

Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021

Volume 1: Written Statement

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Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council



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OUTLINE OF THE PLAN

BACKGROUND

The Development Plan sets out Leitrim County Council's policies and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County from 2015 to 2021. The Plan seeks to develop and improve, in a sustainable manner, the social, economic, cultural and environmental assets of the County. The making of the Development Plan has been informed by the Housing Strategy, the Retail Strategy and the Strategic Environmental Report.

THE PLAN AREA

The Plan covers the administrative area of County Leitrim, which amounts to an area measuring 1,876 square kilometres (613 square miles).

LEGAL PREAMBLE

The legal basis for *Leitrim County Development Plan* is laid out in the Planning & Development Acts 2000- 2014, as amended (hereafter referred to as the Planning Act). Section 11(1) of the Planning Act requires that the Planning Authority, not later than 4 years after the making of a Development Plan, is to prepare a new Development Plan for its area. This process has been ongoing since February 2013, progressing to the publication of the first draft of the *Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021*. The Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021 came into effect on 9th February 2015.

PLAN LAYOUT

The Development Plan comprises of three Volumes, Volume one consists of a Written Statement, Volume 2 consists of Appendices and Volume 3 consists of accompanying maps. Volume 1 is divided into five Sections.

Section 1 sets out the context for the Plan, gives a profile of the County, outlines the vision for the future of the County and sets out the strategic goals and strategic development framework of the Plan.

Section 2 consists of an Economic Strategy for the County, which is primarily aimed at creating sustainable jobs and improving the quality of life. The Strategy examines and presents policies and objectives in respect to several sectors including Tourism, Farming & Agri-Food, Environmental Goods & Services, Creative Industries and Forestry & Wood.

Section 3 consists of the various policies and objectives relating to policy areas such as Urban and Rural Settlement, Transportation, Employment and Industry, Housing, Protection of the Natural Environment/Natural Heritage *etc.* All Policies in the Plan are highlighted in bold font and identified with an individual number preceded with the word 'Policy'. Similarly all Objectives have been individually referenced with an individual number preceded with the word 'Objective' and contained within a text box.

Section 4 contains the particular development management standards for the County. They have been divided up into General, Residential, Industrial and Commercial, Roads and Parking and Other.

Section 5 contains the statement on the likely impact on the environment of implementing the policies of the Plan.

The Appendices to the Plan i.e. the Record of Protected Structures, Recommended Standards for Apartments, County Geological Sites of Interest and Guidelines on Flood Risk and Development. Also included under this Section, but in the form of a separate booklet, are the land use zoning maps for the towns and villages (excluding Carrick-on-Shannon) in the County.

The Plan is accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment Report (including a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report), and a Natura Impact Report. The Plan has been informed by a Housing Strategy and a Retail Strategy.

USING THE PLAN

The Plan can be read as an entire document on planning in County Leitrim up to the year 2021 or as a reference manual for particular topics of interests or development proposals. It is important to note that while some cross-referencing between the policies and objectives (section 3) and the development management standards (section 4) for various topics have been included, it is not intended to be a definitive list of all relevant development management standards. Where cross-referencing occurs, it should be considered only as a guide, as further development management standards may also be relevant depending on the development proposal, its location etc.

If any conflict or ambiguity arises between what is contained in the written statement and the supporting maps, the written statement will take precedence.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Section 15 of the *Planning Act* places a duty on the Planning Authority to “*take such steps within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of the development plan*”.

The Council will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan and will take account of the changing circumstances in the physical, social and economic environment in order to review, update and vary the Plan, as necessary.

Monitoring with reference to the strategic environmental objectives as set out in the Strategic Environmental Report will be carried out as part of the overall monitoring of the implementation of the *County Development Plan 2015-2021*.



SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

“The development plan is a framework for both initiating and influencing the process of change in our surroundings in order to support the wider economic, social and environmental objectives of the community” (DoEHLG, Development Plans: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2007).

Planning fulfils an important and pivotal function of the Local Authority primarily in the development of land. The Development Plan in turn acts as the primary guiding tool for the way in which this development is governed in the County Council area over the set period.

“The development plan is central to achieving greater balance in regional development and enabling all areas to develop to their maximum potential. The plan creates the vision for the area it covers; specifies the type, amount and quality of development needed to achieve that vision; and seeks to protect and enhance the environment and amenities. It creates the policy framework and necessary degree of certainty within which individual development decisions can be made over the life of the plan” (DoEHLG, Development Plans: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2007).

Therefore, the purpose of the Development Plan is to set out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. It is comprised of a written statement and attendant maps that give a graphic representation of the objectives contained in the Plan. The Development Plan can be regarded as an environmental contract between the Council and the community. The Plan sets out the policies and specific objectives that will guide the actions of the Council in its established roles as provider of certain physical infrastructure, protector of the environment and its emerging role as facilitator of social, cultural and economic development.

1.2 REVIEW OF THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2009-2015

Part of the future vision for the County as contained in the 2009-2015 Development Plan was to establish a framework for the future development of the County as a thriving rural community, with a beautiful, clean environment, a rich and varied heritage and a vibrant and diverse social, cultural and economic life. The provision of specific policies and objectives contributed to the achievement of this aim. In drafting the new plan a detailed review has taken place of the 2009 Plan. The County Development Plan 2015-2021 builds on the policy and aspirations of the previous plan and advances policy and objectives in new areas of importance as reflected during the public consultation phases.

1.3 LEGAL PREAMBLE

1.3.1 LEGAL STATUS OF PLAN

The legal basis for this *Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021* is set out in the *Planning Act*. Under the *Planning Acts*, each Planning Authority is obliged to make a Development Plan every six years and, in making the Plan, the Planning Authority shall have regard to national plans, policies and strategies.



1.4 CONTENT AND SCOPE OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1.4.1 CONTENT

Section 10 of the *Planning Act* (as amended) sets out the content of Development Plans, which shall consist of a written statement and map(s) and include objectives, where relevant for: -

- i. The zoning of land;
- ii. The provision, or facilitation of the provision, of infrastructure;
- iii. The conservation and protection of the environment;
- iv. The integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population;
- v. The preservation of the character of the landscape;
- vi. The protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest;
- vii. The preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas;
- viii. The development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration;
- ix. The provision of accommodation for travellers;
- x. The preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities;
- xi. The control of establishments for the purposes of reducing the risk, or limiting the consequences, of a major accident;
- xii. The provision, or facilitation of the provision, of services for the community;
- xiii. The management of features of the landscape, in particular features important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network;
- xiv. Promotion of compliance with environmental standards and objectives included in river basin management plans;
- xv. The preservation of public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility;
- xvi. Landscape, relating to a framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscaped;
- xvii. The promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas.

(The above is not a complete list of items to be included in the Development Plan)

Section 11(1) of the *Planning Act* 2000, as amended, requires that the Planning Authority, not later than 4 years after the making of a Development Plan, is to prepare a new Development Plan for its area. This process began in February 2013, progressing to the publication of the first (Stage 1) draft of the *Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021*. The *Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021* was finalised and adopted on 12th January 2015 to come into effect on 9th February 2015.

1.4.2 SCOPE

The area to which the Plan relates is the administrative area of County Leitrim. It is an aspiration of the Council that a separate integrated Local Area Plan will be prepared for the county town of Carrick-on-Shannon and Cortober, in conjunction with Roscommon County

Council. Having regard to the changes in the *Planning & Development Act* in relation to the need for prescribed Local Area Plans, in the event of such an integrated Plan not being delivered within the prescribed time scale for Local Area Plans, the Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan will be integrated into the County Development Plan by way of a statutory variation.

The Council intends to prepare plans for other towns and villages in the County over the period of this plan.

1.4.3 PERIOD OF PLAN

The Plan is valid for a six-year period from the date the Plan is made.

1.4.4 THE PLAN AREA

The Plan covers the administrative area of County Leitrim which encompasses an area measuring approximately 1,590 square kilometres (614 square miles).

1.5 POLICY CONTEXT

The *Leitrim County Development Plan* must conform to various national and regional policies. The *Planning Act* requires that, so far as it is practical, a Development Plan shall be consistent with national plans, policies and strategies, which relate to the proper planning and sustainable development of an area covered by the plan.

1.5.1 NATIONAL CONTEXT

Ministerial Guidelines

Local Authority Development Plans should be aligned with any Guidelines issued by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government including: -

- i. Architectural Heritage Protection for Places of Worship 2003
- ii. Best Practice Urban Design Manual, May 2009
- iii. Childcare Facilities Guidelines 2001
- iv. Design Standards for New Apartments 2007
- v. Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets
- vi. Development Contribution Scheme Guidelines for Planning Authorities
- vii. Development Management Guidelines -June 2007
- viii. Development Plans Guidelines -June 2007
- ix. Draft Guidance for Planning Authorities on Drainage and Reclamation of Wetlands
- x. Funfair Guidance
- xi. Government White Paper "Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland 2007-2020"
- xii. Guidelines for Planning Authorities & An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, March 2013
- xiii. Implementation of new EPA Code of Practice on Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses
- xiv. Implementing Regional Planning Guidelines- Best Practice Guidance 2005
- xv. Landscape and Landscape Assessment and Appendices 2000
- xvi. Quarries and Ancillary Activities 2004
- xvii. Residential Density Guidelines 1999
- xviii. Retail Planning Guidelines, April 2012
- xix. Retail Design Manual, April 2012
- xx. Section 261A of Planning & Development Act 2000 Guidelines (January 2012)
- xxi. Section 261A of Planning & Development Act 2000 Supplementary Guidelines (July 2012)
- xxii. Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (January 2012)



- xxiii. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) 2004
- xxiv. Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005
- xxv. Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2007
- xxvi. Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2008 & companion document 'Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide' 2008.
- xxvii. Taking in Charge of Housing Estates / Management Companies
- xxviii. Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures 1996 (as amended by Circular PL 07/12 issued on 19 October 2012)
- xxix. The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Local Authorities (November 2009)
- xxx. Tree Preservation Guidelines
- xxxi. Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations
- xxxii. Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006
- xxxiii. The Provision of Schools and the Planning System 2008

The Planning Authority will also have regard to any further Guidelines and Directions published by the Government during the lifetime of the plan. Refer to Departments web site at; <http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/#d.en.1599>

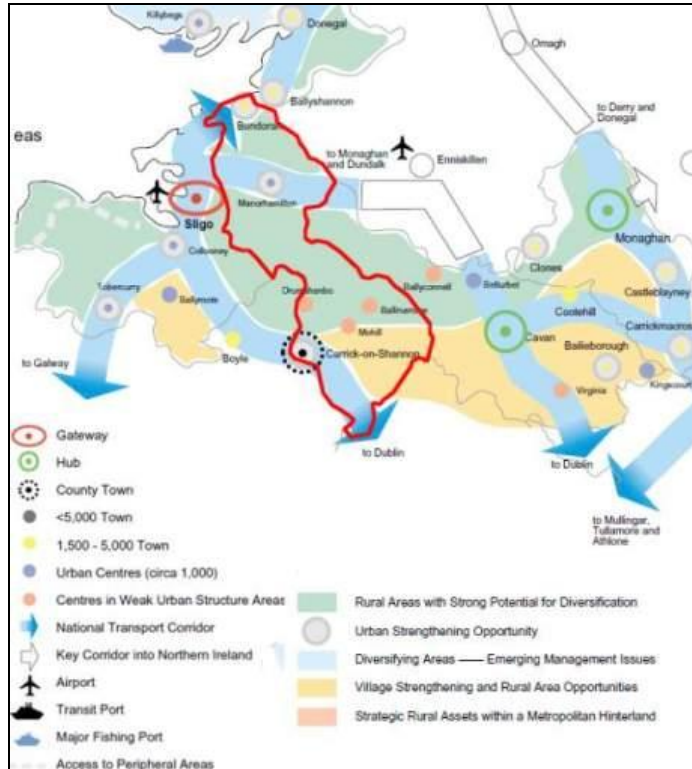
It is acknowledged that the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government webpage, 'Myplan', is an important source of planning-related information, including data in respect of statutory plans, census, heritage site and patterns of housing development. In this regard the development of Myplan is, and will continue to be, supported by the Council in terms of the provision of spatial data as requested by the Department and as resources allow. The 'Myplan' website can be accessed at; www.myplan.ie

National Spatial Strategy

The Department of the Environment launched "Indications of the Way Ahead" in September 2001, the second consultation paper for the National Spatial Strategy. The strategy itself was launched at the end of November, 2002. The guiding principles of the strategy are;

- a) To bring people and their jobs closer together;
- b) To reduce the level of migration eastward;
- c) Facilitating north - south interaction;
- d) Providing a wider variety of employment and leisure options for smaller urban centres;
- e) Improving accessibility to facilities and services;
- f) Lower levels of congestion in major urban areas; and;
- g) Achieve a higher quality environment in both urban and rural areas.

The strategy has identified Leitrim as a predominantly rural county 'with strong potential for diversification'. Sligo is the gateway town for the region (see Map 1.1).

Map 1.1 Leitrim in the Context of the National Spatial Strategy 2002 (Border Region)

Map Source: *National Spatial Strategy* (2002)

Taking account of changed circumstances since the NSS was published in 2002, the *National Spatial Strategy Update and Outlook Report* (2010) highlighted the need to support the emergence of much more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable patterns of development, by tackling the drivers for urban sprawl, maximising the opportunities to reduce CO² emissions and fossil fuel energy use, while adapting to the emerging effects of climate change and protecting the qualities of our groundwater, rivers, habitats and heritage.

Local Government Local and Regional Government Reform

The local and regional government reform measure, contained within the reform programme *Putting People First: Action Programme for Effective Local Government* (2012) and as enacted by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is intended as a comprehensive mechanism for the reform of local government in Ireland. Local and regional bodies are involved in the development and implementation of policies and the provision of funds which are designed to give effect to the strategic goals of the NSS.

The establishment of three Regional Assemblies, as well as the amalgamation of a number of Local Authorities will have an important impact in relation to the delivery of services and funding and the creation of policies in support of individual Gateways.

The three new assemblies will be as follows: -

- a) Southern Region Assembly comprising of Munster and the south east counties of Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford, which will evolve from the existing Southern;



- b) Eastern & Midland Region Assembly which will be newly established (consisting of the province of Leinster other than the south-east counties in the Southern Region) and;
- c) Connacht-Ulster Region Assembly which will evolve from the existing Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly (consisting of the province of Connaught and the counties along the Border with Northern Ireland other than County Louth).

These Assemblies will assume all of the responsibilities previously held by the eight Regional Authorities. Within the context of the NSS, this means that these Assemblies will now be responsible for the delivery and administration of regional and economic strategies, including the continued management of EU Regional Operational Programmes, all of which will be influential in the future development of the designated Gateway and Hubs, as well as the continuing implementation of the RPGs, which will run until 2016, pending their replacement by the new regional strategies and National Planning Framework.

Local government reform provides for local governance at two levels: that at County level and that at the new Municipal District level. This change will result in geographical and spatial consequences to the approach to the implementation of Planning Policy at a local level and this needs to be reflected in the *County Development Plan*. Municipal Districts have been established. Leitrim has three Municipal Areas. These are; Ballinamore, Carrick-on-Shannon and Manorhamilton. It is envisioned that the above mentioned three towns will become the County's three "Key Towns" and will become the centres for, and drivers of, economic development and growth within their areas. Under the Municipal Districts regime, decision-making powers, as prescribed, will be devolved to the local level through legislative provision. The new structure has been reflected in the policy approach and objectives of the *County Development Plan*.

National Development Plan, 2007-2013

The *National Development Plan 2007-2013* entitled *Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All*, sets out a roadmap for Ireland's future. The €184 billion Plan focuses on the principles of sustainable economic growth, greater social inclusion and balanced regional development. It builds on, and consolidates, the achievements of the previous Plan, and provides investment for economic infrastructure, social inclusion measures, social infrastructure, human capital and enterprise, science and innovation.

National Recovery Plan 2011-2014

The *National Recovery Plan 2011-2014* provides a blueprint for a return to sustainable economic growth for the county. In particular it: -

- Sets out the measures that will be taken to restore order to our public finances
- Identifies the areas of economic activity which will provide growth and employment recovery
- Specifies the reforms the Government will implement to accelerate growth in those key sectors.

Overall, the *Recovery Plan* aims to build on Ireland's strengths in ICT, health/life sciences, international financial services, agri-food and other internationally traded services.

1.5.2 REGIONAL CONTEXT

Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022

The Border Region consists of the counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth. The objective of the *Regional Planning Guidelines* (RPGs) is to provide a long-term strategic planning framework, for the development of the Border Region over the 2010-2022 period. In playing this role, the Region will also assist in the national objective of more balanced regional development, by providing a competitive and specialist location in the international context. It is acknowledged that the Region is challenged by some of the most difficult socio-economic and physical barriers to development. This County Development Plan is prepared in line with the RPGs and with due regard to the Development Plans of adjoining Counties.

Regional Strategic Framework for the Central Border Region

The Regional Strategic Framework (RSF) as prepared by ICBAN, is a Framework for the development of the Central Border Region, for the period up to 2027 and embraces the opportunities that regional thinking might create. The document aims to inform and effect policy change, and create a region that can make a distinctive contribution to regeneration and growth of the island economy. This is emphasised within the Vision of “A sustainable region that delivers the best quality of life for its people and makes a distinctive contribution to economic and social renewal and growth on the island”.

The RSF has been developed to influence the Government of Ireland and Northern Ireland to consider the Central Border Region as an investment priority. It also seeks to address the inequalities and social outcomes between the Central Border Region and other regions of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Alongside addressing inequalities that exist within the Central Border Region, the RSF will ensure that this Region plays a more involved role within Europe through networking and engaging, as well as securing investments for key initiatives and projects.

Copies of the RSF and other associated documentation are available to download from ICBAN’s website: <http://www.icban.com/The-RSF>.

The RSF identifies priorities for developing the assets of the Central Border Region:

1. Smart and Internationally Competitive –Development of intellectual and enterprise assets.
2. People-Centered and Inclusive - Development of People, skills and organisational assets.
3. Sustainable - Development and Protection of Natural Assets.
4. Accessible and Connected - Development of Physical Assets.

The key ambitions of the Regional Strategic Framework reflect the challenges and opportunities at local / regional, national and international levels:

- To develop and deliver strategic responses to the key identified needs, which will enable the Region to develop and grow economically and socially
- To influence the Governments of Ireland and Northern Ireland on their investment priorities for the Region, by providing evidence base to justify investments



- To address the inequalities in economic and social outcomes between the Central Border Region and other regions of Ireland and Northern Ireland and the inequalities which persist within the Region itself, by contributing to the balanced development of the area.
- To identify opportunities for local authorities and other stakeholders to work together to realise opportunities and to respond to the challenges facing the area. This is particularly important in a cross-border Region where the existence of the Border may make it more difficult to work together across different legal and organisational structures.
- To play a more involved role as an EU region, by not being peripheral in either a geographic or participative sense. There is a desire to embrace the learning potential within the EU through networking and engaging, as well as securing investments for key initiatives and projects. This will help implement the aims of EU 2020 Strategy and in particular cross-border programmes such as INTERREG. This RSF can assist in suggesting and identifying potential opportunities for further consideration and development by stakeholders.

While the RSF is a non statutory document it can assist in suggesting and identifying potential opportunities for further consideration and development by stakeholders.

Replacement Waste Management Plan 2006-2011

Section 22 of the *Waste Management Act, 1996* and the *Waste Management Planning Regulations, 1997* oblige all local authorities in the country to establish and implement Waste Management Plans to promote responsible waste management.

Leitrim County Council is committed to promoting responsible waste management in County Leitrim. Since 2001 all local authorities in the province have participated in the Connaught Waste Management Planning process. However, the number of planning regions was reduced in 2012 from ten to three. In accordance with Section 22 (3) of the *Waste Management Act, 1996 -2012*, Leitrim County Council is committed to the North West Region comprising Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo and Leitrim, as well as Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan. In accordance with Section 22 (2) of the *Waste Management Act, 1996 to 2012*, an evaluation of the *Replacement Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region 2006 – 2011* was completed in 2012.

The process of preparing a Waste Management Plan for the new North West Region has commenced and it is expected that the new plan will be in place in 2015. These *Waste Management Plans* have to follow the hierarchical approach, which recommends waste avoidance and prevention, Re-use, recycling and energy recovery as preferred options to waste disposal.

River Basin Management

The EU *Water Framework Directive* was adopted in 2000 and it required governments to take a new approach to managing all their waters and requiring that all waters achieve at least good status by 2027 at the latest. It also requires that status does not deteriorate in any waters. In order to achieve these objectives River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) were prepared and adopted in 2009 by the Local Authorities within the relevant river basin catchments, following extensive research and consultation with stakeholders. Measures described in the River Basin Management Plans and Water Management Unit Plans primarily relate to the implementation of European Directives concerning the water environment.

River Basin Management Planning A Practical Guide for Public Authorities June 2008 issued by the DoEHLG states that spatial planning and river basin planning processes need to be properly integrated. This guidance goes on to state that “*planning authorities should therefore ensure that the relevant objectives of any water quality management plans be included in the plan*” (i.e. CDP, LAPs etc). The interaction of the Core Strategy and the Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP), particularly in the preparation of the Water Services Strategic Plan, shall be critical to the proper integration of the spatial and RBMP planning processes.

County Development Board Strategy, 2002-2012

The Social, Economic and Cultural Strategy 2002-2012 sets out a broad framework for development in Leitrim. It includes overall objectives, targets to be achieved and indicators to measure development progress in Leitrim. The integrated nature of the Strategy involves identifying the various agencies operating at local level responsible for and their role in delivering these objectives. As part of the Local Government Reform the County Development Boards has been discontinued. A Local Community Development Committee has been established in each local authority area with a mandate to provide oversight and a planning process to community development in general. Each committee will prepare a Local Economic and Community Plan in 2015 which will provide a basis to continue the integrated approach to the delivery of objectives for the development of the County.

1.5.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Our Sustainable Future – A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland

The green economy and sustainable development agendas are key elements of Ireland’s economic recovery strategy and *Our Sustainable Future – A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland* sets out the range of environmental, economic and social measures required to move these agendas forward from vision to reality.

Smarter Travel—A Sustainable Transport Future; A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020

Smarter Travel - A Sustainable Transport Future (2009) is the transport policy for Ireland for the period 2009-2020. It recognises the vital importance of continued investment in transport to ensure an efficient economy and continued social development, but also promotes more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

Making Ireland's Development Sustainable, 2002

Making Ireland's Development Sustainable comprises a five-year review of the original 1997 Strategy. It served as Ireland’s national report on sustainable development to the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development held in 2002. The report examines progress made in the ten years since the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit.



Towards Sustainable Local Communities: Guidelines on Local Agenda 21

Local Agenda 21 aims to promote sustainable development at local and regional level. Land use policy and controls are central to the achievement of sustainability at the local level.

“The core of Local Agenda 21 is to encourage greater local ownership of and participation in local decision making for sustainable development. These guidelines are intended as suggestions and recommendations which local authorities should take on board, in partnership with their communities, to give real meaning to Local Agenda 21 in their areas” (Towards Sustainable Local Communities: Guidelines on Local Agenda 21).

Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland, 1997

‘The government is committed to ensuring that the economy and society can develop to their full potential within a protected environment, without compromising the quality of that environment, and with responsibility towards present and future generations and the wider international community’. Government policy is contained in ‘*Sustainable Development, a Strategy for Ireland*’ (1997). The principals of sustainable development have informed government policy including the *Planning & Development Acts 2000* 2015 and various planning guidelines as mentioned in Section 1.5.1 above.

1.5.4 CLIMATE CHANGE

National Climate Change Adaptation Framework, 2012

The *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework* provides a strategic policy focus to ensure adaptation measures are taken across different sectors and levels of Government to reduce Ireland's vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change. It provides for climate change adaptation to be addressed at national and local level.

The *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework* provides for Local Authorities to prepare local adaptation plans as part of the Development Plan review process. It is an objective therefore to prepare such a plan as soon as possible following the adoption of the Development Plan.

National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012

Climate change and energy usage are two interrelated issues of considerable and growing importance to Ireland (and the wider world) and it is important that the County Development Plan reflect this through the inclusion of specific policies/objectives/goals.

Flood-Risk Management

The formulation of the policies and objectives in respect to the management of areas at risk of flooding must have regard to the document issued by the Minister entitled; *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management- Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (November, 2009).

The guidelines require the planning system at national, regional and local levels to: -

1. Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding, particularly floodplains, unless there are proven wider sustainability grounds that justify appropriate development and where the risk can be reduced or managed to an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere;
2. Adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management when assessing the location for new development based on avoidance, reduction and mitigation of flood risk; and
3. Incorporate flood risk assessment into the process of making decisions on planning applications and planning appeals.

In terms of existing undeveloped zoned areas that are potentially at risk of flooding, the guidelines indicate that zoning policies and objectives should be reconsidered for any such lands where flood risk is assessed to be potentially significant and likely to increase in the future. Emphasis is placed on inter-alia; removing high risk/vulnerable uses, revisions to the land use zoning area/objectives for such areas, preparing a detailed local area plan informed by more detailed flood risk assessment addressing development issues prior to development; specification of pre-requisite flood risk measures.

1.6 COUNTY PROFILE

1.6.1 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

County Leitrim is located in the north west of Ireland in the Border Region. As the county falls within the Border Midlands and Western Region it qualifies for Objective 1 status for the purposes of EU funding. The county is bounded by Counties Cavan and Longford to the east, Roscommon to the south, Sligo to the west and Donegal and Fermanagh to the north. The County is traversed by three main arterial routes; the N4, the N16 and the N15. Iarnród Éireann railway linking Dublin with Sligo runs along the southwest boundary of the County serving Dromod and Carrick-on-Shannon. The county is served by a host of picturesque and renowned waterways.



Map 1.2 Regional Context

1.6.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS

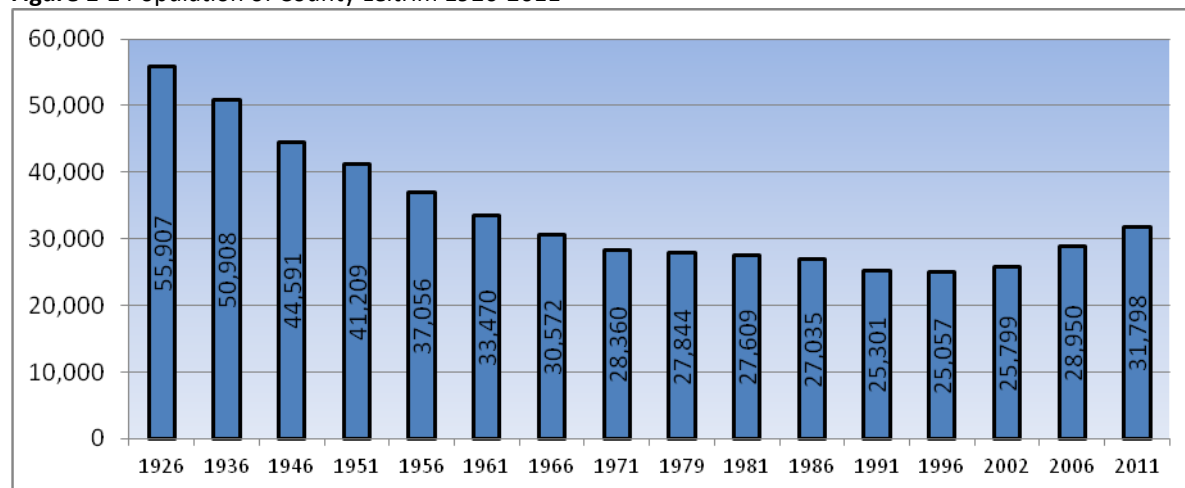
For descriptive and geographical purposes County Leitrim can be divided into a northern and southern half, generally separated by Lough Allen. The northern half of the county is characterised by mesa-mountains, expansive lakes and deep glacial valleys radiating from the centre of the land mass to form a spectacularly scenic landscape. The southern half of the County is characterised by a drumlin belt interspersed with small lakes and rolling hillocks. The resultant soil type in the southern half of the County is primarily the product of retreating glacial masses.

The River Shannon with its associated lake systems forms the County's southwestern boundary with County Roscommon whilst Donegal Bay demarcates the northern extremity of the County at its 4.6 kilometre long coastline.

The predominant soil types within the County generally comprise peats and gleys from glacial drift derived from a mix of limestone, sandstone, shale and other rocks. The predominant groupings of gleys and peats together make up 75% of the total County land mass.

on immigration to the County, and without this the population over the 1996-2002 period would have declined, as the death rate exceeded the birth rate. However, a natural increase in the population is now occurring based on births exceeding deaths.

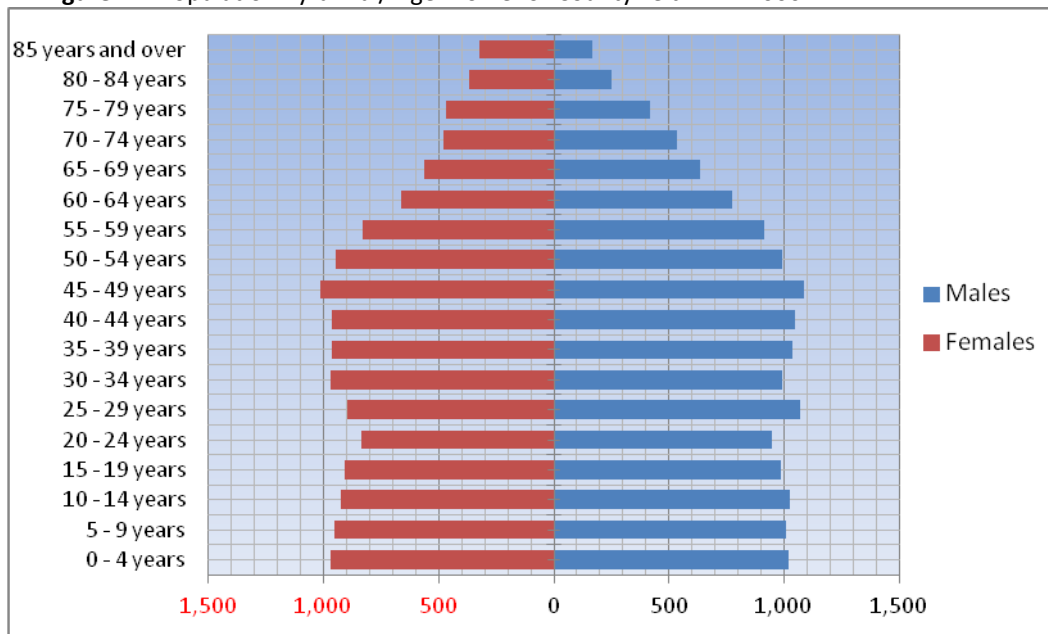
Figure 1-1 Population of County Leitrim 1926-2011



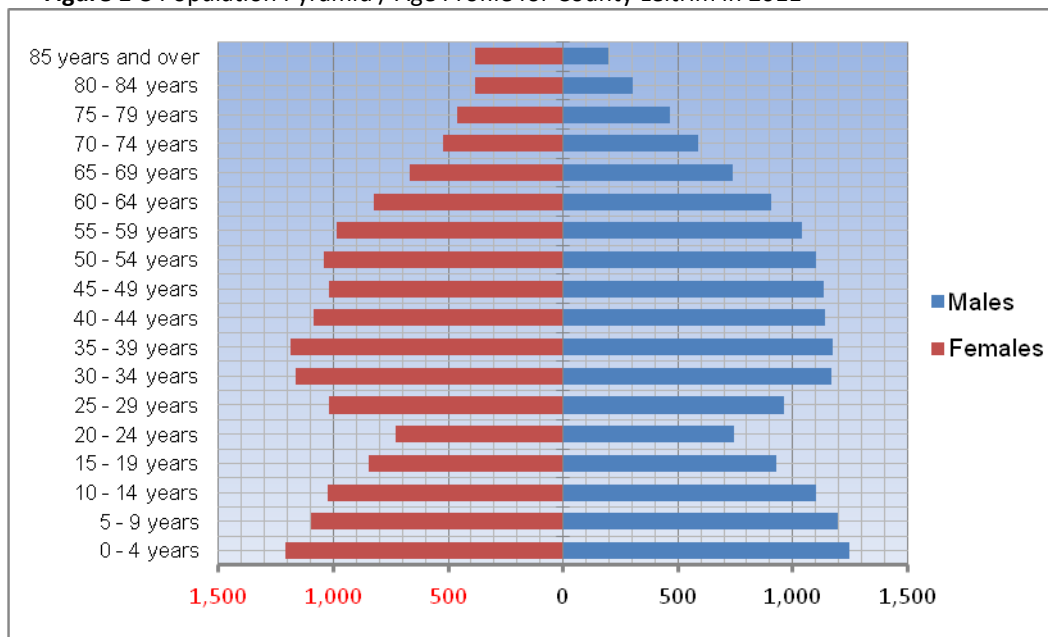
Source: Central Statistics Office (CSO), Census of Population 2011

1.7.1 AGE PROFILE

In the 2011 Leitrim County Age Profile (as illustrated in Figure 1-3), it is evident that a large proportion of the population for the County is within the young (0-14 years) and old (65 years and above) age-dependent categories. In fact Leitrim County had the largest proportion of the population in these age categories of all counties in Ireland in 2011. In comparison with the age profile detailed in Figure 1-2, the County population appears to have expanded significantly in the family formative and young and older children age categories (0-14 years). This suggests many young families have moved to the County in the 2006-2011 period. The 2011 age profile is more consistent with that experienced at a national level.

Figure 1-2 Population Pyramid / Age Profile for County Leitrim in 2006

Data Source: CSO, Census of Population 2006

Figure 1-3 Population Pyramid / Age Profile for County Leitrim in 2011

Data Source: CSO, Census of Population 2011

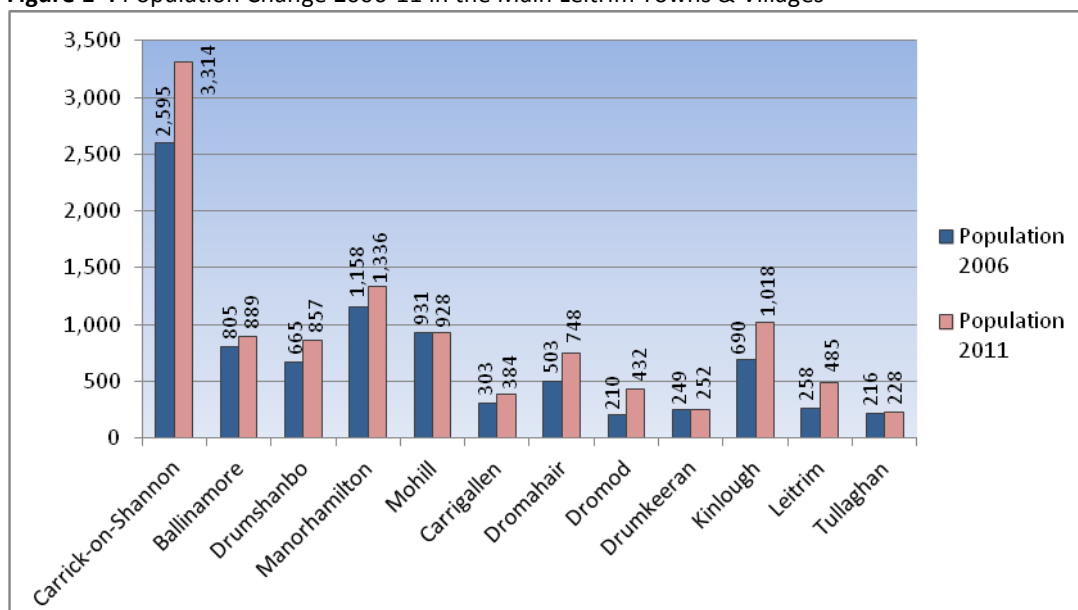
1.7.2 DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION

According to the CSO, in 2011 Leitrim was the most rural county in the country with almost 90% of the population living in a rural setting, followed by Galway County (77.4%), Roscommon (74%), Donegal (72.5%) and Mayo (71%). Map 1-4 shows the distribution of the population throughout the County at Electoral Division (ED) level. Those EDs containing the largest proportion of the population were centred upon the main settlements serving the County, including; Carrick-on-Shannon ED (3,986), Manorhamilton ED (1,782), Dromahair ED



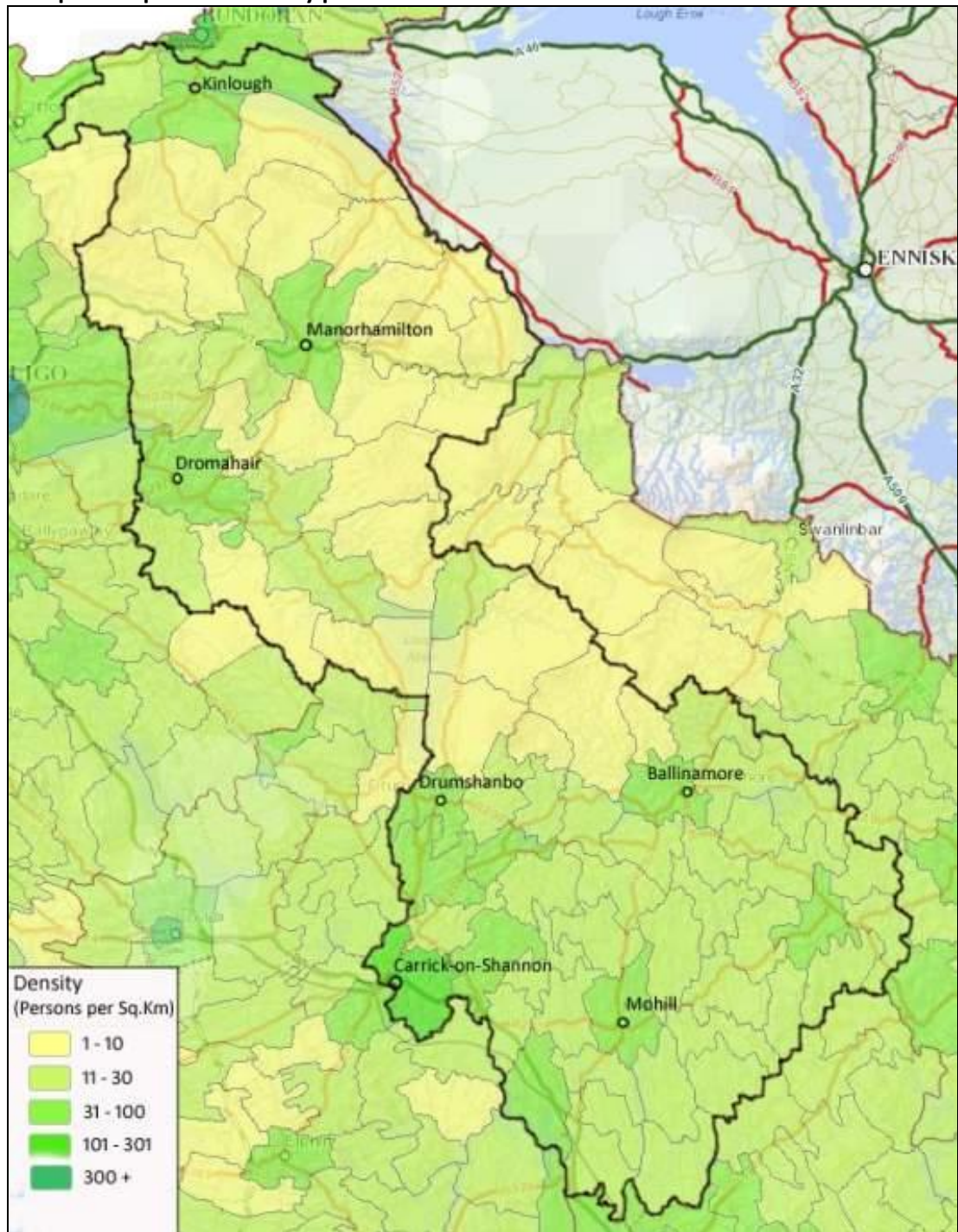
(1,506), Mohill ED (1,378), Drumshanbo ED (1,282), Leitrim ED (1,123) and Ballinamore ED (1,096).

Figure 1-4 Population Change 2006-11 in the Main Leitrim Towns & Villages



Source: Central Statistics Office (CSO), Census of Population 2006 & 2011

Population change in the main (Tier 1-3) towns serving Leitrim is illustrated in Figure 1-4 and this highlights that population change was not evenly distributed. The greatest proportionate change in population in Leitrim towns between 2006-2011 was experienced in Leitrim (88%) and Dromod (106%), whilst the largest actual increase in population over the same period occurred in Carrick-on-Shannon (719 no. person) and Kinlough (328 no. persons). In comparison the rural area and smallest (Tier 4) villages within Leitrim experienced a 560 no. persons increase (2.7%) over the 2006-2011 period.

Map 1.4 Population Density per ED in 2011

Map Source: All-Ireland Research Observatory (AIRO)

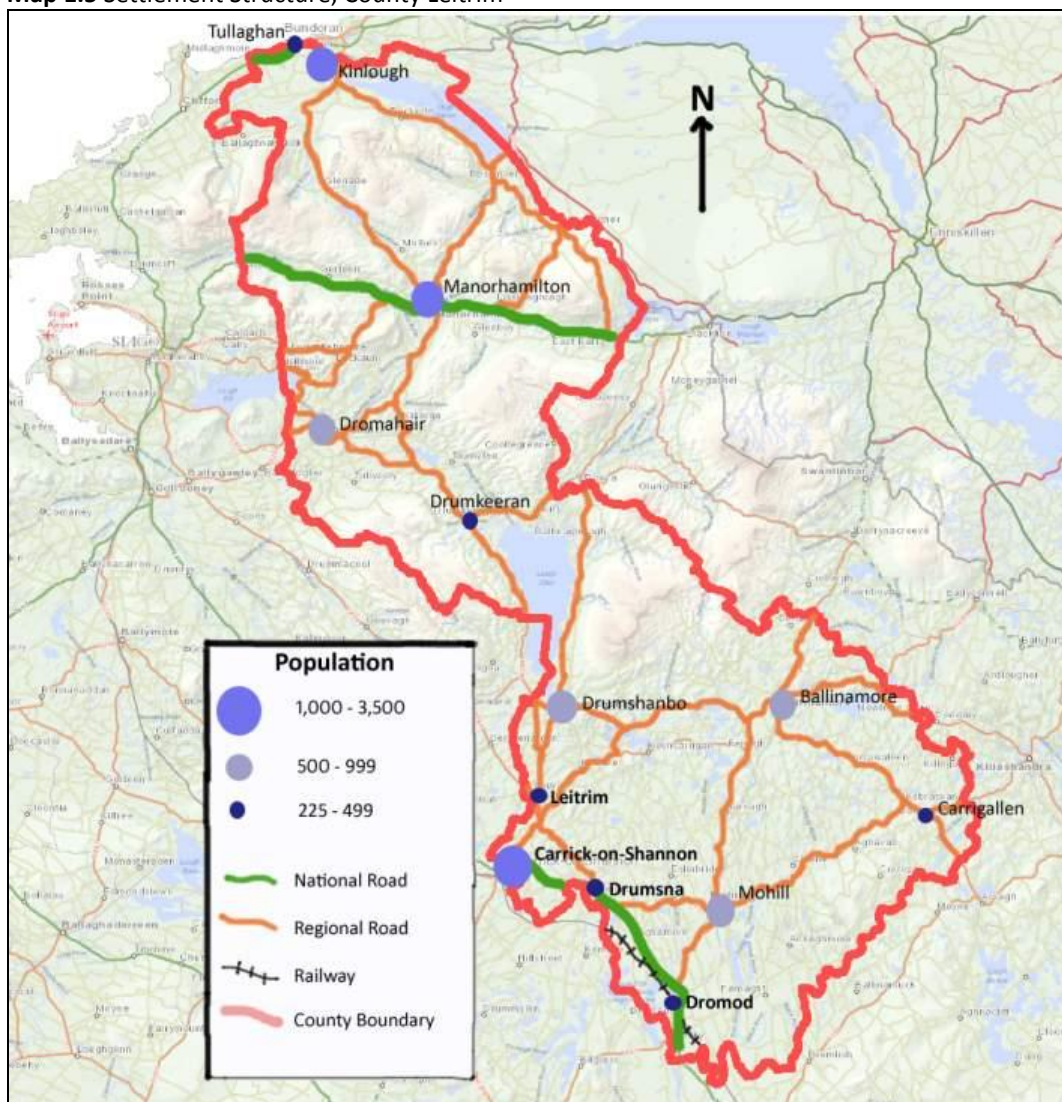
1.7.3 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The future targets for population for Leitrim County and Carrick-on-Shannon are based on the target figures as set out in the *Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010* (Border RPG), which are based on CSO data. In 2010, the Border RPG proposed a 2016 population target for the Leitrim County area of 31,942; this 2016 figure was only 144 persons more than the figure enumerated in Census 2011 for the County. The County population in 2022 based on RPG



projections will be 35,700 and based on growth patterns we have estimated this to be 35,277 in 2021 (the end of the Plan period). The RPG also proposes a population projection for Carrick-on-Shannon of 3,600 in 2016 and 4,200 in 2022. Whilst growth patterns have departed slightly from RPG projections, this Development Plan must continue to refer to the RPGs as a guide towards the future population for the County and Carrick-on-Shannon.

Map 1.5 Settlement Structure, County Leitrim



Map 1.5 provides details of the settlement structure for the County based on the latest Census results and showing the main routes traversing the County.

1.7.4 EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Over the intercensal period 2006 to 2011, the number of persons employed in 'Building & Construction' in the County declined by 1,328 no. persons, in contrast to an increase of 754 county residents employed in 'Professional Services' (see Table 1). There have been significant reductions in those employed within the manufacturing industries and in 'commerce and trade'. The 'Agricultural, Fishing and Forestry' sector, the 'Communications and Transport' sector and the 'Public Administration' sectors all experienced marginal net gains in employment figures within Leitrim. Overall there was a net decrease of 697 persons

employed within the County, compared to an increase of 1,245 persons employed during the 2002 to 2006 period.

Table 1 Change in Employment Categories in County Leitrim, 2006-2011

Employment Category	Employment 2011		
	Males	Females	Total % Change
Agricultural, Fishing & Forestry	1,093	101	+1.8%
Building & Construction	610	33	-67.4%
Manufacturing Industries	894	316	-23.5%
Commerce & Trade	1,191	1,142	-10.5%
Communications & Transport	420	109	+20.5%
Public Administration	472	552	+18.9%
Professional Services	750	2,409	+31.4%
Others	908	972	+15.1%
Net Decrease	-1,168	-471	-5.5%

Source: CSO, Census of Population 2006 & 2011

During the period January 2009 to July 2013, the seasonally adjusted standardised unemployment rate has risen nationally from 4.9% to 13.5%. At a local level, live register figures for Social Welfare offices based in Leitrim¹ show that numbers on the live register plateau during 2008-2010 and have gradually declined in recent years.

1.7.5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Table 2 provides a summary of selective of the socio-economic indicators. It illustrates that, in relation to; proportion of older people, age dependency ratio, levels of low social class, and levels of low education attainment, labour force participation rate and economic dependency ratio, Leitrim County fares slightly worse than the national averages.

Table 2 Socio-economic Indicators for County Leitrim and the State, 2011

Area	Change in Population 2002-2006	Change in Population 2006-2011	Older Persons %	Age-Dependency Ratio	Low Social Class ²	Low Education Attainment	Labour Force Participation Rate	EDR ³
State	8.2%	8.2%	17.3%	49.3%	14.3%	20.8%	61.9%	1.54
County Leitrim	12.2%	9.8%	23.3%	57.7%	14.5%	24.0%	60.3%	1.66

Data Source: CSO, Census of Population 2006 & 2011

¹ Manorhamilton and Carrick-on-Shannon

² Proportion of the Population categorised in the semi-skilled and unskilled manual social class groups within the Census.

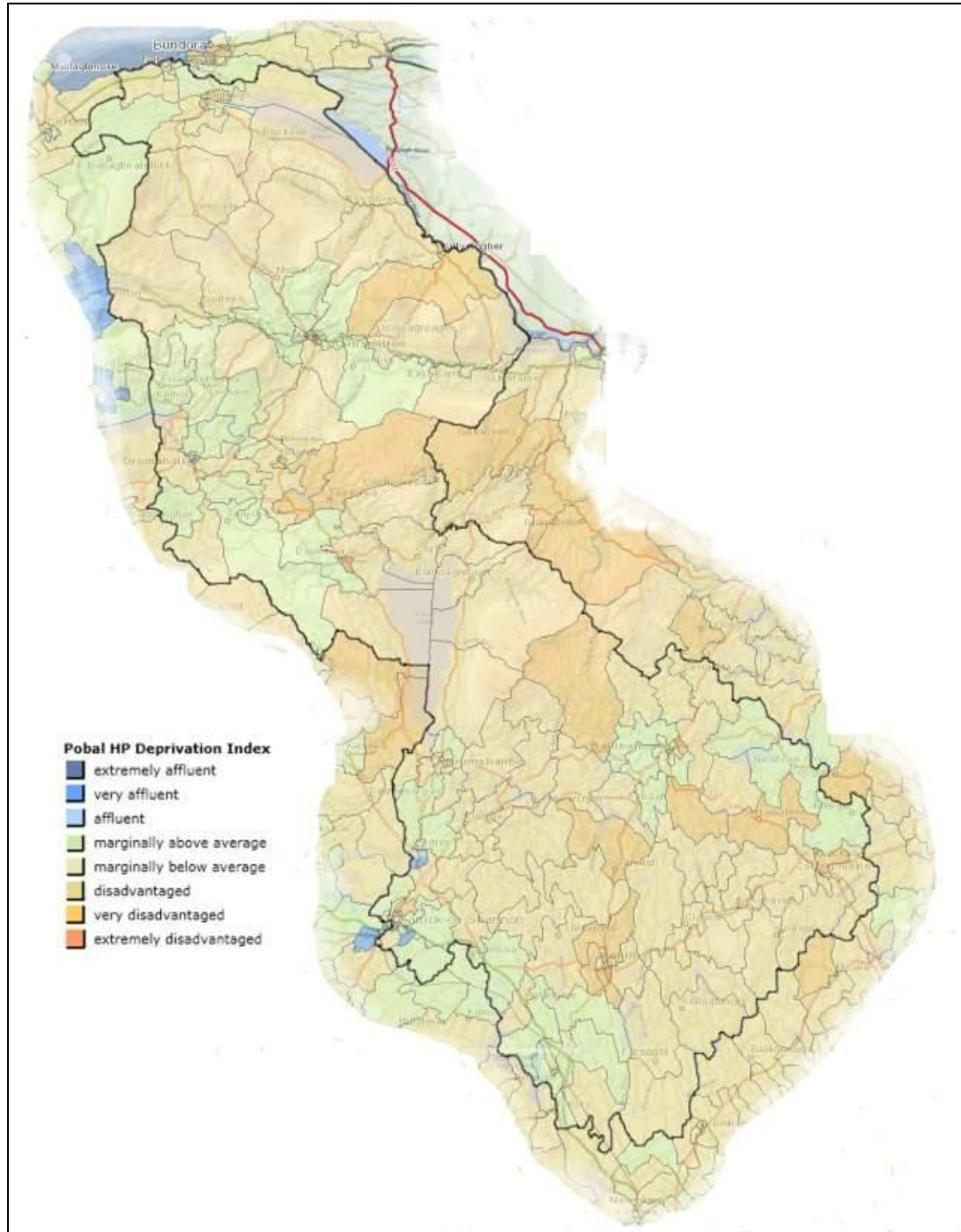
³ The Economic Dependency Ratio (EDR) is calculated as the ratio of the total inactive population (children 14 and under, unemployed, first time job seekers, those engaged in home duties, those retired, students, and those unable to work) to those at work.



Pobal in conjunction with Haase and Pratschke, Socio-Economic Consultants, prepared a Deprivation Index based on Census 2011 results, measuring the relative affluence or disadvantage of particular geographical areas. Population Change, Age Dependency Ratio, Lone Parent Ratio, Educational Attainment, Unemployment Rates and Local Authority Rented Housing were used as part of the measurement and this data was subsequently translated into map form (see Map 1.6).

Using the Pobal HP Deprivation Index for 2011, it was found that Leitrim County fared above average in comparison to national trends relating to disadvantage and well above the neighbouring counties of Longford, Cavan and Donegal.

Map 1.6 identifies the distribution of disadvantage at Small Area level throughout the County based on the Pobal HP Deprivation Index. This largely shows that the county comprises of areas marginally above and below average deprivation, with a number of pockets of 'affluent' areas proximate to Carrick-on-Shannon, Dromahair and Leitrim village. Marginally above average areas are located proximate to the main urban centres. There are also disadvantaged areas generally associated with rural locations in mountain uplands and areas distant from the main road routes serving the County.

Map 1.6 Disadvantage at Small Area level (based on Pobal HP Deprivation Index), 2011

Map Source: Pobal Mapping

With regards to socio-economic groupings, the Census for 2011 found that compared with state averages the proportion of persons in Leitrim County falling within Category B (Higher Professionals – 5.5%) is significantly less than those in the State (18.6%). However, the proportion for Category A (Employers and Managers) at 26.2% is well above the national average (15.4%). Leitrim County has higher proportions of persons falling under the semi-skilled and skilled socio-economic categories than the national average. The proportion of



persons falling into Manual Skilled and Unskilled categories was broadly similar with those of the State in 2011.

1.8 A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF COUNTY LEITRIM

This Development Plan seeks to establish a framework for the future development of the County as a thriving rural community, with a beautiful, clean environment, a rich and varied heritage and a vibrant and diverse social, cultural and economic life.

The Council will seek to realise this vision both directly in its role as planning, housing, sanitary and roads authority and indirectly by facilitating and promoting the social, economic and cultural development of the community.

The Council embraces the principles of sustainable development and will seek to ensure that new development promotes the long-term ability of the County to sustain a vibrant community, living in harmony with the natural environment.

It is recognised that the County is going through a period of profound change with many traditional ways of life disappearing with new technologies and new ideas bringing new opportunities and threats to the County. These changes will have significant impacts on the County's heritage and environment.

The Council recognises that the existing environment has evolved in tandem with human habitation and that the landscapes and environment we value so highly today, have been shaped and moulded by man over the millennia.

As lifestyles change, so land uses will also change. The Council's role is to manage this change, ensuring important wildlife species and habitats are conserved, features of heritage interest protected, water courses and ground water safeguarded from pollution and the beauty of the landscape maintained and enriched, while at the same time aiming to reverse the population decline and underpin the social and economic base of rural communities.

The Council is committed to safeguarding and nurturing the 'unspoilt/green' image and reputation of Leitrim, centred upon the rural characteristics of the County, agricultural activity, the landscape and its environmentally-sensitive lands and waterbodies.

It shall be a basic aim of Leitrim County Council to support population growth in the County to a level which is consistent with both the efficient utilisation of the County's resources and the aspirations of that population for income levels, living standards, employment opportunities and job choices which are compatible with that elsewhere in the State.

It shall further be a basic aim of the Council to ensure that rural populations are strengthened. In this regard, in particular, the Council will support development in rural areas where sustained population decline has been evident. It is recognised that rural communities need diversity and support through persons engaged in a variety of economic activities, not just persons engaged in agriculture.

This Council cherishes the value and tradition of rural communities in this County and there will be a commitment throughout this plan to supporting rural communities particularly where population decline has been evident. Leitrim County Council will also promote the strengthening of the County's towns and villages, to render the area more attractive to inward investment and to help transform, what are currently structurally weak rural areas within their hinterlands into Strong Rural areas.

The Council's Vision and Mission Statement is as follows;

Our Vision

"County Leitrim to be a vibrant, socially inclusive, progressive and distinctive county, providing a good quality of life for all who work, live and visits the county and offering equal opportunities for employment to its people; while protecting, conserving and enhancing the best of the natural and built environment."

Our Mission Statement

"To guide and secure the sustainable development of the County, provide efficient and effective local government services and facilities and place people first, so that Leitrim becomes a vibrant, socially inclusive, progressive and distinctive county."

The Development Plan objectives which have been informed by the Councils Corporate Policy which include the following broad objectives:

1. Economic Development –
Facilitate and encourage the economic development of the County
2. Infrastructural Development –
Maintain and develop the physical infrastructure of the County
3. Cleaner and Greener Environment –
Maintain the County's unspoilt natural and built environment, making Leitrim an attractive place to be, whilst addressing the impacts of climate change
4. Culture and Recreation –
Promote and develop a creative, active and vibrant County
5. Sustainable Communities and Social Cohesion –
Develop the County in a manner which contributes to the positive well-being and quality of life for all citizens.

1.9 CORE STRATEGY

1.9.1 INTRODUCTION TO CORE STRATEGY

An amendment of the *Planning Act* was signed into law in July 2010. This amendment to the *Planning Act* seeks to support economic renewal and promote sustainable development by ensuring that the provisions of Development Plans and Local Area Plans are streamlined with national and regional development objectives as set out in the *National Spatial Strategy* and in the respective *Regional Planning Guidelines*. Under this amendment to the *Planning Act* each Local Authority is required to incorporate a 'Core Strategy' into Development Plans.

The purpose of this Core Strategy is to;

"Articulate a medium to long term quantitatively based strategy for the spatial development of the area of the planning authority, and in so doing, to demonstrate that the development plan and its objectives are consistent with national and regional policy objectives as set out in the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines" (p. 2, DoECLG Guidance Note on Core Strategies [November 2010]).

This medium- to long-term Strategy for the spatial development of County Leitrim sets out, amongst other things, the amount of land proposed to be zoned for residential and mixed-use purposes in the County Development Plan. It provides a high-level summary description of



the key statistics and priorities underpinning this Development Plan. The Core Strategy section of the Plan provides the transparent evidence-based rationale, which is the basis for the Development Plan.

The function of the Core Strategy is to: -

- I. identify the amount, location and phasing of development for the plan period;
- II. demonstrate how future development supports public transport/existing services;
- III. ensure that needs and priorities of existing zoned/serviced land and new zonings for the area are assessed on a plan-led basis; and
- IV. Provide the framework for deciding on the scale, phasing and location of new development, having regard to existing services and planned investment over the coming years.

It includes information on:

- I. population targets / objectives;
- II. quantification of requirements for zoning of lands for residential and/or a mix of residential and other uses; and
- III. The existing and proposed, future distribution of population within the County plan area, within a defined settlement hierarchy.

1.9.2 BASELINE INFORMATION FOR THE CORE STRATEGY

The population projections for County Leitrim are set out in Section 1.7.3 of this plan. The projected population for 2021 in the Plan, at 35,277 persons, is consistent with the population target as set out in the RPG's at 33,162 persons by 2016 and 35,700 persons by 2022 [see Table 3 below].

The urban and rural settlement policies for the county are set out in section 3.1 of the County Plan.

The urban settlement hierarchy is shown in

Figure 3-1 of the plan with Carrick-on-Shannon identified as the tier 1 town. The RPG's have identified Carrick-on-Shannon, as a regionally significant town and that the Leitrim area of this town will grow from its 2011 population of 3,314 to a population of 3,600 by 2016 and 4,200 by 2022. Carrick-on-Shannon is the subject of a Local Area Plan wherein these population targets will be addressed.

Table 3 Populations, Census, Estimate and Projections

Population	2011 [^]	2015 [†]	2016 [*]	2021 [†]	2022 [*]	Population Increase
County Leitrim	31,798	32,889	33,162	35,277	35,700	2,388
Carrick-on-Shannon	3,314	3,500	3,600	4,100	4,200	600
Rest of County	28,484	29,389	29,562	31,177	31,500	1,788

Data Sources: [^]CSO, Census of Population 2011

^{*} Border RPG's 2010- 2022

[†]Leitrim County Development Plan (Estimates)

Estimated Land Requirement

The Tier 2, 3 and 4, [as well as the rural areas], will share in the RPG (Rest of County) allocation, which is based on current population estimates, will amount to 1,788 additional persons being accommodated within the rest of the County, by 2021.

Table 4 Population Change, Housing Change and Resultant Land Requirement, 2015-21

Location	Estimated Population Change	Equivalent Estimated Housing Requirement Change	Theoretical Housing Land Requirement 2015-21 (Ha) (incorporating 50% over zoning in accordance with RPGs)
County Leitrim	+2,388	+1,043*	102 hectares
Tier 1 Carrick-on-Shannon	+600	+262	22 hectares - (based on a general density of 20 units/ha with allowance for 10 units/ha in low density residential development)
Remaining Share (Rest of County)	+1,788	+781	80 hectares - (based on a general density of 15 units/ha with allowance for 12 units/ha in some Centres)

*Leitrim County Housing Strategy 2015-21 (Housing Requirement Estimate)

Table 4 provides an overview of the estimated housing land requirement for the County as a whole, Carrick-on-Shannon and the remaining share of the County. This is based on estimated population projections and housing requirements, extrapolated from the Housing Strategy. In total 102 hectares will be necessary for the County based on specific residential densities and over zoning by 50% in line with RPG recommendations. This is the quantum of residential land required based on the population targets, it excludes the potential available housing stock.

Potential Urban Land Availability



Table 5 Potential Housing Stock Availability, 2012

Location	Under Construction	Vacant	Under Construction & PP Expired	Housing Stock	Equivalent Zoned Land
Tier 1 Centre					
Carrick on Shannon	27	67	12	106	5.3
Tier 2A Centres					
Manorhamilton	0	82	0	82	5.5
Ballinamore	0	57	0	57	3.8
Tier 2B Centres					
Dromahair	3	28	0	31	2.1
Drumshanbo	2	37	29	68	4.5
Mohill	0	20	0	20	1.3
Kinlough	9	9	2	20	1.3
Tier 3 Centres					
Carrigallen	0	4	0	4	0.3
Dromod	0	50	4	54	3.6
Drumkeeran	0	8	0	8	0.5
Leitrim	0	46	18	64	4.3
Tullaghan	0	18	6	24	1.6
Tier 4 Centres					
Ballinaglera	0	0	0	0	0.0
Cloone	0	0	0	0	0.0
Dowra	0	0	0	0	0.0
Drumcong	0	0	0	0	0.0
Drumsna	0	5	0	5	0.4
Fenagh	3	4	0	7	0.6
Glenfarne Pt.1,2&3	0	0	6	6	0.5
Jamestown	0	0	0	0	0.0
Keshcarrigan	30	16	0	46	3.8
Kilclare	0	0	0	0	0.0
Killarga	0	0	10	10	0.8
Kiltyclogher	0	0	0	0	0.0
Lurganboy	0	6	0	6	0.5
Newtowngore	0	23	2	25	2.1
Roosky	0	59	15	74	6.2
TOTALS	74	539	104	717	49.0

Data Source: Leitrim County Council 'Housing Survey' December 2012

This land use requirement, as set out above, needs to take into account the level of oversupply of housing in each location, so as to ensure that existing 'commenced and under construction' and 'completed and vacant' houses can be utilized / brought into productive use before additional housing of the same genre and calibre are permitted to be developed within these areas. The analysis of this information comes from the Council's own Housing Land

Availability Survey carried out in December 2012. A synopsis of these results, relating to permitted developments (expressed in units of housing) is set out in Table 5.

The potential available housing stock was considered as those residential units that were never occupied plus those under construction, including those under construction with an expired permission. This information is detailed for each of the towns and villages in County Leitrim based on a survey of housing schemes throughout the County completed in December 2012. It should be noted that this does not include potential housing stock in the country (outside of the tier 1-4 settlements).

Based on Table 5 a total of 49 hectares housing land is available in County Leitrim towns and villages based on potential housing under construction or vacant following completion. This housing land equivalent amounts to 5.3 hectares for Carrick-on-Shannon and 43.7 hectares for the remaining tier 1-3 towns and villages.

Actual Housing Land Requirement

The actual housing land requirement for the period 2015-2021 is the theoretical housing land requirement (based on population projections), less the equivalent housing land area (based on the Councils survey of unfinished/unoccupied housing estates). Table 6 below shows the actual housing land requirement for the Plan period.

Table 6 Potential Available Housing Stock, 2015-21

Location	Theoretical Housing Land Requirement 2015-21 (Ha)	Less Housing Land Area (Ha)	Actual Housing Land Requirement 2015-21 (Ha)
County Leitrim	102 hectares	49 hectares	53 hectares
Tier 1 Carrick-on-Shannon	22 hectares	5.3 hectares	16.7 hectares
Remaining Share (Rest of County)	80 hectares	43.7 hectares	36.3 hectares

Existing Zoned Housing Land

Table 7 provides a detailed breakdown of land currently zoned to provide for housing in each of the Tier 1-3 centres. With regards to the tier 4 villages and the countryside, no specific lands are zoned for housing, but an estimated 15 hectares is allocated as an equivalent zoned housing area for this.

There currently is an estimated 22.91 hectares vacant lands zoned for residential purposes in Carrick-on-Shannon, whilst there is an additional 21.15 hectares in Tier 2 and 3 towns and villages, including the 15 hectares residential lands allocation in respect to Tier 4 villages and the countryside. A total 59.06 hectares vacant lands zoned for residential purposes emerges for the County.



Table 7 Potential Zoned Land Available, 2012

Location	Residential Zoned Lands (Ha)	Totals
Tier 1 Centre		
Carrick on Shannon	22.91	22.91
Tier 2A Centres		
Manorhamilton	4.06	
Ballinamore	2.94	
Tier 2B Centres		
Drumshanbo	2.01	
Mohill	3.96	
Dromahair	1.27	
Kinlough	1.08	
Tier 3 Centres		
Carrigallen	1.41	
Dromod	1.17	
Drumkeeran	1.02	
Leitrim	0.99	
Tullaghan	1.24	
Tier 2 & 3 Centres	21.15	21.15
Tier 4 Centres	15.00	15.00
TOTALS		59.06

Data Source: Leitrim County Council 'Housing Survey' December 2012

1.9.3 URBAN AND RURAL SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

Urban Settlement Strategy

The Urban and Rural Settlement strategies for the county are set out in detail in Section 3 - Policies & Objectives of the Development Plan. The settlement hierarchy of the County is set out within the context of the *Regional Planning Guidelines* (RPGs).

The hierarchy of towns, villages and other centres within the County is shown in the Core Strategy [Map 1.7] at the end of this section. The Tier 1, 2(A&B) and 3 towns are already listed in the Tables above.

Having regard to the changes to Local Governance under "Putting People First", (See Local Government Local and Regional Reform), the Plan takes into consideration the territorial configuration of the county as defined by the three Municipal Districts of; Carrick on Shannon, Manorhamilton and Ballinamore. Central to the Urban Settlement Strategy is the designation of 'Key Towns' and a 'Support Towns in each of the three Municipal District and promoting the development of strategic transport links and other services and facilities to serve these centres. It is envisaged that these towns, because of their scale, location and range of services and facilities, have a strategic role to play in driving the socio-economic development of the County.

Carrick on Shannon as the Tier 1 and County town is designated as the Key Town in the Carrick on Shannon Municipal District, supported by Mohill Tier as a Tier 2B town.

Manorhamilton as a Tier 2A town is designated as a Key Town in the Manorhamilton Municipal District, supported by Dromahair as a Tier 2B town.

Ballinamore as Tier 2A towns is designated as a Key Town in the Ballinamore Municipal District, supported by Drumshanbo as a Tier 2B town.

Accordingly, Carrick on Shannon, Manorhamilton and Ballinamore are referred to in the Plan as 'Key Towns' and Mohill, Dromahair and Drumshanbo as 'Support Towns'.

The RPGs identify Carrick-on-Shannon as the Regionally Significant Town, within the County, while Manorhamilton is identified as a town for 'Urban Strengthening', which will perform an important local role. Strong socio-economic linkages exist between the Border and Western Regions. The RPG's indicate that Boyle/Carrick-on-Shannon represent one of the key urban influences and business strengths in the Region. The RPG's also identify that the Shannon catchment in Leitrim/Roscommon provides important tourism and environmental strengths. Carrick-on-Shannon is strategically located at the heart of this catchment.

Carrick on Shannon is located on a 'National Transport Corridor' (the N4 and Sligo-Dublin rail line). It is also located along a renowned water navigation corridor with cross border links through the Shannon-Erne Waterway. The town has an attractive urban form, a rich heritage and continues to develop as a significant tourist destination and a popular 'cultural quarter' for the Region. The town has major potential to develop, acting as a catalyst for the economic and social regeneration of the Carrick on Shannon catchment area and the County in particular. This potential is noted in the current Regional Planning Guidelines which notes that 'Carrick-on-Shannon's role can be enhanced in competitive terms to drive development at the county level. Planning frameworks to co-ordinate development, good quality urban design and effective infrastructural/community services and facilities are necessary to deliver this. This Plan is intended to assist in the realisation of this potential by setting out a framework for the future development of the Town as the primary engine for growth within the Carrick catchment area in particular. The nearby urban settlements within the catchment, including the adjacent settlement of Cortober in Co Roscommon, have a significant role to play in the development of the County. As outlined above Mohill has been identified as a 'Support Town' for the development of the Carrick on Shannon Area and in this regard the role of the Carrick/Mohill area in conjunction with the urban belt along the Shannon Corridor, is of particular importance in the overall development of the County.

Kinlough did not exceed the 1,000 population threshold at the time of the 2006 Census and so was not included as a Tier 2 Settlement in the previous Development Plan. The town possesses the critical mass and some of the characteristics of other Tier 2B towns, such as having its population over the 1,000 population (1,018 census 2011, representing a 47.5% population increase over 2006). It is therefore included in the County's Urban Settlement hierarchy as a Tier 2B town.

The Tier 3 towns are considered as being towns with special functions (sub-county service centres and regionally-significant inland waterways role).

The Tier 4 towns, and Graigs (established nodes usually consisting of community facilities and a number of one-off houses) are listed in

Figure 3-1. The land use strategy for these centres is set out in section 3.2.2 of the Plan.



Rural Settlement Strategy

The land-use strategy in respect to rural housing in the countryside is set out in section 3.2.3 of the Plan. It sets out policy in relation to development within the countryside and has had particular regard to: -

- 1 Environmentally sensitive areas such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Special Protections Areas (SPAs), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and Areas of High Visual Amenity (AHVAs).
- 2 Residential vacancy rates within the County based on the 2011 census and;
- 3 Local areas that have been subject to development pressure⁴.

Regards has also been had to the rural typologies, as identified in the NSS. These are illustrated in the Core Strategy Map (Map 1.7).

Arising from this the County is classified into three rural settlement areas based on their ability to absorb additional rural housing: -

- 1 Areas of High Capacity / High Availability;
- 2 Areas of Medium Capacity / Medium Availability and;
- 3 Areas of Low Capacity / Low Availability.

These areas are set out in Map 3.2 and Map 3.3 and also on larger scale maps within Volume 3, Appendix E, Book of Maps.

The urban and rural settlement strategies, as set out in the Plan are considered to be particularly appropriate in terms of “*achieving a dynamic urban and rural structure*” as outlined in the *Border RPGs* and as such are consistent with the *RPGs* and the *NSS*.

The residential zoning within the Plan is consistent with the population projections for the period of the Plan and take into consideration the relatively high vacancy rates and potential housing stock available.

The Draft Plan has been the subject of a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Natura Impact Report in relation to likely significant adverse impacts on Natura 2000 designated sites {SACs and SPAs}. These Reports will ensure that the implementation of the Plan is founded on well-established environmental principles.

The Environmental Report carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process considered alternatives approaches to the development of the County. The Report concluded that the ‘Sustainable Development Plan Led Approach’ was the most appropriate model. Such an approach is consistent with national policy, as set out in the *National Spatial Strategy* and also in the *Border Regional Guidelines 2010 – 2022*. The ‘Sustainable Development Plan Led Approach’ seeks to direct an appropriate level of development and investment to existing urban centres where particular services and facilities exist or can be provided on a ‘cost benefit’ basis. It priorities the development of strategic infrastructure, including the development of a strategic road network between the key towns. These towns would then act as key drivers for the County, whilst providing services and functions for the smaller settlements and rural hinterland. A sustainable relationship between urban and rural

⁴ Please refer to Section 2.01.04a of *Leitrim County Development Plan 2009-2015*, p. 56.

areas would then support the future vitality and viability of rural communities, whilst protecting the key environmental sensitive and vulnerable areas within the County.

The key principles of the core strategy are therefore to:-

- Strengthen the critical mass of Carrick-on-Shannon as a Regionally-Strategic Centre and a support for the Sligo Gateway⁵;
- Develop Manorhamilton and Ballinamore as key economic engines for growth within their respective Areas;
- Improve road and rail infrastructure to facilitate the linkages between the County and Sligo Gateway, Cavan hub, Monaghan hub, Enniskillen and adjacent port and air transport nodes;
- Maximise the return from investment in existing utilities and services;
- Develop the towns and villages of the county to accommodate the 'remaining share' of population. This is to be allocated in terms of priority and in accordance with the sequential approach, based on the tiers of towns and villages in the settlement hierarchy;
- Sustain and revitalise lower-tier settlements and rural areas within the above development framework.

In considering the balanced development model, it is important that it recognises the challenges facing the viability of existing smaller settlements (from peripherality to development pressures) including environmental and infrastructural capacity. The model used must promote the treatment of urban and rural settlements, together with the surrounding countryside, as a functional, spatially integrated entity involving the inter-dependencies of small and medium-sized settlements and rural areas.

To address these shortcomings, achieving a dynamic urban or rural settlement structure "*will involve working with and building upon the strengths of different places*"⁶, while at the same time, protecting these same assets for future generations. In the case of the Border Region, its rural settlement pattern, together with the quality of life potentials, will play a key role in its future social and economic growth and development. It is these potentials which make both urban and rural areas attractive places to live and work, and their ability to adapt to meet changing lifestyle needs.

1.9.4 ZONING OF LANDS AND HOUSING LAND REQUIREMENTS

Development land requirements are met through the zoning of lands for a variety of uses. The purpose of a land use zoning strategy is to indicate the Planning Authority's intentions in respect to the use of all lands within the boundaries of each centre, to promote development in an orderly manner and to prevent the co-location of conflicting or incompatible uses. The approach to zoning in the Plan is based on the following principles: -

⁵ The population growth for the town is allocated by the *Regional Planning Guidelines*. Part of the Greater Urban Area of Carrick-on-Shannon is located in Cortober, County Roscommon. This specific requirement has been addressed as part of the variation to the *Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan*.

⁶ *National Spatial Strategy*, p.41.



- I. the requirement to reserve land for residential development in accordance with the balanced development growth scenario, the settlement hierarchy and the RPG recommendations;
- II. the need to provide suitably-located lands for a variety of uses, including commercial, enterprise, community facilities, open space, sports and recreation amenities to serve and complement residential uses;
- III. protecting the environment, landscape setting and heritage in and around settlements.
- IV. consolidating settlements;
- V. the principle of sequential development.

The proposed land-use zoning is based on the five principles outlined above.

As is evident in section 1.9.2 above, the towns and villages in the County have over 59 hectares zoned for residential development. The amount of land being zoned for development of housing is addressed below, along with mixed use area where housing provision is permitted.

Housing Land Requirements

The Council's Housing Land Availability Survey (2012) also provides information on the areas of zoned undeveloped lands throughout the county towns and villages.

It is recognised that based on Table 8, the total excess of 6 hectares zoned residential lands in Carrick-on-Shannon represents a marginal excess of zoned land for the entire County. Considering the strategic importance of Carrick-on-Shannon, and other factors such as the recent demographic trends and a 'built-in overhead on 1.5; the excess is not considered unreasonable.

Table 8 Core Strategy Allocation and Housing Land, 2015-2021

	Core Strategy Population Growth Allocation ⁷	Actual Land Requirement ⁸ (Ha)	Housing Existing Zoned Residential Lands ⁹ (Ha)	Proposed Zoned Residential Lands ¹⁰ (Ha)	Potential Housing Yield (no. of units)	Excess (Ha)
County	2,388	53	59.06	59.06	956	6 ¹¹
Carrick-on-Shannon	600	16.7	22.91	22.91 ¹²	458 (22.91Ha x 20 units/Ha)	6
Other towns	1,788	21.3	21.15	21.15	318 (21.2 Ha	None

⁷ In accordance with *Border RPGs* (adjusted for the Plan period).

⁸ In accordance with *Border RPGs* (adjusted for the Plan period) and taking account of the existing potential housing stock.

⁹ Amount of vacant land in *Development Plan 2009-15* zoned for residential purposes.

¹⁰ This includes vacant primarily residential lands and other vacant lands suitable for residential development.

¹¹ The total amount of excess residential lands is not considered significant considering the strategic importance of Carrick-on-Shannon (and recent growth trends).

¹² The quantum of residential lands may be adjusted during the preparation of a Local Area Plan for Carrick-on-Shannon based on more detailed housing needs assessment.

(Tier 2 & 3)					x 15 units/Ha)
Tier 4 & the Countryside	(Included above)	15	15	15 ¹³	180 (15Ha x 12 units/Ha) None

It is not proposed to vary the proposed residential zoned lands from that currently zoned under the varied 2009-2015 Plan. It is estimated that 956 no. units of that which would be required to accommodate the anticipated population growth over the plan period, distributed between Carrick-on-Shannon (458 no. units), tier 2 and 3 towns (318 no. units) and tier 4 villages and the countryside (180 no. units).

In calculating the land use requirements in Column 4, full account has been taken of the existing newly constructed vacant and under construction housing stock. A significant area of land within Tier 1, 2 and 3 has been maintained as 'Residential Reserve/Support'. The development of these lands for housing schemes will not normally be permitted during the lifetime of the Plan.

Cognisance has been taken of the need to consolidate settlements by keeping them as physically compact as possible and applying the sequential approach to land-use zoning (as set out in Chapter 5 of the NSS and Ministerial (Section 28) Guidelines, such as the *Development Plan Guidelines* and *Sustainable Urban Residential Development Guidelines*. See also section 3.2.2.5 of the Plan).

Regardless of the residential vacancy rates, a minimum of 2 hectares of undeveloped residentially zoned lands has been allocated to each of the tier 2 towns and 1 hectare in each of the Tier 3 towns and villages. This is to allow for a further mixture of housing types to cater for a mix of housing need, which the existing vacant and unfinished housing may not cater for.

1.9.5 POLICY REGARDING 'RESIDENTIAL RESERVE/SUPPORT'

These lands are identified primarily to serve the long term housing requirements of the settlement in which they are located. These lands will be considered as suitable for the accommodation of development that would be compatible with residential use. Whereas residential development (other than that set out below) will not be permitted on these lands during the lifetime of the Plan, they may be considered for residential development in future Plans. The detail of these zoning shows where development of these lands may be considered.

Section 3.2.2 sets out development types that may be considered acceptable on lands zoned 'Residential Reserve / Support'.

1.9.6 JUSTIFICATION TEST

It is clear that the 'potential housing stock'¹⁴ will meet a significant level of the housing requirements during the Plan period [and in some instances beyond]. Considering the

¹³ Overall allocation for Tier 4 Centres and the countryside, as there are no lands specifically zoned for residential development in these areas.

¹⁴ See comments on 'Potential Housing Stock' in *Leitrim County Housing Strategy 2015-2021*.



foregoing and in particular the need to ensure the utilization of the existing stock of residential units and the proper release of zoned lands for residential type development a 'Justification Test' shall apply. Section 3.2.2.9 also gives details of the Justification Test.

1.9.7 UNFINISHED/UNOCCUPIED ESTATES AND COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

Unfinished/unoccupied estates and commercial property are a manifestation of a systemic failure to properly manage the property sector. This has led to unprecedented social and economic difficulties, particularly within the housing sector. The Council fully recognise and acknowledge this legacy and have to date done much work, from a planning perspective, to help address these difficulties. Section 3.2.2.10 also gives further detail in respect to the above.

Where planning permissions for housing developments exist but are approaching the expiration of their appropriate period and where a) development works have not commenced or b) where they have commenced but substantial works have not been undertaken, it is the policy of the Council, when considering an extension of the duration of the appropriate period, to have regard to the existing levels of 'vacant developments' or 'commenced but unfinished dwellings' in the area, and the likely impact of the proposed extension of duration of the expiring permission may have on the uptake of the existing vacant housing stock.

1.9.8 TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

A modern, efficient and safe road network is vital for the future development of Leitrim. The county is served by the N.4 (Dublin-Sligo), N.15 (Letterkenny-Sligo) and the N.16 (Enniskillen-Sligo) national primary routes.

Strategic transport routes within the County have been identified as indicated on **Map 1.7**

The three National Primary Routes, N15, N16 and N4, together with Regional Route R280, form the principle 'trans-boundary' transport corridors within the County which are identified as Strategic Links on Map 1.7

These principal transport corridors are linked with the 'Regionally and Locally Important Routes' to form important 'intra-county' linkages between the key towns and with Regional and National urban centres. It is critical in terms of the development of the County that the carrying capacity of these routes is preserved. This is in line with the Ministerial Guidelines on 'Sustainable Rural Housing' Accordingly the development of these routes will be prioritised and appropriate planning control measures will operate in terms of the creation of new access points onto these routes. Refer to Section 4.5.7 Access to Public Roads for further details.

A key priority will be to upgrade the National Primary Routes serving the County. This shall be achieved by carrying out and completing the following road schemes within the lifetime of the Development Plan:

- N4 Carrick on Shannon to Dromod (including the Carrick on Shannon Bypass);
- N16 Glenfarne to Glencar (including Manorhamilton Bypass).

Preferred routes have now been chosen for both of these routes. See Section 3.6.6 and Map 3.4, Map 3.5, Map 3.6 and 3.7.

These routes and other strategic external routes are illustrated on the Core Strategy Map [Map 1.7].

The Council will have due regard to the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (2013) recently released, outlining means for promoting sustainable forms of transport. The Manual aims to achieve a better balance in how urban roads and streets are designed and used. This Manual will complement Ministerial Guidelines referred to directly below.

The Council's policy in relation to the development of National Roads will be guided by National Guidelines including in particular the document entitled, *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012).

It is also part of the Core Strategy, that the key internal strategic routes, linking the hierarchy of county towns, is upgraded and developed. These routes are also set out in the Core Strategy Map 1.7, Section 3.6.6 and Policy 54

Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future (2009) contains transport policy for Ireland for the period 2009-2020. The Plan encompasses the transport guidance set out in this document. It recognises the vital importance of continued investment in transport to ensure an efficient economy and continued social development, but also promotes more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

The *National Cycle Policy Framework* (as part of *Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future* 2009) sets out a national policy for cycling, in order to create a stronger cycling culture, a more friendly environment for cycling and improved quality of life. The vision is that all cities, towns and rural areas will be bicycle friendly. The policy document sets a target of 10% of all trips by bicycle by 2020 and places emphasis on promoting and integrating cycle networks. Leitrim will aim to achieve this target.

The creation of physical bus-stops to create awareness of local and inter-urban bus services, the provision (directly or indirectly) of park-and ride carparks and the provision of commuter train services to the GDA are part of Leitrim Co. Council commitment to the concept of Smarter Travel.

1.9.9 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

The Plan contains robust policies and objectives in relation to Flood risk Management, which are designed to ensure that proposed developments in areas at risk of flooding shall conform to the DoECLG Guidelines¹⁵ or any subsequent amendments, during the lifetime of the plan. Section 3.8.5 of the plan refers.

1.9.10 PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL HERITAGE

The Plan contains policies in relation to the protection of Natural Environment and Natural heritage (see Section 3.8). These policies deal with issues in relation to: -

¹⁵ *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, 2009.



- Climate Change: the Development Plan will include practical measures to address both the drivers and side effects of climate change;
- Ecological Corridors: Section 3.8.3.6 of the Plan recognises a number of key ecological corridors located outside designated sites. It is the policy of Council to protect these corridors connecting protected and designated sites;
- Protection of Water Courses: Section 3.8.4 of the Development Plan refers to the requirements of the *Water Framework Directive* and River Basin Management.

1.9.11 ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYMENT

Until very recently poor access, poor infrastructure, lack of a prosperous agricultural industry and a weak urban structure have all militated against the development of industrial and other commercial development.

It is Council policy to actively promote and develop Enterprise and Employment throughout the County. The Council will support the development of transport, energy, telecommunications, water and drainage infrastructure to facilitate such development.

Generally new industry and employment generating enterprises will be encouraged to locate in towns and villages where adequate infrastructure and support services exist. However industries related to agriculture and other land uses or tied to a fixed resource and large-scale industries requiring extensive sites will be acceptable in rural locations. Small enterprises in rural areas will also be acceptable where there are no adverse impacts on the environment or on neighbouring amenity and subject to proper planning and development considerations. Effects on the environment, safe access and residential amenities will be considered in all applications for rural enterprises. Some rural enterprises considered suitable include; agriculturally-related industry, businesses directly related to farming, for example, servicing and repair of farm machinery, land reclamation, drainage work, agricultural contracting etc. teleworking and telecottages.

As a general rule the Council will support small-scale urban and rural home based economic activity, including 'teleworking', in terms of the socio-economic development of the County.

1.9.12 RETAIL

The Council aim to ensure that all retail development permitted is in accordance with the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Local Authorities* (2012) and the accompanying *Retail Design Manual – A Good Practice Guide* (2012) and the *Leitrim County Retail Strategy 2015-2021*. The *Retail Strategy* sets out the retail hierarchy for the County and confirms the level and form of retailing activity appropriate to each of the main towns.

Leitrim County Council will seek to implement the measures outlined in national retail policy in so far as needs dictates and resources permit.

Policy 1.9.12 a: It is Council policy to provide a quality retail environment and opportunities, having regard to the requirements and views of the various sectors in the retail market, whether on the supply or demand side.

Policy 1.9.12 b: It is Council policy to look at measures to improve the performance of the retail sector in Leitrim considerate of the market context and the strengths and weaknesses of the County.

Analysis of recent changes and forecasts for the retail sector points towards a gradual improvement in the markets over the lifetime of the Plan and coupled with population increase, this suggests a more positive outlook for the retail sector in Leitrim. However, this growth must be considered in the context of a changing 'shopping environment' and other challenges to the sector, including currency fluctuations, market dynamics and legacy issues.

As part of the Retail Strategy a number of case studies considering retail themes and trends were investigated in order to provide more insight and direction to the Strategy. Case studies included investigations of 'Post Office Closures in Leitrim', 'Discount Foodstores', 'Weekly Shopping Drivetimes' and 'Living in Town Centres'.

For the first time, the County Retail Strategy incorporated a quantitative review of the extent of retail floorspace throughout the County and coupled with information from the *County Rates Book*, the *Planning Register* and the Central Statistics Office this allowed for detailed estimates of the future requirement for convenience, comparison and 'bulky goods' floorspace over the lifetime of the Strategy.

Town centre health-check assessments were carried out for the 'key towns' and 'support towns' in the County in order to procure further information regarding the performance of towns and actions that might promote town centre improvements. Analysis of competing retail centres enables the Planning Authority and others to identify means of reducing retail spending leakage out of the County.

The retail hierarchy decided upon was dictated by the County settlement hierarchy proposed within the *County Development Plan*, which in turn accounts for the introduction of changes to the Local Government municipal areas. However, the retail hierarchy varies from the settlement strategy based on the findings of the retail survey, which, *inter alia*, details the extent of retail services offered in each settlement.

1.9.13 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the policy framework outlined above, coupled with the meeting of population targets will: -

- 1) prevent over-zoning;
- 2) provide an incentive for those owning first-phase development land to dispose of it and an incentive for purchasers not to hoard it;
- 3) permit the orderly development of land, and the creation of a coherent urban form; and;
- 4) create either an actual or a virtual market for development land.

Variations from the population distribution, as set out here in the Core Strategy, will be regularly considered by the Planning Authority and adjusted as necessary to respond to changing population trends, in consultation with the Regional Authority.

During the period of this Plan, should there be a requirement for additional residential zoned lands, i.e., in addition to the figures outlined above, this may only be provided through an evidence-based approach within a relevant Development Plan review or variation.



1.10 STRATEGIC GOALS

The Strategic Goals follow on from the Vision Statement as set out above and form the framework for the formulation and evaluation of the policies, objectives and development control standards of this plan.

1.10.1 RESOURCES

- a) To promote the efficient use and re-use of scarce resources;
- b) To minimise energy consumption by promoting conservation, recycling and waste reduction;
- c) To guide new development so that the most efficient use is made of existing infrastructure, facilities and services where practicable and appropriate;
- d) To support energy generation from renewable resources where practicable and appropriate;
- e) To make the best use of existing infrastructure;
- f) To embrace the principles of sustainable development in its widest sense;
- g) To ensure an adequate supply of energy, including renewable energy, is available to meet the social, commercial and economic needs of the entire County;
- h) To develop a *Climate Change Adaptive Framework Strategy* incorporating an Energy Strategy for County Leitrim over the lifetime of the County Development Plan.

1.10.2 ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

- a) To adopt the *precautionary principle*¹⁶ in respect of development proposals where significant environmental, including health, implications are involved;
- b) To protect, maintain and enhance the quality of the built and natural environment;
- c) To protect the character and identity of individual settlements and avoid over development by protecting and requiring appropriate green spaces in built-up areas;
- d) To promote regeneration and the reuse of derelict and obsolete sites and buildings;
- e) To minimise environmental pollution to air, water or land and to strictly control hazardous development;
- f) To comply with the aims and objectives of the Water Framework Directive;
- g) To adopt a regional approach in the protection, conservation and management of the environment, co-operating with neighbouring counties in the protection of habitats, watercourses and landscapes and the disposal of waste, for example, *Replacement*

¹⁶ The precautionary principle enables rapid response in the face of a possible danger to human, animal or plant health, or to protect the environment. In particular, where scientific data do not permit a complete evaluation of the risk, recourse to this principle may, for example, be used to stop distribution or order withdrawal from the market of products likely to be hazardous. For further information visit http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/consumers/consumer_safety/l32042_en.htm



Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region 2006 – 2011, the River Basin Management Plans, and the Lough Melvin Catchment Management Plan;

- h) To recognise that Leitrim's archaeological, natural and built heritage are important elements in the long term economic development of the County and to promote their conservation and enhancement, public access and enjoyment;
- i) To protect the unique character of Leitrim's landscapes.

1.10.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- a) To maintain and improve the viability, vitality and diversity of the local economy by being positively disposed towards employment generating development;
- b) To ensure that sufficient well located and serviced land is available for employment purposes;
- c) To ensure that the natural resources of the County are developed where the County enjoys a natural advantage, including the development of downstream development activities, such as, within the Forestry Industry;
- d) To safeguard existing businesses, by among other things; strengthening the towns, through population growth and improving the demographic profile and providing for their development and expansion;
- e) To provide for additional and improved retail and commercial development, whilst maintaining and enhancing the viability and vitality of town centres, in accordance with the County Retail Strategy;
- f) To develop tourism by encouraging the sustainable use of natural attractions, and facilitating the provision of appropriate infrastructure, accommodation and facilities which will extend, consolidate and diversify the tourism industry;
- g) To co-operate with neighbouring County Councils and other existing and future Regional Authorities (both North and South) in developing the economy of the Region;
- h) To co-operate with the Border Midlands Western Regional Assembly, the Border Regional Authority and the incumbent Connacht-Ulster Region Assembly;
- i) To co-operate with the relevant agencies operating in the region with a remit for economic development [such as the I.D.A., Enterprise Ireland, County Enterprise Board, Leitrim Integrated Development Company Ltd. and similar bodies].

1.10.4 TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- a) To encourage alternative means of travel (other than the car) where practicable;
- b) To promote the development of a viable public transport network to serve the needs of all the county's residents;
- c) To promote the improvement of the existing road network to aid economic development, enhance safety and minimise negative environmental impacts;
- d) To relieve traffic congestion, minimise pollution and enhance safety, particularly in town centres, by means of traffic management and traffic calming schemes;
- e) To ensure that the county is well serviced by modern telecommunications to support its sustainable economic, educational, cultural and social development;

- f) To enhance physical linkages with County Fermanagh and the other Northern counties;
- g) To promote the use of broadband communication technology;
- h) To promote continued use and upgrading of the rail network and rolling stock;
- i) To enhance linkage with airports and ports serving the County;
- j) To provide adequate car-parking facilities in towns and villages throughout the County to meet current and future needs;
- k) To co-operate with the relevant agencies operating in the region with a remit for infrastructure development [such as Irish Water, Eirgrid, Eircom, the National Roads Authority and similar bodies].
- l) To safeguard the strategic function of the national Road network, in accordance with the provisions of the DoEC&LG *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)*

1.10.5 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- a) To provide for housing, through the implementation of Universal Design Standards and Principles, which meets the needs of local communities (including special needs), whilst also promoting the support of rural communities through accommodating a controlled and managed expansion of population;
- b) To promote equity and equality of access to education, health, community and recreational facilities and employment opportunities for all residents of the County, including persons with disability;
- c) To ensure high standards of residential amenity in all new development and to provide a physically safe and clean environment for all;
- d) To provide and promote access to buildings, spaces and services for all;
- e) Co-operate with neighbouring Counties, including County Fermanagh, in the provision of social services;
- f) To promote the provision of recreational facilities throughout the County;
- g) To support the providers of childcare facilities to ensure that adequate facilities are made available for the County's residents, in accordance with Leitrim County Childcare Strategy, 2007-2010;
- h) To provide and facilitate the provision of services of a nature and extent appropriate to the needs of each community;
- i) To adopt and implement a recreational Policy for the County.

1.11 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Goals set out above are translated into a Strategic Development Framework. This provides a broad indication of the main areas of growth and development to be provided for, and how this is to be accommodated geographically;

- a) Encourage the further development of Carrick-on-Shannon, Manorhamilton and Ballinamore. These towns are identified as the principal engines for future economic development of the County. However, the Council recognises the need to provide sufficient incentives for private sector investment in all parts of the County. The



Council will seek to ensure that all towns and villages will receive equal opportunity to develop their potential to the fullest, and to prosper. The Council will also seek to ensure that the full range of physical, social and commercial services will be available in them, at a scale appropriate to the centre, on a self sustaining basis into the future. The Council will also actively promote and support all efforts to have further Government Offices decentralised to County Leitrim;

- b)** Reinforce the commercial viability and attractiveness of all the other towns and villages in the County. The Council is aware of the need to make use of existing infrastructure and facilities and will seek to ensure a balanced range of accommodation and ancillary development where services (physical, commercial and institutional infrastructure) are already in place;
- c)** Provide for rural accommodation, where it will help to meet primarily local needs and help to support and maintain communities and services;
- d)** Protect important wildlife habitats within Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) and Special Protection Areas (SPA's);
- e)** Designated sites receive full protection under the EU Habitats Directive 43/92/EU and the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997, transposed into Irish law in the Wildlife (amendment) Act 2000. This law gives full protection to Natural Heritage Areas once designated. The Council is required to ensure that an appropriate assessment of the implications of development proposals is undertaken when planning permission is required. This applies to all development proposals likely to have a significant impact on the Special Areas of Conservation / Natural Heritage Areas [SAC/NHA] irrespective of whether they are located within the area or not;
- f)** Enhance the distinctive character of the landscapes of Co. Leitrim in accordance with the European Landscape Convention and the Landscape Assessment Guidelines published by the Dept. of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government;
- g)** Protect the archaeological heritage, as required by the European Convention for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage, Valletta 1992, ratified by Ireland in 1997. Archaeological Heritage includes those sites and monuments identified on the statutory Record of Monuments and Places, archaeological sites that may not have been recorded yet, sub-soil archaeology and the context and setting of archaeological sites;
- h)** Protect the architectural heritage through the establishment and continual review of the Record of Protected Structures, as required by Section 51 of the *Planning Act 2000*. The Record of Protected Structures shall include structures of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in the county;
- i)** Recognise the importance of the improvement of the national, regional and locally-important roads identified in the Development Plan as major factors in attracting investment, securing job opportunities and promoting growth throughout the county;
- j)** Secure community benefits through the provision of infrastructure, recreational, wildlife, social and other facilities through the use of planning agreements and development charges from new development, where appropriate and relevant;
- k)** Promote the implementation of Public Private Partnership (PPPs) between the Local Authority and the private sector for the purpose of providing public infrastructure, community facilities and related services;

- l)** Support Community-based initiatives aimed at the economic, social and cultural development of the County and wider area;
- m)** Support Cross-Border Regional projects supported and funded through the Special European Union Programme Body (SEUPB), for example, the Border Upland Project linking the Geo Tourism of the Marble Arch Caves for Counties Leitrim, Sligo, Cavan and Fermanagh.



SECTION 2 – ECONOMIC STRATEGY

(INCLUDING POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES)



2 ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The Council is prioritising a focus on the economic development of the County, in particular on working towards achieving the Vision for the County and the delivery of Strategic Goals, Objectives and Core Strategy, as outlined in Section 1 of the Plan. Essentially the strategy is aimed at creating sustainable jobs and improving the quality of life. It should be noted that the Economic Strategy presented here is based on an “*Economic Strategy Background Paper*”, prepared by the Council as part of the Plan-making process.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Leitrim is endowed with a rich and diverse landscape, heritage and culture. Carrick-on-Shannon has been identified within the *Border Regional Guidelines* as a ‘Regionally Significant Town’ and as such it is the principle settlement in terms of economic growth. Manorhamilton and Ballinamore have a key role in terms of the development of the North and South of the County. Leitrim County also has an array of attractive small-scale towns and villages that are well-served by public and community-based services and facilities. Leitrim residents take pride in its strong community spirit and its reputation as a friendly place that offers a high quality of life to the people who live in, work in, and visit the County. The County has a clean environment and with a very low crime rate. –Leitrim is becoming a leading centre for eco-tourism and the promotion of, and learning in, organic agriculture.— Leitrim is open to development that leads to the maintenance and creation of sustainable jobs.

Comparative Strengths and Development Opportunities for County Leitrim

County Leitrim possesses a significant and diverse range of economic strengths. These provide a strong basis for the future successful development of the county and its Key Towns. These strengths are summarised in Table 9 below.

Table 9 Summary of Comparative Economic Strengths of Leitrim

Location: Leitrim is very accessible by road and rail from all the major cities and towns and from all the major airports and ports on the island, with close proximity to Dublin and the related advantages of easy access to Airports and Ports, 3rd/4th level institutions, and domestic and export markets.
Infrastructure: the National Primary Roads are N4 from Dublin, N15 from Sligo to Letterkenny and N16 from Sligo to Blacklion in Cavan towards Enniskillen. The regionally and locally important routes, which are continuously developing, are shown on the Core Strategy Map, Map 1.7. Leitrim is well served by rail services along the key Dublin-Sligo rail line.
People Resources: Leitrim has a significant population which has expanded at a faster rate than across State. Carrick-on-Shannon, Manorhamilton and Ballinamore are the largest towns. Leitrim has a high level of in-migration from the UK and other EU states.
Education & Skills: in terms of educational attainment and 3rd level qualifications held among residents in the county, students in Leitrim have the 5 th highest entrance rate in the state to higher education and a higher proportion of the workforce with technical/vocational and advanced certificate/ completed apprenticeship qualifications.
Sectoral Economic Activity: A high proportion of employment located within Leitrim is held in the private sector (65% of jobs) and public sector (35% of jobs). Private sector employment is prevalent in agriculture, forestry and fishing; manufacturing, electrical, mining, quarrying and construction; and services retail, tourism and traded.
Cost Competitiveness: Housing costs in Leitrim are significantly lower than in Donegal, Cavan, Sligo and Monaghan (border counties).
Quality of Life: Leitrim residents enjoy a high quality of life and this is regarded by businesses as a particular strength for the county.

It is considered that collectively, the economic strengths enjoyed by Leitrim add up to a unique configuration of advantages which have significant marketing potential in terms of



attracting businesses to locate in the county and of realising the significant tourism potential of Leitrim's, among other opportunities.

Assessment of Issues and Challenges

While the comparative economic strengths of Leitrim are impressive and out-weigh the weaknesses, the assessment as part of the formulation of this strategy also noted the presence of specific issues and challenges. These include in particular the persistence of high and long-term unemployment, and resulting social and economic exclusion, in certain parts of the county and its main towns, in addition to vulnerabilities in relation to reliance on traditional sectors and activities, and the need to up-skill the population in certain areas. These issues must be addressed if the county is to fully realise its development potential.

Assessment of Opportunities

The analysis of the existing position also points to a number of areas of potential opportunity for Leitrim going forward, as identified in the table above. Leitrim's evident strengths point to particular opportunities to capitalise on the advantages offered by the county's green image, its location, and the county's existing and emerging strengths in specific sectors.

Local, Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

Under the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, a single 6 year Local Economic and Community Plan (the Plan) will be prepared by the Leitrim Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Local Authority, and will be approved by the Local Authority. The Plan will have two elements:

- A local economic element (prepared and adopted by the Local Authority)
- A community development element (prepared and adopted by the LCDC)

The legislation provides that the Local Authority prepare and adopt both the economic element of the plan and the overall LECP. The Economic element of the plan will cover areas including: creating and sustaining jobs; enterprise and economic development across economic sectors; identifying local attributes that are essential to enhancing local economic performance and actions to support enhancement of local innovation capacity, including investment in research and development capacity, technology transfer, up-skilling and re-skilling.

The local and Community plan will cover actions for the promotion of local and community development. This includes measures to enhance quality of life and well-being of communities including for example measures to tackle social exclusion and poverty, development of social enterprise, development of sustainable solutions that make the best use of local assets, strengths and opportunities to address those needs and priorities and the provision of infrastructure and community facilities and investment in physical regeneration and environmental improvements.

These plans must be consistent with the core strategies and objectives of the County Development Plan and any regional spatial and economic strategy or, as appropriate, regional planning guidelines.

In order to ensure that the LECP is properly aligned with the Plan, it is intended that LECP will be screened for consistency with the Plan.

Services and Manufacturing

The manufacturing and Services sector in Leitrim is a key employer and generator of economic development. There are a range of manufacturing and services business in different parts of the county with Manorhamilton having manufacturing business engaged in the car components sector, Carrick on Shannon has companies engaged in medical device and specialist toolmaking as well as computer software development. The financial services sector, medical device sector, software development and tool making/engineering production sector are key elements which create jobs in the county and efforts to develop this sector further would be encouraged strongly. The businesses in this sector include foreign direct investment and indigenous business and the harnessing of the Leitrim Diaspora in further developing this sector will be critical as well as supporting training initiatives for the specialised nature of staff required in some cases.

2.1.1 SUMMARY OF SELECTED KEY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNTY LEITRIM

- 1) Unspoilt/Green Image: Leitrim's reputation as a Green County with an emphasis on environment and culture has been established through the Greenbox Initiative; and its reputation as a leading centre of eco-tourism; promotion and learning in organic agriculture; and innovative eco-construction solutions highlighted through the "Greendoor" initiative.
- 2) Location: Leitrim is ideally placed to capitalise on the advantages afforded to the county arising from its proximate location to Dublin and Belfast (major cities); Donegal; Cavan; Sligo; Roscommon; Longford; (locally) and Westmeath and Fermanagh (waterway). The county's location also provides a particular opportunity for tourism
- 3) Economic Sectors: Opportunities exist in: -
 - **Tourism** - Leitrim has particular advantages in terms of high quality visitor experiences in cruising/ angling/eco-tourism/adventure tourism, visitor attraction easy access to Knock/Dublin airports and accommodation and other facilities which indicate significant opportunities to further develop the county as a high quality destination for overseas and domestic holiday and business visitors
 - **Farming and Agri-Food - Agriculture** in Leitrim supports thousands of jobs in the rural economy, both directly and indirectly. Leitrim has over 500 food and drink processing jobs supported by the agricultural output of county and also in the wider agri-industry, including input suppliers, agricultural contractors, jobs in auctioneering, transport, engineering, accountancy, legal, veterinary and other agri-advisory services.
 - **Environmental Goods and Services** - This is a relatively new sector for the Leitrim's economy, however, a wide range of enterprise opportunities have been identified in the County which include: Renewable Energies (solar, wind, geothermal); Efficient energy use and management (including eco-construction); Waste Management, Recovery and Recycling (waste salvage and sustainable packaging); and Water and Wastewater Treatment (water reclamation, rain systems, storm water management).
 - **Creative** - Leitrim enjoys a rich and varied creative legacy; there is a considerable pool of creative talent. Opportunities have been identified - to industry (developing capacity and capability), to investors (animation and post-production), to the community (participation employment in the sector), to tourism (festivals and events,



galleries and museums) and to regeneration (innovative architecture and urban design projects).

- **Forestry & Wood** - Commercial forestry has developed rapidly over the last twenty years delivering a range of tradable goods and services generated through timber production along with a number of public benefits including recreation, landscape, biodiversity and carbon sequestration

Existing and Emerging Sectors

Existing and emerging strengths would suggest that there are potential development opportunities for Leitrim in foreign-owned and domestic-owned high-value industry and internationally traded service sector activities, including high end, specialised manufacturing, (such as medical supplies) business services, and other commercial activities including retailing.

2.2 TOURISM SECTOR

County Leitrim is the smallest of Ireland's counties by population but embraces a range of tourism assets that give it a good profile for Irish tourism. 'Lovely Leitrim' is a phrase synonymous with the county. It is renowned for its short coastline – only 2.5kms bordering the Atlantic while its rivers and lakes embrace the Shannon system. The Shannon-Erne Waterway has its roots in the county. It is known too for its festival and events and as an angling and boating county and has opportunities abounding for walking and outdoor activities. The County's natural assets (Waterways; Loughs and Lakes; Glens, Valleys and Waterfalls; and Mountain Ranges) are characterised by an abundance of tourist attractions, cultural and built heritage, famous sons and daughters, village life, water-based benefits, visitor amenities and vitality.

While Leitrim is small it provides a charming sense of identity. Leitrim County Council will continue to raise the profile of Leitrim and ensure that Leitrim is well represented and marketed in regard to regional, national and cross border structure and themed products e.g. the Wild Atlantic Way.

There is a relatively short supply of approved accommodation for visitors which in many ways can determine the volume of visitor numbers to a county. Fáilte Ireland's tourism figures 2013 highlight that Leitrim had 39,000 visits from overseas tourists generating revenue of €14m.

The importance of the domestic and Northern Irish market to tourism development in the County is acknowledged while no robust statistical evidence is currently available to support this comment, anecdotal evidence exists through the success of the County's various festivals and events and the increasing profile of the County's visitor attractions.

The Council acknowledges there are challenges but also that there are plenty of opportunities to double the size of the tourism sector in Leitrim. The strategy will require leadership; collaboration; a clear set of targets and an investment stream from both the public and private sectors. The Council is fully supportive of all future developments that will contribute positively to the tourism potential of the County, while protecting the heritage and environment of the County, so as to achieve maximum economic and social gain.

The Council supports the development of recommendations associated with the following strategies: Lough Allen Catchment Plan 2008¹⁷; The North Shannon and Shannon Erne Waterway Catchment Recreation, Tourism and Economic Product Identification Study 2010¹⁸; the County Leitrim Tourism Strategy (2007-2013)¹⁹; County Leitrim Recreation Strategy 2014, and the Carrick on Shannon 2020 Vision²⁰. The Council will support any updated version of these strategies - an updated County Leitrim Tourism Strategy is planned to commence in 2014 for the period 2015 – 2021.

The Council also supports the following national strategies; Tourism Product Development Strategy 2007 – 2013²¹, the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport - Survival, Recovery and Growth - A strategy for Renewing Irish Tourism 2009 – 2013²² and Lakelands & Inland Waterways Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015.

Policy 1 It is the policy of the Council to deliver a County Tourism Strategy which will: -

- a) Focus on packaging and selling Leitrim's tourism assets, working collaboratively with the private sector to develop Leitrim as a destination, build Leitrim's brand, product/service portfolio, and promote and market Leitrim around the destination concept;**
- b) Forge strategic and operational partnerships in tourism planning, marketing and promotion with surrounding Counties in the North West and Northern Ireland²³ such as the Wild Atlantic Way; Sligo/Leitrim**

¹⁷ Raising Awareness of the Lough; Encouraging Use of the Lough; and Provide Shore Based Facilities

¹⁸ Waterways Development and Infrastructure; Activity Hub Development Programme; Canoe Trails Programme; North Shannon Waterbus; Waterside Walks and Cycle Programme; Castles, Gardens and Historic Houses Trail; Christian Heritage Trail; Pre Christian Heritage Trail; Natural Heritage Sites and Field Study Holiday Programme; Festival Towns and Villages Programme; Angling Holiday Promotion; and the Lakelands and Inland Waterways Area Food Programme

¹⁹ Development of the tourism product for Leitrim; and Marketing Leitrim as a visitor destination and creating awareness of Leitrim as a place to visit

²⁰ "This key theme (Tourism Development) is the centrepiece of the Carrick-on-Shannon 2020 Vision". The cornerstones of the theme are stated as; Developing the town as a regional discovery base for the west and north west regions and the general Lakelands and Inland Waterways region; Developing niche markets in heritage, outdoor adventure, water based leisure and cultural tourism; and Quality packaging and promotion.

²¹ Failte Ireland recognises that strategies must focus on the needs of future consumers, the actions of international competitors and be in-line with market dynamics

²² This report highlights the need for tourism to be much more visible and integrated into the broader economic strategic framework.

²³ Administrative boundaries often mean very little to the visitor they are influenced by the 'attractors' to an area. Tourism initiatives often combine the strengths, skills and influence of a number of partners to build a unified approach to economic and social regeneration within the region



- Greenway (SL&NCR)²⁴ Rail to Trail, the Shannon Blueway, Dromod/Mohill/Ballinamore former Narrow Gauge Railway Line; Kingfisher Cycle Route; and tourism developments through the Border Uplands Project and Harnessing Natural Resources;
- c) Maximise the potential of our Waterways; Loughs and Lakes; and Waterfalls;
 - d) Promote the development of tourism in a sustainable manner and encourage the provision of a comprehensive range of tourism accommodation and facilities, subject to location, design criteria, the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and other planning considerations;
 - e) Encourage tourism accommodation providers; tourist attractions; tourism product and service providers; food and drink establishments to provide value added tourist packages to visitors;
 - f) Support the development of a County tourism product/service portfolio for the following priority sectors Angling; Sustainable tourism; Festival and Events; Cruising Water Based Product; Adventure Tourism: Walking; Cycling; and Activity Tourism (*refer to Section 3.7.6 Sustainable Tourism and 3.10 Recreation, Sport and Amenity*);
 - g) Focus on the importance that culture and the arts play in the development of the County;
 - h) Support community based projects which attract tourists to the County;
 - i) Support the development of food tourism trails within the County (see Section 2.3);
 - j) Increase training and capacity building at multiple levels and encourage investment and broaden the range of local investors;
 - k) Support agri-tourism in the form of visitor accommodation and other agri-tourism related activities such as Open Farms, Health Farms etc. (see Section 2.3).
 - l) Support the development of angling facilities at suitable locations throughout the County.
 - m) Encourage and support the development of suitably located tourist information facilities throughout the County.

Objective 1 It is an objective of the Council to deliver a County Tourism Strategy which will: -

- a) Support implementation of an integrated recreational strategy for the county, in line with national, regional and local policies, in cooperation with other agencies

²⁴ SL&NCR refers to the former Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway that ran from Enniskillen in County Fermanagh, where it joined with the Great Northern Railway, to where it joined with both the Midland Great Western Railway and the Great Southern and Western Railway at Collonee County Sligo. It passed through Florencecourt, Belcoo, Glenfarne, Manorhamilton, Dromahair, Ballintogher and Collooney.

including, Leitrim Development Company, Leitrim Recreational Forum, the Leitrim Growth Tourism Alliance, Leitrim Recreation & Sports Partnership and Waterways Ireland, as well as relevant inter-county and cross-border partners.

- b) Develop a recreational facility in the County that can support the attraction of large-scale festivals and events;
- c) Increase its marketing efforts through a combination of marketing technology - web based marketing and digital tools, effective use of social media - Twitter, Facebook, Apps, downloadable podcasts, virtual tours, regular (monthly) e-zines created for trade partners and consumers; and traditional - direct selling and promotion to selected target markets and niche and special interest markets (angling, cruising, eco- tourism, festivals and events, culture and heritage and activity tourism);
- d) Develop the North Leitrim Glens as a distinct tourism attraction with regard to touring routes, product development and promotion;
- e) Develop and maintain a network of Iconic Attractions of scale;
- f) Develop a Cultural Quarter in Carrick on Shannon to promote the Arts;
- g) Develop the Shannon/Erne Waterways as a distinct tourism attraction with regard to walking, cycling & water activities, product development and promotion.
- h) Establish touring routes around the County's natural assets to reduce the 'corridor effect';
- i) Provide quality information both on route for Tourists using the County's touring routes;
- j) Audit the quality, ease of understanding and functionality of signage within geographic locations; and 'Welcome/Entrance' signs to the County;
- k) Develop the Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway (SLNCR) Rail to Trail project;
- l) Develop the development of a World Class Rowing Centre at Lough Rynn and to support the development of Lough Rynn Demesne as a quality tourism and leisure facility;
- m) Advocate and facilitate the re-opening of the River Rynn to navigation;
- n) Support the work of Waterways Ireland in extending and promoting the extension of the Shannon towards Dowra;
- o) To advocate and facilitate the reopening of the former Cavan Leitrim Railway, from Dromod to Mohill, as a tourism attraction;
- p) Continuously improve the Glencar waterfall tourism product portfolio;
- q) Increase Diaspora and relationship marketing activity;
- r) Advocate the opening of navigation at Drumsna, from Drumsna Bridge upstream to Jamestown Bridge;
- s) Identify a suitable location for the development of an International Angling Centre and additional angling facilities within the County.

2.3 FARMING & AGRI-FOOD

Leitrim which is a very rural county has a diverse range of farming activity with a high number of people committed to farming and proactive in investing in its future. The structure of



farming in Leitrim is characterised by small-scale farms with low economic potential and asset value due to the poor soils, fragmentation and scale.

The land area farmed in the County is 92,130 ha made up of 3,669 farms with an average size of 25 ha. Enterprises with higher potential returns such as dairy farming have declined. There is significant dependence on lower income systems such as the production and sale of weanlings in the cattle sector and store lambs from hill farms in the sheep sector. Income levels from farming in the county are considerably lower than national averages this is reflected in the level of: direct payments (€37m); payment of AEOS/DAS/SCWS (€17m); and smaller economic size units²⁵.

Farmers in Leitrim have a strong historical attachment to the land. Leitrim's farmers are taking every opportunity to secure and improve the income on their farms, at levels which are the highest in the country. This includes entering the AEOS scheme, taking on organic farming, joining the Rural Social Scheme, availing of forestry premiums, developing new or alternative enterprises and seeking opportunities for off-farm work.

Agriculture in Leitrim supports thousands of jobs in the rural economy²⁶, both directly and indirectly. Leitrim has over 500 food and drink processing jobs supported by the agricultural output of county²⁷ and also in the wider agri-industry, including input suppliers, agricultural contractors, jobs in auctioneering, transport, engineering, accountancy, legal, veterinary and other agri-advisory services.

New economic and social forces have started to change people's relationship with the land. The Council aims to promote sustainable economic growth and the development of the countryside in the County. It will support the competitive development of the agriculture, agri-food and forestry sectors, having regard for the needs of consumers, the welfare of animals and the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

Policy 2 It is the policy of the Council to: -

- a) Redress rural isolation and enhance economic capacity in deprived areas through farm diversification and supporting the development of family farms;**
- b) Facilitate the continuation of agriculture, and the broadening of the rural economy, while conserving the landscape, environment and natural diversity of the countryside;**
- c) Empower Leitrim's speciality food sector to maximise its current and potential contribution to Ireland's food and agri-economy, society, culture and environment;**
- d) Support the development Food Tourism Strategy;**
- e) Support the development of Food Trails Initiatives to promote the County (see Section 3.7.6);**
- f) Reduce the carbon footprint in agri-food industry (see sections 3.8.2);**
- g) Support new product and service opportunities through interaction with educational, research and development, marketing and research establishments;**
- h) Increase the number of certified Organic farmers and producers in the county;**

²⁵ Accessible at www.ifa.ie/CrossSectors/Economics.aspx

²⁶ Agri-employers include Rosderra, - Golden Vale Mart; Connacht Gold Marts, - Connacht Gold Store; Manorhamilton Store, - Farrelly & Associates; Manorhamilton Livestock Mart; and Teagasc.

²⁷ Accessible at www.ifa.ie/CrossSectors/Economics.aspx

- i) Increase collaboration initiatives by small artisan food producers e.g. promoting an artisan brand, joint marketing and sales, market research, research and development and interaction with local retail chains;
- j) Support the agri-food sector to participate in quality assurance schemes to provide assurance to buyers and consumers on the quality, safety and traceability of food products from Leitrim;
- k) Increase the number of businesses who introduce cost reductions through waste prevention and minimisation measures and logistics LINK (see sections 3.8 and 3.11);
- l) Promote best practice operates across the range of energy efficiency, pollution prevention or resource conservation initiatives with firms in the agri-food sector (see sections 3.8 and 3.11);
- m) Support agri-tourism in the form of visitor accommodation and other agri-tourism related activities such as Open Farms, Health Farms etc. (see Section 3.7.6);
- n) Increase community led schemes to develop wind farms within the County (see sections 3.8 and 3.11.5);
- o) Enhance the leadership and management skills in the existing industry base.

Objective 2 It is an objective of the Council to: -

- a) Market Leitrim's unspoilt/green reputation, to promote a healthy, pure / natural and safe image, promoting its sustainability advantages;
- b) In conjunction with the IDA, attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the agri-food sector to the County;
- c) In conjunction with Enterprise Ireland, support and facilitate increasing competitiveness, indigenous company expansions and new business start-ups.

Refer to Section 3.7.2, Agriculture

2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS AND SERVICES SECTOR

The Environmental Goods and Services Sector (EGS)²⁸ is a relatively new sector for the Irish economy, and as such, will require innovative approaches to ensure successful delivery. The global industry in industrial/energy clean technology is very diverse but there is heavy investment, innovation and venture capital activity currently happening worldwide in this sector. Government investment in efficient energy use and cleaner technologies sends a clear signal to prospective investors of their commitment in the future. The main delivery mechanism of the State for a sustainable EGS sector in County Leitrim will be through 'Green-Infrastructure' developments including: -

- Providing economic stimulus for the region;
- Creating wealth through job creation;
- Providing necessary infrastructure for the region;
- Improving accessibility within and to the region;

²⁸ Low Carbon / Cleantech



- The wealth multiplier is high for Green Infrastructure – supply chain, job creation, etc.

While a wide range of enterprise opportunities are expected to arise in the growing EGS sector, the sub-sectors which are seen to have the greatest potential are: -

- Renewable Energies (solar, wind, geothermal and marine);
- Efficient energy use and management (including eco-construction);
- Waste Management, Recovery and Recycling (waste salvage and sustainable packaging); and
- Water and Wastewater Treatment (water reclamation, rain systems, storm water management).

The low base of development in Environmental Goods and Services (EGS) subsectors in County Leitrim is acknowledged. The Council recommends that a number of specific areas should be targeted in an effort to build the EGS sector in Leitrim. These specific areas are based on identified opportunities that are expected to arise and on the strengths of the existing enterprise base.

Leitrim County Council will support development and expansion of the County's Green Infrastructure. Recognising and promoting the County's image as a 'Green County' is a significant promotional tool for business development activity further to 2021 and beyond.

Policy 3 It is the policy of the Council to: -

- Maximise the use of renewable energy in County Leitrim;**
- Support initiatives to secure the county's energy supply and reduce dependence on fossil fuels;**
- Seek to develop locally owned energy generating systems that use renewable energy;**
- Support community based consultation on the development of wind farms throughout the County (see Section 3.11);**
- Increase community led schemes to develop wind farms within the County (see Sections 3.7.2 and 3.11);**
- Encourage best practice in eco-construction;**
- Promote sustainable use of water opportunities that exist (see Section 3.11);**
- Support opportunities for companies offering a recycling service for wastewater sludge (see Section 3.11).**

Objective 3 It is an objective of the Council to: -

- Leitrim County Council will make significant reductions in their fossil fuel consumption, with corresponding reductions in carbon dioxide emissions from Council Buildings and public buildings within Leitrim;**
- Increase Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) wind industry activity, with the Council proactively seeking leads in collaboration with the Industrial Development Agency (IDA);**
- Promote greater public awareness locally regarding the important services and functions that ecosystems provide in relation to clean air, water, food, recreation, flood protection and climate regulation;**
- In conjunction with Enterprise Ireland, support opportunities for enterprise development and expansion of innovating companies involved in developing and**

supporting eco-construction;

- e) In conjunction with the relevant development agency, increase the number of companies developing more innovative systems which can process, capture and store greater quantities of water for reuse and use outputs from renewable energy generation and seek to advance innovation through in the County;
- f) Deliver and to support the delivery of the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (see sections 3.8 and 3.11);
- g) In conjunction with the relevant development agency support, the development and expansion of companies with the capability to process waste into fuels which have a wider range of applications such as waste wood into wood pellets (see Section 3.7.3);
- h) In conjunction with the relevant development agency, support the development and expansion of enterprises engaged in conservation work to Priority Habitats and companies who provide ancillary services and equipment to the main operators in the environmental goods and services sector (see sections 3.8 and 3.11);
- i) Improve attractiveness of towns through encouragement of schools, communities, tidy towns organisations and businesses to get actively involved in enhancing their areas.

2.5 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Ireland is going through a social and economic revolution and the replacement of traditional industries by a knowledge-based economy is in line with international trends to transform work patterns and employee skills. Creative industries are defined by the Western Development Commission (WDC) as “....industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation....”²⁹. They also can be seen as industries that generate copyrights, patents, designs or trademarks, and can be grouped as: Design Related Industries - Architecture, Craft, Design, Designer Fashion; Expressive Industries - Music, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Antiques; and Media and Information Industries - Advertising, Film, Multimedia, Games, Publishing, Software, Television and Radio.

Leitrim as a county is increasingly recognised for its cultural vibrancy. Building on a strong pre-existing tradition over many years, the development of creative sector organisations and infrastructure throughout the county combined with the development work of Leitrim County Council and other agencies has given rise to a significantly high proportion of artists and craftspeople living and working in the county.

Leitrim has a substantial number of residents who are very involved in the arts, film, music, literary works and heritage and culture. In 2012, 50% of Festivals and Events taking place in Leitrim were associated with the Arts. Participation rates in creative activity by the wider

²⁹ Western Development Commission Report titled ‘Creative West: The Creative Sector in the Western Region’ (2009).



community are equally high. For example, the National Association of Youth Drama national statistics for participation in youth theatre indicate that participation in youth theatre in Leitrim is four-times the national average. County Leitrim has a high proportion of people working in the creative sector (4.4% of the total employment in the County). This represents a substantial talent base operating in the sector in Leitrim. There is potential for increased growth and employment in this sector in Leitrim.

Creative industries offer potential to industry (developing capacity and capability), to investors (animation and post-production), to the community (participation employment in the sector), to tourism (festivals and events, galleries and museums) and to regeneration (innovative architecture and urban design projects). The sector can be enhanced through effective partnerships between creative industries stakeholders, including the Leitrim Design House and Leitrim Sculpture Centre.

The creative sector is a vibrant part of our economy both of itself and because of the impact it has on the image we present, and the offering we provide to our own communities, visitors and potential investors. It serves to encourage creative thinking which can stimulate new ideas and approaches to how we live and work. It acts as a tool by which we engage with the world and express ourselves as individuals, groups and as a society. As such, the capacity of the creative sector to develop synergies with other areas such as tourism, inward investment and migration and social wellbeing, are very significant and are an important element of continuing growth and development in Co. Leitrim.

The Council acknowledge the on-going work of the voluntary sector in the development of the Creative industries within the County.

Policy 4 It is the policy of the Council to;

- a) Encourage and support artistic and other creative endeavours which contribute to an understanding of Leitrim's national culture in its broad sense as a way of life**
- b) Support and develop quality and excellence in the arts and culture from those engaged in artistic and other creative endeavours**
- c) Enhance the region's cultural vitality as a centre of international excellence in the arts and cultural development**
- d) Enable more effective production and development of creative goods and services through establishing networks of practice**

Objective 4 It is an objective of the Council to: -

- a) Bridge the gap between tourism and the cultural sector;**
- b) Brand 'Leitrim Arts and Creative Experience' as an important resource across all sectors (see Section 3.7.6);**
- c) Promote understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the arts and culture, encouraging as many people as possible to access and participate in the arts and culture;**
- d) In conjunction with the relevant key stakeholders, support organic growth of the creative industry in urban and rural locations;**
- e) In conjunction with the relevant key stakeholders, encourage business to expand through innovation and technology, exports and on line sales;**

- f) Develop creative connectors and hubs in the County to facilitate businesses and operators to work in suitable cost effective environments;**
- g) Provide training to take creative businesses' business skills beyond start-up requirements to deal with the issues of growth/expansion in the creative sector;**
- h) Promote Leitrim as a destination for filmmaking;**
- i) Promote awareness of arts activities locally and nationally;**
- j) Create strong sustainable links with Leitrim's Diaspora in the context of Culture.**

2.6 FORESTRY AND WOOD

The policy arena in which forestry operates is changing rapidly. Forestry is increasingly expected to deliver public benefits including recreation, landscape, water quality, biodiversity and carbon sequestration. Furthermore, the range of tradable goods and services generated in the forestry sector has expanded beyond timber production in Ireland to include, inter alia, cut foliage and marketed recreational activities. Leitrim is a predominately rural county; agriculture and forestry remain important economic activities.

Leitrim is one of the most heavily forested counties, due to an active policy of afforestation. Almost 17 % of the County is planted; this is higher than the State average of 11%³⁰. The proportion of privately owned forestry is growing steadily from 2.4ha in 1982 to 278 ha in 2012. Public Planting stopped in Leitrim in 2004. The private landowners, who account for the vast majority of new planting in Leitrim, are mainly farmers, 30 farms accounting for 269 ha.

The soils and climate of Leitrim are very well suited to planting, as it is rich in mineral gley; surface water gley; peaty gley and brown poolzolic soils. The management of forestry in Leitrim is essential to sustainability and provides local employment opportunities.

The Council has a role in forestry both in planning for initial forestation and expansion; planning permission is required where an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required. In certain Protected Landscapes tree planting may be restricted or prohibited altogether. Applications to the forestry service for planting or felling are referred to the planning authority for its observations (see Section 3.7.3).

Commercial forestry has developed rapidly over the last twenty years. The Council will support developments and management of forestry as a natural renewable resource in an economic, social (recreational) and environmentally sustainable manner.

The Forest Industry Transport Group has produced a Good Practice Guide for Managing Timber Transport. This group is made up of all stakeholders in the forest industry including local authorities. The implication of this Guide will be supported by the Council, as appropriate.

Policy 5 It is the policy of the Council to: -

- a) Support the on-going development of the physical infrastructure**

³⁰ Accessible at http://www.teagasc.ie/forestry/advice/index_statistics.asp



- b) Maintain and develop appropriate systems to produce quality timber and added value products within the county
- c) Encourage private landowners in order to provide sufficient timber from Leitrim's forests to meet demand from the processing sector
- d) Sustain and improve local level consultation on planting issues
- e) Encourage landowners to collaborate to benefit from economies of scale in every area of the thinning program; transport; logistics; management and maintenance
- f) Encourage landowners to ensure adequate harvesting roads and inspection paths are in place well in advance to begin the work harvesting timber from thinning
- g) Facilitate of 'farm scale' forestry, where down- stream added value can be achieved
- h) Facilitate the development of forestry for the production of bio fuels
- i) Encourage the development of a network of growers to create a Leitrim Growers certification scheme to create a recognised brand for the industry in Leitrim
- j) Facilitate the development of grounds for the production of plant material for the cut flower, foliage and Christmas tree market

Objective 5 It is an objective of the Council to: -

- a) Promote and adopt wood energy systems in public buildings: demonstration projects by local authorities are highly significant as they create a demand for wood fuel and thereby support the development of the local supply chain;
- b) In conjunction with the relevant key stakeholders, develop and expand suitable industries such as fuel-wood production, sawmills and stake producing facilities;
- c) In conjunction with the relevant key stakeholder, encourage businesses development and expansion of haulage and transport companies; contractors for excavation and harvesting; growers; planters and maintenance works;
- d) Establish a forum to encourage dialogue and environmental awareness between the industry, the Council and the local community.

SECTION 3 - POLICIES & OBJECTIVES



3 POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

3.1 URBAN AND RURAL SETTLEMENT POLICIES

3.2 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland, 1997

The focus of this document is on environmental protection, sustainable development and the integration of these considerations into policy at all levels of government to ensure balanced development. The Strategy recognises the need for good spatial planning and the inclusion of sustainability concerns in urban and built environment policies. *The Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland* document highlights the importance of Development Plans in protecting and enhancing the natural environment, in ensuring that developments are properly located, suitably structured and designed, and it advocates; closer coordination between transport and land use planning; high residential densities in appropriate locations; clear demarcation between urban and rural land-use to help prevent urban sprawl; more sustainable development patterns in larger settlements; maintaining and integrating development into the rural landscape and accommodating genuine rural housing needs.

National Spatial Strategy, 2002 - 2020

The aim of the NSS is to improve the quality of life of all citizens, bringing jobs closer to where people live, improving the environment and building a strong sustainable economic future for our children and ourselves. The Strategy sets out a 20-year planning framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development and population growth in Ireland. The NSS provides guidance for future development by identifying a hierarchy of settlements to accommodate future growth, in order to achieve balanced regional development.

In order to redress this imbalance, the NSS identifies gateways and hubs that have the capacity to support the stronger urban-rural structure needed to drive the development of these regions.

Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)

These Guidelines revise and update the *Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities* published in 1999, setting out a range of policy recommendations for the development of mixed-use and residential neighbourhoods. The Guidelines are accompanied by the *Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide*, which provides best practice advice and examples on the practical implementation of the policies contained in the Guidelines. Planning guidance for the Tier 1 town of Carrick-on-Shannon is contained in the statutory Local Area Plan for the town [see Section 3.2.2 and

Figure 3-1]. The current Local Area Plan will be reviewed following the adoption of the new County Development Plan.

Guidance for the Tier 2 towns is contained in the Urban Land-Use Strategy and its accompanying maps. The previously prepared Urban Framework Plans for most of these

settlements will continue to inform the Council in relation to the vision for the development of these towns. It is proposed, during the life of this Plan, to prepare an Urban Framework Plan for the newly included Tier 2B town of Kinlough.

Guidance for the Tier 3 towns is also contained in the Urban Land-Use Strategy and its accompanying maps. The previously prepared Urban Framework Plan for the settlement of Drumkeerin will continue to inform the Council in relation to the vision for the development of this town. It is proposed, during the life of this Plan, to prepare Village Design Statements for the remaining Tier 3 towns of Carrigallen, Dromod (including adjoining Tier 4 town of Roosky), Leitrim Village and Tullaghan.

Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022

The 2004 Guidelines set out a vision for the Region and nine key strategic goals that are required to achieve that vision. It is considered that the core elements of that vision remain valid; but it has been updated to reflect the changed circumstances of the Region since 2004. The key strategic goals have also been updated to reflect the new circumstances that this Region faces over the period of the Guidelines of 2010 – 2022.

‘By 2022, the Border Region will be a competitive area recognised as, and prospering from, its unique interface between two economies, where economic success will benefit all, through the implementation of the balanced development model, which will provide an outstanding natural environment, innovative people, which in themselves, will be our most valuable asset’ (p. 34).

KEY STRATEGIC (Regional) GOALS

The key Strategic Goals required to achieve this vision for the Region are as follows:

SG.1 To foster the development of the Region’s most important asset, its people by providing an improved quality of life for all people and communities living, working and visiting the Region;

SG.2 To ensure the development of the Gateways, Hubs, Drogheda and Carrick-on-Shannon as the strategic drivers of growth for the Region and to facilitate integrated sustainable development between urban and rural areas;

SG.3 To improve intra and inter regional connectivity and mobility throughout the Region through the development of Strategic Radial Corridors and Strategic Links;

SG.4 To promote innovation, economic growth, competitiveness and the development potential of the Region and to facilitate emerging sectors in the Region that will provide sustainable jobs for the future;

SG.5 To protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment and built heritage of the Region;

SG.6 To co-ordinate a regional approach to the key environmental challenges facing the Region;

SG.7 To co-ordinate and integrate key issues in National and Regional Spatial Planning Strategies and in particular, the National Spatial Strategy and the National Development Plan, and associated inter-regional development initiatives that support and promote strategic links;



SG.8 To co-ordinate and integrate key aspects of cross border spatial planning strategies, and in particular, the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland and associated inter-regional development initiatives, that support and promote strategic links between the two economies;

SG.9 To exploit the Regions unique location at the interface between two economies, by putting in place the drivers for economic growth, through the development of the Eastern Corridor, Atlantic Arc and the Central Border Area;

SG.10 To coordinated and encourage energy conservation and preservation of finite natural resources in accordance with the National Climate Change Strategy and the Water Framework Directive;

The Core Strategy for the County sets out the framework for the implementation of the aims and objectives of the RPGs. The aims and objectives set out herein are considered to interpret and support the RPGs in terms of National, Regional and in particular Local development.

3.2.1 REINFORCEMENT OF EXISTING TOWNS AND VILLAGES

The Council is aware that much of the social and economic infrastructure of the County (Post Offices, Schools, small Shops and Sports clubs, etc.) has been under threat from population decline.

Policy 6 **It is the policy of the Council to promote the viability of these facilities by encouraging new residential development to locate within the development envelope of existing towns, villages and other centres where these services are available.**

For its part the Council will conserve the capacity of the essential infrastructure such as: sewage treatment, water supply and other infrastructure. In particular, the Council will promote a range of measures such as water conservation and reduced water infiltration into the foul sewerage system. Subject to finance being available, the Council will seek to acquire and develop sites within these centres for residential, economic and social uses where the Council has identified a need for such facilities. In particular, derelict and obsolete properties in towns and villages will be sought and refurbished or redeveloped as appropriate. The Council will also encourage the development of infill or backland sites within the built-up area of towns, villages and other centres.

As a general rule commercial and employment generators will be encouraged to locate within the development envelope of town, village and other centres, in accordance with the Local Area Plan, Urban Framework Plans, Village Design Statements and the respective Land Use Strategy for Selected Towns, Villages and other centres, as set out in section 3.2.2 below. Volume 3 of the Development Plan includes the land use strategy maps.

The Council will encourage the efficient and economic use of services by encouraging new development towards locations where there is capacity in existing infrastructure, facilities and serviced land.

Some areas within the catchments of individual towns and villages are not zoned and are without specific land use policies. While such areas will, generally, remain as they currently

exist, this does not mean that land use change will not be allowed. Proposals for the development of individual sites will be considered on their own merits and within the general context, as set by the land-use guidance in the Development Plan.

Considering the level of vacant properties within towns and villages, the Council will be favourably disposed towards the suitable change of use/redevelopment of such properties.

Policy 6a **It is the Policy of the Council to favourably consider proposals for the appropriate change of use/redevelopment of vacant properties within towns & villages.**

Refer to Sections 4.1.1 Development Management Requirements, Section 4.1.2 Location of Development and 4.1.3 Town and Village Boundaries for further guidance.

3.2.2 LAND USE STRATEGY FOR TIER 2, 3 AND 4 TOWNS AND VILLAGES

The purpose of the Land Use Strategy is wide ranging and is not intended for use as a rigid development control tool. Rather, the aim is to address the following issues, in consultation and discussion with the relevant stakeholders:

- I. To implement and reinforce the settlement strategy as defined in the *Leitrim County Development Plan*;
- II. To define, enhance and strengthen the existing character of each of the centres;
- III. To secure attractive and vibrant places in which to live, work and visit;
- IV. To provide guidance and direction for those proposing to develop lands within each of the centres;
- V. To protect and enhance areas, structures and associations which contribute to the identity of the area and provide a good sense of place;
- VI. To counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social background.

The Land Use Strategy has been formulated in order to give better definition to the aims of the *County Development Plan* in respect to the strengthening of towns, villages in order to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds.

The lands identified in the Strategy are zoned in order to promote the sustainable growth of each centre and direct development towards particular areas and maximise the return on the Council's investment in infrastructure. A key response to the strengthening of structurally weak areas, such as County Leitrim, is the strengthening of the structure of towns and villages. A vital aspect of achieving sustainable development and vibrant urban and rural communities is that these centres are allowed to evolve and grow in an orderly manner. As such, these centres will act to provide both urban and rural communities, with a range of services, facilities and employment opportunities.

The Land Use Strategy will also aim to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds. In this regard it is proposed to include requirements in respect to Part 5 of the *Planning Act*, relating to Social and Affordable Housing to certain Tier 2 and Tier 3 Centres. Mohill and Drumkeeran have been excluded from Part 5 requirements due to the existing level of social housing in these towns.



It is not anticipated that social housing will be required in Mohill, Drumcong or Drumkeeran other than for those in classes in section 3/4/5 & 6 under social housing [i.e. not just Part V].

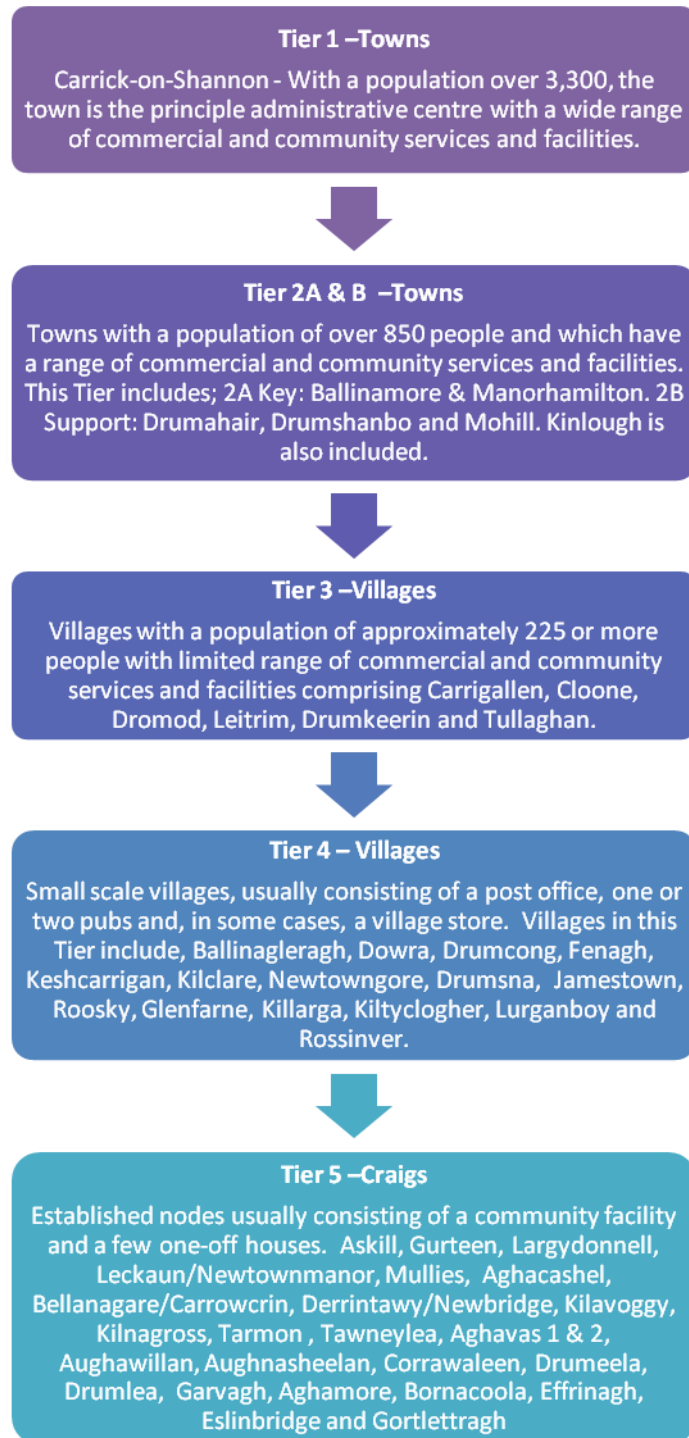
This strategy has been formulated in respect to Tier 2, 3 and 4 Centres as outlined below. In the case of Ballinamore, Dromahair, Drumkeeran, Drumshanbo, Manorhamilton, and Mohill, the strategy has been informed by the *Urban Framework Plans* which have been adopted by the Local Authority, for these towns. The *Urban Framework Plans* will continue to inform the Council in relation to the vision for the development of these towns.

In general terms, lands located in Tier 2 and 3 centres have been zoned: 'Mixed Use', 'Primarily Residential', 'Enterprise and Employment', and 'Social and Community'. Areas zoned 'Tourism' have been identified in some of the centres. The smaller-scale centres [Tier 4] have been zoned 'General Development' with 'Social and Community' and 'Amenity' type zoning being common to all.

Where land is zoned for a particular use, permission may be refused if, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, the infrastructure is not adequate to service the proposed development. Planning permission may also be conditional on the provision of certain key pieces of infrastructure.

Volume 3 (Appendix E) to this Development Plan comprises a 'Book of Maps' providing detailed landuse and specific zoning objectives for each of the Tier 2, Tier 3 and Tier 4 centres within the County.

Figure 3-1 Hierarchy of Towns and Villages and other Centres



Tier 1 Centres

Carrick-on-Shannon, with a population of 3,314, (2011 CSO) is the key service, administrative and retail centre. Carrick-on-Shannon has been identified in the *Border Regional Planning Guidelines* as a strategically-important town and as such has a key role to play in supporting the economic, social and cultural development of the County and wider area.



Tier 2A & Tier 2B Centres

Tier 2 Centres are generally those with a population over 850 and have a range of commercial and community services and facilities. They include: 2A Key Towns of Manorhamilton and Ballinamore and the 2B Support Towns of Dromahair, Drumshanbo, Mohill, and Kinlough.

Manorhamilton is identified within the Regional Planning Guidelines Tier 2 Towns as a strategically-significant town. As such, and as a Key Town, the Council will seek opportunities to develop Manorhamilton as an economic engine for growth within the northern part of the County and will seek to develop economic, social and cultural links with Sligo, Enniskillen and other towns and villages within the area, especially its support town of Dromahair.

Likewise, as a Key Town, the Council will seek opportunities to develop Ballinamore as an economic engine for growth within its area within the County and will seek to develop economic, social and cultural links with Cavan (an NSS Hub Town) and other towns and villages within the area, especially its support town of Drumshanbo.

Tier 3 Centres

Tier 3 Centres are generally those with a population of 225 or more with a limited range of commercial and community services and facilities. They include Carrigallen, Dromod, Drumkeeran, Leitrim and Tullaghan.

Tier 4 Centres

Tier 4 Centres consist of the remaining villages and settlements within the County, namely: Ballinagleragh, Cloone, Dowra, Drumcong, Drumsna, Fenagh, Glenfarne, Jamestown, Keshcarrigan, Kilclare, Killarga, Kiltyclogher, Lurganboy, Newtowngore, Roosky and Rossinver.³¹

3.2.2.1 The Purpose and Aims of Land Use Zoning Strategy

The purpose of land-use zoning strategy is to indicate the Planning Authority's intentions in respect to the use of all lands within the development boundaries of each of the Centres. The land-use zoning objectives are outlined below and details of the lands zoned are shown in Volume 3 of the Development Plan, *"Land Use Zoning Maps for selected towns and villages"*. A range of land uses are listed in the matrix in Table 10, together with an indication of their broad acceptability in the different land use zones

3.2.2.2 Social and Affordable Housing (Part 5 of Act).

The requirements in respect to Social Housing, under Part V of the Planning Act, applies to Carrick-on-Shannon, Ballinamore, Drumshanbo, Manorhamilton, Carrigallen, Dromahair, Dromod, Kinlough, Leitrim and Tullaghan. In determining the extent to which Part V requirements apply, consideration has been taken of the existing level of social and affordable housing within each of the centres and the capacity of the centre to absorb such a requirement without inhibiting their sustainable development.

³¹ Public Wastewater Treatment Systems are not available in Kilclare or Rossinver.

3.2.2.3 Zoning Classification in Respect to Tier 2, 3 and 4 Centres

Refer to Table 10 for land uses 'acceptable in principle', 'open for consideration' and 'not acceptable' within each of the zoning types considered below.

Enterprise and Employment

One of the most common conflicts between neighbouring land uses is traffic generation. In general, the strategy has been designed to cluster the heavier traffic generating activities, associated with enterprise, towards the edge of urban centres, with good road access, where possible, onto the Regional/National road network, while ensuring minimal impact on residential areas. Other common conflicts between land uses that may arise includes, visual, noise, other emissions and light pollution. Employment generating development likely to lead to such nuisances will be directed to areas zoned 'Enterprise and Employment'. Developments, including retail warehousing and bespoke office development to which the public will not normally have access will be open for consideration within these areas. Other employment generating development that is not likely to create a significant nuisance may be acceptable in areas zoned 'Mixed Use' and 'Primarily Residential'.

Primarily Residential

Residential development will be encouraged in town centres and lands zoned 'Primarily Residential'. The Council seeks to encourage high-quality residential schemes with convenient and safe access to local services and a safe and pleasant local environment. The Council will strive towards the ideal of mixed residential neighbourhoods, where people of different social and economic backgrounds and of different ages can live in proximity and harmony.

Larger areas of vacant lands and unfinished residential development, located within areas designated as 'Primarily Residential', have been identified as 'Primarily Residential (undeveloped)'. Areas that are, in the main, developed are identified as 'Primarily Residential (developed)'. Refer to Volume 3, Appendix E, Book of Maps.

It is envisaged that the bulk of residential development will take place on lands zoned 'Primarily Residential'. Other development that does not negatively impact on the residential use of neighbouring lands will also be open for consideration in this zone.

Certain institutional and community uses, small-scale enterprises and shops can enliven residential areas and ensure local services are easily available. The key to their acceptability will be their impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

Areas zoned Primarily Residential that have been largely undeveloped are indicated as such in Appendix E, Book of Maps. These areas include vacant lands and certain areas where development has not been substantially completed.

Residential Reserve/Support

These lands are identified primarily to serve the long-term housing requirements of the Centre in which they are located. These lands will also be considered as suitable for the accommodation of development that would be compatible with residential use. Whereas residential development (other than that set out below) will not be permitted on these lands during the lifetime of the Plan, they may be considered for residential development in future Plans.

The following residential type development may be considered acceptable on lands zoned Residential Reserve/Support:



- I. Where there is a live permission for residential development that has not been activated and the life of these permissions may be extended in accordance with the Provisions of Section 42(a) of the *Planning & Development Act 2010, as amended*.
- II. A proposal for a dwelling house where:
 - a. the unit to be provided will serve as the permanent place of residence of the landowner or a member of his/her immediate family;
 - b. and where it can be clearly demonstrated that the provision of such a unit would not compromise the development of the adjoining lands (lands from which the site is being annexed);
 - c. and the unit to be provided would easily integrate with the future development of the lands and those in the vicinity.
- III. In exceptional circumstances, where it can be clearly demonstrated by the developer that there is a significant difficulty in the release or identification of lands for a specific residential type development, consideration will be given to the release of lands zoned Residential Reserve/Support, subject to established planning criteria and including in particular:
 - a. The requirement to remain within the overall residential land use targets as set out in the 'Core Strategy';
 - b. Compliance with the 'Justification Test' (refer to details below);
 - c. Compliance with the 'Sequential Approach' (refer to Section 3.2.2.5).

Mixed Use

Zones designated as 'Mixed Use' have been identified in the core of the Centre within which a mix of residential and commercial activity takes place. More generally, buildings designed and located so as to be capable of adaptation to a range of other uses will be encouraged. In determining the suitability of development within this zone regard shall be given to the environmental impact of the proposed development on neighbouring uses.

General Development

This designation relates primarily to Tier 4 Centres and includes residential, commercial activity and enterprise and employment uses. In determining the suitability of proposed development within this zone, regard shall be given to the environmental impact of the proposed development on neighbouring uses.

Social and Community

This zone generally caters for community buildings, schools, hospitals and health centres, football pitches and other generic or specific social and community uses.

Open Space and Amenity

This zone generally comprises of open space, public walkways and public recreational areas.

Tourism-Related Development

This zone generally provides for developments that are linked to tourism including guesthouses, hotels, hostels, holiday homes, restaurants, pubs and other tourism-related developments.

3.2.2.4 Definition of terms used in Zoning Matrix

Acceptable in Principle ('y')

The Council will seek to ensure the development of lands and properties in accordance with the Zoning Objectives set out in this section of the plan. Land uses designated under each zoning objective as 'Acceptable in Principle' are generally permissible, subject to compliance with the relevant policies, standards and requirements set out herein.

Open for Consideration ('o')

Land uses shown as 'Open for Consideration' are uses that are not considered acceptable in principle in all parts of the relevant use zone. However, such uses may be acceptable in circumstances where the Council is satisfied that the proposed use would not conflict with the general objectives for the zone and the permitted or existing uses, as well as being in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Not Acceptable ('n')

Land uses which are indicated as 'Not Acceptable' in the Land use Zoning Matrix will not be favourably considered. However, uses which are clearly ancillary uses may be considered acceptable.

Other Uses

Proposed land uses not listed in the matrix will be considered on the merits of the individual planning application, with reference to the most appropriate use of a similar nature indicated in the table and in relation to the general policies and zoning objectives for the area in question of the Plan.

Non-Conforming Uses

Existing established uses that are inconsistent with the primary zoning objective, where legally established by continuous use for the same purpose prior to 1 October 1964 or by a planning permission, will not be subject to legal proceedings under the *Planning Act* in respect of their continued use. Where extensions or improvements of premises accommodating these uses are proposed, each shall be considered on its merits in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The extension or intensification of undesirable uses will likely not be permitted.

Transitional Areas

While the zoning objectives indicate the different uses acceptable in each zone, it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use at the boundary of adjoining land use zones. In these areas it is necessary to avoid developments that would be detrimental to amenity.

In zones abutting residential areas, particular attention will be paid to the use, scale, density and appearance of development proposals and to landscaping and screening proposals, in order to protect the amenities of residential properties.

Development abutting amenity and open space will generally facilitate the passive supervision of that space where possible by fronting onto it.

When interpreting Table 10 'Land Use Matrix', a degree of flexibility will apply in the immediate vicinity of abutting zones in terms of the appropriateness of the uses pertaining to each zone, i.e. a certain degree of cross-fertilization in terms of land uses may be considered



appropriate in these transitional areas so as to allow for a soft transition between abutting zones.

3.2.2.5 Sequential Release of Lands

Cognisance will be given to the need to consolidate settlements by keeping them as physically compact as possible and by applying the sequential approach to the release of lands for housing developments (as set out in Chapter 5 of the *NSS* and within Ministerial Guidelines, such as the *Development Plan Guidelines* and *Sustainable Urban Residential Development Guidelines*). In the interest of orderly development priority, will be given to the release of lands close to the core of the settlement, as identified in the zoning maps for this purpose. Any lands surplus to the identified housing need, which have been identified as 'residential reserve/support', will be regarded as a strategic reserve and proposals for the development of such lands for housing will not be considered during the plan period, other than by testing through the sequential approach and where justification in terms of housing demand can be demonstrated. Lands which are located at the periphery of the settlement may only be developed for residential development where it is demonstrated that both lands, zoned for residential development, and lands identified as residential reserve, have been exhausted, or where it can be demonstrated that these lands cannot be developed for reasons related to their ownership status or tenure.

In this regard and within the context set out above, as a general rule, priority will be given to the development of lands that can be served by means of a gravity sewer as opposed to proposals that rely on pumping. Additional pumping stations will not normally be permitted, while lands capable of being serviced by an existing gravity sewer or by an existing pumping station remain undeveloped.

The Council proposes to identify pumping station sites and the area to be serviced in order to rationalise the development of such facilities and secure the appropriate release of zoned lands.

3.2.2.6 Preserving the Urban Form and Avoiding Urban Sprawl

The design and layout of development within the envelope of each Centre shall respect and where possible enhance the inherent character of the area in terms of its built form.

Refer to Sections 4.1.1 Development Management Requirements and Section 4.3 Residential Development in Towns and Village for further guidance.

In order to preserve the urban form of towns and villages and avoid ribbon development particular planning control measures will operate along the approach roads to each of the towns and villages. In this regard, a compelling justification as to the applicants' need for a one-off dwellinghouse at the location proposed will be required to support such a proposal.

Refer to Section 4.2.2 'Ribbon Development' for further guidance.

In order to meet the needs and desires of families to construct individual one-off houses in close proximity to social/commercial services the development of serviced sites in towns and villages with existing water and wastewater spare capacity will be actively encouraged.

Development of proposals for one-off dwellings located along that section of the former National Primary route, between Roosky village and Dromod, that has been replaced by the

Roosky-Dromod By-Pass, will only be permitted where the applicant has an intrinsic link to the area and a clear need to locate in the area is established.

Policy 7 It is the policy of the Council to ensure that the scale, density, design, site layout and pattern of development within each of the Tier 2, 3 and 4 Centres shall respect, and where possible, enhance the inherent character of these centres in terms of their built form.

Policy 8 It is the policy of the Council to seek the development of land in accordance with the land use objectives set out in Table 10.

Objective 6 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that development of one-off-housing does not give rise to the coalescence of towns and villages and other centres.

Table 10 Land Use Zoning Matrix

Land Use	Mixed Use	Primarily Residential	Residential Reserve/Support	Enterprise & Employment	General Development	Open Space & Amenity	Social & Community	Tourism-Related Development
Dwelling	y	y	n ³²	n	y	n	o	o
Guest house/hotel/hostel	y	y	Y	o	y	n	o	y
Restaurant	y	o	O	o	y	n	o	y
Pub	y	o	O	o	o	n	o	y
Shop (convenience)	y	y	Y	o	y	n	n	o
Shop (comparison)	y	n	N	n	y	n	n	n
Retail warehouse	n	n	N	o	o	n	n	n
School	y	o	O	o	y	n	y	n
Medical and Related Consultant	y	y	Y	o	y	n	y	n
Health centre	y	o	O	o	y	n	y	n
Nursing home	y	y	Y	n	y	n	y	n
Community hall & Sports halls	y	o	O	o	y	o	y	y
Recreational buildings/marina	y	o	O	o	y	o	y	y
Cultural uses library	y	y	Y	o	y	o	y	y
Offices	y	o	O	y	y	n	o	o
Garages car repairs	n	n	N	y	o	n	n	n
Petrol station	o	n	N	y	o	n	n	n
Motor sales	o	n	N	y	o	n	n	n
Car parks	y	y	Y	y	y	o	o	y
Heavy commercial vehicle parks	n	n	N	y	n	n	n	n
Cinema dancehall disco	y	n	N	o	o	n	o	o
Warehouse (wholesale)	n	n	N	y	o	n	n	n
Repository store depot	o	n	N	y	o	n	n	n

³² For exceptions refer to Section 1.9.5 Policy regarding 'Residential Reserve/Support'.



Land Use	Mixed Use	Primarily Residential	Residential Reserve/Support	Enterprise & Employment	General Development	Open Space & Amenity	Social & Community	Tourism-Related Development
Industry	n	n	N	y	o	n	n	n
Industry (light)	n	o	O	y	o	n	n	n
Workshops	o	y	Y	y	o	n	o	o
Playing fields	o	y	Y	y	o	y	y	y
Place of worship	y	y	Y	o	y	o	y	o
Park/playground	y	y	Y	o	y	y	y	y
Tourist camping site	n	o	O	o	o	o	n	y
Tourist caravan park	n	o	O	o	o	o	n	y
Halting site	n	y	Y	y	y	o	y	n
Cattle-shed/slatted unit	n	n	N	n	n	n	n	n
Broiler house	n	n	N	n	n	n	n	n
Stable yard	n	n	N	n	n	o	n	n
Amusement Arcade	o	n	N	n	o	n	n	o
Hot food take-away	o	n	N	o	y	n	n	o
Utility structures	y	y	Y	y	y	y	y	y
Funeral homes	o	o	O	o	y	n	n	n
Crèche/playschool	y	y	Y	o	y	o	y	n

Notes: 'y' = Acceptable in principle, 'o' = Open for consideration, 'n' = not acceptable.

With regard to determining the suitability of retail developments, applications will be assessed having due regard to the current *Leitrim County Retail Strategy*, the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and the accompanying *Retail Design Manual*.

Objective 7	To seek the development of lands zoned 'Mixed Use' for commercial residential, health, community, educational, cultural, retail and related uses.
Objective 8	To seek the development of lands zoned 'Primarily Residential' for residential and associated uses. Open space and recreational facilities must be provided in association with residential development, in accordance with the standards set out in the County Development Plan.
Objective 9	To seek the development of lands zoned 'Enterprise and Employment' for employment-generating uses.
Objective 10	To seek the development of lands zoned 'Social and Community' for amenity, recreational, educational and health uses.
Objective 11	To seek the development of lands zoned 'General Development' for a suitable mix and pattern of development types as outlined in a), b) and c) above.
Objective 12	To seek the development of lands zoned 'Tourism Related Development' for tourism-related development and activities.

In the case of lands at risk of flooding, the types of uses mentioned above may be further constrained having regard to the policies, objectives and guidelines of this Plan and in

particular the Ministerial Guidelines *'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities'*.

3.2.2.7 Design Criteria Relating to Rural and Urban Housing

In order to ensure the integration of dwellings into their respective settings, it is considered appropriate to provide clear guidance for the public and developers with respect to house design, siting, boundary treatment for rural housing and boundary treatment in the case of housing schemes.

Refer also to Section 4.2.4 Individual Houses, 4.2.5 Site Boundaries, Section 4.3 Residential Development in Towns and Villages, Section 4.3.3 Density, 4.3.5 Open Space Provision in Housing Schemes and 4.3.8 Apartments for further guidance.

3.2.2.8 Existing Housing Stock

It is clear from a comprehensive survey of unfinished housing developments completed by the Council in the last quarter of 2012 that the level of vacant and under construction housing units will meet a significant level of the housing requirements during the Plan period and in some instance beyond. It is also noted that the quantity of vacant and under construction units decreased by over 27% in 2 years since the previous Council survey.

Considering the foregoing and in particular the need to ensure the utilisation of the existing stock of residential units and the proper release of zoned lands for residential type development, the following 'Justification Test' shall apply.

3.2.2.9 Justification Test

A justification test in terms of the market demand for new residential development will generally be required in the case of all new applications for residential schemes (two or more dwellings) pending a narrowing of the supply and demand of residential units in those centres where there remains a wide divergence. Certain developments that can demonstrate a strategic element, for example, a significant commercial or social element, may be deemed acceptable. Developments that satisfy a 'niche' housing market may also be deemed acceptable. Normally the requirements of a justification test will be in the form a 'Property Development Surveyor's Report'.

3.2.2.10 Unfinished/Unoccupied Estates and Commercial Property

Unfinished/Unoccupied estates and commercial property are a manifestation of a systemic failure to properly manage the property sector. This has led to unprecedented social and economic difficulties, particularly within the housing sector. The Council fully recognises and acknowledges this legacy and has to date done much work from a planning perspective to help address these difficulties.

Notwithstanding this legacy, unfinished/unoccupied buildings represent a significant resource that needs to be resolved in a pragmatic and sustainable way. In the interest of clarity, and



not to deflect from the responsibilities of the Council, it must be stated from the outset, that the primary responsibility in relation to the completion of unfinished estates and commercial property lies with the developers and property owners.

Nevertheless, given the scale, extent and complexity of the social, economic and environmental issues involved, public intervention may be required. Resolution of the issues involved will require a joint, sustained and measured response, where some innovative solutions may be needed and indeed a considerable commitment in terms of resources may be required. It is therefore a key Planning issue that will continue to be addressed by the Council and kept under review.

The Council will be guided in its approach to unfinished estates by the document *Managing and Resolving Unfinished Housing Developments - Guidance Manual* and any subsequent Guidance in this regard. With this in mind the Council is anxious to fully support any such measures falling within its remit and as resources permit.

The Council has established a dedicated team within the Planning Department to deal with planning issues relating to unfinished estates. This team will continue to identify, record and monitor the status of unfinished estates within the County and will actively engage with the relevant stakeholders in an effort to resolve the planning issues involved. The Council is currently working with Developers, Financial and Legal institutions, the Department of Environment, and other relevant parties in order to secure the satisfactory resolution of any unfinished estates.

A range of measures will continue to be developed and deployed by the Council in relation to resolving planning matters associated with Unfinished/Unoccupied estates and commercial property, including:

- Appropriate and timely action where deemed necessary on significant issues of Public Health and Safety;
- Prioritising site resolution of occupied/unfinished estates;
- Providing direction to, and securing the co-operation of, developers and other relevant stakeholders in an effort to secure compliance with planning permission;
- Taking enforcement action and the 'calling-in' of bonds and cash deposits in order to complete developments, where appropriate;
- Accommodating (under the development management process) appropriate revisions to the design, layout and/or use of the permitted development in order to secure their completion/occupation;
- Restricting (under the planning process) certain additional development types in areas where there is a surplus;
- Implementing key infrastructural and community-based works including Town and Village Improvement Schemes; thereby making Towns and Villages more attractive places in which to live, work and visit;
- Increased efforts towards facilitating and promoting opportunities for enterprise and employment.

Policy 9 **It is the policy of the Council to operate a proactive approach and to work with relevant parties towards achieving a sustainable resolution to the**

difficulties associated with unfinished/unoccupied estates and commercial property within the County.

- Policy 10** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that development would not overload or otherwise compromise the proper operation of the Public Wastewater Treatment Plants. Such development will not be permissible, regardless of the zoning of such lands.
- Policy 11** It is the policy of the Council that either the Council or Irish Water, as may be appropriate, becomes the sole operator of pumping stations serving more than one house where the system has been commissioned to the satisfaction of the Council.
- Policy 12** It is the policy of the Council to manage the development of settlements in accordance with the Core Strategy and as detailed in Section 3.2.2 – Land Use Strategy for Tier 2, 3 and 4 Towns and Villages.

3.2.2.11 Land Use Strategy in Respect to Rural Housing in the Countryside

The County has undergone significant change during the currency of the existing Development Plan in terms of residential development and population change. This change has not been consistent throughout the County. A feature of this change has been the high level of residential vacancy. There are areas within the countryside that are under pressure from development in terms of one-off housing, particularly along the approach roads to towns and villages. Having regard to the foregoing and in order to achieve the basic aims of the Council, as set out above in term of increasing the population of the County, it is considered appropriate to formulate a land use strategy in respect to the accommodation of residential development within the countryside. In doing so, it is the aim of the strategy to protect those areas under pressure from excessive levels of one-off rural housing and thereby provide for the needs of people with a strong justification to live in these areas, while at the same time encouraging residential development towards areas of relatively low population growth and vacancy levels.

3.2.2.12 Policy Formulation

Having regard to the foregoing, a two-track approach has been taken towards the accommodation of residential development in the countryside. In the first instance small-scale settlements were identified and are referred to hereafter as 'Graigs'. These are nodes with an established identity that were considered suitable for the development of small-scale housing schemes and/or single dwellinghouses.

The second part of the approach was to determine the capacity of the countryside to absorb one-off housing, having regard to issues in terms of environmental sensitivity, population trends, vacancy rates and the existing level of development in the area. In this regard the following actions were taken:

1. Environmentally sensitivity areas including; – Special Areas of Conservation, Natural Heritage Areas, Special Protection Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's) and Areas of High Visual Amenity (HVA's) were identified and mapped;



2. Vacancy rates were mapped in relation to each electoral division and the Small Area Populations (SAPs). The information was based on the vacancy rate given in the 2011 Census;
3. Local areas within each ED that are clearly under significant development pressure were mapped. The information was based on the Geo-directory.

3.2.2.13 Identification of 'Graigs'

Existing settlements that clearly have an established identity, containing a community facility such as a School, a Retail unit, e.g. a Post office, a Church and Community centre with some housing in the vicinity were identified as suitable areas for small-scale residential developments. It is considered appropriate that such areas should be reinforced in order to sustain the social capital of the area and provide suitable alternative type locations for residential development. This approach is consistent with Policy 6 of the Plan in terms of securing the social and economic infrastructure of the county and the location of new residential development. These centres are referred to as 'Graigs'. See Map 3.1, page 90.

In general terms vehicular access points to developments within Graigs will be directed onto local roads as opposed to regional roads. There will be a presumption in favour of the development of one-off housing within the Graigs and similarly for the development of small-scale housing schemes served by suitably designed and strategically located community wastewater treatment units which shall be suitable and capable of being expanded to service additional development and eventually to be taken in charge by the Local Authority. Development will be directed so as to consolidate existing development in the first instance and thereafter to provide for the organic growth of the centre as appropriate. Accordingly the development of Graigs should be commensurate and in accordance with the existing size and scale of existing nodal footprint and that the development of these centres is contingent on the provision of a proper level of infrastructure with particular reference to the provision of adequate wastewater treatment facilities by the developer.

All proposals for development will have to comply with normal planning requirements in terms of site section, site layout, building design, road safety and in particular the treatment of wastewater.

Table 11 Graigs Identified

Carrick-on-Shannon Electoral Area	Ballinamore Electoral Areas
Effrinagh	Aghavas 1 & 2
Eslinbridge	Aughawillan
Aghamore	Aughnasheelan
Gortlettragh	Drumreilly/Corrawaleen
Bornacoola	Drumeela
Kilnagross	Garvagh
Manorhamilton Electoral Area	
Askill	Bellanagare/Carrowcrin
Gurteen	Derrintawy/Newbridge
Largydonnell	Kilavoggy
Leckaun/Newtownmanor	Tarmon

Askill is located close to the northern part of Lough Melvin, approximately 7km west of Kinlough and close to the Leitrim/Donnegal County boundary. It consists of a former national school, now used as a community building and a number of dispersed one-off dwelling houses.

Gurteen

Gurteen is located approximately 7km west of Manorhamilton and 7km east of the Leitrim/Sligo Boundary and a short distance north of National Primary Route N16. It consists of a Church, a small-scale local authority housing scheme and a number of one-off houses. The National School is located approximately 1.5km west of the Church at the junction of local road LT 4138-1 and the N16. Development will be directed towards consolidating the area in the vicinity of the Church and the small-scale local authority housing scheme.

Largydonnell

Largydonnell is located approximately 5km south of Kinlough along the Regional Road R280. There is a former Post Office located a short distance to the north and a church approximately 1 km to the south. There are a number of one-off dwelling houses in the vicinity and also a civic amenity site and burial ground.

Leckaun/Newtownmanor

Leckaun/Newtownmanor is located approximately 5km north of Dromahair and approximately 1km west of that section of Regional Road R286 which links Dromahair with the National Primary Route N16. It is also approximately 4km east of the Leitrim/Sligo boundary and the rural area known as Fivemilebourne. The former Post Office has been abandoned and is in need of essential repairs. Local facilities are dispersed, with the National School located a short distance to the west, a community centre to the south and a church further south. Whereas the school is located within an area designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the former Post Office is outside this designation. There are a number of dwellinghouses located between the school and the former Post Office. It is considered appropriate that new development should be directed towards the area of the former Post Office. The road fronting the former Post Office and the National School is the Regional Road R286. The creation of multiple vehicular access points onto the Regional Road is discouraged at this location.

Mullies

Mullies is located approximately 5km north of Manorhamilton. It consists of a Church and a number of dispersed one-off dwelling houses. While there is potential for some small-scale development in the vicinity of the Church, it is restricted on the eastern side of the road by overhead electrical cables and by ground slopes to the west.

Aghacashel

Aghacashel is located approximately 8km east of Drumshanbo and 5km west of Aghnasheelan. There is a shop/Post Office with a small number of dwelling houses in the vicinity.

Bellanagare/Carrowcrin

Bellanagare/Carrowcrin is located approximately 3km south of Dromahaire and 2km east of the Leitrim/Sligo boundary. Bellanagare/Carrowcrin includes a Community centre, a church

and 4 no. dwellinghouses located approximately 3/4km north of Carrowcrin. There are a number of one-off houses and a burial ground located between these two centres. Carrowcrin consists of a National School with a number of dwellinghouses in the vicinity. The area in the vicinity of the National School is located near a stream leading to the Bonet River which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation. The ground in the vicinity of the school would appear to be poor for the purposes of accommodating a wastewater treatment system. Having regard to the foregoing, any development in the vicinity of the school will be required to clearly demonstrate that it would not give rise to a risk of pollution.

Derrintawy/Newbridge

Derrintawy is located towards the northern part of Lough Allen along Regional Road R200. It lies near the Leitrim/Cavan boundary, approximately 7km east of Drumkeeran and 3km west of Dowra. It consists of a Church and a former National School which is now used as a community facility. There are a number of one-off dwelling houses in the vicinity. The creation of new access points onto the Regional Road would prove difficult due to the poor alignment of the road. It is therefore envisaged that development should be accessed from the local road at this location.

Kilavoggy

Kilavoggy is located at the junction of two local roads within a relatively remote and sparsely populated rural area, approximately 7km southeast of Dromahair. It consists of a Church with 6 no. dwellinghouses in the vicinity. It is considered appropriate that development would be focused proximate to the Church.

Tarmon

Tarmon is an established node located along Regional Road R280, approximately 11km north of Drumshanbo and 6km south of Drumkeeran. It includes a Church and a National School located on the western side of the R280. There are 6 no. dwellinghouses in the vicinity of the Church and School. The former Tarmon National School is in need of essential repairs and is located a short distance to the north of the Church on the eastern side of the R280. There is a civic amenity site located beside the former national school. The road in the vicinity is governed by an 80km/hr speed limit, with traffic movements relatively fast. The speed limit is likely to be increased to 100km/hr. Having regard to the foregoing, the creation of multiple access points onto the Regional Road in this location is discouraged.

Tawnylea

Tawnylea is located approximately 6km north of Drumkeeran and approximately 2km east of Regional Road R280. It consists of a Church, a dwelling house, public telephone kiosk and a roadside Post Box facility. There is a National School located approximately 600m northwest of the Church.

Ballinamore Electoral Area:

Aghavas 1 and 2

Aghavas is located approximately 6km west of Carrigallen and 11km northeast of Mohill. It is divided into two centres: the northern part (1) being located beside Regional Road R201, consisting of a pub, a post office, a sports grounds, a small-scale local authority housing scheme and a few dispersed one-off dwelling houses. The southern part (2) consisting of a Church, a National School and a number of one-off houses located within its environs.



Aughawillan

Aughawillan is located approximately 5km east of Ballinamore. To the south of its area a National School and Community Centre are located with a RC Church located a short distance to the north. There are a number of dwellinghouses in the vicinity of the National School and Church.

Aughnasheelan

Aughnasheelan is located approximately 4km northwest of Ballinamore. It consists of a Church and Graveyard, a small-scale Local Authority housing scheme and a small-scale private housing scheme presently nearing completion. This centre is served by a recently constructed and strategically located wastewater treatment system. There is a Community Centre located towards the western side of this settlement.

Corrawaleen

Corrawaleen is located approximately 5km northwest of Carrigallen along the Regional Road R204. It consists of a Church, a small Local Authority housing scheme, a cluster of dwellings and a shop, which is also serves as the local Post Office.

Drumlea/Drumreilly

Drumlea is located 1km northwest of Corrawaleen (6km northwest of Carrigallen) along the Regional Road R204. It consists of a Church and Graveyard, Community Centre and a National school. There are a few scattered dwellings in the vicinity.

Drumeela

Drumeela is located at the junction of two local roads, approximately 4km north of Carrigallen. It consists of a Church, a National School and a few dispersed one-off houses.

Garvagh

Garvagh is located along Regional Road R202 approximately 7km north of Mohill and 5km south of Fenagh. Its environs include a Church, a Community Centre and two dwelling houses. Development will be directed towards the area between the Church and Community Centre with access onto the local roads as opposed to the Regional Road.

Carrick-on-Shannon Electoral Area:**Kilnagross**

Kilnagross is located approximately 10km northeast of Carrick-on-Shannon at a crossroads. Its environs consist of a shop/Post Office/dwelling house, National School and 4 no. dwellinghouses.

Effrinagh

Effrinagh is located at the junction of two local roads approximately 8km northeast of Carrick-on-Shannon. It consists of an attached shop, Public House and dwellinghouse. There are a few dwellinghouses in the vicinity. The site of Jim Gralton's Pearse/Connolly Memorial Hall is also located in Effrinagh.

Eslinbridge

Eslinbridge is a dispersed settlement located approximately 5km northwest of Mohill. Its environs include Church and 6 no. dwellinghouses. The former National School has been converted into a Community Centre and is located approximately 2km south of the Church with the local GAA pitch approximately 2km further to the south. There will be a presumption in favour of development that would consolidate the area in the vicinity of the Church and Bridge.

Aghamore

Aghamore is located approximately 5km south of Drumsna and 5km north of Dromod. The settlement is divided by the National Primary Route N4, with the local shop and Post Office and a small-scale housing scheme on the western side of the N4 and a Church, National School and numerous one-off dwelling houses located on the eastern side of the N4.

Gortletteragh

Gortletteragh is located approximately 6km southeast of Mohill and 9km northeast of Roosky. It consists of a National School, a Church and Graveyard. There are a number of dwellings dispersed within its environs.

Bornacoola (Johnstown Bridge)

This area is located approximately 3km to the east of Roosky. It consists of a Church and a Community Centre including post box facility. This area is served by a public footpath and public lighting. There are a number of one-off dwellinghouses in the vicinity of the area.

Policy 13 It is the policy of the Council to support the sustainable development of the Graigs identified above.

Policy 14 It is the policy of the Council to direct development so as to consolidate existing development within the Graigs in the first instance and ensure that the sustainable and organic growth of these Centres is commensurate and in accordance with the existing size and scale of existing nodal footprint and furthermore, that the development of these centres is contingent on the provision of a proper level of infrastructure

3.2.2.14 Selection of Areas of High Capacity/High Availability, Medium Capacity/Medium Availability and Low Capacity/Low Availability

The overall consideration of environmental issues, arterial routes, landscape sensitivity, population trends, vacancy rates and local areas under development pressure reveals areas that may be considered high capacity/high availability, medium capacity/medium availability and low capacity/low availability, in terms of accommodating one-off housing type development within the countryside. The areas concerned are indicated on

Map 3.2 and

Map 3.3. Larger scale maps may be view in Volume 3, Appendix E, Book of Maps.

The areas were selected in the main by overlaying GIS-based mapping that indicated the overall consideration mentioned above. The cumulative impact and inter-relationship between these considerations, together with in-house experience of the development



management process also informed the selection process. It should be noted that the Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment highlighted the need for such an approach. The extent of the areas indicated are schematic only and should not be read at a detailed level. The areas include large-scale physical features, such as uplands and lakes, where it is clear that residential development is excluded.

Low Capacity/Low Availability

In general terms, areas adjoining towns and villages that were clearly under pressure from residential development were considered as Low Capacity Areas. These areas tend to be associated with areas of high residential vacancy. They are particularly prominent along the approach roads to the towns and villages. Other areas of Low Capacity included the areas in the vicinity of the conglomerate consisting of Carrick-on-Shannon, Leitrim Village, Drumshanbo and extending southwards along the Shannon corridor towards Roosky and eastwards along the Shannon – Erne corridor towards Ballinamore, where there is a need to: avoid coalescence, protect the urban character/setting, avoid the proliferation of wastewater treatment systems and protect the carrying capacity of strategic roads. Also included are the environs of Dromahair and the environs of Kinlough/Tullaghan/Lough Melvin, that are within the urban influence of Sligo and are associated with environmentally sensitive areas. There is a need to ensure that the capacity of these areas to serve the residential needs of the local community is not compromised by development that could be more appropriately accommodated elsewhere.

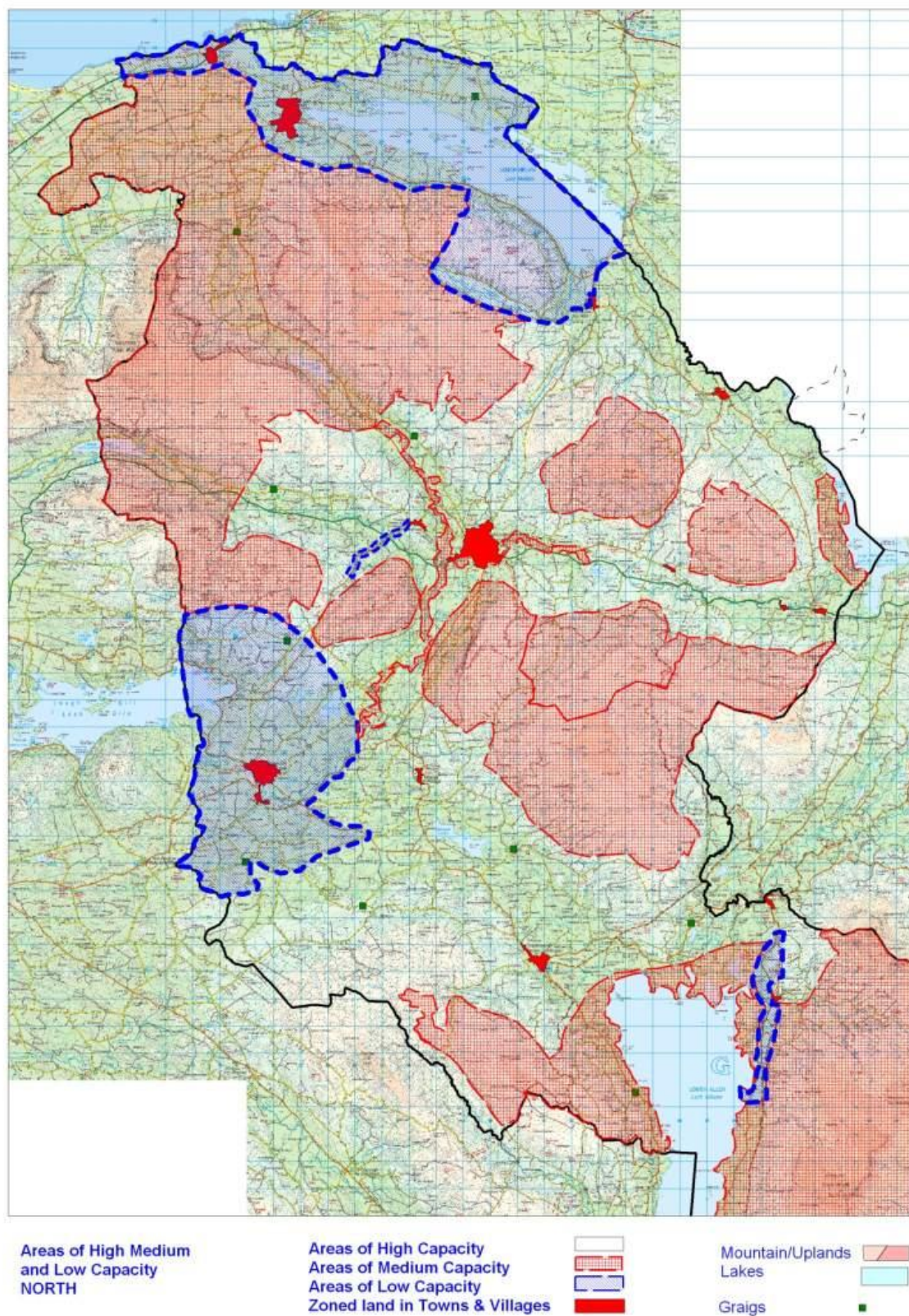
Medium Capacity/Medium Availability

In general terms these are areas of high environmental sensitivity such as: Special Areas of Conservation, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Areas of High Visual Amenity were considered as Medium Capacity Areas. There is a need to protect the integrity of these designated areas. As referenced above there is also a need to ensure that the capacity of these areas to serve the residential need of the local community is not compromised.

High Capacity/High Availability

These comprise the balance of the areas. In general terms they do not include designated areas and are not, in relative terms, under pressure from nearby settlements. There are however 'pockets' within High Capacity Areas that are clearly under pressure from one-off housing and where the capacity to absorb further development is limited. Proposal for development in such areas will be assessed on their merits and may be subject to the criteria applicable to areas of Low Capacity or Medium Capacity as considered appropriate.

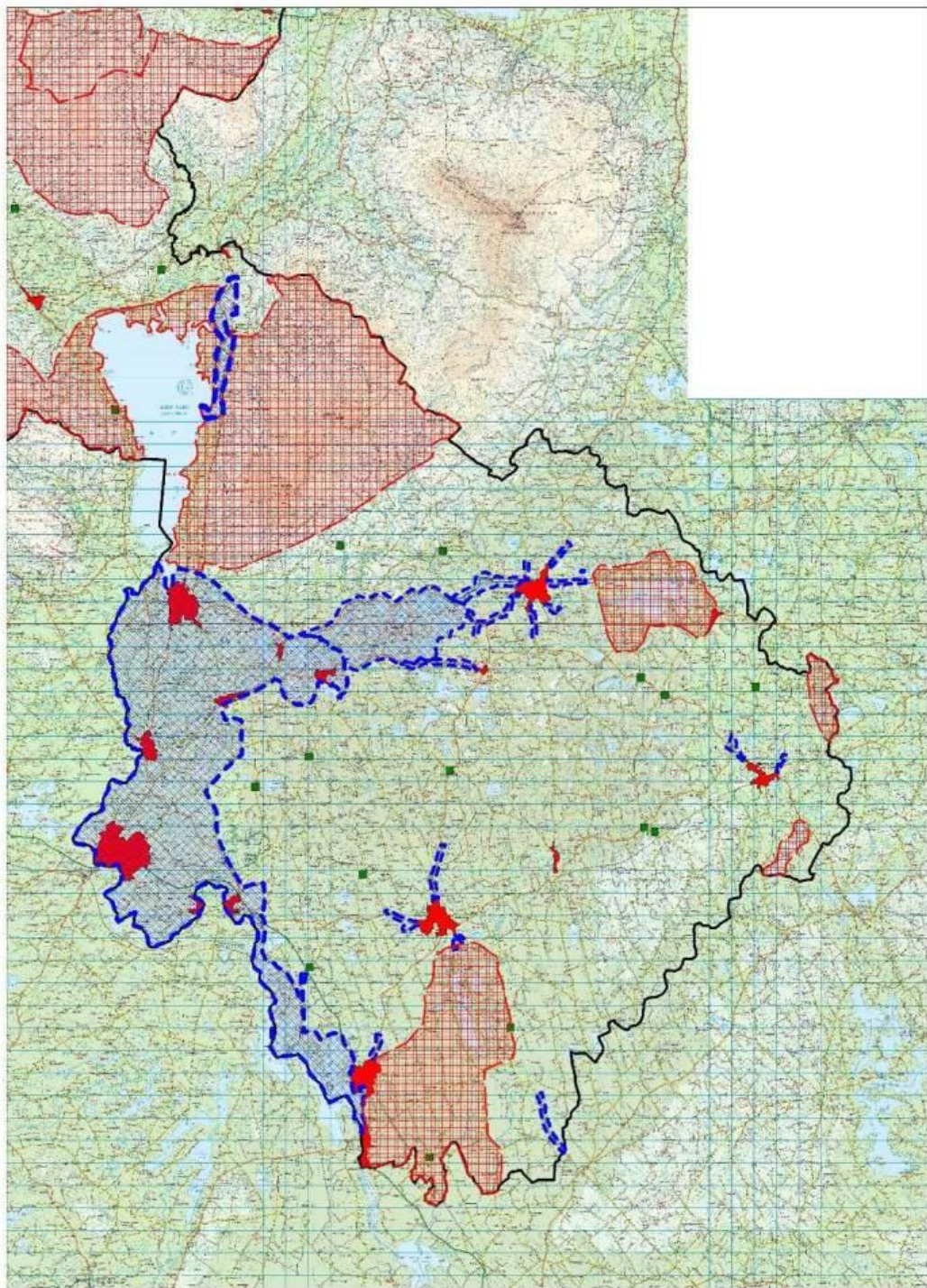
Map 3.2 Areas of High Capacity, Medium and Low Capacity – North Leitrim



See (Volume 3) Appendix E 'Book of Maps' for larger scale version of Map 3.2

Map 3.3 Areas of High Capacity, Medium and Low Capacity – South Leitrim





Areas of High, Medium
and Low Capacity
SOUTH

Areas of High Capacity
Areas of Medium Capacity
Areas of Low Capacity
Zoned land in Towns & Villages



Mountain/Uplands
Lakes
Graigs



See (Volume 3) Appendix E 'Book of Maps' for larger scale version of
Map 3.3

Policy 15 It is the policy of the Council to operate a presumption in favour of one-off housing in Areas of *High Capacity/High Availability* subject to normal planning requirements.

Policy 16 It is the policy of the Council to consider one-off housing acceptable within areas of *Medium Capacity/Medium Availability* subject to normal planning requirements and where applicants demonstrate compliance with the following requirements:

They are currently living and/or working in the area;

or

They are working within reasonable commuting distance therefrom and wish to use the proposed development as their permanent place of residence and where there is evidence that there will be a net community gain arising from the proposed development;

or

They are originally native to the area and wish to return to the area for family or social reasons and wish to live there as their permanent place of residence;

or

They would propose to live full time in that area of the County and they would make an economic and social contribution towards the development of that local area.

Policy 17 It is the policy of the Council to consider one-off housing acceptable within areas of *Low Capacity* subject to normal planning requirements and where applicants demonstrate compliance with the following requirements:

1) They are currently living in the Low Capacity area, in the immediate vicinity of the proposed site and can demonstrate a need to continue living in the area, other than in their current residence, with their proposed dwelling, as their permanent place of residence;

or

Can demonstrate that they are originally native to the Low Capacity Area and wish to return to this area for family or social reasons and wish to live there, with their proposed dwelling as their permanent place of residence.

AND

Are willing to enter into an occupancy agreement, in relation to the future occupancy of the proposed dwelling, with the Planning Authority under Section 47 of the *Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended*.



Other developments considered acceptable in areas identified as medium and low capacity include:

- The conversion, adaptation, re use and extension of existing rural dwellings and other structures capable of being adapted to residential use.
- The replacement of existing dwellings on the same site.
Where it is proposed to replace an existing dwelling on the same site, the Planning Authority will have regard to the soil conditions on the site and its suitability to accommodate effluent treatment systems to appropriate standards to service the proposed development. Where an effluent treatment system already exists on site, its suitability must be certified by a qualified Site Assessor and by the Designated Certifier under the 2013 Building Control Regulations. If the system is found to be unsatisfactory or unsuitable to cater for the proposed development, it shall be de-commissioned and replaced by a modern wastewater treatment system, whose design and construction shall be bespoke, to meet the site suitability requirements.

Refer to Sections 4.1.4 Rural Areas, Section 4.2.2 Ribbon Development, Section 4.3.10 House Extensions, Section 4.2.4 Individual Houses, Section 4.1.7 High Capacity/High Availability Areas, Section 4.1.8 Medium Capacity/Medium Availability Areas, Section 4.1.9 Low Capacity/Low Availability Areas Section 4.2.6 Wastewater Treatment and Section 4.5.8 Access onto Public Roads and Sight Lines .

3.2.3 RENEWAL OF RURAL AREAS

The *National Spatial Strategy* (NSS) outlines four broad objectives for a sustainable rural policy framework, as follows:

1. To sustain and renew established rural communities and the existing stock of investment in a way that responds to the various spatial, structural and economic changes taking place, while protecting the important assets rural areas possess;
2. To strengthen the established structure of villages and smaller settlements, both to assist local economies and to accommodate additional population in a way that supports the viability of public transport and local infrastructure and services, such as schools and water services;
3. To ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality, the natural and cultural heritage and the quality of the landscape are protected to support quality of life and economic viability;
4. To ensure that rural settlement policies take account of and are appropriate to local circumstances.

These objectives are reflected in the policies and objectives of this Plan. In the context of policies appropriate to local circumstances, the Council recognises that Leitrim is predominantly a rural county with a history of declining population. However, this trend has been reversed in each of the last three intercensal periods. According to the CSO, in 2011 Leitrim was the most rural county in the country with almost 90% of the population living in a

rural setting³³. A network, of social and economic services and facilities, has evolved to support the rural population including Schools, Post Offices, parish Churches, Sports clubs and Community organisations. The Council believes that this web of institutions and organisations has been under threat from population decline. It is the primary aim to protect and reinforce the population base that underpins them. The Council is proactively involved in regenerating rural areas.

In terms of the different types of rural areas as set out in the NSS, Leitrim can be classified as a 'structurally weak rural area'. In this context the Council will be favourably disposed towards granting planning permission for residential development to those who wish to live in the County, whether they are existing residents of the County seeking to remain here, family members of existing residents, returning emigrants or new migrants coming to the County for the first time, subject to compliance with the policies, objectives and development control standards set out in this Plan.

In deciding on planning applications for housing in rural areas, the Council will balance the obligation to protect the heritage and environment and maximise use of infrastructure against the net community benefit accruing to an area by permitting further residential development, particularly in areas of population decline and/or where rural services are under threat.

The smaller the impact on the environment, the more favourably disposed towards the development the Council will be.

Development must avoid pollution of surface and ground waters.

Development must avoid creating a traffic hazard.

In assessing development in the countryside, the carrying capacity of the receiving environment will be considered. Thus where one or two houses may be acceptable in a given location, the cumulative impact of a larger number of houses (or other developments) may lead to an excessive concentration of wastewater treatment systems feeding into a watercourse, excessive traffic on an inadequate road infrastructure or an unacceptable visual impact on a sensitive landscape.

Refer to Sections 4.1.4 Rural Areas, Section 4.2.6 Wastewater Treatment and Section 4.5.8 Access onto Public Roads and Sight Lines .

Housing in rural areas should follow the design principles laid out in the Council's *Design Guide for the Siting and Design of Single Houses within the Leitrim Countryside*, including encouragement of innovative house designs and site layouts that harmonise with the landscape and respect well-established planning principles.

Refer to Section 4.2.4 Individual Houses, Section 4.2.5 Site Boundaries and Section 4.6.7 Light Pollution for further Guidance.

The refurbishment of derelict or abandoned buildings in the countryside will be particularly favoured.

³³ Over 34% of the population of Leitrim resided in Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 towns in 2011, up from 30% in 2006.



Refer to Section 4.2.3 Restoration and Conversion of Houses and Structures of Note and Section 4.2.6 Wastewater Treatment for further guidance.

Objective 13 It is an objective of the Council to take a proactive, integrated approach towards the sustainable development of rural areas and to engage with the public and other interested parties in so doing.

3.3 AREA SPECIFIC LAND USE POLICIES

3.3.1 LAND USE ZONING

The Council does not currently consider it appropriate to zone lands in the countryside for particular uses. Applications for development will be considered on their merits taking into consideration the potential gain (or loss) for the local community, the potential impact on the receiving environment and landscape, health, safety and other technical issues.

3.3.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

The Council produced a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the whole County, (available from the Council and on the Council website). This LCA has been used as a Guidance Document to inform policy on Forestry and Wind Farms, as referred to in Sections 3.7.3 and 3.11.5.

3.3.3 THE COASTAL AREA

Leitrim has a short but beautiful coastline opening onto Donegal Bay. The Council recognises that pressure for development in this exposed and sensitive location is particularly intense and the Council is anxious that such development is sympathetic to its location.

Refer to Section 4.1.10 Coastal Area for further guidance.

The Council will liaise with the neighbouring Counties of Sligo and Donegal in the drawing up of any coastal zone management plan that may be necessary to protect the coast around Donegal Bay.

Policy 18 It is the policy of the Council that in the coastal area, with particular reference to the seaward side of the coast roads (LP-2059-1, LP-2059-2 and LP-2059-3), primary importance will be given to the conservation or enhancement of the landscape and coast, subject to any changes in the National Foreshore Policy which is currently under review.

Development may be permitted if:

- it is located in the village of Tullaghan and serviceable by gravity to the existing wastewater collection system;³⁴
- it accords with its surrounding in scale, density, height, massing, layout and materials;
- it would not have a detrimental impact on skylines or important views;
- it is not in an area at risk from flooding, erosion by the sea or landslips which may require expensive engineering works.

Policy 19 It is the policy of Leitrim County Council to actively promote and protect public access to the coast.

3.4 COMMUNITY SERVICES

As part of the *Government Action Programme for Local Government Reform: Putting People First*, Local Authorities have an enhanced role in Local Economic Development. The Government enterprise and jobs strategy titled, *Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs Locally*, is an important framework for Local Authorities in progressing local strategies for economic development and enterprise support to drive the *Action Plan for Jobs*.

Local Authorities provide essential services for business to thrive. The Local Government system interacts in one form or another with a wide range of large, medium and small-scale enterprises operating within the County and beyond. Without the essential services managed and delivered by Local Authorities, these enterprises would find it hard to do business. The Local Government enterprise and jobs strategy focuses on helping as many of these businesses retain and create jobs in the very challenging trading environment that they face. This Council will strive to continue and increase their efforts to promote the economic development of the County and in particular to provide leadership at local level to support the commercial, cultural and tourism sectors. In particular, the development of environmentally sensitive enterprises such as sustainable tourism and eco-friendly agri-business, subject to normal planning requirements, will be promoted and facilitated.

Objective 14 It is an objective of the Council to work in conjunction with the local business sector, relevant local, regional and national agencies and other interested parties towards the implementation of the strategy as set out in the document; *Local Government Sectoral Strategy to Promote Employment and Support Local Enterprise - Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs – Locally*³⁵.

³⁴ The existing wastewater treatment system is operating at capacity. It is proposed to connect to Bundoran wastewater system within the period of the Plan.

³⁵ Accessible at www.environ.ie/en/Publications/LocalGovernment/Administration/



The Council is committed to the implementation of the action programme as set out in the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government document *Putting People First – An Action Programme for Effective Local Government*. The emphasis in this action programme is to enable local government to deliver more to the community it serves, to be more accountable and to build a stronger relationship between: local government, local representatives and the communities they serve. It is about local government putting people first as the title refers³⁶.

The Council acknowledges the well-established and significant role played by Local Community Organisations in the development of their respective communities throughout the County.

The Council is committed to working with Local Community Organisations and other Agencies and to developing improved ways of enabling the development of community-based services and facilities, and in developing ‘community capacity building’ (i.e. developing measures that strengthen the collective ability of a community).

Objective 15	It is an objective of the Council to identify deficiencies in social infrastructure within the County and to plan for the future development of all services in an equitable and fair manner, including the provision of adequate zoned lands to accommodate the future provision and development of social infrastructure.
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3.4.1 CHILDCARE FACILITIES

The Council will refer to Ministerial Guidelines *Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities* when considering matters relating to Childcare Facilities.

Policy 20 **It is the policy of the Council to actively encourage the provision of childcare facilities accessible to parents at their place of residence and/or place of work.**

Large residential or commercial developments may be required to provide adequate childcare facilities as part of the development.

The conversion of a house, in whole or in part, to a *crèche* or playschool will be acceptable in principle. However, the Council recognises that purpose designed and built facilities better meet the needs of children.

³⁶ A guide to the document may be viewed on the Departments web site at; www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/LocalGovernmentReform/PublicationsDocuments/FileDownload,31310,en.pdf

In all cases an adequate outdoor play area and good access for patrons dropping off and collecting children, without compromising neighbouring residential amenity, will be required.

Objective 16 It is an objective of the Council to support and facilitate the Childcare Strategy for the County, prepared by the County Childcare Committee in accordance with Ministerial Guidelines *Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.

3.4.2 EDUCATION

The County is served by 40 primary and 7 secondary schools. The Council believes that: teaching, equipment, standard of accommodation and recreation facilities available at these schools should be to the highest standard provided in the National network. The Council will liaise with the Dept. of Education to identify those schools likely to increase their enrolment and towards which investment should be targeted over the next six years. The retention of these schools is vital if rural communities are to continue to survive and thrive.

Policy 21 It is the policy of the Council to support the viability of schools by encouraging families to settle within the catchment area of these schools.

Proposals for the refurbishment and extension of schools will generally be favourably considered.

Policy 22 It is the policy of the Council to support and facilitate the development of a third level institution, such as an out-reach branch, or distance learning centre of a university or institute of technology or other third-level school/facility to locate within the County.

When assessing proposals for education facilities, the Council will have regard to 'Technical Guidance Document -025 – Identification and Suitability Assessment for Sites for Primary Schools', as published by the Department of Education & Skills in 2012, and 'Technical Guidance Document -027 – Identification and Suitability Assessment for Sites for Post Primary Schools', as published by the Department of Education & Skills in 2012 and the Code of Practice 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System', as published by the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government in 2008, and any updated version of these documents.

Objective 17 It is an objective of the Council to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills and local schools' Boards of Management in planning for education and in determining the need for facilities.

Objective 18 It is an objective of the Council to reserve individual sites for primary and secondary schools as and when they are required and identified.



3.4.3 CULTURAL FACILITIES AND LIBRARIES

The Council recognises the importance of cultural facilities for the existing population of the County and as an attraction for potential future residents.

Policy 23 **It is the policy of the Council to consider the arts as playing a central role in the promotion of the county as a quality location to live and invest in and the enrichment of the quality of life for the existing population.**

It fully supports the works of such institutions as the Leitrim Sculpture Centre and The Glens Centre in Manorhamilton, and the Dock in Carrick-on-Shannon.

The *Leitrim Arts Strategy 2012-2017* was adopted in June 2012 and the Council is committed to implementing its objectives as funds allow. A central ambition of the Strategy is to continue to develop greater access and quality participation in the arts for all people resident or visiting Leitrim. The main themes to be addressed as part of the Strategy include: -

- To bring greater awareness to the culturally rich and artistically vibrant offering and services in Leitrim;
- To ensure that each citizen has the opportunity to engage with, and participate in, the arts fully;
- To support and assist artists and enables arts organisations, venues and festivals to achieve their potential;
- To encourage partnership across all sectors and agencies in order to achieve shared goals.

Policy 24 **It is the Policy of Leitrim County Council to continue to operate the *Percent for Art Scheme* in supporting the development and provision of public art projects in association with nationally-funded capital projects. The scheme will be applied to all capital-funded schemes undertaken by this Council.**

The Council shall continue to provide a high-quality library service. In particular the Council will seek to:

- Adhere to the *County Library Strategy 2009-2013* and prepare a *County Library Strategy 2014-2019*;
- Develop a new library in Carrick-on-Shannon and Dromahair;
- Seek a suitable location for Archives;
- Operate an Archive Service under the umbrella of the County Library Service;
- Continue to develop the Genealogy Service within the County;
- Develop and expand the digital library.

A new *Library Development Plan* for the period 2014 - 2018 is being prepared. The main focus will be on the development of improved library facilities in Carrick-on-Shannon. The *Library*

Development Plan will consider the upgrading of services and facilities at the network of branch libraries throughout the County.

Objective 19 It is an objective of the Council to provide a County Archive service, with a suitable building facility to house the Archive.

The Council will continue to support the Leitrim Genealogy Centre as a means of providing an enquiry service for people with Leitrim ancestry. The Council also recognises the importance of this service in promoting roots tourism.

Leitrim County Council recognises the importance of the Irish Language as forming a significant part of the County's Cultural Heritage. The Council will support local active Irish Language and Heritage Groups in the promotion of the language throughout the County.

As Gaeilge

Ghlac an Chomhairle Contae le Scéim faoin Acht Teanga agus beidh na moltaí sa phlean sin á chur i gcrích de réir a cheile faoi mar atá sa scéim. Beidh seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge á chur ar fáil don phobal agus beidh fáilte roimh gnó trí Ghaeilge leis an gComhairle. Tá moltaí sa Scéim maidir le hainmneacha eastáit, comharthaí bóithre, comharthaíocht inmheánach, agus a lán rudaí eile. Beidh an obair sin deanta faoi stiúradh an Choiste Gaeilge.

3.4.4 HEALTH & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Human health encompasses an enormous area of study and includes everything from physical and mental disabilities, long-term illness, acute and chronic disease, mental health and aging populations.

Proposed 'Activities/Uses' that have potential to cause harm to humans will be required to undertake an appropriate level of environmental assessment considering the likely impact of this 'activity/use', directly and indirectly, on humans.

Sources of health problems arising from environmental conditions may arise from areas such as: Air, Water, Noise, Light, Geology and Biodiversity.

The expansion and upgrading of existing health care facilities, including accident and emergency services, the provision of day-care centres and community centres will all be encouraged by the Council, in anticipation of the expected growth in demand for such facilities.

Policy 25 It is the policy of the Council to protect public health by promoting and facilitating a proper level of health related services and facilities and avoiding the risk to human health arising from pollution (including light and noise pollution) associated with development.



- Policy 26** The Council recognises that the Health Service Executive (HSE) is the body with statutory responsibility for the provision of Health Care Services in County Leitrim. It is the policy of the Council to co-operate with the HSE, voluntary and community groups in the provision of adequate healthcare and community care facilities for the residents of the County.
- Policy 27** The Council will promote co-operation between the Housing Authority and the HSE in co-location of social housing and sheltered housing where synergies and economies-of-scale may be achieved in the provision of community and day-care centres, which may be mutually beneficial to both providers of these services.

3.4.5 BURIAL GROUNDS

The Council will assist and encourage local involvement in upkeep and maintenance of burial grounds, and in the preservation of the heritage value of burial grounds. Advice on the public health and other technical aspects of new burial grounds will continue to be given to local community interests.

- Policy 28** It is the policy of the Council to maintain all burial grounds in their charge in good condition and will extend them, as necessary, and assist local communities in the provision of burial grounds to serve their area.
- Policy 29** It is the policy of the Council to protect burial grounds within the County and encourage their rehabilitation and maintenance, in accordance with good or accepted conservation principles.

3.4.6 FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Council operates five fire stations in the County with the service headquarters in Carrick-on-Shannon. Leitrim is a participant in the *Computer Aided Mobilisation Project (CAMP)*, including participation in the upgrading of an emergency call-out service. Leitrim Fire Service also participates in the implementation of the *Leitrim Major Emergency Framework Plan 2012*. Efforts will continue to seek new or improved facilities. Work will continue on the implementation of the findings of the review of the Fire Service carried out through the initiative of the DoECLG National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management *Keeping Communities Safe*.

- Policy 30** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that an adequate water supply is available in all urban areas and in as extensive an area as possible in rural areas for fire fighting purposes.

The Council will support and facilitate the establishment and training of voluntary inshore search and rescue teams, in partnership with other relevant agencies.

3.4.7 SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social inclusion may be defined as a series of positive actions to achieve equality of access to goods and services, to assist all individuals to participate in their community and society, to encourage the contribution of all persons to social and cultural life and to be aware of and to challenge all forms of discrimination. Whilst the level of in-migration to the County has reduced in recent years compared to the early 2000s, persons continue to move to the County for housing, economic and refugee purposes; although Leitrim's population growth is now spearheaded by greater births over deaths rate. Our communities have become more diverse and for this reason providing for social inclusion has become a significant challenge facing the Council. The Council recognises that it has a role through its planning powers to strive to achieve social inclusion, particularly through ensuring the equal and fair distribution of opportunities and services for all of the people in the County and ensuring equal access to such opportunities. There are several groups within society that are considered to have specific planning and design needs. These include children/young people, people who are ill or with disabilities, travellers, members of social and ethnic minority groups and older people. The Council is committed to achieving the social inclusion of people from all sectors of society.

Social inclusion has been mainstreamed across all Government and public body policy development in the last number of years. This has been done through embedding the issue into all major strategic documents, in particular, the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016*, the social inclusion elements of *Towards 2016*, the *NDP* and Ireland's report to the EU on *National Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion* (NSSPI). As well as the National Office for Social Inclusion, most Government Departments and Public Bodies now have Social Inclusion Units, whose remit is to assist in the mainstreaming of best practice of Social Inclusion into the day-to-day provision of public services across all sectors.

The Government's *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016* highlights a number of high-level goals, which are aimed at making a decisive impact on poverty:

1. Ensuring children reach their true potential;
2. Supporting working age people and people with disabilities, through activation measures and the provision of services to increase employment and participation;
3. Providing the type of supports that enable older people to maintain a comfortable and high-quality standard of living;
4. Building viable and sustainable communities, improving the lives of people living in disadvantaged areas and building social capital.

The Council supports these goals and will work with other agencies and interested parties to implement Government policy and thereby promote social inclusion within the County and beyond.

Refer to Section 4.6.5 Care for Persons with Disabilities for further guidance.



- Policy 31** It is the policy of the Council to recognise the needs of people with special needs that live or work in the County or who choose to visit, and to support the provision of facilities for people with special needs.
- Policy 32** It is the policy of the Council to consider cultural diversity and ethnic minorities in planning for the needs of communities and to seek to consult with the relevant agencies representing or working within these groups.
- Policy 33** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that community facilities and social services provided are accessible to all individuals, communities and sectors of society, including people with disabilities, and marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

Objective 20 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the recommended standards such as those set out in *Building for Everyone - a Universal Design Approach* (NDA 2012) are applied in internal and external built public environments where feasible.

3.5 HOUSING

3.5.1 GENERAL

- Policy 34** It is the policy of the Council to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in a good environment and, as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice.

The Council will pursue this goal:

- a) by the direct provision of housing;
- b) by facilitating and co-operating with approved voluntary housing associations and other social and affordable housing providers;
- c) by facilitating the development of the private rented sector as an attractive tenure and the implementation of the Rental Accommodation Scheme;
- d) by providing paths to home ownership from social housing and in response to demand for affordable housing;
- e) by continuing to operate grant schemes to assist older people and people with a disability in private housing;
- f) by being favourably disposed towards the development of new houses in appropriate locations and refurbishment and extension of existing houses in the county.

Standards for residential developments are detailed in the Development Control section of this plan. All housing developments, including those carried out by or on behalf of the Council itself and other voluntary bodies, will be required to conform to the policies and standards set out in this Development Plan. Proposals for housing developments should be guided by the design standards and principles set out in the guidance document entitled,

Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities and Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments prepared by the DoECLG.

Analysis of household size undertaken within the Housing Strategy suggests that the Council should consider encouraging housing units with a smaller number of bedrooms. Applicants for new housing should consider potential for designing in adaptability into room usage (modular elements).

3.5.2 SOCIAL & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Council has prepared the *Leitrim County Housing Strategy 2015-2021*, in accordance with its obligations under Part V of the *Planning Act*. The Strategy was adopted alongside the adoption of the Development Plan. It will be a policy of the Council to review this Strategy periodically. All developments which fall under this category are advised to consult the *Housing Strategy 2015-2021*. This document is available from the Council.

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| Policy 35 | It is Council policy to meet identified needs through the delivery of various housing supports in a coherent and integrated manner. |
| Policy 36 | It is the Council's policy to encourage the distribution of social and affordable dwellings so as to meet the locational preferences of housing applicants, build on and strengthen existing social networks and provide for the growth of towns and villages within the county. |
| Policy 37 | The Council will continue to work with the Voluntary Housing Sector. |
| Policy 38 | It is the Council's policy to assist in the provision of houses or sites on lands acquired as part of the overall housing programme or under the provision of the <i>Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended</i>. |
| Policy 39 | It is the Council's policy to support the settlement and integration of Traveller families into settled communities, in line with their expressed preferences, and to provide accommodation under the <i>Traveller Accommodation Programme</i>. |
| Policy 40 | It is the Council's policy to examine and bring under review the adequacy of lands zoned for residential purposes in the context of meeting the demands for housing generally, including social and affordable housing. |
| Policy 41 | It is the Council's policy to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reserving by way of condition in any planning permission granted, 12.5 per cent of housing for social, in any development of 5 or more houses or on greater than 0.1 hectares within the zoned areas of the following towns and villages; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tier 1 Centres: Carrick-on-Shannon Tier 2 Centres: Ballinamore, Dromahair, Drumshanbo, Kinlough and Manorhamilton [but excluding Mohill] Tier 3 Centres: Carrigallen, Dromod, Leitrim and Tullaghan [but excluding Drumkeerin] |



Given the identified demand for social housing and given that it was identified that there is no demand for affordable housing (given the current low cost of housing within the housing market within the county), the required provision on any individual site, between social and private market housing should be as required by the Planning and Housing Authority, having regard to the desirability of an appropriate split of 12.5% social and 87.5% for the private market;

- b. Acquiring housing in private estates to accommodate persons on the housing waiting list in order to meet demand for social housing and also to counteract and/or avoid the effects of social segregation;
- c. Encouraging home ownership amongst local authority tenants;
- d. Encouraging development in areas, which at present exhibit an imbalance in either direction.

The Council recognises the need for population growth throughout the County, the need to support persons building family homes in rural areas, and the need also to strengthen the demographic profile of the County. In particular where there are threats to the sustainability of rural communities, the Council will take account of and protect the agricultural and other socio-economic needs of that community. These objectives form part of the overall Housing Strategy.

As part of its policy of encouraging residential development on serviced land, the Council will seek to acquire lands based on need in the County's towns and villages with a view to developing for social housing.

The Council will seek to develop sustainable communities by ensuring that social housing developments are generally small in scale. The size and nature of the receiving community will be a factor in determining the appropriate size of a social housing development, including the provision of community infrastructure.

The Council will provide appropriate housing in towns, villages and rural areas for those eligible and in need. Land and property will be acquired, by Compulsory Purchase Order if necessary, to meet social housing demand.

3.5.3 ACCOMMODATION OF THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

The land use strategy for the towns and villages identifies the zoning provisions, which identifies lands which are 'acceptable in principle' and 'open for consideration' for the development of halting sites (See Table 10 Land Use Zoning Matrix). Serviced halting sites will be provided and maintained by the Council as the need arises.

Policy 42 **It is the policy of the Council to provide appropriate housing accommodation for the Traveller Community in accordance with the *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018* adopted by the Council and in accordance with subsequent revisions to this programme, when formally adopted by Council.**

3.5.4 ACCOMMODATION OF THE HOMELESS

The Council believes decent accommodation is a basic human right and will implement the 'North West Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2013-2018' adopted by the Council. The Council will work with voluntary organisations, and other government agencies, in ensuring accommodation is available to all.

3.5.5 ACCOMMODATION OF PERSONS WITH SENSORY/PHYSICAL/INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

The Council supports the provisions of *Part M of the Building Regulations (Access for People with Disabilities)* and will require all external works associated with the development of houses (footpaths, external ramps and steps, etc.) to be accessible to persons with disabilities. The Council will, however, encourage all such facilities to be designed and implemented using the principals of universal design standards in all new developments.

Refer to Section 4.5.4 Parking for the Disabled for further guidance.

The Council supports the policies of the Health Service Executive in providing care in the community, wherever possible, and will seek to facilitate the Health Service Executive in the provision of housing for persons with sensory or intellectual disabilities.

3.5.6 ACCOMMODATION OF OLDER PEOPLE

The Council is particularly concerned with the provision of appropriate housing for older people resident in the County. It is anxious that they can continue to reside in good quality accommodation within their communities, for as long as possible.

Refer to Section 4.3.9 Residential Care Homes for further guidance.

Policy 43 **It is the policy of the Council that a proportion of all new residential schemes will be dedicated to the special needs of the older people.**

The Council is conscious that the population of Leitrim County is ageing and that the number of older people requiring day care or long term care will increase. While the Health Service Executive is responsible for healthcare, the Council will seek to facilitate their needs so as to ensure residents can remain active in their communities, for as long as possible.

Purpose-built retirement homes are becoming increasingly popular. The Council will be favourably disposed towards their development, particularly in existing population centres, where residents are best located to remain active citizens.

Objective 21 It is an objective of the Council to provide Local Authority housing in all areas where the need arises for those persons eligible. The scale of social housing shall be commensurate to the scale of the settlement and an overconcentration of social housing in particular locations is to be avoided, for example, as in Mohill and Drumkeerin.



Objective 22	It is an objective of the Council to implement Government policy in relation to all aspects of social housing.
Objective 23	It is an objective of the Council to provide advice and assistance to approved voluntary housing organisations operating in the county.
Objective 24	It is an objective of the Council to provide, landscape and maintain serviced halting sites (both permanent and transient) should the need arise and in accordance with the provision of the Traveller Accommodation Programme for the accommodation of the Travelling Community.

3.6 TRANSPORTATION

3.6.1 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

The Council policies and objectives in relation to Sustainable Transportation are guided by National Policy document *Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future*. This document recognises the vital importance of continued investment in transport to ensure an efficient economy and continued social development, but also promotes more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. The promotion of initiatives that can reduce congestion, improve local environments and encourage healthier and safer lifestyles are key features of sustainable transportation. The Council will implement where feasible guidance provided within the Ministerial *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (2012). The Council encourage, and will facilitate participation, in the 'Green Schools' programme which is run by An Taisce.

The Council seeks to influence people's travel behaviour towards more sustainable options and seeks to do so by working closely with relevant organisations in improving public transport facilities and promoting opportunities for alternative transportation such as walking and cycling. The Council will be guided by: the National Transport Authority (NTA) document *Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans – Guidance for Planning Authorities and Workplace Travel Plans – A Guide for Implementers and Mobility Management Plans*, in attempting to secure and implement travel plans through the planning process. Also, the Council will be guided by the NTA National Cycle Manual, which sets out guidance on all aspects of cycle planning, from network development to detailed design.

The Council recognises the importance of walking to the well being and quality of life of residents. It will support and encourage the continued development of walking as a sustainable form of transportation and will work with organisations and groups in the promotion of safe walking throughout the County, including heritage walks and the protection of public rights of way, which are an important amenity and tourism resource.

Opportunities to upgrade transport routes and carry out ancillary works, including the provision of: signage, other traffic management measures, amenity areas, cycle and walking routes and landscaping, will be pursued and implemented as resources become available.

Policy 44 It is the policy of the Council to support the National Policy document *Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future* and implement, where feasible, guidance provided within the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* or any updated versions of these documents issued within the lifetime of the Plan.

In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, the basis of the Council's transportation policies will be to:

1. minimise demand for transport by encouraging major employers to locate in towns and villages where possible and by encouraging residential occupancy towards those towns and villages;
2. encourage walking and cycling as a recreational activity and a healthy exercise;
3. advocate and facilitate the development of a viable public transport network appropriate to the needs of the communities of Leitrim;
4. minimise the negative impacts of traffic on the environment by developing an efficient and safe road network, and;
5. support the reduction of the carbon footprint of the County's transport sector.

Policy 45 **It is the policy of the Council to support and facilitate where appropriate developments that will reduce the carbon footprint of the County's transport sector.**

3.6.2 MINIMISATION OF DEMAND

The most cost effective and environmentally sustainable approach to transport planning is to minimise demand. The land use policies contained in this plan have been derived with this strategy in mind. In general, enterprises with a significant number of employees will be encouraged to locate on serviced lands close to towns and villages. They may be required to produce a mobility-management plan as part of the planning process. Similarly new residential development will be encouraged to locate within the catchment area of existing services such as schools and shops.

3.6.3 WALKING AND CYCLING

Safe routes to schools from residential areas will be identified in partnership with local communities and will be signed, surfaced and lit appropriately, when and where funds allow.

A number of long-distance walking and cycle tourist routes have been laid out and signposted throughout the County. The Council will facilitate the maintenance of existing routes and further expansion of these networks in co-operation with local community groups and the Regional Tourism Authority. These routes will be appropriately signposted so as to facilitate tourists and warn motorists. The Council will actively encourage the development of walking routes, cycle tracks and bridle paths along redundant railway lines. Proposals for cycling routes will be designed as per guidance provided in the *National Cycle Manual*.

The Active Travel Towns programme (under the 'Smart Travel' initiative) is acknowledged as important in terms of the development of walking and cycling within settlements and is supported by the Council.



- Policy 46** It is the policy of the Council to encourage safe walking and cycling by providing linear parks, footpaths, cycle paths and public lighting in towns and villages.
- Policy 47** It is the policy of the Council to seek to improve the facilities for pedestrians and access facilities for people with special mobility needs in line with the aims of the *European Charter of Pedestrian Rights*.

Objective 25	It is an objective of the Council to complete the design and progress to construction the provision of a walking/cycle way along the old Sligo to Enniskillen railway line in co-operation with Sligo and Cavan County Councils.
Objective 26	It is an objective of the Council to complete the design and progress to construction the provision of a walking/cycle way along the narrow gauge Railway from Dromod to Mohill and Ballinamore, and also along the former narrow gauge Railway route from Ballinamore towards Belturbet, in order to continue to secure this route, pending the re-introduction of rail line and services (such as a tourist/heritage train) along this former line.
Objective 27	It is an objective of the Council to develop the National Cycle Network Corridors within the county – Corridor 1 (Sligo to Dundalk) and Corridor 11 (Limerick to Carrick-on-Shannon).
Objective 28	It is an objective of the Council to develop a National Cycle Network Corridor from Carrick-on-Shannon to Mullingar.
Objective 29	It is an objective of the Council to seek opportunities for the development of suitable walking routes, cycle tracks and bridle paths along redundant railway lines and other suitable locations such as; along waterways and historical access routes.
Objective 29 (a)	It is an objective of the Council to map suitable recreational routes within the County and to promote and facilitate the development of such routes having cognisance of National policy in this regard and subject to the availability of resources

3.6.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Leitrim is poorly served by public transport. The Dublin-Sligo railway line skirts the southwestern border of the county serving Dromod and Carrick-on-Shannon (with a station in Cortober, County Roscommon).

Otherwise the County is served by the Bus Éireann Dublin-Sligo Expressway service and local services and the Ulsterbus Derry-Cork service. The Council supports the continuation and expansion of these services and will support the provision of additional public transport by both public and private sector operators.

The Council would encourage and welcome the introduction of a more integrated transport network to ensure that scheduling of bus and train services allow for maximum interconnectivity.

In particular the Council would encourage and welcome the provision of adequate public transport facilities serving the Ballinamore Area.

- Policy 48** It is the policy of the Council to seek to ensure that adequate day return services to and from Dublin/Sligo are available, and maintained, from all areas of the County.
- Policy 49** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that towns and villages continue to be served by long distance bus services as bypasses are built.
- Policy 50** It is the policy of the Council to support and facilitate the construction of bus shelters, car parks and electric-car charging points at appropriate locations in the county such as the R280, R201, R199, R202, Carrick-on-Shannon and Dromod (Railway Stations).
- Policy 51** It is the policy of the Council as part of the Western Rail Committee, to support proposals for the reinstatement of the Sligo-Limerick western rail corridor.
- Policy 52** It is the policy of this Council to support the provision of high-speed inter-urban rail links between Sligo and Dublin and Sligo and Limerick/Cork, with appropriate park and ride facilities at each station. The Council supports the provision of adequate parking facilities at Carrick-on-Shannon Station (in Cortober, County Roscommon) and Dromod; being the main rail stations which service the County.

3.6.5 RURAL TRANSPORT INITIATIVE

The Council welcomes and supports the Rural Transport Initiative announced by the Department of Public Enterprise. Leitrim County Council will work with and facilitate the implementation of the Rural Transport Policy, at local level with key partners.

- Policy 53** It is the policy of the Council to support all Rural Transport Initiative Schemes in the County and to support means of providing sustainable transport for rural residents.

3.6.6 ROADS

A modern, efficient and safe road network is vital for the future development of Leitrim. The County is served by the N4 (Dublin-Sligo), the N15 (Letterkenny-Sligo) and the N16 (Enniskillen-Sligo) National Primary Routes.

Refer also to Section 4.5 Roads and Parking Development Management Standards for further guidance.



Policy 54 It is the policy of the Council to upgrade the National Primary Routes serving the County. This can be achieved by carrying out certain road improvements along these routes and in particular completing the following road schemes within the lifetime of the Plan:

- N4 Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod (including the Carrick-on-Shannon Bypass)
- N16 Glenfarne to Glencar (including the Manorhamilton Bypass)

Policy 55 It is the policy of the Council to ensure that proposed developments do not prejudice the implementation of any identified/proposed road scheme, whether this relates to the construction of new roads, improvements to or widening of/or re-alignments of existing roads, particularly in relation to National and Regional roads.

See Sections 4.1.12 Road Improvements and Section 4.5 Roads and Parking Development Management Standards for further guidance.

Policy 56 It is the policy of the Council to preserve, free from development, proposed road realignments/improvement lines and associated corridors, where such development would prejudice the implementation of the scheme.

Policy 57 It is the policy of the Council to adhere to the provisions of the DoEC&LG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012) in undertaking development plan and development management functions relating to National Roads.

Objective 30a	It is an objective of the Council to review policy in relation to access onto National Roads in consultation with the NRA and other interested parties, with particular reference to the requirements under Policy 2.5 and 2.6 of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government <i>Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines</i> . Following the review, the Plan will be amended by way of a Variation, as considered appropriate.
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N4 National Primary Route

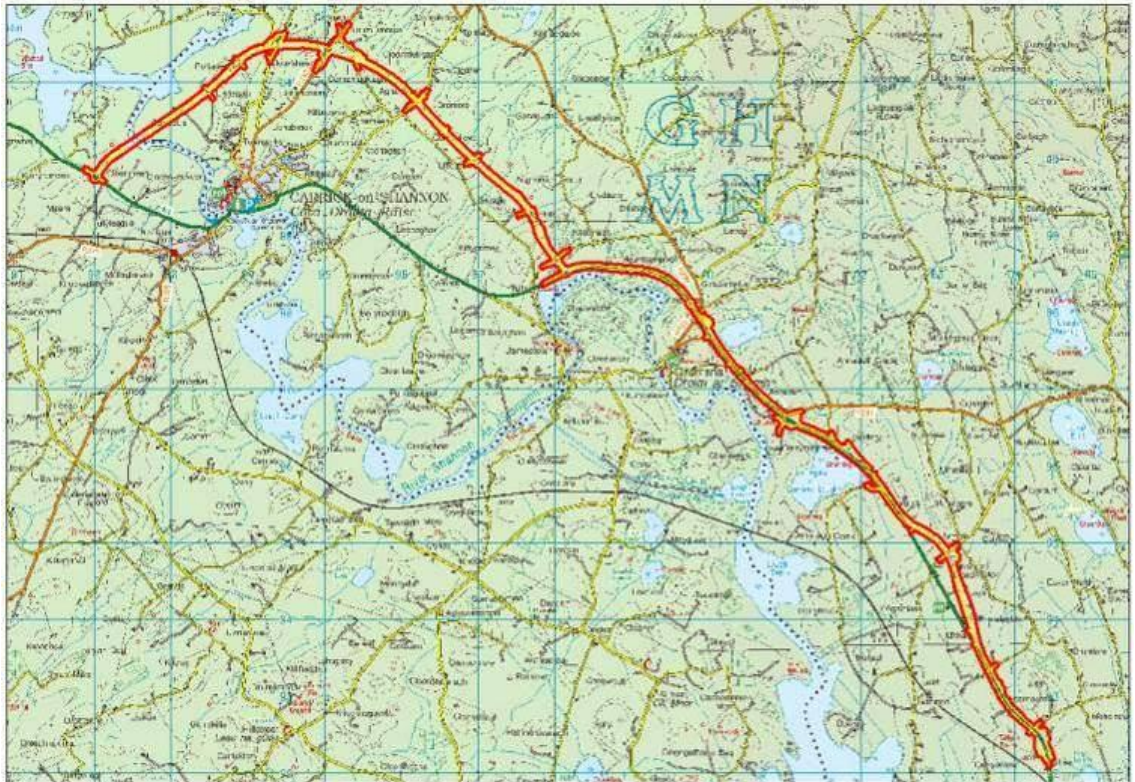
The N4 was significantly upgraded in the early 1990s and the Dromod/Rosky Bypass (Class 2 Dual Carriageway) was completed in 2007. This has greatly improved access between Dublin, Leitrim and the Northwest region. The Council supports the proposed construction of the Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod Road Scheme; and this project is currently awaiting approval to publish the Compulsory Purchase Order and the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Council will protect and improve the carrying capacity of the existing N4 through Carrick-on-Shannon pending completion of the new bypass through conventional and innovative traffic management initiatives.

Objective 30 (b)

It is an objective of the Council to complete the design and construct the proposed Carrick-on-Shannon bypass and to upgrade/realign it as necessary from the western end of the Dromod-Roosky By Pass at Moher/Finnalaghta townlands to link into the Carrick-on-Shannon by-pass. See Map 3.4 N4 Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod Preferred Route.

Map 3.4 N4 Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod Preferred Route



The Council will work in conjunction with Longford and Westmeath County Council and the National Roads Authority in support of the Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) Road Improvement Scheme for which a Preferred Route has been identified. It is an objective of the Council to advocate and facilitate the reopening of the Rynn river. In this regard the Council will work to ensure that any new bridge crossing over the Rynn river will be designed to accommodate the movement of cruisers using the river.

N16 National Primary Route

The Department of Transport published 'A Study of Border Region East West Transport Corridor' (March 2010), which recommends the N16 as part of this corridor.

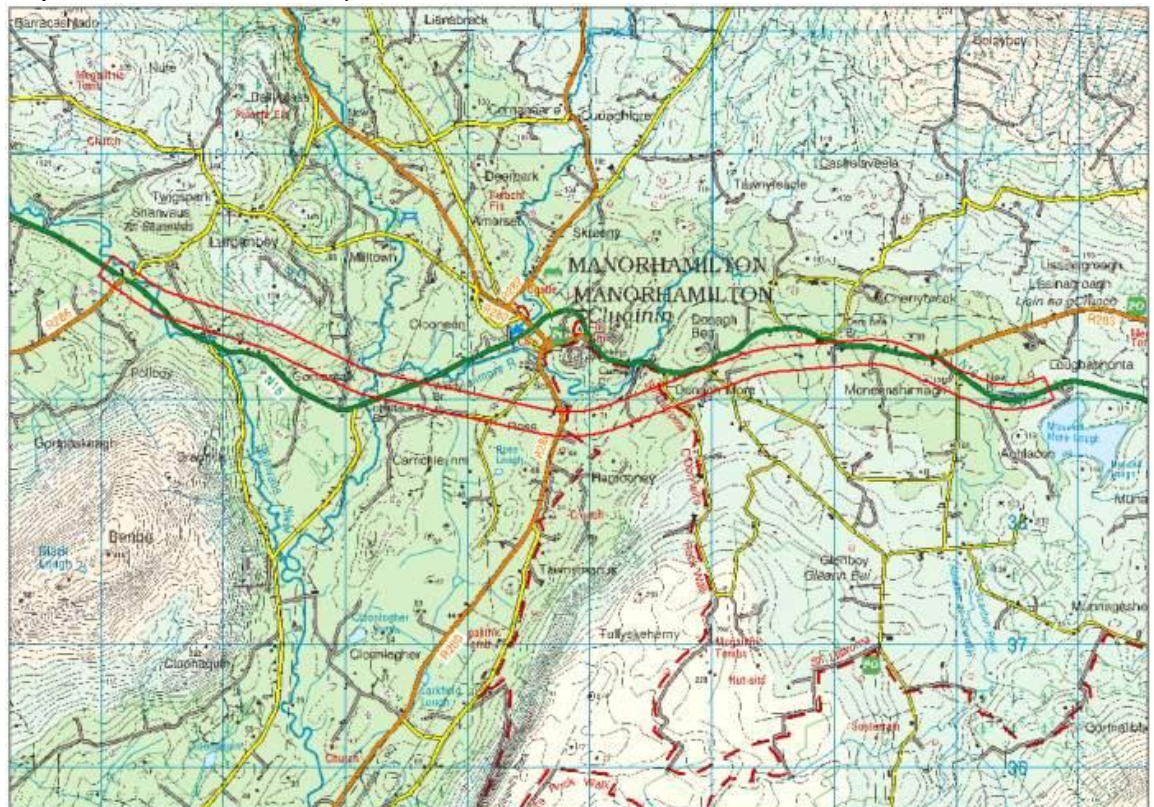
ICBAN produced a document entitled 'Setting Strategic Direction Improving Transport Infrastructure in the Irish Central Border Area' which discussed the importance of the N16

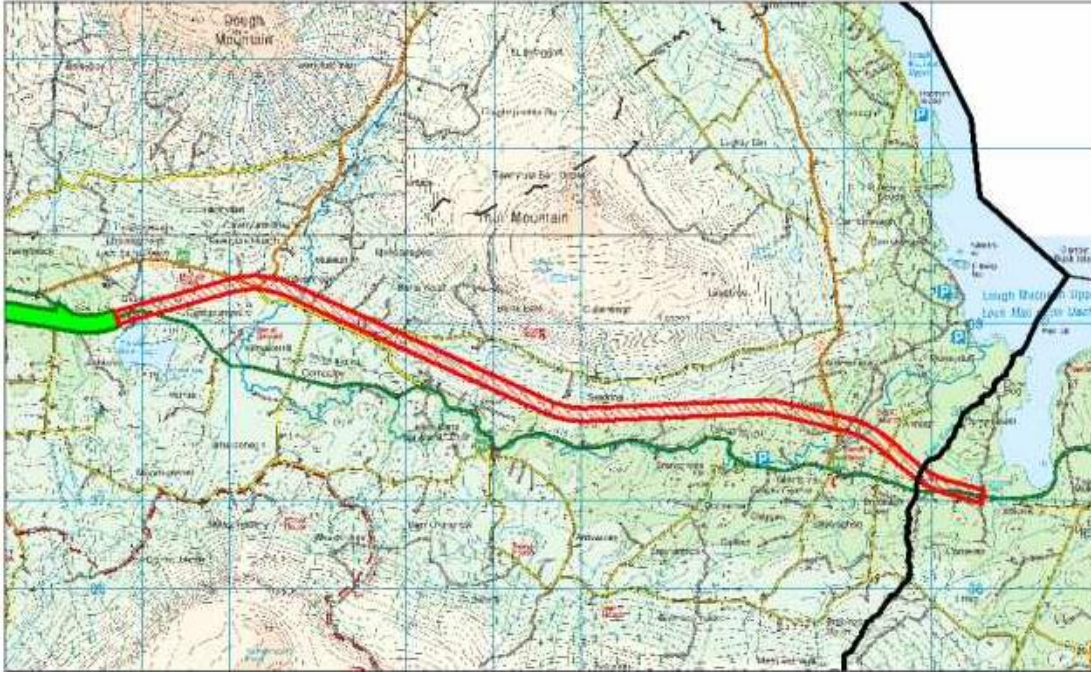
The Council considers the realignment of the entire N16 route in County Leitrim as vital to the long-term development of the county and thus the Council supports the upgrading of the N16. A route selection report has been adopted by Leitrim County Council for sections of the



N16 extending from the proposed Manorhamilton bypass to the Cavan Boundary and from Glencar to the Sligo boundary. These route selections, including the Manorhamilton bypass, will be included within the County Development Plan (See Map 3.5, Map 3.6 and Map 3.7.

Objective 31 It is an objective of the Council to complete the design and progress the realignment/construction of the most critical sections of the N16 route, particularly the Manorhamilton bypass and the interim realignment works already approved by the NRA, at Cornacloy.

Map 3.5 N16 Manorhamilton to Sligo Boundary Preferred Route**Map 3.6 N16 Manorhamilton By-Pass – Preferred Route**

Map 3.7 N16 Manorhamilton – Glenfarne Preferred Route**N15 National Primary Route**

The Council also supports the upgrading of the N15. While the N15 is currently of a high standard, the Council supports any future upgrading of the N15 both within the County and adjoining Counties.

Since the demise of the Cavan-Leitrim railway, transportation routes have been heavily-biased towards access to and from Dublin. Linkages between Leitrim and the Ulster counties have dwindled. The Council supports the proposed East West link (Sligo-Dundalk) which will open opportunities for access to the ports of Dundalk and Drogheda and the east coast generally. Funds for the enhancement of road links to County Fermanagh will also be sought.

The Council is also conscious that southerly links to Roscommon and Galway are poor and supports the upgrading of the N61 National Secondary Route.

Policy 58 **It is the policy of the Council to upgrade the Regional Routes serving the county and seek to have them upgraded to National Route status, where appropriate.**

Strategic Links (see Map 1.7)

National Primary Routes N4, N15 and N16 together with the R280 are considered 'Strategic Links'.

The R280 Regional Road runs along the backbone of the County, linking the N4, the N15 and the N16 National Primary Routes. This road connects Carrick-on-Shannon to Manorhamilton and onwards to the N15 at Bundoran/Ballyshannon Bypass and it is a vital link for the north of

the County to prosper. The Council will prioritise this road for upgrading to National Secondary standard and status.

Regionally and Locally Important Roads (see Map 1.7)

A full list of Regionally and Locally Important Roads is given in Section 4.5.7.2.

The following 'Regionally and Locally Important Roads':

R201 regional road (N4 at Annaduff via Carrigallen to the Leitrim – Cavan County Boundary),

R202 regional road (Dromod-Enniskillen),

R199 regional road (Ballinamore-Cavan),

are likely to grow in significance as the northern and southern economies and societies are more closely integrated. The Council supports the upgrading and realignment of both of these routes and will advocate their upgrading to National Secondary standard and status. Investment in these roads will be prioritised and the creation of new access onto these routes will be strictly controlled, in line with the policies currently set for national routes.

The Council also supports co-operation with Roscommon County Council on a project to improve the existing bridge over the River Shannon at Roosky. This Bridge is at 'Detail Design Stage' and it is proposed to commence when resources become available.

Other regional routes include the R200, R201, R203, R204, R205, R206, R207, R208, R209, R281, R282, R283, R286, R287, R288, R289 and R290 regional roads.

This Council is the administering Authority in the proposal to construct a replacement bridge over the River Shannon linking County Leitrim with County Roscommon on Local Road LP03400 at Hartley Bridge. Also, it is a long term objective of the Council to replace Lennox Bridge located on the Leitrim/Donegal County Boundary.

More generally the Council will carry out a programme of local and regional road improvements and road maintenance throughout the period of the Plan, as funds allow and will at all times seek best value for money in restoring roads. All road improvements and realignments will be carried out in such a manner as to protect and enhance the character of the landscape.

Refer to Section 4.5 Roads and Parking Development Management Standards for further guidance.

Policy 59 It is the policy of the Council that roadworks undertaken by the Council or private developers, are carried out in such a manner as to protect and enhance the general environment and the character of the landscape within which the road is located.

Objective 32 It is an objective of the Council to identify route corridors and prepare preliminary designs for inner relief roads at Drumshanbo and Mohill.

Developers will be required to contribute to the development of relief roads in the County.



Objective 33	It is an objective of the Council to pursue the upgrading of the R280 regional road to National Secondary standard and status.
Objective 34	It is an objective of the Council to widen, realign and improve substantial sections of the R280 regional road.
Objective 35	It is an objective of the Council to carry out significant works to the R202, R199 and R201 regional roads including the widening and realignment of substantial sections and have them upgraded to National Secondary Route standard.
Objective 36	It is an objective of the Council to improve all other regional roads to an appropriate standard, which will involve widening, resurfacing <i>etc.</i>
Objective 37	It is an objective of the Council to design and construct a new bridge over the River Shannon at Hartley on LP03400 local road to replace the existing deficient bridge.
Objective 38	It is an objective of the Council to design and upgrade the bridge over the River Shannon at Roosky on the R371 regional road.
Objective 39	It is an objective of the Council to ensure all towns and villages have adequate footpaths and public lighting.
Objective 40	It is an objective of the Council to complete the inner relief road at Ballinamore, including necessary bridge widening works
Objective 41	It is a long-term objective to replace Lennox Bridge.

3.6.7 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND CAR PARKING IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES

The Council will seek to improve traffic management and car parking in towns and villages. This will reduce congestion and improve the environment and viability of these settlements. New development will normally be required to provide sufficient and adequate off-street car parking facilities at a location convenient to the site and to cater for the immediate and anticipated future demands. In addition, adequate loading and unloading facilities will be required. The Council will seek to upgrade public lighting and traffic route lighting. The shared use of car parking spaces between night-time and daytime, weekday and weekend uses will be favoured.

The Council will seek to encourage growth of town centre development through interventions such as review of car parking.

Refer to Section 4.5.1 General Roads and Parking Standards, Section 4.5.2 Sharing of Car Parking Spaces and Section 4.5.3 Set-Down Requirements and Car-Parking Bay Sizes.

Objective 42	It is an objective of the Council to seek to upgrade and augment car-parking facilities in towns and villages where the need arises.
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Leitrim County Council is fully supportive of the Governments Electric Transport Programme 2008, which aims to see 10% of the Irelands road vehicle fleet electrically powered by 2020 and will support the roll-out of EV infrastructure.

Objective 43 It is an objective of the Council to seek to ensure the provision of electric-car charging points in car parks and other appropriate locations to service the planned expansion of the electric vehicle fleet (10% of the Irelands road vehicle fleet by 2020).

3.6.8 DEVELOPMENTS AT NATIONAL ROAD INTERCHANGES AND MAJOR JUNCTIONS

The Planning Authority will have regard to the Policies of the National Roads Authority in relation to development at interchanges/junctions as set out in the NRA's Policy statement, '*Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)*'. In order to ensure the safety and retain the carrying capacity of the National Road Network, the Planning Authority will not be favourably disposed to granting planning permission for developments on or adjacent to such interchanges or junctions.

Refer to Section 4.5.7 Access to Public Roads for further information.



3.7 COMMERCIAL SECTORS

3.7.1 GENERAL

Policy 60 It is the policy of the Council to ensure County Leitrim offers a sufficiently broad and attractive range of employment opportunities so that the County continues to be an attractive location to chose to come to, to live, work and invest. It is the Council's desire that the County continues to grow as a location of continuing and sustainable population growth.

The Council believes that while the location of the County in the northwest and on the Border had traditionally militated against the economic development of the County, with the work by and support of such bodies as the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and the European Union in relation to Peace and Reconciliation and the County's commitment to working with neighbouring counties and regional authorities and assemblies, including cross border bodies, the County has addressed and overcome this perceived disadvantage.

3.7.2 AGRICULTURE

Agriculture remains a major employment category in the County, notwithstanding its declining economic importance. The industry is characterised by small landholdings. While farming is unlikely to be the sole income for the bulk of the County's residents in the future, an attachment to the land is a deeply-rooted part of the County's culture.

Policy 61 It is the policy of the Council to support those rural families wishing to remain on the land and accordingly the Council will favourably consider agri-tourism schemes and other enterprises intended to supplement farm income.

New economic and social forces have started to change people's relationship with the land, which necessitates a new approach. The challenge facing the Council is to facilitate the continuation of agriculture, and the broadening of the rural economy, while conserving the landscape, environment and natural diversity of the countryside.

Agriculture is an important part of the economic and social life of the County. In addition, it is recognised that the practice of agriculture is an integral part of the management of large parts of the rural environment and the landscape and provides an amenity for enjoyment by the general population.

Intensive or industrial agriculture proposals warrant special treatment. Where these are located on local roads that are not originally designed to accommodate the heavy commercial vehicles generated by these productive units, the Planning Authority may require the payment of a special contribution where necessary. Intensive agricultural units may also have adverse environmental impacts such as soil and ground water contamination and damage to rural amenities. The Planning Authority may require a full assessment from the developer and will require detailed information in relation to the disposal of wastes and slurries. The Council

will have regard to Draft Ministerial *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Drainage and Reclamation of Wetlands* and their future revisions.

The *National Spatial Strategy* and the White Paper on Rural Development – *Ensuring the Future, a Strategy for Rural Development in Ireland (1999)*, sets out Government policy and guidance with regard to supporting rural communities. Emphasis is placed on the role of farm diversification as a component in the securing and development of the rural economy, and in supporting the maximum number of family farms.

Home-based economic activity can be a compatible rural use for existing agriculture, farms and residences. The proposed use, traffic and visual impact, residential amenities and amenities of the rural location will all be considered in the assessment of home-based economic activity.

Policy 62 **It is the Policy of the Council to consider, facilitate and encourage the sustainable development of agricultural enterprises, agri-tourism projects, farm diversification and other suitable proposals that support the development of alternative rural enterprises, whilst ensuring that development does not have an undue negative impact on the visual amenity of the countryside.**

While the Council itself does not have a direct role in the development of the farming industry, it supports the policies of the County Development Board, as expressed in the *County Development Board Strategy*. This Strategy seeks to consolidate existing landholdings and supports the development of organic and environmentally-friendly farming practices.

The Council will facilitate agricultural support services and will encourage participation in Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS), especially in environmentally-sensitive areas.

The Council is in favour of the introduction of an awards scheme in the County for farming best practice and sustainable diversification.

The Council is conscious that the ‘green’ image the County currently enjoys is potentially one of its greatest assets and the Council will be conscious of the protection of that image in deciding on planning applications likely to have a negative impact on the environment.

The Council will seek to ensure that agricultural buildings are designed and sited in a manner that ensures their maximum integration into the landscape; in so far as is controlled by planning legislation or where controlled by the Planning Authority.

Organic and hydraulic loading of wet soils will be monitored and the Council supports the introduction of By-laws, if considered necessary, to protect surface and groundwaters from nutrient enrichment.

Refer to Section 4.4.13 Agricultural Development for further guidance.

3.7.3 FORESTRY

Nothing alters a landscape more radically than large-scale afforestation, yet such planting is largely outside the control of the Planning Authority. Initial afforestation of lands is classified as exempted development under the 2001 – 2013 Planning Regulations, while an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for planting of more than 50 hectares. The



Council would welcome a revision of the Planning Regulations that would bring forestry plantations under the control of the planning system.

While the Council has a very limited role in forestry, it generally favours deciduous over coniferous planting on the basis that native species of deciduous trees sit more comfortably in the Leitrim landscape and also have more benefits for biodiversity. In certain Protected Landscapes, tree planting may be restricted or prohibited altogether.

The soils and climate of Leitrim are well-suited to commercial forestry development and this industry has developed rapidly over the last twenty years.

The Council will encourage '*farm-scale*' forestry, where downstream added value can be achieved. The development of woodchip production from thinnings, for alternative energy provision, will be encouraged as an on-farm scale activity.

The Council recognises and encourages the role of forestry in providing recreational activities. While walking is the most popular activity, forest recreation embraces other specialised activities including orienteering, mountain biking, horse riding and fishing. In line with Forest Service Guidelines the Council will support the development of roads, tracks, rides, and purpose built trail and cycle tracks in selected locations.

The Council will support and encourage the carbon neutral harvesting of forestry.

Once planted for forestry, land is unlikely ever to revert to agricultural use, reducing the possibility of expanding or consolidating neighbouring farms. Traditional field patterns and sometimes features of archaeological interest can be obliterated. Extensive and dense tree planting can lead to an oppressive and featureless landscape, increasing the sense of isolation of remaining residents, while clear-felled forests leave an ugly scar on the landscape.

Poorly designed forests can have a negative impact on water quality and can lead to the demise of valuable fish hatcheries. The harvesting of lumber can put great stress on the road network, with minor roads and *boreens* bearing loads far beyond their design capacity.

The Council recognises the broad brush approach contained in the forestry strategy contained in Table 12 below. The Council recognises that notwithstanding the designation of an area as being of high/medium afforestation capacity, lands within these zones may not be suitable for afforestation. Afforestation should be avoided on lands containing deep peat soils and where the land slope is steep, especially where the latter slopes towards a water body.

In accordance with the Landscape Character Assessment, guidance on the appropriate location of forestry is set out at the end of this section (see Table 12 page 129). Figure 3-2 **Landscape Capacity to Accommodate Forestry** Figure 3-2 indicates the capacity of the landscape to accommodate forestry.

Policy 63 It is the policy of the Council to require adherence to the Guidelines published by the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine, Forest Service.

The Council has no means of requiring strict adherence to these guidelines except in the cases where planning permission is required.

On assessing planning applications for forestry, regard shall be had to the extent of forestry in the immediate area and to the social, environmental and economic impacts arising from such applications.

The Council, in cooperation with the Forest Service and the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine shall encourage and promote the adoption of an Indicative Forestry Strategy for the County as an important means of contributing to its objective of protecting and enhancing the County's biodiversity, natural resources and landscape. The Council will work towards the establishment of a County Forestry Advisory Committee to work alongside the Forest Service and Coillte Teoranta on major new proposed plantations under the auspices of the Planning Strategic Policy Committee.

The Council encourages the establishment of dialogue between the industry, the Council and the local community on best practice for the forestry resource in County Leitrim. To enable this, the Council will support the Forestry Forum established by Arigna LEADER to develop a strategy for the development of forestry in Leitrim and north Roscommon as proposed in the Landscape Character Assessment. The assessment itself will provide a useful tool in this process.

Policy 64 It is the policy of the Council to require Forestry Management Plans where afforestation is subject to the planning control process. These management plans will, *inter alia*, identify haul routes for the extraction of timber.

The Council will seek to recover the cost of damage to public roads from the developer, landowner, and/or the transport operator through available legal procedures.

Particular routes best suited to bearing the traffic generated by the industry may be agreed between the Council and the industry.

Refer to Section 4.4.7 Forestry for further guidance.



Table 12 Landscape Capacity to Accommodate Forestry**Forestry Strategy**

The afforestation of recent decades has left a considerable legacy of adverse landscape and visual impacts that need to be addressed. However it is recognised that new woodland planting offers valuable landscape opportunities also. The main priorities of the Council, based on field survey and analysis of the effects of forestry in the landscape, are as follows.

On steep slopes above the 300m contour line new afforestation will be strongly discouraged and where possible the existing area under forestry will be reduced, restructured and/or redesigned following clearance. This is considered particularly important around the flanks of Dough, Boleybrack and Sliabh an Iarainn, where forestry is most intrusive.

Elsewhere, particular attention will be paid to retaining (or restoring) views to the water and valley approaches to the hills. This applies particularly to the following areas: -

- Around the shores of Lough Melvin, Lough Gill, Lough Allen and the smaller loughs around Ballinamore.
- Within the distinctive river corridor landscapes of the Shannon and the Cullies rivers, where open wetland areas and views to the water are key landscape characteristics.
- In Glenaniff, the Scardan and Owennaayle valleys on the north and east of the Boleybrack uplands, and the Yellow River valleys north and south of Sliabh an Iarainn.

New woodland planting may be encouraged in;

1. Areas of marginal agricultural land on the fringes of the uplands below the 300m contour. These areas already have a distinctive wooded character, provided by strong hedgerows and natural woodland regeneration. They provide relatively good growing conditions for broadleaves. Such areas occur in all the northern glens and the lower hill slopes below the 300m contour line;
2. The drumlin landscapes of the central and southern lowlands, which have considerable further capacity to accommodate woodland expansion, provided that the underlying topography is not obscured by blanket planting over wide areas;
3. Other areas where there is scope to restore or enhance the landscape's distinctive character. These include abandoned farmland, amenity landscapes, the landscape settings to settlements and areas degraded by urban, industrial or infrastructural development.

The assessment of landscape capacity to accommodate forestry was carried out by ERM/Maptec as part of the preparation of the Landscape Character Assessment and evolved through discussion with forestry interests, analysis of the effects of forestry and woodlands on the landscape and opportunities and constraints on further expansion. The context is a national forestry policy that envisages a doubling of Ireland's tree cover in the period to 2030. The County was divided into three broad categories. These capacity classes give a clear indication of the Council's likely response to woodland expansion in different areas.

Areas of High Capacity:

These comprise of: -

- 1.) marginal farmland around the fringes of the uplands and;
- 2.) drumlin landscapes within the central and southern lowlands.

New woodlands in these areas may offer opportunities to enhance degraded landscapes. These landscapes may be able to accommodate larger areas of new woodland, subject to detailed siting and design considerations.

Areas of Medium Capacity:

These areas include: -

1. lough and riverside landscapes where it is important to retain views to the water;
2. the main valley approaches to the hills, where forestry might block important sightlines and important local landscape characteristics.

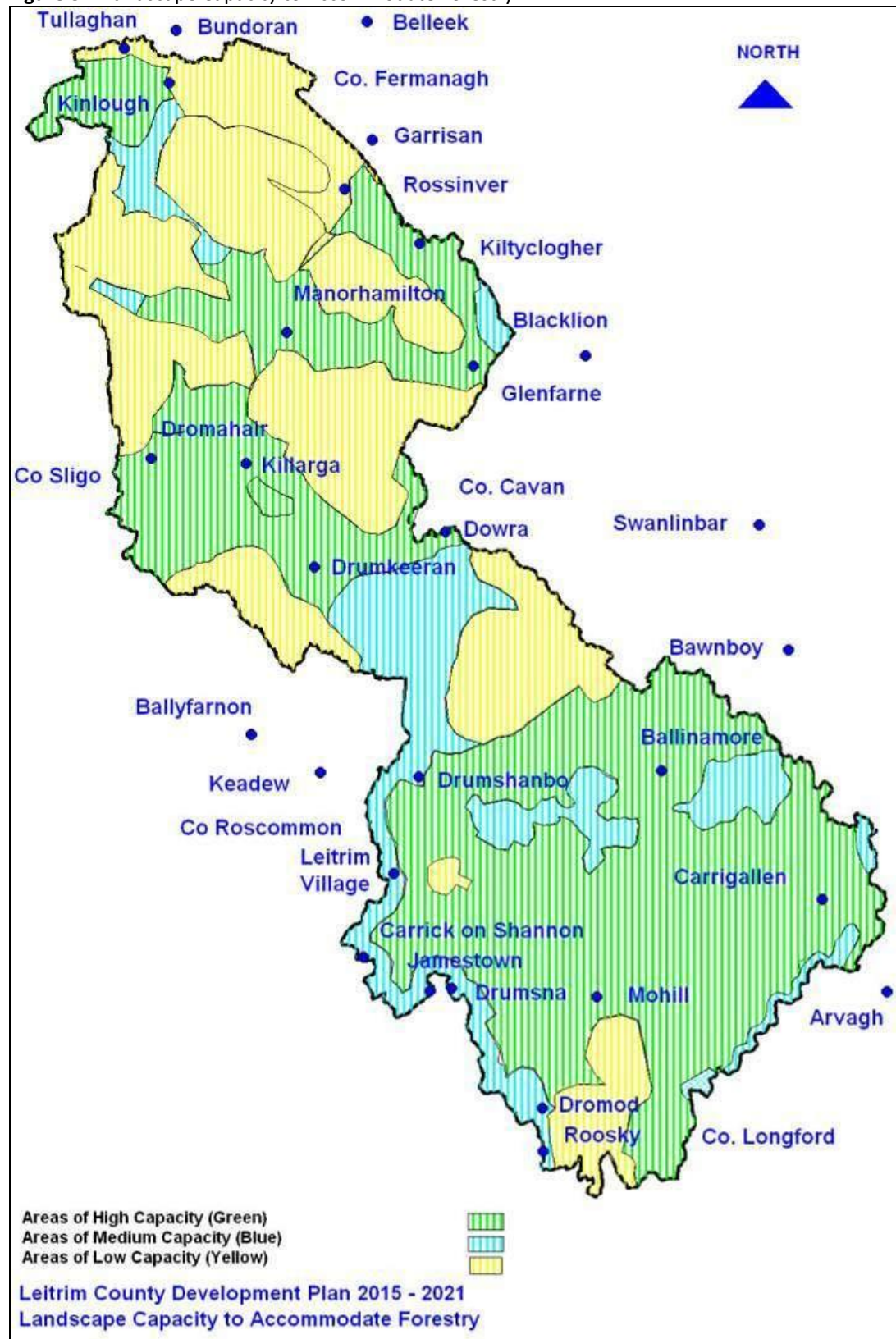
These landscapes may be able to accommodate new small scale woodlands provided that their scale, siting and species composition are in keeping with landscape character.

Areas of Low Capacity: -

These include the County's mountain and moorland landscapes and steep slopes above and around 300m AOD. These are characteristically open landscapes. New woodlands are highly visible and seldom in keeping with moorlands character. New afforestation in these areas will be strongly discouraged and where possible the existing area under forestry will be reduced.



Figure 3-2 Landscape Capacity to Accommodate Forestry



3.7.4 ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYMENT

Until very recently Leitrim had been unsuccessful in developing a strong industrial and commercial base. Poor access, poor infrastructure, lack of a prosperous agricultural industry and a weak urban structure have all militated against the development of industrial and other commercial development.

Policy 65 It is the Council's policy to actively promote and develop Enterprise and Employment throughout the County. The Council will support the development of transport, energy, telecommunications, water and drainage infrastructure to facilitate such development.

Generally new industry and employment-generating enterprises will be encouraged to locate in towns and villages where adequate infrastructure and support services exist. However, industries related to agriculture and other land uses or tied to a fixed resource and large-scale industries requiring extensive sites will be acceptable in rural locations. Small enterprises in rural areas will also be acceptable where there are no adverse impacts on the environment or on neighbouring amenity and subject to proper planning and development considerations. Effects on environment, safe access and residential amenities will be considered in all applications for rural enterprises. Some rural enterprises considered suitable include; agriculture-related industry, businesses directly related to farming, servicing and repair of farm machinery, land reclamation, drainage work, agricultural contracting, teleworking and telecottages.

Refer to Section 4.4.1 Industrial/Commercial Development, Section 4.4.2 Commerce, Section 4.4.4 Advertising and Section 4.6.6 Noise for further guidance.

Objective 45	It is an objective of the Council to actively support all efforts to have further Government Offices decentralised to County Leitrim and to seek to maximise the amount of Government Services to be delivered from the County.
Objective 46	It is an objective of the Council to actively engage with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and other Government Departments, for the expedient delivery of infrastructural projects.
Objective 47	It is an objective of the Council to actively support all efforts to develop the forestry and wood-products industries based on the supply of raw material from indigenous resources.
Objective 48	It is an objective of the Council to encourage the expansion of service sector employment and to recognise the opportunities it presents to the retention of population in both urban and rural areas.
Objective 49	It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the re-use of disused industrial buildings for appropriate alternative uses.
Objective 50	It is an objective of the Council to work in partnership with the Industrial Development Authority, Enterprise Ireland, the County Enterprise Board, SOLAS, Educational Bodies, Leitrim County Development Board, Leitrim



Integrated Development Company, Government Departments and other organisations to promote and facilitate the location of industry and enterprise (including the technology sector) and to ensure the provision of necessary infrastructure supports and linkages are developed having regard to the need to ensure conservation and protection of the natural, recreational and cultural amenities of the County.

Objective 51 It is an objective of the Council to encourage and facilitate home-based employment of appropriate type, size and scale subject at all times to the consideration of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.7.5 RETAILING

The Council adopted the *Retail Strategy 2015-2021* alongside the adoption of the Development Plan, in accordance with obligations under the *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2012). All retail and related developments are advised to adhere to the contents of the Retail Strategy, which is available directly from the Council and on the Council's website.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2012) emphasise that enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres, in all their functions through sequential development, is an overarching objective in retail planning. The Guidelines include a presumption against large out-of town retail centres, in particular those adjacent to or close to existing, new or planned national roads / motorways.

The Guidelines also provide specific guidance for the content and role of Development Plans including the requirement to have clear evidence-based policies and objectives in relation to retailing in a discrete section of the Plan.

Refer to Section 4.4.3 Retail Services, Section 4.4.4 Advertising and Section 4.4.5 Shop Front Design Standards.

3.7.5.1 Policy Context

The DoECLG Retail Planning Guidelines were reviewed in 2012 and continue to require that all Planning Authorities prepare a Retail Strategy for their area.

Among the changes to the *Retail Planning Guidelines* were increases in the cap on size of supermarkets in large cities and the restriction of out-of-town warehouse retail developments to large cities. The Guidelines also attempt to revive flagging town centres by directing new retail developments into city and town centres and not into new retail parks or out-of-town retail centres. Application of the sequential test³⁷ to all new retail developments will be paramount to the Council ensuring Leitrim towns are to have vibrant and healthy retail cores.

³⁷Refer to:

<http://www.enviro.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload,30026,en.pdf>

In accordance with the *Retail Planning Guidelines* the *County Development Plan* should include information in relation to the following: -

- Elements of their settlement hierarchy in line with the relevant regional planning guidelines and their core strategy;
- Outline the level and form of retailing activity appropriate to the various components of the settlement hierarchy in that core strategy;
- Define, by way of a map, the boundaries of the core shopping areas of city and town centres and also location of any district centres;
- Set out strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail development to support the settlement hierarchy, including opportunity sites;
- Identify sites which can accommodate the needs of modern retail formats in a way that maintains the essential character of the shopping area;
- Include objectives to support action initiatives in town centres; such as Mobility management measures-- that both improve accessibility of retail areas while aiming to develop a pedestrian and cyclist friendly urban environment and vibrant street life; and Public realm interventions-- aimed at improving the retailing experience through high quality civic design, provision of attractive street furnishing, lighting and effective street cleaning/business improvement district type initiatives; and
- Identify relevant development management criteria for the assessment of retail developments in accordance with these guidelines.

3.7.5.2 Retail Hierarchy

Leitrim County Council supports a balanced development model, promoting the treatment of urban and rural settlements, together with the surrounding countryside, as functional, spatially-integrated entities. The Retail Hierarchy proposed has been prepared mindful of this model and is broadly similar to that presented in the *County Retail Strategy 2009-2015* with the following exceptions: -

1. Dromahair, Kinlough and Carrigallen have been included in the revised retail hierarchy as 'Tier 2B – Sub-County Retail Centres' stepping up from Tier 3 'Local Retail Centres'. The rationale for including these towns as Tier 2B Centres is based on their revised position within the County settlement hierarchy and having regard to the existing level of retail function performed by these towns. Furthermore, Dromahair is identified as a support town within its Municipal Area.
2. Leitrim Village, Drumsna, Dromod and Cloone have been included in Tier 3 'Local Retail Centres'. The reason for upgrading these additional settlements is based on their 'Tier 3 Villages' settlement hierarchy position identified under Variation No.1 of the *County Development Plan 2009-2015* and given the scale of their retail function and population/housing base.

Graigs have been identified within the *County Development Plan* and were selected on the basis that they are existing settlements with an established identity, containing a school, post office, shop or other such facility. These '*Graigs*' and villages guided the selection of 'Tier 4-Rural Villages/Shops'. The provision of suitable retail development, such as a local shop, within the identified Tier 4 centres would be considered appropriate, subject to normal planning considerations. The retail hierarchy is outlined in Figure 3-3 and mapped in Map 3.8



Figure 3-3 Retail Hierarchy

3.7.5.3 Definition of Retail Boundaries

The *Retail Planning Guidelines 2000* introduced the sequential test approach in relation to assessing retail applications in Ireland, with the focus on town centres as the preferred location for new retail development. This planning principle is further reinforced through the revised *Retail Planning Guidelines 2012*. In cases where there are no town centre sites available, the next preferred option is 'edge of centre' sites. It is only in cases where there are no town centre or 'edge of centre' sites available or where satisfactory transport accessibility realistically cannot be ensured within a reasonable period of time that 'out of centre' sites will be considered suitable.

The land-use strategy maps for each of the towns and villages have informed the retail boundaries (i.e. the Book of Maps forming Volume 3 of the Development Plan) and in the case of Carrick-on-Shannon the areas suitable for retail proposals are identified within the *Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan 2010-2016*. It is noted that this *Development Plan* includes reference to a desire to prepare a Plan for the town of Carrick-on-Shannon including the Cortober area. Should this occur and/or the Local Area Plan is revised, this shall further inform the appropriate retail boundaries for the County town.

Appendix C to the Retail Strategy includes a set of maps delineating the core retail/commercial centres for each of the Tier 1 (Carrick-on-Shannon), Tier 2A (Ballinamore and Manorhamilton) and Tier 2B (Mohill, Drumshanbo, Dromahair, Carrigallen and Kinlough) centres identified within the retail hierarchy. This *Retail Strategy* supports adoption of a flexible approach to reuse of core retail/commercial town centres and vacant properties. For clarity, it should be noted that these maps illustrate the core retail/commercial centres and not the town centre areas suitable for retail, as the Book of Maps forming Volume 3 of the Development Plan will primarily inform this.

Where 'change of use' planning permissions for retail are approved for existing premises within Tier 1 and 2 core retail/commercial areas, the Council will consider the development contribution applicable having regard to the development contribution scheme. Such decisions will be at the discretion of the Council considerate of the intent of this objective to support the viability and vitality of the retail centres serving the County, by encouraging use of existing town centres and bring vacant buildings back into use.

The rationale for setting the core areas within each of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 centres is based on a host of factors, including: -

- Vacant premises;
- Containment of town centres (encouraging cross-visitation/reasonable walking distances);
- Historic town cores;
- Permitted and existing use of premises;
- Potential for reuse;
- Street frontage;
- Architectural Conservation Areas;
- Development Plan/Local Area Plan land-use zoning objectives;
- Urban Framework Plans/Village Design Statement; and
- General perception of the area (physical buffers).

3.7.5.4 Broad Assessment of the Requirements for Additional Retail Floor space

The Retail Strategy survey identified the distribution of convenience retail space throughout the County, with 62% located in the County 'key towns'. In 2014, Carrick-on-Shannon contained 72% of comparison retail floorspace within the County, but also contained a significant excess of 'bulky goods' retail floorspace. The level of commercial vacancy overall in the County had increased by over 3% since 2008 to 22% and this vacancy rate matched the housing vacancy rates for the County (when secondary and holiday homes were excluded). Estimates suggest that between 1,100 sq.m. and 1,300 sq.m. of convenience, comparison and 'bulky goods' retail floorspace will be required over the lifetime of the Plan. Whilst recognising the extent of retail vacancy, robust retail assessments would be necessary for future retail proposals, where town centre sites are not available and/or suitable.

Objective 52 It is an objective of the Council to keep the Retail Strategy under review and the Council will have regard to any such review in determining applications for retail development.

3.7.5.5 Guidance on the Location and Scale of Retail Development

The vast majority of the retail developments granted in the County in the last 8 years have been in Carrick-on-Shannon, Ballinamore and Manorhamilton. This is reflective of their roles in serving expansive hinterlands with an expanding population.

Carrick-on-Shannon is expected to absorb one-third of the overall population and housing growth over the lifetime of the Plan. It is anticipated that the majority of future retail applications in the County will be primarily attracted to the County town of Carrick-on-Shannon, whilst there may be some scope for the Tier 2A centres of Manorhamilton and Ballinamore. The remaining Tier 2B centres of Dromahair, Drumshanbo, Mohill, Carrigallen and Kinlough have potential to attract retail development appropriate to their scale and status. Appropriately located large-scale retail developments will be directed towards Tier 1 and Tier 2A and Key Town Centres only where a need has been identified and strictly having regard to the sequential test. Appropriate zoning provision to accommodate existing and expanding retail provision have been made in the 'Mixed-Use' town centre zonings within each of the Tier 1, 2A and 2B settlements.

The prospects of growth and expansion in the more rural parts of the County are expected to be more limited. The policy of the Council is to maintain and enhance the existing retail environment to serve and benefit local communities. The importance of general foodstores, post offices and pharmacies, in addition to salons, pubs, restaurants and cafés is acknowledged.

The Council will encourage the provision of retail and related development within the core area of towns and villages. It also encourages appropriately-located shops and services associated with the tourism and agri-tourism sectors. It is acknowledged that Leitrim is predominantly rural County and this fact should be harnessed as part of the marketing of the County and in business.



- Policy 66** It is the policy of the Planning Authority to support the vitality and viability of existing designated centres and facilitate a competitive and healthy environment for the retailing industry into the future by ensuring that future growth in retail floorspace responds to the identified retail hierarchy.
- Policy 67** It is the Policy of the Council to assess all large-scale retail applications against the criteria set down in the *Retail Strategy* for Leitrim and the *Retail Planning: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and accompanying Retail Design Manual*.
- Policy 68** It is the policy of the Planning Authority to support the development of core retail, to reinforce the role and function of the core retail areas and to direct retail development to serviced areas (see Core Retail Areas for Tier 1, 2A & 2B centres in Appendix C to the *Retail Strategy*).
- Policy 69** It is the Policy of the Council that the preferred location for large-scale retail developments is in town centres, and that alternative locations may only be considered in accordance with the Sequential Test, as required under the *Retail Planning Guidelines 2012* as published by the DoECLG.
- Policy 70** It is the policy of the Planning Authority to promote and encourage the enhancement of retail floorspace, primarily comparison goods, and town centre functions in Carrick-on-Shannon in order to reduce retail expenditure leakage out of the County and to sustain its competitiveness and importance as the County Retail Centre and a regional retail centre.
- Policy 71** It is the policy of the Council to encourage reuse of vacant town centre commercial premises for alternative uses and adapt a flexible approach to reoccupation, particularly where this can complement the existing service base. This approach will be reflected within the Council's Development Contribution Scheme.

3.7.5.6 Criteria for the Assessment of Retail Developments

For significant retail development proposals, Leitrim County Council encourages early and comprehensive engagement at the pre-application stage.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines 2012* provide the main principles for assessing new retail proposals and the *Retail Strategy* suggests that these should be referred to and reflected in the County Development Plan. The *Guidelines* state that the main planning considerations for retail development include;

- 1) Location (site selection);
- 2) Suitability of use (land use zoning and specific objectives);
- 3) Size and Scale (impact, form and design);
- 4) Accessibility (access and servicing arrangements).

In line with the Guidelines the preferred location for retail development is within existing town centres. Development proposals not according with the fundamental objective to support the vitality and viability of city and town centre sites must demonstrate compliance with the sequential approach. Leitrim County Council will require that a full assessment of all suitable and viable sites is undertaken. The availability of these sites will be taken into consideration.

Considering the extent of vacant floorspace and anticipated additional floorspace required over the lifetime of the Plan, it is likely that all application proposals for significant additional retail floorspace, including extension of duration permissions will be required to be accompanied by a Retail Impact Statement, assessing the impact of the proposal relative to the Council Retail Strategy and the viability and vitality of respective town centres.

Transport impact assessments may be required for significant retail development which due to their scale and/or location may impact on the vitality and viability of town centres.

Objective 53	It is an objective of the Council to encourage and facilitate innovation and diversification of the County's retail profile, including tourism and agri-tourism related ventures and markets where appropriate.
Objective 54	It is an objective of the Council to encourage and facilitate a mix of retail uses in order to achieve a balance in the range of services provided.
Objective 55	It is an objective of the Council to encourage the retention of retail and service units within town and village centres, with the exception of commercial operations that are no longer viable or are more appropriately located elsewhere.
Objective 56	It is an objective of the Council to encourage and facilitate the reuse and regeneration of derelict land and vacant buildings within town centres for retail uses having due regard to the Sequential Approach.
Objective 57	It is an objective of the Council to encourage the retention and/or reinstatement of traditional shopfronts and pub fronts.
Objective 58	It is an objective of the Council to ensure that retail and service units will generally be located within the central area of a town or village.
Objective 59	It is an objective of the Council to ensure that all new retail and commercial development proposals respect the character and scale of the existing streetscape within which they are proposed.
Objective 60	It is an objective of the Council to discourage inappropriate out-of-town shopping facilities that detract from the vitality, viability and/or character of existing town and village centres.
Objective 61	It is the objective of Leitrim County Council to implement the following objectives, as specifically identified within the County Retail Strategy in order to ensure the continued vitality and viability of town centres, including: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote the revitalisation and reuse of vacant and derelict properties/shop units; b) Promote measures to maintain and promote retail services including Post Offices in rural areas; c) Promote initiatives or programmes to enhance the character and urban design quality of the County's towns and villages to improve mobility and to ensure that they remain attractive for investment in commerce and in retailing;



- d) Promote complimentary non-retail uses in core retail areas, particularly where this can encourage cross-visitation;
- e) Promote activities including festivals, events and farmers' markets in town centres;
- f) Promote the town centre of Carrick-on-Shannon as a *bijou/niche* comparison retail destination;
- g) Encourage the regeneration of over-the-shop premises and vacant town centre terraces for residential uses, where appropriate;
- h) Encourage retail development in the Cortober area (Co. Roscommon) to adhere to the appropriate policies in the context of the greater Carrick on Shannon area, as set out in a joint Local Area Plan to be prepared by Leitrim and Roscommon County Councils in partnership.
- i) Keep the Retail Strategy under review and have regard to any such review in determining applications for retail development.

3.7.6 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

3.7.6.1 Introduction

Leitrim has tremendous potential to develop a significant tourism industry. Despite some of the most spectacular scenery, excellent angling and boating opportunities the County has lagged behind other parts of the country in developing tourism. This is due partly to poor access, proximity to the Border and lack of an accommodation base.

Progress continues to be made, especially in the promotion of the Shannon and the development of the Shannon-Erne Waterway. The impact of the development of these watercourses on towns such as Carrick-on-Shannon and Ballinamore and villages like Leitrim and Keshcarrigan has been tremendous. Similarly the development of various cycling and walking routes such as the Kingfisher Cycle Route, the North West trail (cycling and walking), the Leitrim Way and Miners Way have helped open up the County's rich and diverse landscape and promote environmentally sustainable tourism. The recent development of the Carrick-on-Shannon Riverside Amenity has opened up the river Shannon and is an attractive feature in the town.

Leitrim as a County is experiencing a change in external perceptions, due to the unprecedented development of the County over the last number of years. It is important therefore to ensure that the product development and marketing of the County reflects this opportunity and that the growing potential of the County, as a tourist destination, is exploited, in a sustainable manner, to the maximum.

3.7.6.2 Management and Control of the County's Resources and Tourism Development

The Council will be favourably disposed toward the development of appropriately located hotels, hostels, holiday homes, marinas, campsites and other-tourism related developments. In assessing such proposals the Council will seek to minimise negative impacts on the heritage and the environment and to maximise economic and social gain for the local community. Thus such facilities will be encouraged to locate in existing towns and villages where a critical

mass of tourism accommodation, pubs and restaurants may develop and away from environmentally-sensitive areas. However, the Council acknowledges that this may not always be achievable and that instances may arise where development peripheral to villages and towns and in sensitive areas may be appropriate due to the locationally unique nature of the resource involved. In such instances the highest standards of design, construction and on-going management will be required and all ancillary landscaping should seek to blend in, and any signage should be appropriately designed.

Refer to Sections 4.3.11 Multiple-Holiday Home Development, 4.4.10 Marinas, 4.4.11 Other Tourism Facilities and 4.4.4 Advertising for further guidance.

The further consolidation and expansion of existing facilities may also be favourably considered, subject to compliance with the policies and standards of this plan.

The Council is conscious that the County's key tourism resource is its natural environment. In a very real way the quality of the County's landscapes, watercourses and cultural heritage are economic resources to be enhanced.

3.7.7 QUARRIES, EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES, MINING, OIL AND GAS

The Council recognises that the aggregates (stone, sand and gravel) and concrete products industry contribute to the economic development of the County and that these products are essential building materials for future development.

Refer also to Section 4.4.6 Quarries, Extractive Industries, Mining, Oil and Gas for further guidance.

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| Policy 72 | It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the further development of the industry by permitting the continuation and extension of existing quarries and the development of new quarries, where such development does not adversely impact on; human or animal health, the environment, existing infrastructure and the amenity value of neighbouring lands. |
| Policy 73 | It is the policy of the Council to promote the mineral, gas and oil extractive industries where such development does not adversely impact on; human or animal health, the environment, existing infrastructure and the amenity value of neighbouring lands. |
| Policy 74 | It is the policy of the Council that transportation of extracted material from the source be carried out without causing nuisance to other road users. |

The Council further recognises that the aggregates and concrete products industries have a particularly sensitive role in relation to the environment and as such any development of aggregate extraction, processing, delivery and associated concrete production must be carried out in a manner which minimises adverse effects on the environment and the local community. Applicants will be required to demonstrate their commitment to good environmental management through the implementation of a recognised environmental code of practice.

Developers must ensure that on completion of operations the site is left in a satisfactory state and be of beneficial use.



3.8 PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT / NATURAL HERITAGE

3.8.1 GENERAL

The Council, in its capacity as Planning Authority, is one of the key agencies responsible for the protection of the natural environment. At a time of rapid and radical social, economic and cultural change the management of changing land uses is critically important. The Council recognises that attempting to simply resist change is futile. It aims to manage that change with the following goals in mind: -

- The protection of fragile ecosystems and species and habitats so as to ensure that biodiversity is maintained and vulnerable habitats protected;
- The protection and conservation of non-renewable resources and their settings, where settings are important;
- The protection and, where necessary and possible, the enhancement of the distinctive character of the natural heritage of County Leitrim;
- The enhancement of opportunities for the enjoyment of the natural heritage.

The priorities of the Council will be to;

- i. Avoid unnecessary harm to the natural heritage where possible;
- ii. Reduce the effects of harm where it cannot be avoided;
- iii. To conserve and protect the natural heritage resource for the benefit of future generations and;
- iv. Identify enhancement to the natural heritage where possible.

In assessing all decisions on development the Council will balance possible impacts on the environment and possible social, economic, community and cultural impacts.

3.8.2 CLIMATE CHANGE

The Government's *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework* outlines how Local Authorities can effectively utilise existing planning frameworks to build resilience to the impacts of climate at a local level for communities and businesses.

The *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework* provides a strategic policy focus to ensure adaptation measures are taken across different sectors and levels of government to reduce Ireland's vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change. It provides for climate change adaptation to be addressed at national and local level.

The *first phase* is focused on identifying national vulnerability to climate change. The *second phase* involves the development and implementation of sectoral and local adaptation action plans which will form part of the comprehensive national response to the impacts of climate change.

The Council has had regard to the *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework* in framing this Development Plan and has already sought to introduce planning and development

measures in the overall approach to adaptation to climate change, for example by ensuring that risks of flooding are identified and integrated into the planning process and by promoting the development of natural carbon sinks such as forestry in suitable locations. The Plan supports the move towards a zero carbon society through, inter alia, changes to the county's settlement pattern, the adoption of eco-friendly building techniques, the requirement for compliance with Part L of the Building Regulations and the rolling out of the Smarter Travel initiative.

The Council recognises that climate change is a global threat with local consequences. Whilst uncertainties surround the magnitude and extent of climate change impacts, the Council is committed to addressing climate change in a proactive manner through the careful consideration of growth and development.

Policy 75 It is the policy of the Council to support the implementation of the *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework* and reduce Ireland's vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change, and to promote and incorporate into all policy areas the goals and strategies set out in the European Commission's *Energy Roadmap 2050*.

3.8.3 EUROPEAN, NATIONAL AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE SITES

The principal legal framework for the conservation of wildlife is contained within the *European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)*, the *European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)*, the *Wildlife Act 1976*, the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000* and Part XIII of the *Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended*. The objectives of this European and National legislation are to provide for the protection and conservation of the flora and fauna in the habitats in which they occur.

The five categories of designated sites in effect in County Leitrim are:

- **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**
SAC's have been, and are being, designated under the *EU Habitats Directive* to conserve habitats and species of European importance.
- **Special Protection Area (SPA)**
SPAs have been, and are being, designated under the *EU Habitats Directive* to protect birds which are rare, in danger of extinction or vulnerable to changes in habitat and which need protection.
- **Natural Heritage Areas (NHA)**
NHA's have been, and are being, designated to conserve habitats and species of national importance and sites of geological interest, under the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000*.

Refer to Section 4.6.1 Environmental Impact for further guidance.

It is considered that certain developments within areas adjoining and in the vicinity of environmentally sensitive areas may impact on the integrity of such sensitive areas. Accordingly, areas adjoining environmentally sensitive sites, including; Natura 2000 sites, proposed Natural Heritage sites, Natural Heritage Sites, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, High Visual Amenity Areas, and other features such as; lakes, rivers, waterways, wetlands, peatlands and deciduous woodlands, shall be protected from inappropriate development



through the Development Management process. It is not proposed to map the extent of such areas; determination shall be based on the potential impact of the particular development concerned (taken in conjunction with other developments in the area) and the requirement to conserve and protect the environmental integrity of the feature concerned.

3.8.3.1 Natura Sites

Natura sites refer to Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. The Council shall take appropriate steps to avoid, in these areas, the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species, as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of the *EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC Directive)*.

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to 'Appropriate Assessment' of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4 of the Habitats Directive the Council shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Council shall take appropriate action so that all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. The Council shall take appropriate action to inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the European Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

In demonstrating compliance with the requirements of Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive, proposal for development should refer to Leitrim County Council Guidance Document '**PART C** *'Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive'* or any updated version of this document'.

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|------------------|--|
| Policy 76 | It is the policy of the Council to protect and conserve Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas including 'Candidate' and 'Proposed' areas. |
| Policy 77 | It is the Policy of the Council to ensure that all Plans and Projects that have the potential to negatively impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA), in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance. |
| Policy 78 | No projects or programme giving rise to significant adverse; direct, indirect, secondary or cumulative impacts upon the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites, |

having regard to their qualifying interests and conservation objectives, arising from their size, scale, area or land take, shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) ³⁸.

3.8.3.2 Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs)

The *EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)* required each EU Member State to designate candidate SAC's. The Habitats Directive was transposed into Irish domestic law on 26 February 1997 with the enactment of the *European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 (Statutory Instrument No. 94 of 1997)* (the 1997 Regulations).

In accordance with the above Regulations habitats of European ecological importance have been designated candidate Special Areas of Conservation by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. Under these regulations Member States are required to maintain the quality of the habitats and species for which they have been designated. Special Areas of Conservation are prime wildlife conservation areas in the county which are considered to be important on a European level, as well as Irish level. While cSACs are fully protected under the EU Habitats Directive, the term 'candidate' refers to the fact that the sites are currently under consideration by the European Commission.

Map 3.9 identifies the cSACs in the County.

Objective 62 It is an objective of the Council to protect those sites identified as candidate Special Areas of Conservation as well as any other sites that may be so identified during the lifetime of this plan.

Table 13 List of Candidate Special Areas of Conservation

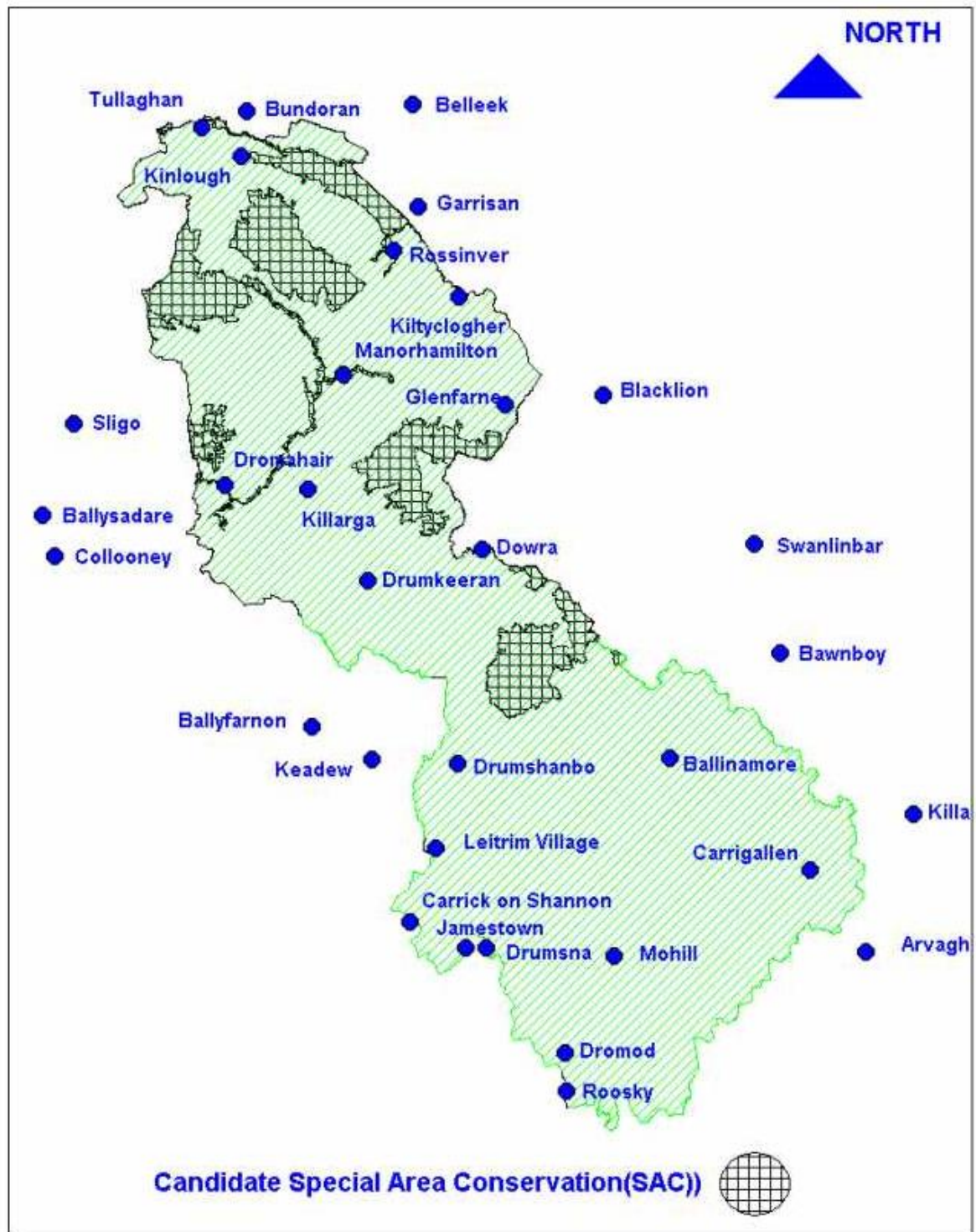
Ref No.	Name of Area
000623	Benbulbin, Gleniff and Glenade Complex
000625	Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore
001919	Glenade Lough
001403	Aroo Mountain
000428	Lough Melvin
001976	Lough Gill
000584	Cuilcagh- Anierin Uplands
002032	Boleybrack Mountain

³⁸ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. there must be:

- (a) No alternative solution available;
- (b) Imperative reasons for overriding public interest, including those of a social and economic nature; and,
- (c) Adequate compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected.



- Objective 63** It is an objective of the Council to protect the character, appearance and quality of the habitats and semi-natural features in County Leitrim such as woodlands, hedgerows, peatlands, wetlands and artificial waterways of historic or ecological importance.
- Objective 64** It is an objective of the Council in partnership with the relevant agencies to promote the development and implementation of codes of best practices through initiatives such as; the Local Floral Pride Initiatives, Environmental Partnership and the Green Schools projects.

Map 3.9 Location of Candidate Special Areas of Conservation

3.8.3.3 Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Special Protection Areas are designated by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. The *EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)* requires the designation of SPAs for wild birds. These sites are areas of importance for wild birds and relate to their breeding, feeding, roosting and wintering areas. To date there is only one proposed SPA in the County and Map 3.10, page 150, identifies the location of this SPA in the County. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) are collectively known as Natura 2000 sites.

Objective 65 It is an objective of the Council to protect the following proposed Special Protection Areas and all others as they become proposed and designated during the lifetime of this plan.

Table 14 Overview of Special Protection Area

Ref. No.	Name of Special Protection Area	Species	NHA ½ Inch Map No.
004187	Sligo/Leitrim Uplands	Peregrinne (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) Chough (<i>Phyrrhcorax pyrrhcorax</i>)	2, 3, 4, 6 and 7

Map 3.10 Location of proposed Special Protection Area

3.8.3.4 Natural Heritage Areas

Leitrim County has lands designated as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) or proposed NHAs. NHAs as designated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Under the provisions of the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000*, NHAs are important habitats for the conservation of wildlife of national significance. Many of the NHAs overlap designated cSACs.

It is the policy of the Council to protect NHA sites. The Council acknowledges that not all sites of ecological importance have been identified and will protect any such site of significance, proposed as an NHA. Map 3.11 identifies NHAs and pNHAs in the County.

Policy 79 **It is the policy of the Council to protect and conserve Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas**

Objective 66	It is an objective of the Council to protect all Natural Heritage Areas and those proposed for designation either before or during the lifetime of this plan so as to recognise that the process of designation of such sites is ongoing, with new sites being added and boundaries of existing sites being adjusted, as better information becomes available.
Objective 67	It is an objective of the Council to protect the following proposed Natural Heritage Areas and all others as they become proposed during the lifetime of this plan.

Table 15 List of proposed Natural Heritage Areas

Ref. No.	Name of Proposed Natural Heritage Areas
001401	Aghavoghil Stream
001402	Annaghhealy Lough
001403	Arroo Mountains
002032	Barleat and Lackagh Bogs
000623	Ben Bulbin, Gleniff and Glenade complex
001404	Bonet River
000625	Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore
001920	Carrickaport Lough
000424	Clooncoe Wood and Lough
001407	Corduff Wood and Lough
001409	Cromlin Bridge Woods
000584	Cuilcagh Anierin Uplands
001412	Drumierny Wood
001413	Garadice Lough Wood
000983	Glasshouse Lake
001919	Glenade Lough
000426	Kilgarraiff Marsh
001415	Kinlough Wood
000427	Lough Allen south end and parts
001642	Lough Bodergh and Lough Bofin

Ref. No.	Name of Proposed Natural Heritage Areas
001643	Lough Drumharlow
001807	Lough Errew
001976	Lough Gill
000428	Lough Melvin
001417	Lough Rinn
001808	Lough Sallagh
001418	O'Donnel's Rock Wood
001419	Owengar Wood
002032	Boleybrack Mountain
001421	Sheemore Wood

Objective 68 It is an objective of the Council to protect the following Natural Heritage Areas and all others as they become designated during the lifetime of this plan, Table 16 refers.

Table 16 List of Natural Heritage Areas

Ref. No.	Name of Natural Heritage Areas	Type
002430	Aghavogil Bog	Blanket Bog
00422	Aghnamona Bog	Raised Bog
001405	Cashel Bog (Leitrim)	Raised Bog
001423	Cloonageeher Bog	Raised Bog
001420	Corracramph Bog	Raised Bog
002321	Corry Mountain Bog	Blanket Bog
002435	Crockauns/Keelogyboy Bogs	Blanket Bog
002384	Dough /Thur Mountains	Blanket Bog
000691	Rinn River	Raised Bog



Map 3.11 Locations of Natural Heritage Area and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas

3.8.3.5 Development in or near Ecologically Sensitive Sites

Developments in or near ecologically sensitive sites will need to satisfy to the Planning Authority that the development proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the area concerned. This applies to all development proposals likely to have a significant impact on the area concerned, irrespective of whether they are actually located within the area or not.

The Council will ensure that an adequate level of assessment of the implications of development proposals is undertaken when development is proposed that has the potential to have a significant impact on the integrity of ecologically sensitive areas, including designated or proposed designated areas. The assessment should include: -

- a) Opportunities for alternative siting or potential mitigating measures
- b) Opportunities to enhance nature conservation
- c) The potential damage to habitats and/or species
- d) The possibilities for replacement sites.

Where uncertainty exists regarding the potential impact of a proposed development, the 'precautionary principle' will apply, and the proposed development will not be favourably considered unless or until its effects are clearly understood.

Refer to point b) of Section 4.1.1 Development Management Requirements for further guidance.

Planning applications located within protected sites will be referred to the Heritage Council, An Taisce and the Development Applications Unit of the DoEHLG - National Parks and Wildlife Services Section. The Council will generally be guided by their comments in reaching a decision.

3.8.3.6 Nature Conservation and Important Ecological Corridors

The full extent of Leitrim's natural heritage of wild species, geological features and landforms, and natural and semi-natural habitats, extend to more than just those sites which benefit from statutory protection. Under Article 10 of the *EU Habitats Directive* it states that Member States shall endeavour, where they consider it necessary, in their land-use planning and development policies to encourage the management of features of the landscape, which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those, which by virtue of their linear and continuous structures such as rivers, or their functions as stepping stones such as ponds and small woods, are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species. The features will vary from area to area and include hedgerows, canals, ponds, lakes, ditches and banks, linear tree belts/shelter belts, larger semi-natural or ancient woodlands, river corridors and other locally-important habitats.

Important ecological corridors within the County include the following water bodies (including their tributaries and lakes where relevant) - the list is not exhaustive and their inclusion is not an indication that they fall within the remit of Article 10 of the *Habitats Directive*: -

- River Shannon System;
- The land mass of the Leitrim Uplands;
- Shannon-Erne Waterway (Ballyconnell-Ballinamore Canal);
- Lough Allen System;
- Bonet River System;
- Duff River;
- The Drumcliff River (including Diffreen River);
- Drowes River/Lough Melvin System;
- Bradoge River;
- River Erne.



Policy 80 It is the policy of the Council to protect ecological networks linking protected and designated important sites within the County, in accordance with Article 10 of the *Habitats Directive*.

Policy 81 It is the policy of the Council to treat the uplands of North Leitrim located above the 160m contour, as an ecologically-sensitive entity, where these uplands are not already designated as such.

Objective 69 It is an objective of the Council to encourage appropriate management of landscape features, particularly through the development management process and by the use of planning agreements with landowners and developers, where appropriate.

3.8.3.7 Local Biodiversity Plan

The *Actions for Biodiversity 2011 – 2016 Ireland's 2nd National Biodiversity Plan* recognises that Biodiversity loss has continued at an alarming rate over the period of the previous Plan. The primary causes are habitat change, over exploitation, pollution, invasive alien species and climate change.

This document requires Planning Authorities to prepare and implement Local Biodiversity Action Plans. This is identified as a long term action in the *County Leitrim Heritage Plan*. A Draft Status Report and Review of the Heritage Plan was completed in 2012. The Council propose to undertake a new plan for the period 2015 -2022, to incorporate a Local Biodiversity Plan, in compliance with the National Biodiversity Plan subject to resources becoming available. The Local Biodiversity Plan will include policies and an action plan to address the issue of invasive species. The Council will co-operate with National, Regional and interested parties in the control of invasive species.

Objective 70 It is an objective of the Council to prepare a Local Biodiversity Plan in consultation with relevant stakeholders within the lifetime of this County Development Plan, subject to specific funding being made available by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

The Council fully recognise the following: -

- (a) The 2020 biodiversity target agreed at the *Nagoya Convention on Biological Diversity Intergovernmental Conference* in 2010;
- (b) The *National Biodiversity Plan* and;
- (c) The need to protect the County's biodiversity.

Negative impacts on biodiversity and designated sites, particularly along rivers, around lakes and in wetlands, can occur as a result of development such as walking routes, cycle-ways, seating, lighting, loss of riparian zone and mowing of riparian zone, and can lead to erosion

and added disturbance by humans and dogs. Such developments along waterways for example could impact on species such as otter and bat species, which are strictly protected under the *Habitats Directive*, and Kingfishers, which is listed on Annex I of the *Birds Directive*. Care therefore needs to be taken to ensure any proposed walkways along rivers are located a suitable distance from the water's edge and, where such proposed developments may impact on a European (Natura 2000) site, compliance with the requirements of the *Habitats Directive* shall be established prior to consent for any such development.

The Council fully recognise the ecological importance of waterways and wetlands.

Alien invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed can be damaging to local biodiversity and policy is needed to protect against the accidental introduction of such species during development.

Bats and their roosts are protected by Irish and EU law, because all species have declined and some are threatened or endangered. There are 10 known species of bats in Ireland, each with its own lifestyle and habitat requirements. They use a wide variety of roosts and may be present in trees, buildings and bridges. Bat roosts can only be destroyed with derogation under the *Habitats Regulations*³⁹.

3.8.3.8 Areas of Geological Interest

Geology is now recognised as a fundamental component of natural heritage and as such the conservation of geological heritage features is considered an important aspect of conserving the natural heritage. In 1998, the Geological Survey of Ireland established the Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) Programme which is a partnership between The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) and the NPWS. Under the IGH Programme important sites that are capable of being conserved as Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) are being identified. Those not selected for NHA designation are being promoted as County Geological Sites (CGS). The IGH Programme has identified 27 no. County Geological Sites of interest in Leitrim, details of which are listed in Appendix C (Volume 2) of this Plan.

Geological heritage is part of Leitrim's natural heritage and its uniqueness is a reflection of the county's geological makeup.

Policy 82 It is the Policy of the Council to recognise the need to identify sites of geological interest in the County and to protect these sites in the interest of protecting our geological heritage.

Objective 71	It is an objective of the Council to protect from inappropriate development County Geological Sites, as outlined in Appendix C (Volume 2) of this Plan.
Objective 72	It is an objective of the Council to protect geological NHAs as they become designated during the lifetime of this Plan.
Objective 73	It is an objective of the Council to conduct an audit of County Geological Sites, in partnership with the Geological Survey of Ireland and the Heritage Council, as per the National Heritage Plan; subject to the necessary resources becoming available.

³⁹ For further details in relation to bats refer to; www.npws.ie/publications/irishwildlifemanuals/



3.8.3.9 Peatlands

The Council is aware of the importance of a number of peatlands, or bogs as they are more commonly known, in the County and recognise that they are an irreplaceable resource that act as a carbon sink and are of significant ecological value. Peatlands are protected under the *EU Habitats Directive* and as Table 16 indicates, 9 bogs have been designated as Natural Heritage Areas in the County.

The Council is aware of the preparation by the Department of the Arts Heritage & Local Government of a Draft National Peatlands Strategy, Draft National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan and NHA Review. The Council will be guided by the outcome of this body of work when it is finalised, as may be appropriate. The Council will work in conjunction with interested parties including; Landowners, the National Parks & Wildlife Service, the Irish Peatland Conservation Council, Bat Conservation Ireland, The Irish Wildlife Trust and BirdWatch Ireland, in the management of ecologically important sites, including peatlands.

Objective 74	It is an objective of the Council to conserve peatlands and protect peatland landscapes within the County.
Objective 75	It is an objective of the Council to seek hydrological reports for significant developments within and close to peatlands, in order to assess potential impacts on the integrity of the peatland ecosystems.

3.8.3.10 Trees, Woodlands & Hedgerows

Trees, woodlands and hedgerows make a significant contribution to the County, both in terms of their impact on the landscape and in terms of their visual attractiveness and in terms of their ecological value as wildlife habitats.

Policy 83 It is the Council's policy to ensure the preservation of sound deciduous trees, woodlands and native hedgerows, without excessively inhibiting development (see Table 17).

Table 17 Sample Native Wood Species found in Leitrim Hedgerows

Latin Name	Common Name	Frequency of Occurrence
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	99%
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	68%
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	63%
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	61%
<i>Salix spp</i>	Willow	52%
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse	22%
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	17%
<i>Alnus Glutinosa</i>	Alder	15%
<i>Sorbus Aucuparia</i>	Rowan	13%
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	8%
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder Rose	8%
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle	5%
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab Apple	5%
<i>Ulmus spp</i>	Elm	3%
<i>Betula spp.</i>	Birch	3%
<i>Quercus spp</i>	Oak	1%
<i>Prunus Avium</i>	Wild Cherry	1%

Source: Leitrim County Hedgerow Survey 2006

The Council considers the wooded nature of much of the County to be one of its most attractive features and is anxious to protect existing mature deciduous trees and woodlands that contribute to the high visual amenity of the County. The Council will continue to consider the adoption of Tree Preservation Orders for individual trees/groups of trees and woodlands as and when necessary.

The Council also recognises the recreational potential of woodlands in the County.

The Council will landscape new roadworks, housing schemes and other works for which the Council is directly responsible for with deciduous trees and other native species, of local provenance where possible. Other agencies and private-sector developers will be encouraged to do likewise.

New development will be required to integrate existing mature trees of amenity value into the new schemes, where this is appropriate and practical in the opinion of the Planning Authority.

Hedgerows constitute an important natural and historic resource given both their role as wildlife corridors between habitats, their value in terms of visual amenity and their historic significance as townland and field boundaries.

The Council will seek to ensure that hedgerows and verges are maintained and trimmed in the interests of ensuring road safety. The Council will avoid the cutting of hedgerows during the bird nesting season, as defined in the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000*, from March 1 to August 31.

The Council will also seek to enhance the county hedgerows by increasing coverage using locally native species, taking opportunities provided by the consideration of new development proposals.

The Council will protect and preserve existing hedgerows where possible and seek their replacement with new hedgerows, consisting of appropriate native species, where their removal is necessary during the course of roadworks or other works. The Council have in association with the Heritage Council carried out a Hedgerow Survey. The Council will be informed by the results of the survey in terms of their role in the protection and preservation of hedgerows.

Policy 84 It is the policy of the Council to support the Native Woodland and Neighbourhood Wood schemes and other initiatives that aim to establish and enhance woodlands for recreational and wildlife benefits, in partnership with local communities.

Objective 76	It is an objective of the Council to discourage the felling of healthy mature trees to facilitate development and to encourage the retention of healthy mature trees within developments.
Objective 77	It is an objective of the Council to use Tree Preservation Orders to protect important trees, groups of trees or woodlands, as appropriate during the lifetime of this plan.
Objective 78	It is an objective of the Council to protect and preserve existing hedgerows and minimise their removal. Where their removal is necessary to seek their



replacement with new hedgerow material native to the area.

Objective 79 It is an objective of the Council to require a bond in all relevant permissions relating to the retention, relocation or re-establishment of hedgerows, which will be returned on the successful retention, relocation or re-establishment of the hedgerow concerned within a given period.

3.8.4 PROTECTION OF WATER COURSES

3.8.4.1 The Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) sets out a framework for comprehensive management of water resources in the European Community. It addresses inland surface waters, estuarine and coastal waters and groundwater. The fundamental objective of the WFD aims at maintaining 'high status' of waters where it exists, preventing any deterioration in the existing status of waters and achieving at least 'good status' in relation to all waters by 2015. Member States will have to ensure that a co-ordinated approach is adopted for the achievement of the objectives of the WFD and for the implementation of programmes of measures for this purpose. Irrespective of political boundaries, the river basin is the natural unit for water management. Ireland is divided into 8 River Basin Districts, 3 of which effect County Leitrim. River Basin Management Plans have been adopted for each of the Districts. The eight plans which will be the output from the Catchment Flood Risk and Management studies (CFRAMs 2015) will be integrated with the River Basin Plans upon the next iteration of each so that from 2020 all aspects of catchment management will be incorporated in one plan.

3.8.4.2 River Basin Management Plans

These Plans set out a program of measures aimed at protection and improvement of the aquatic environment (both groundwater and surface waters). The principal objectives of these plans include: -

- a) To prevent further deterioration in water quality;
- b) To improve all waters including surface, ground and coastal waters to 'Good' status by 2015;
- c) To manage water bodies based on river basins or catchments.

County Leitrim falls into 3 of these River Basin Districts as follows: -

- i. The Shannon RBD covering all of the River Shannon and its tributaries;
- ii. The North Western International RBD covering the River Erne (part of the Shannon/Erne Waterway, Cullies River, Lough McNea) and its tributaries and Lough Melvin catchment area;
- iii. The Western RBD covering the Bonet River and Lough Gill catchment.

It is acknowledged that the county's watercourses are one of its most important assets and will be protected by the Council.

Given that there is a very strong link between land use and water quality, this Council recognises that it is necessary for there to be appropriate alignment between the County Development Plan and the Water Management Plans, prepared under the *Water Framework Directive*.

Policy 85 It is the policy of the Council not to permit development on a flood plain other than in exceptional circumstances (where the development is of significant importance for the local community).

Refer also to Section 3.8.5 Flood Risk Management

Policy 86 It is the policy of the Council to control development in accordance with the aims of the Water Framework Directive generally and more particularly with the goals and policies of the three River Basin Districts which cover all water bodies in Leitrim.

Policy 87 It is the policy of the Council to commit itself to continue to make appropriate and considered input into the preparation and implementation of the River Management Plans and to ensure that there is adequate alignment between the Development Plan and the future Water Management Plans.

Policy 88 It is the policy of the Council to fully implement the programme of measures (and where appropriate the additional recommendations) of the Shannon, North Western International and Western River Basin District Plans, as appropriate, in co-operation with the other relevant local authorities and statutory bodies, subject to funding being available.

Policy 89 It is the policy of the Council to promote the improvement of water quality in the rivers, lakes and ground water bodies in line with the objectives of the three River Basin Management Plans.

Policy 90 It is the policy of the Council to establish source protection zones for all drinking water sources serving more than 50 people. In these zones development shall be strictly controlled.

Policy 91 It is the policy of the Council, in co-operation with the appropriate statutory bodies, to facilitate the free flow of rivers and streams in or partially in the county subject to environmental considerations.

Policy 92 It is the policy of the Council to identify, and if resources or circumstances permit, to secure suitable lands and install Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW), as part of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for all the towns and villages for which land use strategies are prepared.

As already indicated in the plan, protecting and enhancing water quality is an important environmental planning aim. In this regard it is appropriate for the Council to consider adopting bye-laws to deal with standards, monitoring, enforcement *etc.* in relation to individual treatment systems. The Council's development management standards to be achieved in relation to wastewater treatment are set out in the relevant *EPA Codes of Practice* and the *Building Regulations* and the *Water Pollution Acts* (see also Section 4.2.6).



To ensure the proper operation and maintenance of waste water treatment systems serving individual dwellings in the countryside, it is considered appropriate for the Plan to set out clearly an approach to monitoring the operation of septic tanks and other individual treatment systems. To this end the Council is supportive of the introduction of appropriate bylaws, to facilitate the monitoring of effluent discharges. In this way the Council will ensure that water quality will be improved.

- Policy 93** **It is the policy of the Council to support the National Programme for the registration and upgrading of septic tanks and individual waste water treatment systems serving dwellings in un-serviced rural areas.**
- Policy 94** **It is the policy of the Council to promote the use of sustainable drainage systems, which balance the impact of urban drainage through the achievement of control of runoff quantity and quality and enhancing amenity and habitat.**
- Policy 95** **It is the policy of the Council to cooperate with Irish Water, to minimise the number and frequency of storm overflows of sewage to watercourses in the county and to establish a consistent approach to the design, improvement and management of these intermittent discharges to ensure that the needs of the County's receiving waters are met in a cost-effective manner.**

The Council understands the importance of active flood plains in the retention of seasonal flooding and the prevention of siltation of river channels. Flood plains have been identified by the OPW and can be viewed at the following website: www.floodmaps.ie. Development should not itself be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor should it cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations. Further details in respect to flood risk can be found in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment forming Appendix A to the SEA. Also, refer to; Volume 2 Appendices, Appendix D, 'Guidelines on Flood Risk and Development'.

The Council is pro-active in protecting water courses by licensing and monitoring discharges to sewers and watercourses under the *Water Pollution Acts*. Unlicensed discharges are liable to prosecution.

- Policy 96** **In order to maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of our waters, it is the policy of the Council to promote the implementation of the Three River Basin Water Quality Management Plans for ground, surface and coastal waters in the County, as part of the implementation of the *EU Water Framework Directive*.**

3.8.5 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

It is the aim of the Council to ensure, where appropriate, that proposed developments in areas at risk of flooding shall conform with guidance contained in *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities* or any subsequent version of this document issued by a Government Department, during the lifetime of the Plan. It should be noted that Carrick-on-Shannon has been identified in the *Border Regional Planning Guidelines* as a Regionally-Strategically Important Town and as such has been identified as a growth

centre. Accordingly, its status as such will be taken into consideration when assessing certain type developments within areas at risk of flooding.

The flood risk maps, expected to arise from the Shannon Catchment Flood Risk and Management (CFRAM) Study in 2015, shall inform the Council in relation to all matters relating to proposed development in all areas shown to be at risk.

3.8.5.1 Flood Risk Assessment

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the Plan (SFRA) has been undertaken and is contained in a separate document (see Appendix A of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Report). The SFRA has informed the making of the Plan. In particular the recommendations in respect to zoning of lands, surface water drainage and development management standards have been suitably incorporated into the Plan.

Policy 97 It is the policy of the Council to require, where appropriate, that developments of a type that may be considered sensitive to flooding are subject to a 'justification test'*. Where a justification test is required it shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that: -

- a) Such proposals apply the 'sequential approach' as outlined in Section 3 of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Nov. 09. In particular, the proposal shall demonstrate that there are no alternative sites available at a more suitable location within the town that would meet the requirements of the development;
- b) The area comprises significant previously developed and/or underutilised lands within the urban envelope;
- c) The development of the area is essential to facilitate regeneration or town centre expansion;
- d) Environmental/hydrological assessment has been undertaken to identify the impact of flood risk as a result of development and that the development would not result in increased or new flood risk elsewhere and if possible will reduce the overall flood risk;
- e) The proposal includes measures to minimise flood risk to people, property, the economy and the environment as far as is reasonably possible;
- f) The development proposed includes measures to ensure that residual risks to the area and/or development can be managed to an acceptable level as regards the adequacy of existing flood protection measures or the design, implementation and funding of any future risk management measures and provisions for emergency services access;
- g) The proposal complies with other relevant policies and development standards as set out in the *County Development Plan*.

* Note: In general, but not exclusively, the justification test will only apply to lands that are affected by flooding, as set out in the *Flood Risk Management Guidelines*.



- Policy 98** It is the policy of the Council to seek to ensure that proposals within flood risk areas exclude high vulnerability uses such as residential care homes, hospitals, emergency services, residential use at ground floor level and certain strategic infrastructural services and facilities.
- Policy 99** It is the policy of the Council to protect the floodplain of the Shannon. Planning permission for development on the floodplain will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and where the Council is satisfied that downstream (and upstream) consequences are insignificant. The Council must be satisfied that all floor levels in such developments are sufficiently high above the maximum recorded flood levels.

The Council will continue to work in conjunction with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and other relevant bodies towards the management of flood risk with particular reference to the OPW flood risk mapping and other documentation under the CFRAM project and having regard to the availability of resources.

Surface water drainage systems are effective at transferring surface water quickly, but they can cause the volume of water in the receiving watercourse to increase more rapidly thereby increasing flood risk. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can play a role in reducing and managing run-off to surface water drainage systems as well as improving water quality. For larger developments, the use of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) techniques will be favoured.

In general terms, and where appropriate, proposals for development shall be required to submit a contoured site drainage plan - identifying cut-off drains, the dimensions and locations of silt traps and discharge arrangements, at the Planning Application stage.

Refer to Section 3.8.5 and Appendix A of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Report.

3.8.6 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The Council commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the whole County. The LCA has been used as a guidance document to inform policy on afforestation and windfarms, as referred to in Sections 3.7.3 and 3.11.5.

3.8.7 AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) AND HIGH VISUAL AMENITY (HVA)

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and High Visual Amenity are identified on Map 3.12. The Council will preserve and enhance these areas, as far as is practicable, by careful management and by the operation of special controls over development in these areas.

Refer to point c) of Section 4.1.1 Development Management Requirements, Section 4.1.5 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Section 4.1.6 Areas of High Visual Amenity for further guidance.

The Council recognises that the landscape character of these areas, as we experience it today, has evolved over centuries through traditional farming practices. The Council considers the

local farming communities to be the custodians of this landscape and will work to ensure their continual survival.

The capacity to absorb development varies greatly from AONB/HVA to AONB/HVA and even within AONB/HVAs. The most beautiful landscape is not always the most vulnerable to change.

While the Council is committed to the protection of the character of these areas, it recognises that this character has evolved over centuries through traditional farming practices and that continuing human involvement is necessary to maintain that character. The Council is anxious to support the evolution of existing communities in these areas, while at the same time protecting the landscape from the pressures of speculative development.

Capacity of the landscape to absorb development will depend, amongst other things, on the local topography, vegetation and the nature and extent of existing development.

Policy 100 It is the policy of the Council to permit development in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where the applicant can satisfy the planning authority that it is not practicable to develop in a less-sensitive location and where it is demonstrated that the development will not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity or uniformity of the landscape.

Policy 101 It is the policy of the Council to permit development in an area of High Visual Amenity only where the applicant has demonstrated a very high standard of site selection, site layout and design and where the planning authority is satisfied that the development could not be accommodated in a less-sensitive location.

In terms of the accommodation of one-off housing in the countryside refer to Section 3.2.2.14.

The Council will consider the development of appropriately located hotels, hostels, marinas, campsites and other tourism-related developments in areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and areas of High Visual Amenity. In assessing such proposals, the Council will seek to minimise negative impacts on the heritage and the environment and maximise economic and social gain for the local community.

Thus such facilities will be encouraged to locate in existing towns and villages, where a critical mass of tourism accommodation, pubs and restaurants may develop, and away from environmentally-sensitive areas. However, the Council acknowledges that this may not always be achievable and that instances may arise where development peripheral to villages and towns and in sensitive areas may be appropriate. In such instances the highest standards of design, construction and ongoing management will be required.

Such housing must be carefully integrated into the landscape in accordance with guidance set out in the *Design Guide for the Siting and Design of Single Houses within the Leitrim Countryside*.

The Council will be favourably disposed towards the development of appropriately located water-based tourism enterprises proposed to be located in sensitive areas, where there is a



maximum gain to the local economy and only where the highest standards of design and management applies.

Requirements will also extend to the non-exempted activities of statutory undertakers. High-tension electrical power line or telephonic communication installation proposals in such areas will be approved by the Council only where the highest standards of safety and visual mitigation have been satisfied following establishment of necessity.

Afforestation proposals will be expected to conform to those requirements of the Council deemed by them to be essential to amenity preservation.

The Council will adopt a positive approach to development proposals outside these designated areas which support the 'living countryside' philosophy of the Council. However, even here the highest standards of design will be sought and care must be taken to minimise negative visual impacts.

The Council will seek the removal and/or refurbishment of derelict structures and eyesores and will carry out amenity schemes in these areas, as necessary and as funds allow.

The Council will ensure provision of access to features of particular interest or quality is adequate by the creation of rights of way, lay-bys, viewing areas and signage, as appropriate and as funds allow.

Objective 80 It is an objective of the Council to protect the following Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, (Table 18 refers).

Table 18 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Map Ref.	Area
A1	The Coast
A2	Lough Melvin North
A3	Aroo, Glenade, Truskmore, Glencar and environs
A4	The Doons, Lough Gill and environs
A5	Benbo
A6	O'Donnell's Rock and Boleybrack
A7	Sheemore

Objective 81 It is an objective of the Council to protect the following Areas of High Visual Amenity, (Table 19 refers).

Table 19 Areas of High Visual Amenity

Map Ref.	Area
B1	The Coastal Plain
B2	Lough Melvin, Glenaniff River and Environs
B3	Dough Mountain
B4	Thur Mountain
B5	Lough McNea Upper and environs
B6	Cloonclare
B7	Corry Mountain
B8	Lough Allen, Sliabh an Iarainn, Bencroy and environs
B9	Lough Scur, St. John's Lough and environs
B10	Lough Garadice and environs
B11	River Shannon, Derrycarne and environs
B12	Lough Rynn, Lough Sallagh, Lough Errew and environs
B13	Gulladoo Lake and environs
B14	Laheen Lake, Glasshouse Lake and environs

3.8.8 LANDSCAPES CONSERVATION AREAS

The Council may consider the creation of Landscape Conservation Areas in appropriate locations in accordance with Section 204 of the *Planning Act*.

3.8.9 PROTECTED VIEWS AND PROSPECTS

A number of outstanding views and prospects are identified on Map 3.12.

These views are primarily of the County's lakes and upland areas from public roads and are an important resource for the development of tourism in the county. Views and prospects are not restricted to public roads, refer also to Table 20.

Policy 102 It is the Council's policy to protect these views from intrusive development and enhance them by the removal of dereliction and eyesores. Lay-bys and viewing areas will be developed, as appropriate and as funds allow.

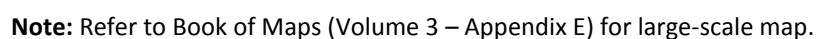
Objective 82 It is an objective of the Council to protect the following Views and Prospects, Table 20 refers.



Table 20 Protected Views and Prospects

Map Ref.	View
V1	View towards Donegal Bay from N15 and Local Roads LP02059-1, LP02059-2, LP02059-3, LS06058-0, LS06059-0, LS06001-0 and LS06071-0
V2	View from Local Road LS060491-0 toward Truskmore and Kings Mountain
V3	View towards Lough Melvin and Donegal Bay from Local Road LS06094-1 and LS06094-2
V4	View of Lough Melvin from Aghavoghil
V5	View of Loughs Melvin and McNeen from Loughross Bar (Local Road LS06197)
V6	View towards Glenade Lake and valley from R280
V7	View towards Glenade Lake from Local Roads LT21251-1, LT21512-2, LP02125-1 and LP02125-2
V8	View towards Glencar Lake from Local Road LP04145
V9	View towards Glencar Lake from N16
V10	View towards Benbo Mountain from Local Road LP02136
V11	View towards Lough McNeen from Local Roads LT61842-1, LT61842-2, LT61843 and LT61961.
V12	View of Fivemilebourne and Carrickanurroo
V13	View of Lough Gill from Carrickanurroo
V14	View of Lough Gill from R286
V15	View towards Carrigeencor Lake from Local Roads LS08162 and LS08164
V16	View of Benbo, Thur and Dough Mountains from R280
V17	View from O'Donnell's Rock
V18	View of Creevelea Abbey from the R288
V19	View towards Bellhavel Lake from Local Road LT42461
V20	View from Gleaghnafeanagh from Local Road LT42533
V21	View towards Lough Allen from the R280
V22	View towards Lough Allen from the R200
V23	View of Slieve an Iarainn from the R280
V24	View of Slieve an Iarainn and Lough Scur from the R209
V25	View of River Shannon from the N4 Faulties to Aughamore
V26	View of Lough Rynn from Local Roads LP01053 and LS05515
V27	View of River Shannon from Local Road LS07426
V28	View of River Shannon from the N4 in the townlands of Munkil and Tully
V29	View towards the Leean Mountain Range from the R.278 in the area of Doon Lough

Map 3.12 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, High Visual Amenity & Protected Views and Prospects



3.9 PROTECTION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

3.9.1 GENERAL

The built environment refers to all features built by man in the environment including buildings and other structures such as bridges, archaeological sites and field boundaries. These structures have been influenced by the particular physical, climactic, technological, cultural and socio-economic circumstances of their creators and are a record of man's continuous interaction with his environment. While not every structure is of sufficient importance to warrant protection, the conservation of special examples of the built heritage is vital if a sense of continuity with the past is to be maintained.

Leitrim has a rich and diverse heritage and brings benefits to all that live in the County and those who visit. Along with forming our identity, heritage teaches us lessons from the past and also brings economic benefits to the County by providing scenic landscapes, vernacular architecture and historic monuments for the tourist. Retaining a wide diversity and quality of heritage resource may also be seen as a measure of success and competitiveness. The Shannon-Erne Waterway, Parke's Castle, Sweathouses, Creevelea Ironworks, Black Pig's Dyke, Lough Rynn Estate, Sliabh an Iarainn, Glenade Lough, Kingfisher Trail, pattern days and mumming festivals, landscapes, architecture, archaeology, nature, wildlife and cultural festivals all combine to make up a unique sense of Leitrim.

Caring for our heritage helps fulfil the need for sustainable development by maintaining the quality of our landscapes, historic and cultural resources and the heritage of the manmade environment. There are many individuals and groups who are interested in and have responsibility for our heritage.

The Council will seek to promote environmental awareness and good practices, together with high standards of design in all development proposals. The Council considers the appointment of a Heritage Officer/Conservation Officer is necessary in order to encourage good practice in building and conservation. The appointment of such however, is subject to availability of resources.

The Council would be favourably disposed generally towards developments/projects, in appropriate locations, which would enhance understanding of County heritage – artistic, cultural and literary.

3.9.2 PLANNING LEGISLATION

Under Section 10 (2)(f) of the *Planning Act*, it is a requirement of all County Development Plans to include objectives for:

“the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest”.

Under Section 10 (2)(g) of the *Planning Act*, it is a requirement of all County Development Plans to include objectives for:

“the preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas”.

Section 51 (1) of the *Planning Act*, states: -

“For the purpose of protecting structures, or parts of structures, which form part of the architectural heritage and which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, every development plan shall include a record of protected structures, which is, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, of such interest within its functional area”.

3.9.3 COUNTY LEITRIM HERITAGE PLAN 2003-2008

The adoption of the *Leitrim Heritage Plan 2003-2008* arose from the requirements of the *National Heritage Plan 2002* and the *National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2002*. It is a strategic framework within which to direct the management of one of Leitrim’s most valuable resources. Protection and enhancement of heritage is also an aim of strategic document ‘*A Shared Vision; the Social, Economic and Cultural Strategy for County Leitrim 2002-2012*’. The current *Leitrim Heritage Plan* is being reviewed and its aim is to: -

“implement a cross-agency approach to promote awareness, education, best management practise and access to heritage in recognition of the benefits that heritage delivers; identifying a sense of place for Leitrim, learning lessons from the past and added value for development and the environs of the county”.

Some of the objectives of the plan include: -

- To continue to promote and raise the profile of heritage in Co. Leitrim in recognition of its cultural and economic benefits for the people of Leitrim.
- To raise awareness on and promote the needs of the archives and museum sector of heritage in Leitrim.
- To promote sustainable planning for Leitrim’s waterways.
- To maintain and create access to Leitrim’s natural, built and cultural heritage.
- To maintain and enhance the network of Leitrim’s walkways.
- To increase our knowledge of and promote the appropriate care and conservation of our historic sites and monuments.
- To raise awareness on Leitrim’s cultural heritage.

Objective 83	It is an objective of the Council to carry out a review of the County Heritage Plan during the lifetime of this plan subject to specific funding being made available by the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.
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The term ‘architectural heritage’ is defined in the *Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) & Historic Monuments Act, 1999*, as “all (a) structures and buildings together with their settings and attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings, (b) groups of such structures, and (c) sites”, which are of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.



3.9.4 PROTECTED STRUCTURES

Policy 103 It is the policy of the Council to protect all structures in the Record of Protected Structures (Appendix A Volume 2 of this plan).

A Protected Structure is a structure that Leitrim County Council considers to be worthy of protections from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. The built heritage is an important element in the character of County Leitrim and every Planning Authority is required to have a Record of Protected Structures in its functional area.

The Inventory of Appropriate Buildings/Structures for Inclusion in the New Record of Protected Structures prepared by CAAS in November 2000 and the National Inventory for Architectural Heritage in County Leitrim (Dúchas, the Heritage Service), the Carrick-on-Shannon Architectural Heritage Study (Dúchas, the Heritage Service) and the Urban Framework Plans for Drumkeeran, Drumshanbo, Ballinamore, Mohill, Manorhamilton and Dromahaire shall be used as the basis for the preparation of any new Record of Protected Structures. All structures of local, regional and national importance will be considered for protection.

Sixty buildings were brought forward from the 1997-2002 Record of Protected Structures list into the 2003-2009 Record of Protected Structures. One of those on the list “*Annagh –Sweat House*” did not originally form part of the Record of Protected Structures in the 1997-2002 County Development Plan but was instead listed under Monuments of Archaeological Interest. It is intended therefore to correct this and omit this structure from the Record of Protected Structures.

In 2005, Leitrim County Council added an additional 211 structures to the Record of Protected Structures and a further 2 no. structures in 2006. A total of 272 Structures will therefore form the Record of Protected Structures – identified in Appendix A Volume 2 of this Plan.

Under the *Planning Act*, the entire building is listed for protection. The protection afforded to a Protected Structure automatically includes all parts of the structure within the curtilage of the property and any other structures within its attendant grounds (including the interior and exterior of all structures, walls, gates and boundaries etc.). Where a structure is a Protected Structure all works (including those normally exempt) that affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure that contributes to its special interest require planning permission. The owner or occupier is entitled to a declaration from the Council, under Section 57 of the *Planning Act*, which will identify the features of the structure of particular interest and worthy of conservation.

It is proposed to further review buildings/structures contained within the National Inventory for Architectural Heritage with a view to their inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures during the lifetime of this Plan.

Particular attention will be paid to the alteration/ addition of buildings or structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures and these should reflect the setting, form, scale, mass, material and colouring of the original building.

Development or redevelopment in close proximity to any building or structure listed in the Record of Protected Structures, must respect the setting and character of the Protected Structure. In this regard, the Council will offer advice on conservation.

Policy 104 It is the policy of the Council to actively pursue funding for building conservation under the Conservation Grants scheme run by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Objective 84	It is an objective of the Council to seek the protection of all structures within the County that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.
Objective 85	It is an objective of the Council to review the record of Protected Structures during the lifetime of this plan.
Objective 86	It is an objective of the Council to seek funding for the conservation and restoration of Protected Structures.
Objective 87	It is an objective of the Council to seek the appointment of a Conservation Officer/Heritage Officer to improve the level of expertise available to the Council. However the Council will seek to develop in-house expertise in the interim in the absence of these appointments, having regard to the current embargo on recruitment.

3.9.5 STREETSAPES AND AREAS OF GOOD URBAN DESIGN

In addition to protecting individual buildings and structures, the Council is aware that many other buildings, while not of sufficient merit to warrant individual listing, are nevertheless important in the context of their contribution to the streetscape and the character of the towns and villages within which they are located.

The demolition of any building in a defined streetscape area will not be allowed unless in exceptional circumstances, such as :-

- a) the building or structure is beyond reasonable repair;
- b) demolition would be a positive benefit to the areas enhancement;
- c) permission has been granted and an agreement entered into for the erection of an appropriate replacement building reflecting the design and character of the area.

Generally in town and village centres new development will be expected to respect established building lines, eaves and ridge heights, roof pitches and fenestration patterns. New development can be more successfully absorbed into established streetscapes when attention is paid to details such as chimneys, eaves overhangs and shop fronts.

However the Council welcomes high-quality modern architectural designs which demonstrate an affinity with these settings. Ideally new buildings should reflect both the era in which they are built and respect the context in which they are located.



3.9.6 ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREAS (ACA's)

An architectural conservation area is “a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that is of architectural, historical, artistic, archaeological, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contributes to the appreciation of a Protected Structure, and whose character it is an objective of a development plan to preserve. A Planning Authority recognizes, by making provision in the Development Plan for the protection of these areas, that in many cases the protection of the architectural heritage is best achieved by controlling and guiding change on a wider scale than the individual structure, in order to retain the overall architectural or historic character of an area” (*Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, DoEHLG, 2004).

The purpose of defining an ACA is to give the necessary protection to buildings and the urban environment.

Within these areas the priority will be to preserve and/or enhance those buildings, structures, trees, open spaces, archaeological remains, views and other elements, which contribute to the unique character of the area.

Where appropriate the Council will encourage the retention and restoration of the external fabric of these buildings. Particular attention will be paid to the retention (and repair if necessary) of original natural slate roofs, chimneys, cast iron rainwater goods and railings, external renders, original timber sash windows and shop fronts (including the use of appropriate colours). The Council will pursue such grant aid and tax incentives as may be made available in support of this policy.

The purpose of an ACA is to ensure the following: -

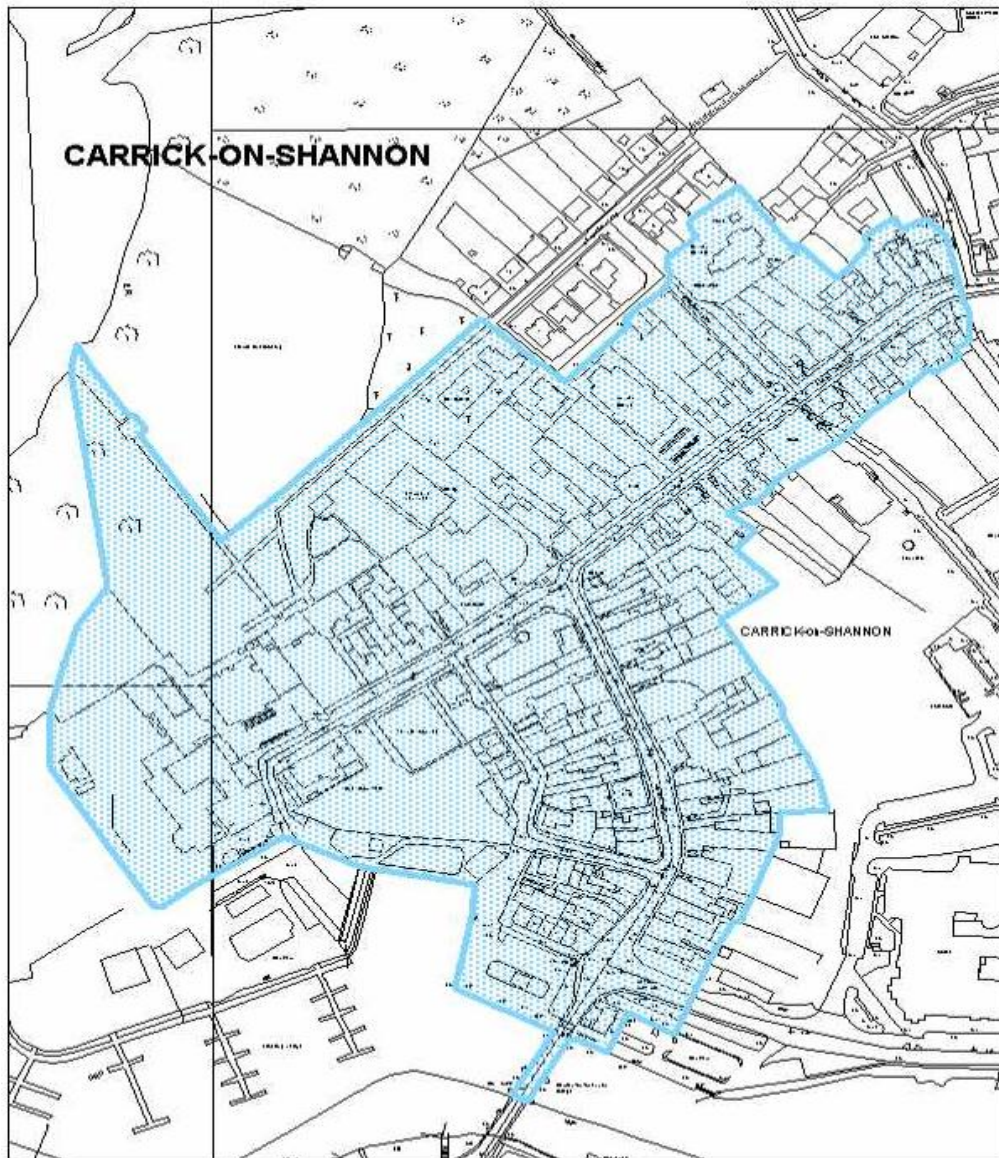
- a) High standard of civic amenity and civic design
- b) Preservation and protection of the environment, including architectural, archaeological and natural heritage
- c) Streetscape improvement
- d) Control of layout of areas, density, building lines and treatment of spaces
- e) Control of design, colours and materials
- f) Promotion of maintenance, repair or cleaning of structures
- g) Promotion of mixed uses
- h) Control of changes in use
- i) Promotion of the development or redevelopment of derelict or vacant sites
- j) Control of advertisements.

In recognition of the importance of such areas and having due regard to the recommendations made in the various Urban Framework Plans carried out, the Council is designating a portion of some of the towns and villages in the county as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). The Architectural Conservation Areas are indicated on Map 3.13 to Map 3.20.

Carrick-on-Shannon

St. George's Terrace, Main Street and Bridge Street.

Map 3.13 Carrick-on-Shannon ACA



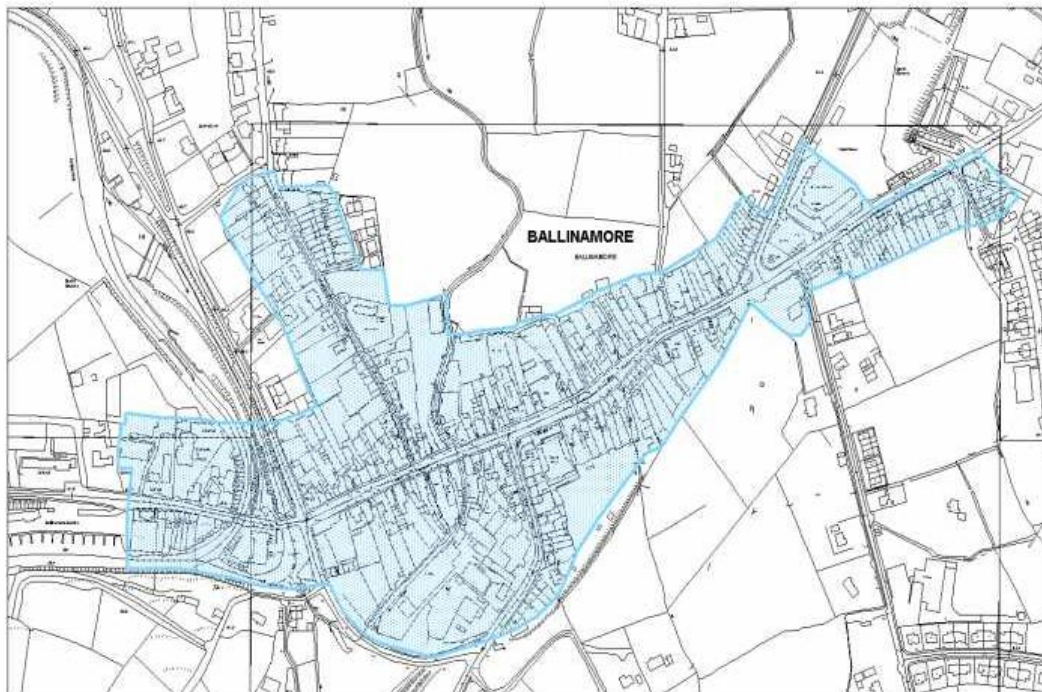
Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) for Carrick on Shannon

— = ACA



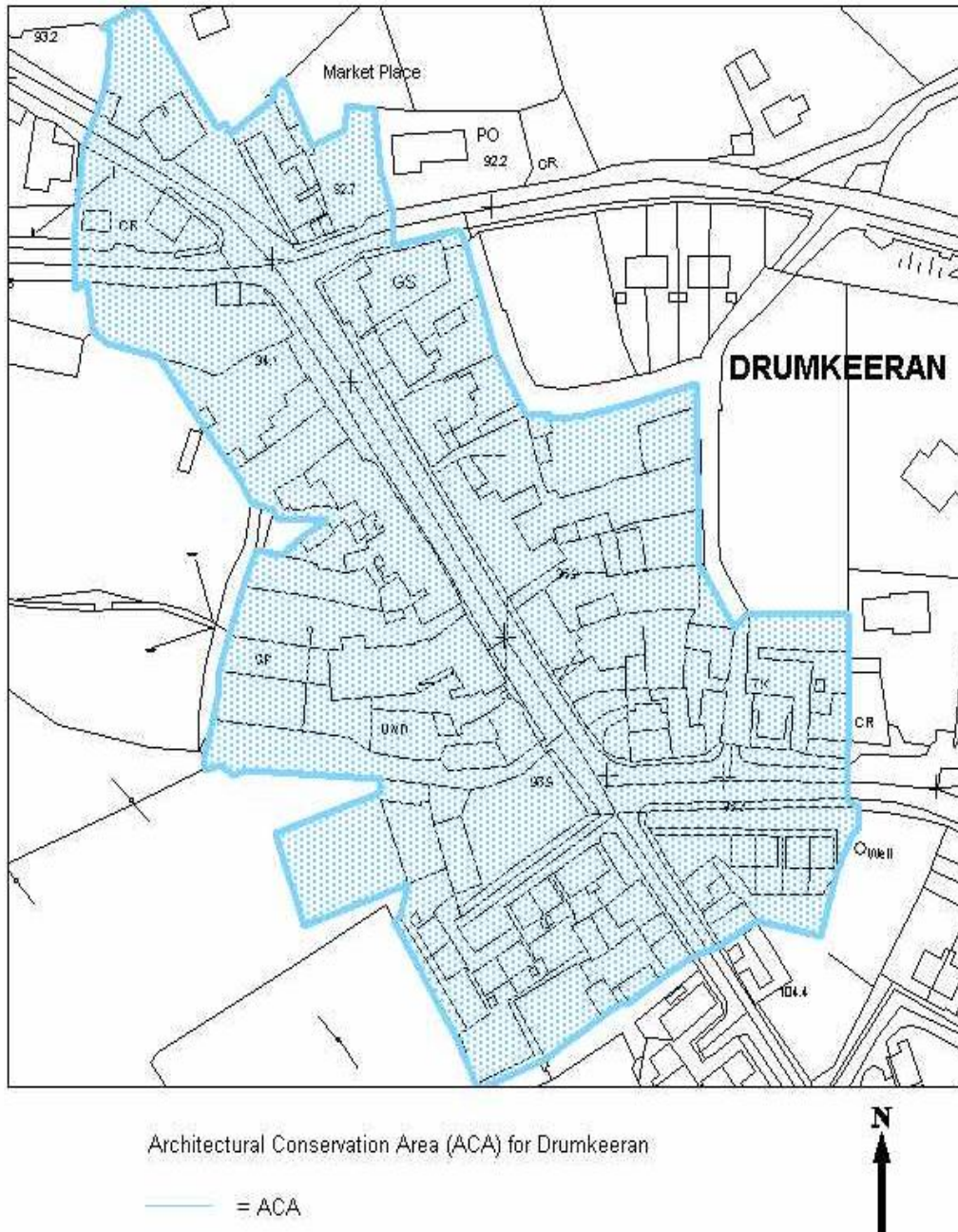
Ballinamore

Town Centre

Map 3.14 Ballinamore ACA

Drumkeeran

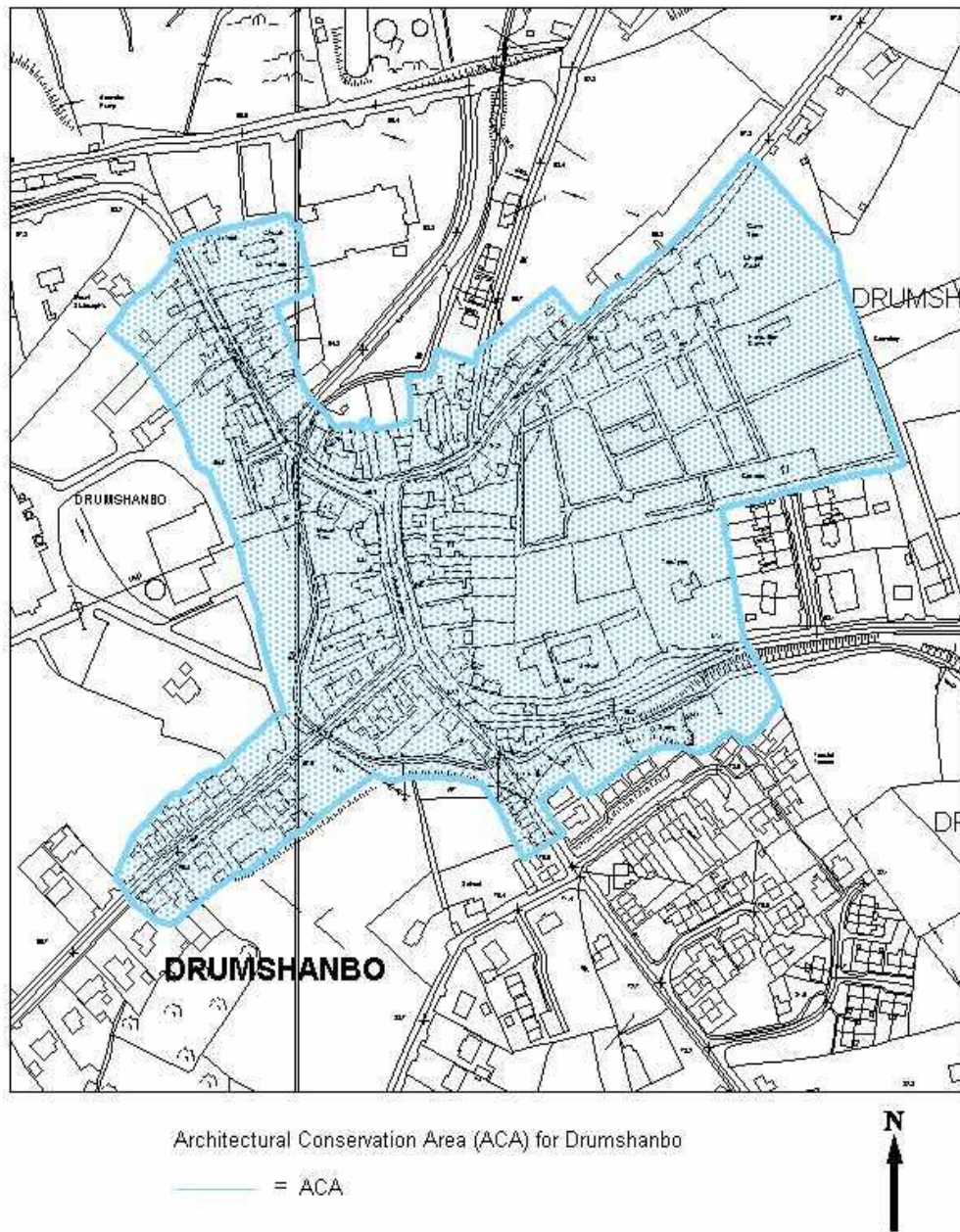
The Main Street

Map 3.16 Drumkeeran ACA

Drumshanbo

The historic core of the Town

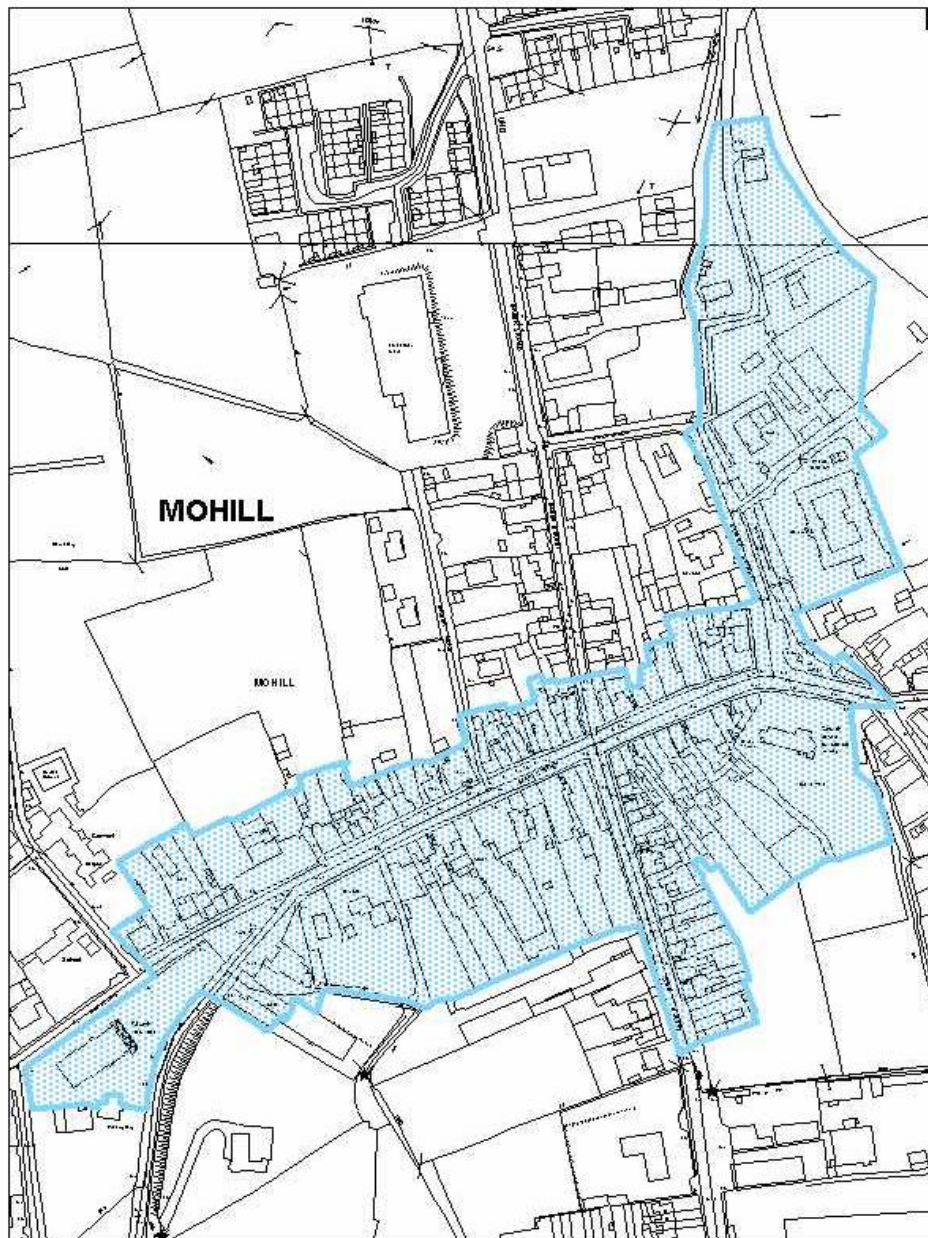
Map 3.17 Drumshanbo ACA



Mohill

Main Street including Áras O'Carolan and the Castle area.

Map 3.18 Mohill ACA



Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) for Mohill

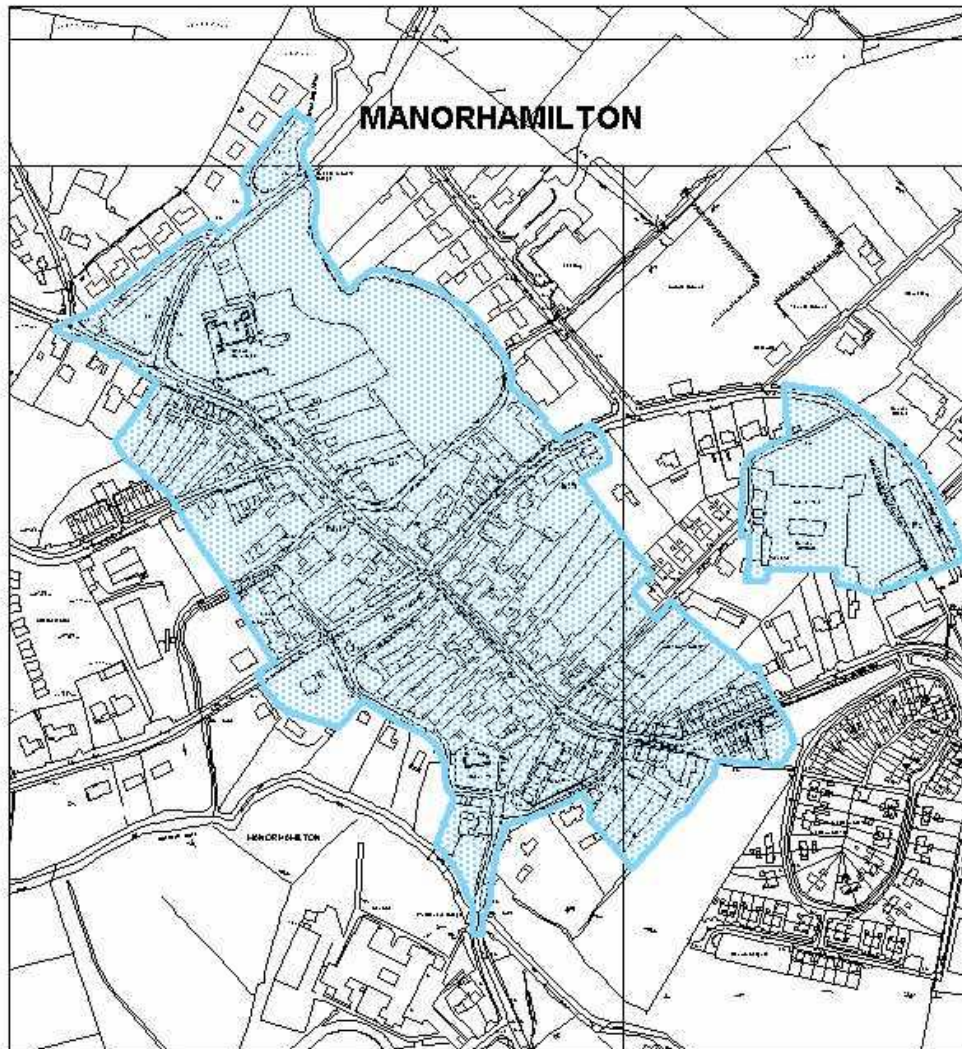
— = ACA



Manorhamilton

The historic core/village centre

Map 3.19 Manorhamilton ACA



Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) for Manorhamilton

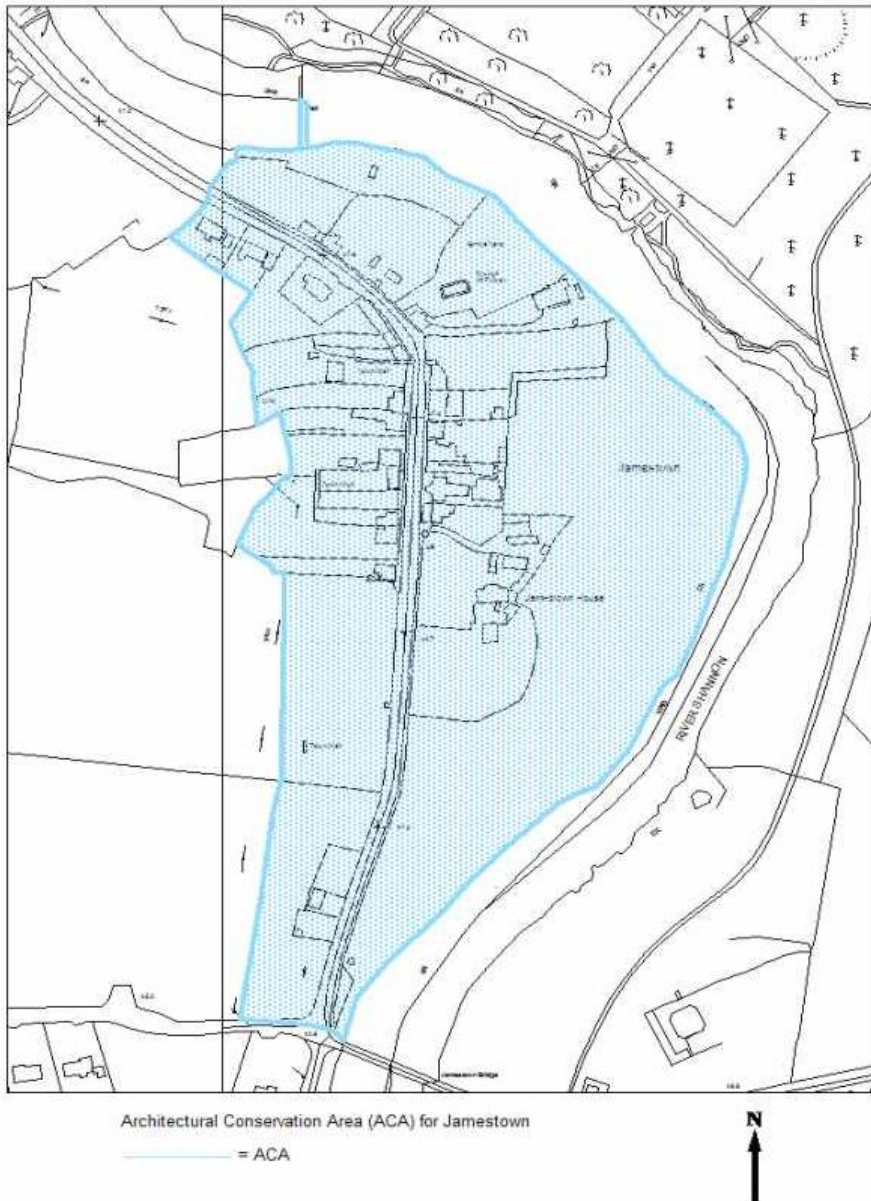
— = ACA



Jamestown

The village centre

Map 3.20 Jamestown ACA



Objective 88	It is an objective of the Council to identify where necessary additional Architectural Conservation Areas.
Objective 89	It is an objective of the Council to exercise specific design control for ACA's and to facilitate applicants, it is the Council's intention to develop guidelines for ACAs.
Objective 90	It is an objective of the Council to protect and enhance the areas identified as Architectural Conservation Areas.
Objective 91	It is an objective of the Council to prepare additional Urban Framework Plans and Village Design Statements during the life of this plan, in order to facilitate and guide development within towns and villages.

3.9.7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

"Archaeology is the scientific study of past societies, their cultures and their relationship with the environment through an examination of the material remains of our predecessors.All remains and objects and any other traces of humankind from past times are considered elements of the archaeological heritage. The archaeological heritage is a resource, which can be used to gain knowledge and understanding of the past. The archaeological heritage is therefore of great cultural and scientific importance" (DoEHLG website).

Sites and monuments of archaeological significance are recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). The RMP is compiled by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland and is a statutory inventory of sites and areas with accompanying maps on which sites and monuments are marked and numbered. The Record includes all identified monuments such as megalithic tombs, ring forts and castles in County Leitrim, dating to before 1700AD and some sites post-dating 1700AD. There are approximately 1,400 sites and monuments identified in the RMP for County Leitrim. Each monument is encircled by a zone of archaeological potential. The duties of the owner of a recorded monument are detailed in the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994*. The RMP is available for viewing in the Planning Authority Office and in the County Library. It should be noted that any direct impacts on national monuments in State or Local Authority care or subject to a preservation order will require the consent of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government under Section 14 of the *National Monuments Act 1930* as amended by Section 5 of the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004*.

Policy 105 **It is the policy of the Council to promote public awareness of the rich archaeological heritage that exists in County Leitrim.**

The archaeological heritage of County Leitrim includes, according to the *European Convention for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage, 1992 (Valetta Convention)* structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, all recorded monuments as well as their contexts, and moveable objects; situated both on land and under water. This means that the



archaeological heritage is not confined to the archaeological sites within the Record of Monuments and Places, but also includes any archaeological site that may not have been recorded yet, as well as archaeology beneath the ground surface, as well as the context of any site. Leitrim has one underwater heritage order in the County (UHO 1/90), which refers to Lough Donogher, located to the north east of Cloone.

Objective 92 It is an objective of the Council to promote the County's archaeological heritage as a tourism resource, in partnership with key tourism organisations.

Table 21 List of National Monuments in County Leitrim

RMP No.	Townland	Description	Status	National Monument No.
LE002-019	Aghaderrard West	Druid's Alter Passage Grave	Ownership	477
LE008-013	Corrocaloona	Megalithic Tomb	Guardianship	405
LE014-004	Creevelea	Franciscian Friary	Ownership	69
LE025-09601	Fenagh (Commons)	Fenagh Abbey	Ownership	68
LE005-014	Lattone/Gortnaderrary	Worm Ditch or Black Pigs Race	Ownership	653
LE010-043	Kilmore (Drum. By) Sramore E.D.	Park's Castle	Ownership	390
LE008-032	Laghty Barr	Teach Mhic Dhiarmada	Ownership	508

Table 22 List of Preservation Orders (PO) on Monuments in the County

RMP No.	Townland	Description	No. of PO
LE025-096001, LE25-096003, LE025-096004, LE025-096005	Commons	Monastic Enclosure	3/94
LE027-054001, LE027-054002, LE027-054003	Sheemore	Sheemore Passage Grave Cemetery	10/78

Table 23 List of Underwater Heritage Orders (UHO) in the County

Location	Townland	Date of Order	UHO No.
Lough Donogher – LE 29	N/A	14/09/1990	1/90

3.9.8 ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Policy 106 It is the policy of the Council to secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in-situ or in particular circumstances where the Council is satisfied that this is not possible, preservation by record as a minimum) of all archaeological remains and sites of importance such as National Monuments, Recorded Monuments, their setting and context.

The Council will protect all such sites and monuments and their settings from inappropriate development. All planning applications likely to interfere with such a recorded site, monument or zone of archaeological interest will be referred to the Development Applications Unit of the Dept. of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, An Taisce and the Heritage Council. Regard will be given to the advice and recommendations of these bodies in respect of whether or not planning permission should be granted and the nature of conditions to be attached to any grant of planning permission.

Proposed development on, or in close proximity to, a site and monument of archaeological significance will only be allowed where development does not adversely affect their character and setting. Where allowed, the Council will use planning conditions and agreements to enable an archaeological assessment, on site monitoring, testing and/or excavation by a licensed archaeologist.

In assessing development proposals that affect sites and monuments, the Council will have regard to the recommendations of both the Development Applications Unit of the Dept. of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, An Taisce and the Heritage Council. The Council will also have regard to the guidance document *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage*, as published by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands in 1999.

Objective 93	It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any development (above or below ground), within the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest shall not be detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting.
Objective 94	It is an objective of the Council to require, where appropriate, that an archaeological assessment be carried out by a suitably qualified person prior to the commencement of any activity that may impact upon the archaeological heritage.
Objective 95	It is an objective of the Council to protect the zones of archaeological potential, as identified in the Record of Monuments and Places.
Objective 96	It is an objective of the Council to protect archaeological sites discovered since the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.

3.9.9 INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND CANALS

The Council is aware of the cultural importance of the County's industrial heritage and in particular of the canal and waterway systems that traverse the County. Canals, lough gates and associated structures are fine examples of 19th century industrial engineering, which have mellowed over time to form an intrinsic part of the County's landscape. The importance of



protecting these structures is all the greater given the increased importance of the canal and navigation network as a tourism and recreational resource.

Policy 107 **It is the policy of the Council to protect and enhance public accessibility to the County's industrial heritage.**

3.9.10 NOISE

A *Noise Action Plan 2013*⁴⁰ has been prepared by Leitrim County Council to address environmental noise from major roads with more than three million vehicles *per annum*. The action planning area covers the N4 (Dublin-Sligo) and N15 (Sligo-Letterkenny).

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of EU *Environmental Noise Directive* 2002/49/EC, which was transposed into Irish Law by the *Environmental Noise Regulations 2006*, SI No. 140 of 2006. The Council recognises that noise is becoming a significantly increasing issue in relation to quality of life and future development. The *Noise Action Plan* contains the following Policy Statement: -

Leitrim Local Authority will seek to address environmental noise from major roads in the county, will endeavour to maintain satisfactory noise environments where they exist and will have regard to acoustical planning in the planning process (within the confines of the 2000 Planning and Development Act) to endeavour to ensure that future developments include provisions to protect the population from the effects of environmental noise in the interests of residential amenity and public health.

Refer to Section 4.6.6 Noise for further guidance.

Policy 108 **It is the policy of this Council to seek to achieve a healthy and comfortable environment that minimises unwanted Noise. To achieve this, the Council will implement the EU Directive on assessment and management of Environmental noise.**

3.9.11 MAJOR ACCIDENTS DIRECTIVE

The control of establishments where significant quantities of dangerous substances are stored falls under the *Major Accidents Directive* (known as the Seveso II Directive), which seeks to reduce the risk and to limit the consequences to both man and the environment, of accidents at manufacturing and storage facilities involving dangerous substances.

The Council is aware of its responsibilities regarding the *Major Accidents Directive* and will work closely with the Health and Safety Authority in the event of an establishment handling dangerous substances that fall within the meaning of such substances as defined by the EU

⁴⁰ The Draft Action Plan may be viewed at <http://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/News/Draft-Noise-Action-Plan.pdf>

(Control of Major Accidents Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2006 (S. I. No. 74 of 2006) being established within the county or likely to impact on the county.

The Health and Safety Authority acting as the Central Competent Authority issue technical advice to Planning Authorities in respect to establishments designated as containing hazardous substances. In addition to normal planning requirements, the Planning Authority will seek to ensure that development complies with this advice.

The Council is not aware that such establishments exist at present and will take a precautionary approach should one be proposed.

The Council reminds potential operators of their obligation to inform the Planning Authority and the Health and Safety Authority if their development is likely to be classified under the *Major Accidents Directive* and their obligation to obtain planning permission if an existing operation is expanded, changed or intensified in such a way as to be classified under the directive in the future.

If such establishments are located within the County, or bordering the County, planning applications for other developments in the vicinity of the establishment will be referred to the Health and Safety Authority and the Council will generally follow the recommendations of the authority in determining that application.

3.10 RECREATION, SPORTS AND AMENITY

3.10.1 INTRODUCTION

The provision of recreation and amenity facilities is an important aspect of delivering sustainable communities. It is crucial that the facilities provided cater for all age groups and are accessible by all. The role that good quality recreation and amenity facilities can play in ensuring a healthy and active community is recognised by the Council.

Refer to Section 4.4.12 Formal and Informal Recreational Facilities.

The Council believes that the County possesses some of the finest countryside in which to pursue outdoor recreational pursuits. Recreational opportunities are some of the County's greatest assets and are seen by the Council not just as an enrichment of the lives of the County's existing residents, but also as a potential draw for new residents, investors and tourists. The Council will therefore welcome any proposed development of recreational activity in the County, subject to the protection of the environment, health, safety and traffic issues.

The Council will require direct provision of public open space and/or recreational facilities in all residential developments.

Refer to Section 4.3.5 Open Space Provision in Housing Schemes.

The rights of landowners shall be respected by those using the countryside for recreational purposes.



3.10.2 PROVISION FOR RECREATION AND AMENITY

The Council is aware that the tourism potential of its amenities has not yet been fully developed and will facilitate, and where necessary become directly involved in, the promotion and development of amenities such as: -

1. The development of the GeoPark through its extension into Leitrim;
2. The Management Plan for Lough Allen;
3. The work of Waterways Ireland in extending and promoting the Shannon Navigation, Lough Allen and the Shannon-Erne waterway;
4. The development of marinas where considered appropriate;
5. The development of the Cavan-Leitrim Railway, from Dromod to Mohill;
6. The re-opening of the River Rynn to navigation.

The Council will also be favourably disposed towards community initiatives aimed at developing recreational resources in the County. In addition, community run gardens and allotments will also be looked upon favourably, in appropriate locations.

3.10.3 WATER-BASED SPORTS AND RECREATION

The Council recognises that the County's watercourses are assets whose recreational potential has yet to be fully realised. Protection of water courses from infestation by invasive species requires control on access points which ideally would be developed and managed in conjunction with local communities, angler or other interest groups.

The Council will promote and facilitate the creation of waterside linear parks, fishing stands and public moorings so local communities can make better use of these assets.

Towns and village communities will be encouraged to make more active use of watercourses running through their settlements, with new development in urban/built up areas generally encouraged to front onto rivers/canals and the possibility of new public waterside walkways explored.

Activities likely to impact negatively on the enjoyment of these resources by others, such as jet-skiing and water skiing will not be favourably considered. By-laws may be introduced restricting or prohibiting these pursuits if necessary.

The Council is aware of the importance of coarse and game angling as a recreational and tourism resource. The Council will work with the Inland Fisheries Ireland in protecting fish stocks and spawning grounds and promoting the County as an angler's paradise.

The Council will support the acquisition of fishing rights by approved local fishing clubs or organisations and assist in the maintenance of good fishing stocks by controls over unsuitable development. The opinion of the relevant fisheries authority will be sought and considered for any development proposal likely to impact on a fishery.

The Council recognise that the County's rivers and lakes are not exclusively of benefit to visitors to the area and that means for improving access for local persons to these waterbodies should be investigated and supported.

Policy 109 It is the policy of the Council to ensure that managed access to good fishing waters is available to locals and visitors and that the resource is appropriately managed.

Objective 97	It is an objective of the Council to improve and develop safe public access to the rivers and lakeshores.
Objective 98	It is an objective of the Council to protect the rivers, lakes and canals from ecological damage.
Objective 99	It is an objective of the Council to encourage new developments in urban/built up areas, to front onto rivers/canals and where possible develop new public walkways along rivers and canals.
Objective 100	It is an objective of the Council to investigate and support means for improving access for local persons to the County's rivers and lakes, particularly along the Shannon/Erne Waterway.

3.10.4 INLAND WATERWAYS

"The Shannon navigation and our waterways are a national asset which needs to be protected and nurtured for future generations, also, they need to be maintained as a real living, working environment." (Waterways Corridor Study 2005, page 8).

Policy 110 It is the policy of the Council to promote and protect managed public access to the County's rivers and lakes and to ensure appropriate environmental safeguards are put in place in the provision of such accessibility.

The Council acknowledges the importance of the inland waterways to the County of Leitrim and the need to both protect and properly manage this valuable resource. The Council recognises that the importance of such a resource extends beyond purely water-based activities such as angling, cruising, sailing, canoeing and other such water sports and that other activities such as walking, horse riding, cycling, bird watching also benefit from and use the waterways.

The inland waterways network within Leitrim primarily includes the following major waterbodies:

- 1) North Shannon Waterway;
- 2) Lough Allen; and
- 3) Shannon-Erne Waterway.

These waterways represent one of the most important and defining characteristics of the southern part of Leitrim County and are considered to be of international importance in terms of their heritage, recreational, economic and environmental value. In the interests of the people of Leitrim, this Council will continue to co-operate with Waterways Ireland and other relevant agencies in developing a range of tourism and commercial facilities associated with the Waterways. It is acknowledged that the development of the aforementioned



waterbodies, including extension of these waterbodies and provision of complimentary and essential services and facilities for these waterways continues to offer significant opportunities for the development of the County and its surrounds. Opportunities to enhance and expand the existing public and private facilities associated with the waterways will be promoted, where appropriate, considerate of environmental constraints and architectural heritage in particular. Likewise existing and new outdoor recreational activities that are hinged upon the waterways including; cruising, fishing, angling, canoe trails and heritage trails will be promoted and facilitated, as appropriate.

It is also envisaged that the development of the Waterways will be integrated with the development of the towns and villages in the vicinity. Improved connectivity is considered vital to spreading and fully harnessing the economic and social benefits of the waterways. Integrated development linking 'Blueways', 'Greenways', 'Cycleways', 'Walkways' and 'Bridleways' will be supported in conjunction with other agencies, as resources allow. It is acknowledged that the development and maintenance of fishing infrastructure along Leitrim's waterways is considered a vital component in attracting tourists to the area. Opportunities to enhance the existing waterways infrastructure in order to facilitate recreational and tourist offerings will be facilitated where appropriate and where gaps exist. The Council will operate strict planning control measures along waterway corridors (through the development management *regime*) in order to protect the amenities of the Waterways and avoid inappropriate development, which might detrimentally restrict the continued and future development of this vital and major resource.

Currently Leitrim has only one designated bathing water site at Keeldra Lake east of Mohill town.

Objective 101 It is an objective of the Council to maintain water quality at Keeldra Lake, a designated water bathing site and investigate and identify additional designated bathing water sites within the County.

3.10.5 SPORT AND RECREATION

The Council is actively supporting sporting facilities throughout the County. The development of the Aura Leisure Centre in Carrick-on-Shannon has been very successful and it is an objective of the Council to continue the development of the lands at the Aura Leisure Centre for the expansion of sporting facilities.

Pairc Sean MacDiarmada in Carrick-on-Shannon, including a 3,000 seater stand, is a valuable resource for the County.

This Council recognises that Gaelic Games are by far the biggest outdoor pursuit in the County and have the best network for delivering sports participation in the County at present. The Council is committed to the further development of GAA facilities in line with its commitment to the development of all sporting and outdoor recreational pursuits within the County.

While the Council recognises the strong network of GAA and the sporting facilities provided by the GAA, the Council is aware that the County is poorly provided for in terms of the range of sports facilities outside of GAA-related sports.

The Council also actively supports the continued development of outdoor pursuit centres, golf courses and equestrian centres in the County and will work towards increasing opportunities to participate in sport at local level to enhance access to sports and recreation for all.

The Council have been active in the provision of public amenities throughout the County and in this regard will continue to seek opportunities to improve and add to the provision of these amenities. The Council will ensure through its role in development management that all new developments will be served with high-quality amenity facilities.

Levies may be imposed on new development to fund recreational facilities in the County, in accordance with the Development Contributions Scheme to be adopted by the Council under Sections 48 & 49 of the *Planning Act*.

Policy 111 It is the policy of the Council to ensure appropriate high-quality recreational and amenity facilities are available in urban and rural areas.

Policy 112 It is the policy of the Council to work in conjunction with the Leitrim Sports Partnership in the development of sporting facilities in the County.

Objective 102	It is an objective of the Council to implement the Council's Development Contribution Scheme to secure new recreational and amenity facilities and the improvement of existing recreation and amenity facilities.
Objective 103	It is an objective of the Council to seek a greater variety of provision of recreation and amenity facilities to reflect the demand of a growing and diverse population.
Objective 104	It is an objective of the Council to actively encourage and support the provision by private developers of additional recreational and amenity facilities across the county, including swimming pools, gyms, play-areas, playing pitches, horse-riding arenas, playgrounds or other such amenities, in appropriate locations.
Objective 105	It is an objective of the Council to continue the development of the lands at the Aura Leisure Centre, Carrick-on-Shannon, for the expansion of sporting facilities.
Objective 106	It is an objective of the Council to support and encourage the development of sporting leisure facilities, by the public, community and private sectors.

3.10.6 PLAY AND RECREATION

The Council recognise the importance of play in the development of children. The Council will support initiatives, which encourage play and raise awareness of the importance of play for the health, wellbeing and development of children.



Policy 113 It is the policy of the Council to increase the range of public play opportunities available to children.

Policy 114 It is the policy of the Council to improve the quality and safety of playgrounds and play areas.

Objective 107 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that surfaces and play equipment provided in public playgrounds or publicly-funded playgrounds, conform to the Irish standards for play equipment and surfacing.

3.10.7 WALKING/ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

Leitrim County Council recognises the importance of hill-walking to the County from a social as well as economic point of view. There are a number of walking routes such as Sli Liatroma (Leitrim's Way), The North West Trail, the Beara-Breifni Way and the Miner's Way, which facilitate access to the countryside for everyone. Such routes open up the amenity asset that is the Leitrim Countryside, as well as providing opportunities for enhancement of quality of life and health.

Policy 115 It is the policy of the Council to co-operate with representative bodies, such as Comhairle na Tuaithe, the Mountaineering Council of Ireland, Irish Farmer's Association, Irish Cattle Farmers Association, Keep Ireland Open, local groups and others, to support the improvement and development of walking routes throughout the County in an environmentally-sustainable manner.

Policy 116 It is the policy of the Council to preserve public rights of way and to create new rights of way, where appropriate.

Objective 108 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the further development of way marked walking and loop routes by maintaining and creating rights of way.

Objective 109 It is an objective of the Council to maintain and signpost walking routes.

Objective 110 It is an objective of the Council to protect existing public rights-of-way from development and to enforce, by legal action if deemed necessary, any unauthorized attempt to inhibit access.

Objective 110 It is an objective of the Council, by way of a formal variation to the Plan, to compile a list of existing rights-of-way, for formal protection, within the lifetime of the Plan. The list will be accompanied by detailed maps showing the actual routes.

Refer to section 3.6.3 'Walking and Cycling' for detail in respect to policy on sustainable transportation.

3.10.8 CYCLING ROUTES

Leitrim County Council recognises the importance of cycling routes to the County from a social as well as economic perspective. There are a number of cycling routes such as the Kingfisher Cycling Trail, the *Tour De Humbert* Trail and the recently launched North West Trail, which facilitate access to the countryside for everyone. Such routes open up the amenity asset that is the Leitrim countryside, as well as providing opportunities for enhancement of quality of life and health.

Policy 117 It is the policy of the Council to co-operate with representative bodies to support the improvement and development of cycling routes throughout the County in an environmentally-sustainable manner.

Objective 112 It is an objective of the Council to maintain and signpost cycle routes.

Objective 113 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the provision of cycle lanes along public roads in urban/built up areas and in tourist areas, where appropriate and as funds allow.

3.11 UTILITY SERVICES

3.11.1 WATER SERVICES

The Programme for Government committed to the creation of Irish Water, a State company that have taken over the water investment and maintenance programmes of the 34 County Councils and City Councils with the key aim of supervising and accelerating the significant investment needed to upgrade the State's water and sewerage infrastructure.

Irish Water are statutorily responsible for both investing and operating water services infrastructure in its role as a provider of drinking water and waste water services to household, commercial and industrial customers in Ireland (not served by Group Water Schemes). Water and wastewater services formerly operated by the Council were handed over to Irish Water in 2014. The Council are operating these services from the 1st January 2014 under a 'Service-Level Agreement' with Irish Water and will work in co-operation with Irish Water to ensure the provision of a proper level of water service throughout the County.

Leitrim County Council will engage with Irish Water and seek Capital Investment to extend and improve the water services infrastructure in County Leitrim to meet the expanding domestic, commercial and industrial needs of the County and to improve the provision of water services in those areas where deficiencies exist at present.

The water supply schemes identified and prioritised by Leitrim County Council for investment are as follows: -

- a) North Leitrim Regional Water Supply Scheme Phase 2 -- Contract 3a --Extension of Moneyduff Water Treatment Plant;
- b) North Leitrim Regional Water Supply Scheme Phase 2 – Contract 3b – Extension of supply to Rossinver and Kiltyclogher.



Policy 118 It is the policy of the Council to seek the provision of an adequate water supply, conforming to EU Drinking Water directives, to all commercial enterprises and private houses in County Leitrim.

The Council will seek to implement its Rural Water Strategic Plan for the County. Where connection to the regional supply schemes is not cost effective, the Council support the provision of Group Schemes. The Council also support the provision of Group Schemes off the public schemes. Water sources will be protected from development that may cause their pollution.

- Objective 114** It is an objective of the Council to seek the approval and funding by Irish Water for the Extension of the Water Treatment Plant at Moneyduff, Dromahair, to provide for increased production capacity of 7,200 cum/day to provide for the water demands in the North Leitrim Regional Water Supply scheme area for the foreseeable future.
- Objective 115** It is an objective of the Council to seek the implementation in full of the objectives of the Rural Water Strategic Plan for County Leitrim.
- Objective 116** It is an objective of the Council to undertake an ongoing needs assessment of requirements for water and wastewater infrastructure for County Leitrim and to proactively pursue the provision of the required infrastructure with Irish Water.

3.11.2 WASTE WATER TREATMENT

3.11.2.1 Municipal Waste Water Treatment Systems

Leitrim County Council has assessed the needs in the waste water infrastructure in the County and has identified and prioritised the requirement to upgrade 7 no. Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTP's) located at; Ballinamore, Carrigallen, Dromod, Drumshanbo, Leitrim Village, Manorhamilton and Mohill. Leitrim County Council has completed a Design Review Report and proposals have been submitted to Irish Water for inclusion in their Investment Plan 2014-2016.

The Council will seek to maximise the use of Natural, low carbon systems in the treatment of urban waste water and urban surface water run-off.

Policy 119 It is the policy of the Council, during the period of this plan, to seek the provision by Irish Water of waste water treatment facilities of adequate capacity and treatment standards in the County's towns and villages in accordance with the Water Framework Directive 2000 and EU Urban Wastewater Directive.

Objective 117	It is an objective of the Council to seek the approval and funding by Irish Water for the upgrade, improvement and expansion of the wastewater treatment facilities for the towns and villages of Ballinamore, Carrigallen, Dromod, Drumshanbo, Leitrim Village, Manorhamilton and Mohill.
Objective 118	It is an objective of the Council to seek to remedy the risk of environmental damage from existing septic tanks and stand alone treatment systems at properties on the periphery of towns and villages by seeking the extension of the existing public sewers networks to service these properties.
Objective 119	It is an objective of the Council to seek the extension of the existing waste water treatment plant at Keshcarrigan.
Objective 120	It is an objective of the Council to prioritise, and aim to comply with the recommendations set out in the EPA's <i>Code of Practice - Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses Report 2009</i> and the EPA Drinking Water Advice Notes.

3.11.2.2 Wastewater Treatment Systems serving Single Houses

The Council is conscious that poorly functioning septic tanks/effluent treatment plants can cause groundwater pollution that may lead to the contamination of wells, group water schemes and watercourses. EPA guidelines on septic tanks and proprietary treatment systems will therefore be rigidly adhered to where applications for development on unserviced lands are being considered. The installation standards of the wastewater treatment systems will be strictly controlled through assessment and certification by appropriately qualified persons.

Leitrim County Council has identified an opportunity to facilitate the testing (and possible certification) of a waste water treatment and disposal facility that has the potential to have no (zero) discharge of effluent. This process involves the use of Integrated Constructed Wetlands and the transposition of a facility, currently used in Denmark (and other European Countries), to the Irish context. The successful testing of such facilities would be of significant importance to the County as much of the soil types in Leitrim are such that effective percolation cannot occur and current environmental requirements prevents the installation of traditional waste water systems (that have a discharge to ground) on such soil types.

In addition the Planning Authority is actively involved in considering innovative wastewater treatment systems that have the potential to meet the required standards in respect to the accommodation of wastewater treatment systems serving single houses in unserviced areas.

Refer to Section 4.2.6 Wastewater Treatment for further guidance.

3.11.2.3 Private Communal Sewerage Schemes

The Planning Authority will support and facilitate where appropriate proposals for private communal sewerage schemes in the following cases: -

1. In areas where the Council do not propose to carry out a public scheme.
2. In areas which can be served by extensions of existing Council sewers.



3. In areas where the Council intend at a later stage to provide a public sewerage scheme.

In such cases, schemes should be so designed as to be capable of being connected to the public scheme in due course. Such schemes shall be purpose designed, appropriate in scale, specification and capacity, designed to the needs of users and shall be subject to legally-binding maintenance and bonding arrangements agreed with the County Council.

3.11.2.4 Legislative Requirements

The Council is systematically notified of Government policy and any changes to legislation through Circulars issued by the DoECLG, and exchequer funding is conditional on the implementation of these policies.

The Water and Environment Service Programmes are guided by national legislation and policies which are in turn guided by a number of EU directives for control on the utilisation of natural waters and activities affecting water bodies such as, the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EC), the Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC) and the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC).

Circular PD/709 issued by the DoECLG to Local Authorities and dated 16th July 2009 sets out certain obligations on Planning Authorities under the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 (SI 684 of 2007) as well as the interrelationship between these requirements and investment plans under the Department's Water Services Investment Programme.

In accordance with the aforementioned Regulations, Planning Authorities must assure themselves that in approving development that it would not compromise the operation of municipal wastewater treatment plants, and furthermore that they operate in accordance with the requirements of the EPA licence governing the plant.

Policy 120 It is the policy of the Council to ensure that in approving development that would give rise to additional discharges to a waste water works or from storm water overflows governed by EPA licences, such discharges, taken in conjunction with discharges from other existing and/or already approved development, are capable of being treated in a manner that is compliant with the stricter of the requirements of:

1. The Urban Waste Water Regulations;
2. The requirements of an EPA Licence.

Objective 121 It is an objective of the Council to seek the full compliance of Irish Water in their Operation and Maintenance of the Waste Water infrastructure in County Leitrim, in accordance with the relevant Environmental Legislation; EU Water Framework Directive, River Basin Management Plans etc.

3.11.3 SOLID WASTE RECOVERY AND DISPOSAL

The Council implements a waste management strategy, which contain the following features:-

- Conform to the EU and National Waste Strategies in all matters relating to the production, handling, treatment and disposal of waste generated within the County;
- Co-operate with, and participate in, the preparation of Regional Plans for the collection, treatment, handling and disposal of wastes;
- Promote the prevention and reduction of waste and the increased re-use and recycling of materials from all waste.

Policy 121 The Council's policy on solid waste disposal is based on the principles of waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling, energy recovery and the environmentally responsible disposal of residual waste, in that order.

Details of the Council's policy are contained in the *Replacement Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region 2006 – 2011*. The Plan is in the process of being replaced by a new Regional Waste Management Plan for Connacht-Ulster,(2015 – 2021) whilst also taking into account recommendations of the *Evaluation of the Replacement Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region 2006 – 2011*. The new regional plan will continue to provide for the development of waste infrastructure in County Leitrim, promotion of best waste management practice and compliance with national waste legislation.

The Council continues to pursue and promote the recycling and reuse as the preferred method of disposal of waste.

The Council's *Litter Management Plan* seeks to reduce litter and to raise public awareness of the issue, and will continue to promote litter prevention and enforcement by implementation of the Plan, and other initiatives. The Council commits to the enforcement of Leitrim County Council Litter Bye Laws, which seek to prevent the creation and control of litter by addressing litter caused by food related and festival activities.

The Council promotes segregated household waste recycling through the adoption and enforcement of Waste Presentation Bye-Laws relating to both individual householders and apartment developments. The Council has recently rolled out the 'brown bin caddy service' on a phased basis, to divert organic food waste from landfill to organic waste facilities, whereby it will be produced into a compost product.

There are four main sources of non hazardous sludge; agriculture, industry, water treatment and wastewater treatment. These sludges will be disposed of in accordance with the Sludge Management Plan for County Leitrim, a constituent part of the *Replacement Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region 2006 – 2011*.



- Policy 122** It is the policy of the Council that the provisions of the *Litter Act* will be rigorously implemented.
- Policy 123** It is the policy of the Council that construction and demolition waste disposal and recycling will be controlled by permits through the *Planning and Waste Management Regulations*.
- Policy 124** It is the policy of the Council that waste segregation facilities shall be provided for in all apartment developments.
- Policy 125** It is the policy of the Council that landfill sites, when full, will be fully remediated, monitored and, where appropriate, landscaped and returned to beneficial use, including use for agriculture and amenity purposes.

Proposed industrial and commercial developments must identify the separate waste streams and forward a plan for the management of the waste arising, in accordance with the policies contained in the *Regional Waste Management Plan*.

- Objective 122** It is an objective of the Council to implement the *Regional Waste Management Strategy*.
- Objective 123** It is an objective of the Council to continue to maintain the level of provision of existing civic amenity sites in the County in accordance with the *Replacement Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region 2006– 11*.
- Objective 124** It is an objective of the Council to maintain the level of provision of bring centres in accordance with the *Regional Waste Management Plan*.

3.11.4 ELECTRICITY GENERATION AND TRANSMISSION

The Council recognises that an adequate and reliable electricity supply/infrastructure is essential if the County is to develop and compete nationally for investment and is committed to advocating and facilitating the extension of three phase electricity supply to all towns and villages in the County.

The Council will be guided by the 'Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure', July 2012, or any updated version of this policy, in the assessment of applications for transmission infrastructure. In accordance with the Guidelines, it is expected that EirGrid and ESB Networks will undertake and communicate, well informed objective and authoritative analysis, thorough impact assessment and pre-planning consultation in arriving at optimal routes, technology choice, design and costings. Using the best available advice and expertise the State Companies will be required to address and mitigate as necessary, human, environmental and landscape impact in delivering the best possible engineering solutions for the electricity system.

The Council will also be guided by the 'Landscape Assessment of County Leitrim (2001)' in determining the acceptability of proposed transmission lines in sensitive landscapes. However the Council's preferred option is for the undergrounding of high voltage (220kV and

above) transmission lines in these areas. Applications for the erection of high-tension lines will have to give consideration to impacts on residential amenities.

The development of secure and reliable electricity transmission infrastructure is recognised as a key factor in supporting economic development and attracting investment to the area. The Council supports upgrading of the electrical transmission network both within the County and adjoining Counties.

The Council supports the provision for new electricity transmission infrastructure, including high voltage transformer stations and new transmission power lines. This infrastructure will be required for the reinforcement of the transmission network, related to growing electricity demand arising from existing and new customers.

The *Regional Planning Guidelines* recognise that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed for the long-term strategic development of the electricity transmission infrastructure in the Border region. These issues include: -

- a) The advent of significant amounts of new generation, in particular, generation from renewable sources, that is expected to materialise throughout both the Border Region itself and the West Region;
- b) The requirement to provide enhanced electrical connections between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland;
- c) Security of supply throughout the Region.

Existing Infrastructure

ESB Networks operate and maintain the electricity supply network, whilst Eirgrid is the body responsible for developing the transmission network in Ireland. Investment in electricity infrastructure in the County continues and there are currently 3 no. 110 kilo Voltage (kV) substations within Leitrim and 4 no. 110kV substations bordering Leitrim. The County is predominantly supplied by the existing 20kV network fed from a 220kV bulk supply point at Flagford in County Roscommon, 2km south of Carrick on Shannon and this is linked to Arvagh in County Cavan via a 220kV transmission line, traversing the south of the County.

Proposed Infrastructure

Proposals for additional reinforcement of the electrical transmission network are ongoing in the northwest region, including Eirgrid projects within neighbouring counties to Leitrim: -

- 1) 'Grid West Project', proposed to provide a 400kv powerline between Bellacorick substation in Mayo and Flagford substation, County Roscommon;
- 2) 'Arva-Shankill 110kV' overhead electricity line from the Arva to Shankill County Cavan, which will provide essential reinforcement to the existing transmission network.

In addition to the development of the transmission network, ESB Networks have set out a range of projects that are likely to be required during the period of the Plan and beyond. These projects are required to ensure a safe, reliable and adequate electricity supply in the Region.

EirGrid's projects are reviewed at key milestones during the lifecycle of the project taking account of the most up-to-date information, assumptions and forecast available. The current



status of proposed infrastructure is reflected in EirGrid's annual 'Transmission Development Plan' publication.

Policy 126 Leitrim County Council will engage in early consultation and discussion with Eirgrid on planned-bulk transmission infrastructure projects affecting the County.

Policy 127 Consistent with the *Border Regional Planning Guidelines*, Leitrim County Council will facilitate the provision and or enhancement of energy networks in principle, provided that it can be demonstrated that: –

- the development is required in order to facilitate the provision or retention of significant economic or social infrastructure;
- the route proposed has been identified with due consideration for social, cultural and environmental impacts including Habitats Directive Assessment; where required;
- the design and type of infrastructure being considered will minimise environmental impacts (including impact upon human beings);
- the proposed development is consistent with international best practice with regard to materials and technologies that will ensure a safe, secure, reliable, economic and efficient and high quality network;
- in the case of electricity transmission, the undergrounding of lines is considered in the first instance, as part of a detailed consideration and evaluation of all options available in delivering and providing this type of infrastructure; and
- where impacts are inevitable mitigation features have been included.

The Council recognises the potential of the County for generating electricity by means of windfarms and is favourably disposed towards their development subject to the protection of the environment and visual amenity. The Landscape Character Assessment gives guidance on the integration of wind farms into the landscape.

Refer to Section 4.4.8 and Section 3.11.5 for further guidance in respect to Windfarms..

Where applications are made to replace existing turbines with more efficient and effective turbines, the Council would generally be favourable disposed to such a proposal, subject to all standard issues such as visual amenity, environmental considerations (etc.) being satisfied.

In deciding on applications for windfarm development the Council will be guided by the DoECLG *Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006*.

Objective 125 It is an objective of the Council to support infrastructural renewal and development of electricity transmission networks in the County.

3.11.5 WINDFARMS

The Council acknowledges the role of wind energy in; reducing the reliance on non renewable sources of energy, reducing the dependency on imported fuels and in moving towards a 'low carbon' society.

The Council is also aware of the environmental impacts associated with windfarms and the public concerns raised in respect to such developments. Whereas the Council is disposed towards the development of windfarms, strict development management measures will operate and the Council will only permit such developments where it can be clearly demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, that such developments are in accordance with National and Regional Guidance and in particular the criteria set out herein.

In deciding on the suitability of an area to accommodate windfarm development, the Council will be guided by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Wind Energy Guidelines 2006 or any updated version of the Guidelines. (The Council is aware that a revision of the Guidelines is currently under consideration by the Department).

Environmentally sensitive areas have been identified in the Plan. These include:-

- The Natura 2000 network (cSAC's and SPA's)
- Special Areas of Protection
- Natural Heritage Areas
- Proposed Natural Heritage Areas
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Areas of High Visually Amenity
- Outstanding Views and Prospects
- Areas of Archaeological Importance including those recorded on the list of protected Monuments
- Areas of Geological Importance including those established under the Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) Programme.

Note: The above is not an exhaustive list of environmentally sensitive areas within the County.

Criteria for the accommodation of Windfarms

In order to assess a proposal for a Windfarm development information in respect of the following details should accompany any proposal for a windfarm, as appropriate;

- Ground conditions, including peat stability;
- Site drainage and hydrological effects, such as water supply and quality and watercourse crossings;
- Size, scale and layout and the degree to which the wind energy project is visible over certain areas;
- Potential impact of the project on natural heritage, to include direct and indirect effects on protected sites, on habitats of ecological sensitivity and biodiversity value and, where necessary, management plans to deal with the satisfactory co-existence of the wind energy development and the particular species/habitat identified;
- Assessment of all noise, shadow and flicker etc;
- Potential impact on habitable dwellings. All habitable dwellings within 750m radius of all turbines should be plotted and shown;
- Potential impact of the project on the built heritage including archaeological heritage;



- Potential visual impact on the Landscape and Rural Character;
- Impact of ancillary development, such as connection to the electrical grid or access roads;
- Local environmental impacts including noise, shadow flicker, electromagnetic interference, etc;
- Adequacy of local access road network to facilitate construction of the project and transportation of large machinery and turbine parts to site;
- Information on any cumulative effects due to other projects, including effects on natural heritage and visual effects;
- Information on the location of quarries to be used or borrow pits proposed during the construction phase and associated remedial works thereafter;
- Disposal or elimination of waste/surplus material from construction/site clearance, particularly significant for peatland sites;
- Decommissioning and site restoration, including details of the financial costs involved; and
- Aircraft safety and navigation.

In summary, development that can clearly demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, that they would not have a significant adverse impact on the amenities of a dwelling or a building occupied, or capable of being occupied, by people, or would not compromise the integrity of an environmentally sensitive area, will be 'open for consideration'. The location of the development within easy access to the electrical grid and having suitable windspeeds, will be important factors in determining the suitability of a site to accommodate a Windfarm.

Conversely, development that would have a significant adverse impact on the amenities of a dwelling or a building occupied by people, or would compromise the integrity of an environmentally sensitive area, will not be favoured by the Planning Authority.

Pre Planning and Public Consultation

Windfarm developers/applicants are advised to undertake pre planning consultations with the Planning Authority. Requests for pre planning consultations should be accompanied by plans and documents that provide an outline of the project including computerised modelling indicating the visual impact of the development taken from salient vantage points.

While it is not a mandatory requirement, applicants are advised to submit details of having carried out an appropriate level of pre planning public consultation, prior to the submission of a formal planning application.

Environmental Impact Assessment

An Environmental Impact Assessment is mandatory for wind energy developments that exceed the following thresholds:

- have more than five turbines, or
- will have a total output greater than 5 megawatts.

In these circumstances, an Environmental Impact Statement must be submitted with the relevant planning application (Section 176 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2013, and Article 93 and Schedule 5, of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended).

Certain sub-threshold developments may also require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

The information gathered during the Environmental Impact Assessment process should be used to guide the planning and design of the wind energy development so that sensitive ecological or hydrological areas are avoided, and any negative impacts are minimised insofar as is possible.

Avoidance or reduction of negative impacts on the environment and the consideration of alternatives are fundamental components of Environmental Impact Assessment, both in terms of legal requirements and best practice. In designing wind energy projects, there is huge potential to avoid or reduce negative environmental impacts, owing to the small size of the actual development footprint.

Natura Impact Statement

An application for a wind energy development shall demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. Such a requirement shall be in the form of a Natura Impact Statement, prepared by a suitably qualified person.

Proposal for the development of Windfarms shall demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plans for the County, as appropriate.

Policy 128: It is the policy of the Council that all wind farm applications will be assessed on the full range of criteria including those mentioned herein and those identified in the Wind Farm Development Guidelines, 2006 (or any subsequent update) published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Refer to Section 4.4.8 Wind Farm, of the Plan for further guidance.

3.11.6 GAS

Leitrim is not currently connected to the national grid and the Council is aware of this deficiency in its infrastructure. The Council will advocate and support any proposal to extend the grid to County Leitrim and will facilitate any proposal to do so.

3.11.7 UNCONVENTIONAL GAS EXPLORATION AND EXTRACTION

Leitrim County Council is aware of oil and gas prospecting interests within the Leitrim County area and its surrounds⁴¹, in particular proposals for unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction⁴² projects/operations.

It is a strategic goal of the County Development Plan to adopt the 'precautionary principle'⁴³ in respect of development where significant environmental implications are involved. Further to this, the Council wishes to safeguard and nurture the unspoilt/green image and reputation of Leitrim and the health of its present and future communities, centred on the

⁴¹ <http://thegasmancometh.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/tamboranlicence.pdf>

⁴² in the pre-draft of the development plan, fracking is defined as hydraulic fracturing. This is not acceptable as hydraulic fracturing is only a stage in the process of unconventional shale gas exploration and extraction.

⁴³ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001395/139578e.pdf>



rural characteristics of the County, agricultural activity, the landscape and its environmentally sensitive lands and water bodies – both surface and groundwater.

This Council is cognisant of the significant ongoing controversy around, and the significant proven levels of risk associated with, unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction internationally and acknowledges that the high volume of public objections to unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction internationally, nationally and locally relate to potential and actual adverse impacts on the environment and human health, including impacts on:

- Local Communities;
- Local Infrastructures;
- Local Landscapes and Amenities;
- Water Quality and Water Supplies;
- Air Quality and Safety;
- Land/Soil Integrity;
- Agriculture;
- Tourism;
- Climate Change;
- Local Businesses;
- Property Prices.

Objections are not solely restricted to the above.

Applications for onshore exploration licences have been received for the Northwest Carboniferous Basin including parts of Leitrim and several other counties.

It is acknowledged by this Council that there is significant and growing public concern in respect to the social, public health, economic and environmental impacts that may be associated with unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction in Leitrim and adjacent counties. This Council will endeavour to protect the rights of the people of Leitrim and adjoining counties to be safe in their own communities and understands that short term national policy can have long term and permanent negative effects.

On Monday, 2nd September 2013 Leitrim County Council passed a motion which called on the National Government to put in place “an immediate and outright ban on the exploration and extraction of Shale Gas by the fraction of Shale rock by hydraulics, cryogenics or similar purpose technology generally known as Fracking”.⁴⁴

Having regard to the foregoing, the Council has set out the following policy with regard to hydrocarbon exploration and extraction.

⁴⁴ http://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/About_the_Council/Council_Meeting_Minutes/Council-Meetings-2013/Minutes-2nd-September-2013.pdf

- Policy 129** It is the policy of the Council to apply the precautionary principle to Unconventional Oil/Gas Exploration and Extraction (UGEE) projects/operations proposed within the county. Given the scientific evidence, and personal testimonies, of the risks of UGEE projects/operations and with the objective of avoiding the risk of serious danger to human health or the environment, it is therefore the policy of Leitrim County Council that UGEE projects/operations shall not be permitted within the County of Leitrim.
- Policy 130** It is the policy of the Council to carefully scrutinise any unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction project/operation proposal outside the County where it may, due to geographical proximity, have a significant impact on the County and where available evaluation does not allow the risks to the environment of the region, the ecology of the region and human and animal health within the region to be determined with certainty. It is also the policy of this Council in such cases to seek from the relevant authorities a comprehensive full life cycle Health Impact Assessment, together with a full life cycle analysis of all possible cumulative and permanent negative effects for the potential full development.
- Policy 131** It is the policy of the Council, in the eventuality that an outside body or bodies takes steps to overrule Policy 129 above, that a comprehensive full life cycle Health Impact Assessment, together with a full life cycle analysis of all possible cumulative and permanent negative effects for the potential full development, will be required for any proposal for oil/gas exploration and extraction projects located inside the County, as a mandatory component of the evaluation of any such proposals.

Footnotes

1. Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction (UGEE) refers both to the use and full life cycle of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) of low permeability sources such as shale gas deposits, coal seams and tight sandstones. The impacts of UGEE projects/operations to be considered are those arising from UGEE projects/operations in their totality, not just from fracking activities, including all stages of UGEE projects/operations, i.e, drilling, construction, commissioning, operation, decommissioning and aftercare as well as off-site and other developments.

2. Including but not limited to the Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking (Unconventional Gas and Oil Extraction) Concerned Health Professionals of NY, July 2014 (<http://concernedhealthny.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CHPNY-Fracking-Compendium.pdf>)

3.11.8 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Council recognises the importance of advanced communications infrastructure for an information-based society, and as a key support for business, education and research. The Council will support and facilitate the provision of advanced communication networks and



services to the extent required to contribute to national, regional and local competitiveness and attract inward investment. The Council will also encourage the further co-ordinated and focused development and extension of telecommunications infrastructure including broadband connectivity in the county, particularly in the District Towns, as a means of improving economic competitiveness.

Refer to Section 4.4.9 'Telecommunications' for further guidance.

Policy 132 It is the policy of the Council to ensure that all areas of the County have adequate mobile communication coverage and in particular service providers will be encouraged to provide services in areas identified as having low/no coverage.

The Council considers the provision of a state of the art telecommunications network to be critical in addressing the County's peripherality and will seek to ensure the County is served by the most up-to-date technology available.

3.11.8.1 Broadband

The implementation of broadband is under the remit of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources who published a National Broadband Plan entitled '*Delivering a Connected Society: A National Broadband Plan for Ireland*'. This identified high-speed broadband connectivity as a core to competitiveness. Three regional broadband schemes have been rolled out to advance broadband connectivity across the country: -

1. National Broadband Scheme;
2. Rural Broadband Scheme;
3. Schools 100MBS Project.

The Metropolitan Area Network (MAN), a network of ducting and fibre optic cable has been installed in Carrick-on-Shannon and Manorhamilton, which can be used to provide services including telecoms, Internet access, television, telematics and CCTV.

Facilitation of the development of a broadband network will extend to making public roads and other rights-of-way and way-leaves in the control of the Council available for the laying of cable insofar as it is within the power of the Council to do so.

Policy 133 It is the policy of the Council to support the provision and expansion of the Counties Broadband capacities, in order to ensure that the County improves its competitiveness and retains its attractiveness as a place of business and residence.

3.11.8.2 Telecommunication Antennae

The Council recognises the importance of a high-quality telecommunications service and will seek to achieve a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications services in the interests of social and economic progress and sustaining residential amenities and environmental quality, while having due regard to the diverse views and concerns, of the

various interested parties and acknowledging concerns of the people with regard to public health.

Policy 134 It is the policy of the Council to support the provision of a modern telecommunications infrastructure throughout the County, while seeking to ensure that such equipment is so sited, that it will not adversely impact on the visual or residential amenities of any areas within the County, or on the natural beauty or archaeological heritage of the County, or give rise to genuine public concern on health grounds, having regard to standards of the International Radiation Protection Association and the World Health Organisation.

Whereas reason must apply in all cases, only as a last resort should free-standing masts/antenna be located within, or in the immediate surrounds of smaller towns or villages, within a residential area, within the vicinity of schools or private dwellings. For the purposes of clarity, there is a presumption against granting permission for the siting of masts/antenna within the vicinity of these type developments.

In terms of ensuring the application of the foregoing policy, a proposal for permission or retention permission, in respect to a telecommunication mast/antenna, will normally be required, as a minimum, to provide the following information when making a planning application:-

- 1) A map to O.S detail and suitable scale that clearly indicates all buildings in the vicinity of the development. Salient separation distances between the proposed development and buildings within the vicinity should be shown on the map. A legend should accompany this map which clearly states the type of developments in the vicinity; viz; residential, schools, community use, mixed use, industrial, agricultural, etc.;
- 2) Details of research of alternative sites for the proposed mast/antenna to include: options to erect a mast/antenna or masts at alternative locations away from towns or villages, residential areas, schools or private dwellings, in order to provide coverage. The details shall include a comprehensive technical justification as to why these locations cannot be used;
- 3) A map to OS detail and suitable scale that clearly indicates the location of the nearest existing telecommunication masts/antenna which provide coverage in the general area;
- 4) Details that clearly define, with technical justifications and rationalisations, as to why co-location on an existing support structure and/or to share a site or an adjacent site of an existing telecommunication structure, is not feasible;
- 5) Details to include maps clearly indicating:-
 - a) The level of existing telecommunication service in the general area served by the existing masts/antenna;
 - b) The level of service to be provided following the installation of the proposed development.

Any proposal under this clause must demonstrate clearly that to do otherwise, would not be reasonable in terms of meeting technical requirements. The applicant shall provide satisfactory evidence that this is the only location possible to meet specific requirements, and that all other alternatives have been examined but are not capable of being exploited for



stated specific reasons. Commercial competition in this instance will not be acceptable as a reason for locating in these areas. This should not be interpreted so as to preclude development where the applicant has full knowledge of the location of an existing mast.

In rural areas masts should be placed in forestry plantations provided that the antennae are clear of obstruction. The developer will be required to retain a cordon of trees around the site, which will not be felled during the lifetime of the mast with the written agreement of the owner. In un-forested areas, softening of the visual impact should be achieved through judicious design, and through the planting of shrubs, trees, etc., as a screen and backdrop.

Where there is an existing mast in a rural area every effort should be made to share it. All applicants will be encouraged to share and will be obliged to satisfy the Planning Authority that they have made every effort to do so.

Where it is not possible to share a support structure, the developer should share the site or an adjacent site, so as masts and antennae may be clustered.

Proximity to archaeological sites and other monuments should be avoided.

In the vicinity of larger towns, developers should endeavour to locate in industrial estates.

Masts are not generally to be located in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty where they can be clearly visible from vantage points accessible to the general public.

As a means of ensuring compliance within the spirit of the above, the Leitrim County Council Chief Executive shall furnish a report at the end of each calendar year or other such frequency as may be requested by the elected members, setting out the level of compliance with the above provisions.

3.11.9 RENEWABLE ENERGY

The main driver for the implementation of renewable energy policy is the *Renewable Energy Directive*. Ireland is legally obliged to ensure that by 2020, at least 16% of all energy consumed in the state is from renewable sources, with a sub-target of 10% in the transport sector. Ireland submitted its *National Renewable Energy Action Plan* to the European Commission in July 2010. The plan set out national targets for the share of energy from renewable sources consumed in transport, electricity and heating and cooling in 2020, with actions to meet the overall national target.

The Council supports the *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012* which builds on measures established under the first *National Climate Change Strategy (2000)*, and provides a framework for achieving emissions reductions. The Council supports the implementation of the Government's White Paper Document *Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland, Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020*.

The Council aims to develop an Energy Strategy over the lifetime of the County Development Plan, as part of a *Climate Change Adaptative Framework Strategy*.

The Council will seek to improve the energy efficiency of its existing building stock and to promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings in the County and in residential schemes in particular. The Council encourages low energy and passive house design and construction within the County.

Policy 135 It is the policy of the Council to support national policy on reducing carbon emissions and increasing energy generation from renewable sources.

Objective 126 It is an objective of the Council to prepare an Energy Strategy for the County over the lifetime of the County Development Plan and the Council will have regard to such a Plan in determining applications for developments relating to renewable and other energy projects.



SECTION 4 – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS



4 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Development management is the statutory process for assessing planning applications, whereby there is an obligation on the Council to ensure that permissions granted under the *Planning and Development Acts* are consistent with the policies and objectives of the Development Plan. This chapter of the Plan sets out the development management and design standards that will be applied by the Council in assessing development proposals within its functional area.

The purpose of this chapter is to give guidance to developers as to the criteria used by the Planning Authority to in assessing planning applications. Each application for development is unique, as is each site. Any decision to grant or refuse planning permission takes this uniqueness into account. Individual applications for development will be considered with regard to the policies and objectives of the Development Plan. The decision is not, and cannot, be taken by using a standard formula or a set of rules.

The guidance contained in this chapter is not exhaustive, but rather a statement of general principles.

In addition to the specific locational policies of the Development Plan, all development proposals must satisfy certain general requirements, the regulation of which is a key function of the planning system. Quality development can only be achieved through the application of flexible but sensitive standards relating to design, traffic and environmental impact. The County Council will from time to time, issue supplementary guidance with the aim of encouraging high standards of development.

The Council encourages developers, as best practice, to engage with the local communities (both residential and business) within which medium to large scale developments are proposed, so as to identify issues of concern at an early stage with the aim of resolving them prior to the lodging of the applications.

The Council may take enforcement action, up to and including prosecution, if necessary, where development takes place in breach of planning permission, or conditions attached to a grant of permission, including the implementation of management agreements or the phasing of development.

The Council will seek to improve access to buildings and public spaces through the statutory development control process. This will include ensuring that all non-domestic developments, including, where practicable, changes of use, alterations, and extensions to existing buildings are accessible to people with restricted mobility or vision.

The Council notes the “Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach” documents published by the National Disability Authority and will have regard to these in the performance of its functions.

4.1.1 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Development in flood plains will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that appropriate flood protection, and mitigation of the loss of flood storage volume, can be incorporated and maintained, at the developer’s cost, to compensate for the impact of the development.



See the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Appendix A to the SEA) for guidelines on flood risk and development. See also Volume 2 - Appendix D of the County Development Plan.

- Within candidate Special Areas of Conservation and Natural Heritage Areas, scientific and conservation interests will take priority over all other interests. Development within such areas that would have an adverse impact on their intrinsic qualities will be resisted. In locations adjoining such areas, particular consideration will be given to the adverse impacts on either visual or nature conservation grounds.
- Within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Areas of High Visual Amenity and Areas of Outstanding Views and Prospects, careful management and special controls on development shall be attached to permissions for new developments to maintain their inherent interests.

Development which is in accordance with aims, policies and objectives of the Plan will be permitted provided that the development: -

1. respects the character or appearance, particularly the established scale, massing, rhythm and materials, of the building, group of buildings or surrounding area, including characteristic building lines and plot widths, of which it forms a part;
2. is of materials, form and detailing appropriate to the design and function of the building and locality in which it is set;
3. incorporates, where possible, existing landscape or other features, takes into account site contours, changes in level and avoids prominent skylines;
4. does not materially/detrimentally affect the existing form and character of the surrounding townscape or landscape;
5. provides satisfactory vehicular, pedestrian and disabled access, adequate off road parking and servicing arrangements, and has no adverse impact on the local road network;
6. does not materially/detrimentally affect the amenity of local residents, other land and property users or characteristics of the locality by virtue of increased activity, disturbance, noise, dust, fumes, litter and provides satisfactory amenity standards itself;
7. satisfies physical or natural environmental considerations relating to land drainage, land stability and liability to flooding;
8. does not materially/detrimentally affect the natural conditions and wildlife habitat or watercourse corridors;
9. provides adequate sewerage/sewage treatment facilities;
10. has regard to the adequacy of existing public facilities and services. If new infrastructure is required this should be capable of being provided at a reasonable cost and in reasonable time.

4.1.2 LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

New development will be encouraged to locate in existing towns and villages where services can be economically provided and the social and urban structure can be consolidated, in

accordance with the principles of sustainable development. Generally the Council will encourage development in town and village centres.

4.1.3 TOWN AND VILLAGE BOUNDARIES

Where a Local Area Plan exists for a town/village, or is made during the life of this plan, the boundaries of the town/village will be as determined by that Plan. Otherwise the boundary will be as indicated in the attached book of maps (Appendix E - Volume 3 of this Plan).

4.1.4 RURAL AREAS

Outside the built-up area of towns and villages, development proposals will be assessed according to: -

- The likely impact on the environment (including, inter alia, watercourses, ground water and habitats);
- The visual impact on the landscape;
- Heritage criteria (both natural and man-made);
- Traffic Safety;
- The social, community or economic gain accruing to the local community;
- Whether the housing demand is urban or rural generated (this is particularly relevant in the medium capacity areas); and
- The location of the proposed dwelling in relation to the rural capacity areas.

An important consideration in the assessment of development in rural areas will be design, particularly the appropriateness of the design with regard to the character of the area and whether the development can be absorbed into the landscape. Guidance is provided in the *Design Guide for the Siting and Design of Single Houses within the Leitrim Countryside*, available from the Council.

The repopulation of rural areas of County Leitrim through, amongst other measures, the building of one-off rural houses and the restoration of derelict rural houses, is a primary objective of the County Development Plan, having regard to the considerations contained in Section 3.2.3 and in particular the demographic profile of the area being considered.

In order to advance this objective and, at the same time, to protect the rural environment, the following shall apply: -

- In areas of high visual amenity, houses shall be designed and located, as far as is practicable, so as to minimise the impact on the landscape.
- As a guideline, a minimum site size of 3,000 square metres shall apply.
- A proprietary effluent treatment system, followed by a sand polishing filter and final discharge to ground water shall be used instead of the traditional septic tank.
- It shall not be a general requirement that an applicant for permission to build a rural house shall be a member of a farming family or have any such allegiance to a rural area.
- The Council shall actively promote the provision of rural council houses, as the need arises and at suitable locations.



4.1.5 AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

These are the areas of highest quality landscape in the County, which the Council is committed to protecting. Development will be limited to those categories identified in Policy 100 of this plan.

4.1.6 AREAS OF HIGH VISUAL AMENITY

These are highly scenic areas, although less sensitive than Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). As with Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty development will be limited to those categories identified in Policy 101 of this plan.

4.1.7 HIGH CAPACITY/HIGH AVAILABILITY AREAS

This category covers the largest part of the County and there will be a presumption in favour of the development of rural houses subject to the site satisfying general development management criteria – Policy 15 refers.

4.1.8 MEDIUM CAPACITY/MEDIUM AVAILABILITY AREAS

These are areas in the County which lie in environmentally-sensitive and scenic areas, such as cSAC, pNHA, SPA, AONB's and HVA'S. In these areas the development of rural housing will be limited to those categories identified in Policy 16.

4.1.9 LOW CAPACITY/LOW AVAILABILITY AREAS

These are areas adjoining towns and villages that were clearly under pressure from residential development. They tend to be associated with areas of high residential vacancy. They are particularly prominent along the approach roads to the towns and villages. In these areas the development of rural housing will be limited to those categories identified in Policy 17.

4.1.10 COASTAL AREA

Within the coastal area along the seaward side of the coast road, development will only be permitted provided that: -

- it is essential for the development to have a coastal location;
- it does not unacceptably affect;
 - the townscape and/or landscape value, character or appearance of the coast;
 - the scientific or nature conservation values of the coast;
 - natural or physical coastal processes within the open and undeveloped parts of the coastal areas. The primary consideration will be the preservation and enhancement of the coastal landscape character and its features. Development which detracts from its landscape value will be resisted and any development

permitted will be required to meet the highest design standards, avoiding harm to both nearby and distance viewpoints.

4.1.11 CERTIFIED DRAINAGE SCHEMES

In the case of Certified Drainage Schemes, a 10-metre setback from the banks of channels subject of these schemes will be required.

4.1.12 ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

As stated in Section 3.6.6, it is the policy of the Council to ensure that cognisance is given to location of road improvement/realignment lines in considering all applications for development to ensure that such improvement/realignment works are not prejudiced.



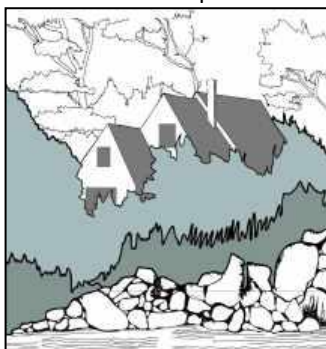
4.2 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

The Council will have regard to *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and its companion document *Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide*;, *Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*;, *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities - Design Guidelines*;, *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities - Policy Statement*;, *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments* and any future guidelines issued in relation to residential development standards.

4.2.1 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

Residential development in rural areas will be required to conform to the principles detailed in the *Design Guide for the Siting and Design of Single Houses within the Leitrim Countryside* published by Leitrim County Council Planning Department.

Figure 4-1 New housing absorbed into landscape when well sited and screened



4.2.2 RIBBON DEVELOPMENT

Ribbon development, where a continuous line of houses snakes along a public road, will be discouraged. This pattern of development, common on the edges of many towns and villages, leads to a reduction in the carrying capacity of the public road, reduces traffic safety and inhibits the orderly expansion of towns by frustrating the in-depth development of backlands. In exceptional circumstances, notably where ribbon development is substantially in place and where additional housing will effectively consolidate the ribbon, 'infill' development may be permissible.

Infill development is defined as the development of no more than two dwellings in a small gap in a developed frontage.

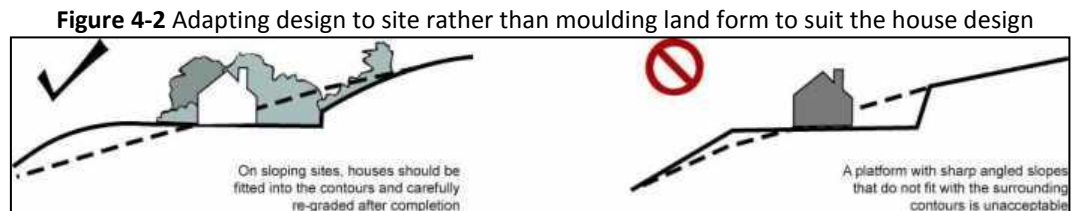
4.2.3 RESTORATION AND CONVERSION OF HOUSES AND STRUCTURES OF NOTE

The Council encourages the restoration of houses and other structures of note in the countryside, as opposed to their demolition and replacement. Where it is proposed to demolish and replace an existing house a detailed and compelling justification for such a proposal shall be required. Where it is proposed to extend the unit, the extension should respect the existing scale, character and external finishes of the original building. Proposals for restoration must comply with the standards for wastewater disposal and access, if a new access onto a public road is required. Refer also to Section 4.2.6 for further guidance.

The Council may invoke the provisions of the *Derelict Sites Act 1990*, as appropriate.

4.2.4 INDIVIDUAL HOUSES

Individual houses for permanent occupancy are acceptable in principle in High Capacity Areas (and in Low and Medium Capacity Areas for qualifying persons). All such development should be designed in accordance with the *Design Guide for the Siting and Design of Single Houses within the Leitrim Countryside* and the standards set out in this plan.



4.2.5 SITE BOUNDARIES

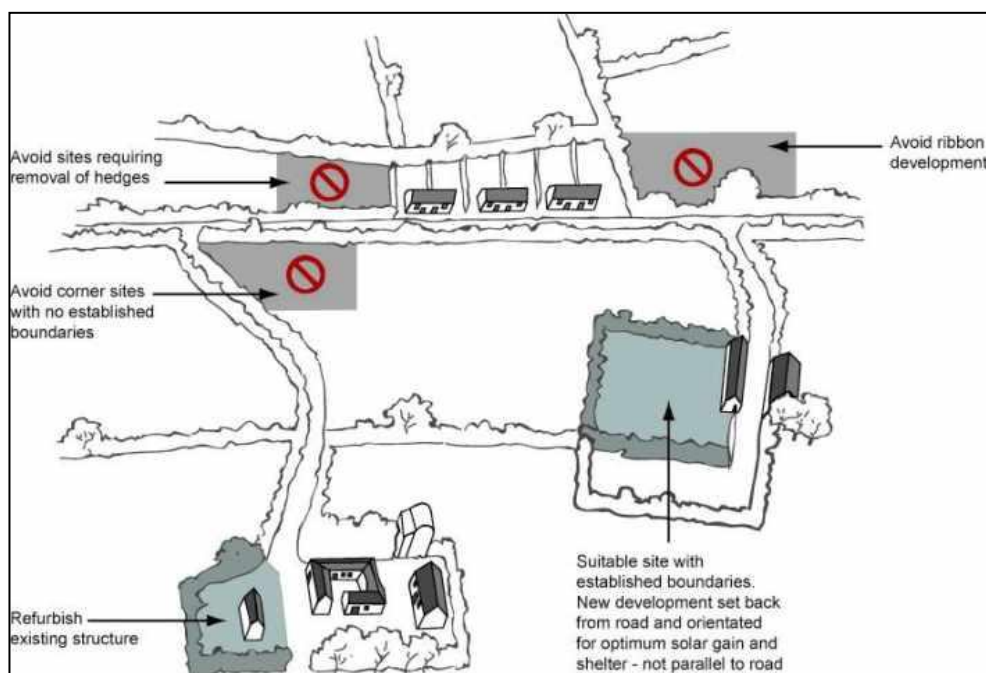
The removal of existing roadside boundaries, except to the extent that this is needed for a new entrance and traffic safety purposes, shall be avoided where at all possible. Where disruption is unavoidable the replacement with like for like boundary hedges, trees, stonewalls and sod and stone ditches will be necessary.

Elaborate walls and gates in rural areas will be discouraged. The Council encourages the augmentation of existing hedgerows and stands of trees and the planting of new trees and hedgerows, using native broad leaf species, where possible of local provenance, at the boundaries of new housing developments and around new housing, to create shelter and help knit the new development into the landscape.

It should be noted that the Council will be guided by existing or any amended or additional guidance documents relating to the treatment of site boundaries in rural areas and within housing schemes.

Site Selection plays a crucial role in successfully integrating new development into established rural landscapes (see Figure 4-3 Site Selection Process’).



Figure 4-3 Site Selection Process

4.2.6 WASTEWATER TREATMENT

The Council prefers connection to public sewers, if possible. However, the Council will resist overly long extensions of the public sewerage network to serve developments outside of existing settlements.

Where connection to public sewerage facilities is not possible, dwellings must provide their own private means of waste water treatment.

In rural areas the minimum size of site will normally be determined by the requirements to provide satisfactory sanitary services. The foregoing notwithstanding, the minimum acceptable site size is 0.3 hectares in rural areas. In the exceptional case where services are to be provided/upgraded for an existing dwelling and it can be proved that the land in question was divided prior to May 2003 (the date the requirement for 0.3 hectares site size came into effect) a reduced site size of no less than 0.2 hectares may be considered acceptable.

The Council requires effluent treatment systems be designed and constructed in accordance with the *EPA Code of Practice; Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses* (or as updated and amended) and NSAI Standards. Systems will be required to include polishing and filter stages. The Council may specifically require the inclusion of reed beds and/or environmental barriers consisting of nutrient absorbing planted material or similar.

Alternatively the use of a standard recommended design, adapted by the Environment Department of the Local Authority, from the *EPA Manual*, which takes account of the particular soil and climate of County Leitrim, will be acceptable. In each case, the installation of the treatment system must be certified by a qualified Site Assessor and by the Designated Certifier under the 2014 Building Control Regulations.

Proprietary Effluent Treatment Systems in accordance with *EN 12566-Part 3 EU Harmonised Standard* and *EPA Code of Practice; Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses* and any future legislation/Guidelines as issued, are required. Traditional septic tanks are not normally deemed appropriate to the ground conditions in County Leitrim unless accompanied with secondary and tertiary filtration systems, acceptable to the Council's Environment Department.

Where poorly functioning septic tanks are identified, they will be required to be replaced with a Proprietary Effluent Treatment System or other suitable alternative system, in accordance with the relevant standards and guidelines.

The applicant may be required to obtain a Discharge License from the Council. The location of discharge point must be indicated on the planning application drawings. Random sampling will be carried out on the system at the Council's discretion.

Where a public sewerage treatment system is provided or planned, the Council will require individual houses to connect to it when it is commissioned and require that the private treatment system be decommissioned, and any associated ground contamination resolved.

4.3 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Development proposals in the towns and villages of the County should be designed to respect the scale, character and finishes of the local built environment. Proposals located on the edges of built-up areas should be designed to integrate with the existing urban fabric and not to create sprawling boundaries to the towns and villages. Infill proposals will be evaluated to ensure that detailed design elements harmonise with adjoining buildings and that overdevelopment of restricted sites does not result.

While the *DoECLG Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas 1998* provides a comprehensive guide for new housing developments, the Council considers this manual more suited to development in larger towns. Developments designed in accordance with this manual tend to have a more suburban feel than is appropriate for most towns and villages in County Leitrim.

The Council will have regard to *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and its companion document *Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide* in relation to residential development standards in urban areas. The Council will also have regard to the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)* issued by the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport. While these may have more relevance to more complex urban environments, the principles contained therein should be referred to in any proposals within an urban context in Leitrim. As well as showcasing best practice, these documents address the practical aspects of creating successful neighbourhoods. Many residential and mixed-use schemes fail to work because of structural or strategic problems - such as poor layout and/or detailed design. A successful scheme requires the right decisions to be taken at the right time. Short extracts from the *Urban Design Manual* are shown below (please see Figure 4-4 to Figure 4-6).

Generally layouts should be informal and designed in response to the natural topography and feature of the site, rather than road requirements.



House designs should reflect the local vernacular. Generally red brick and red tiles (including ridge tiles), unrendered concrete block, artificial or non-native stone are not acceptable to the Planning Authority and should therefore be avoided.

Residential development should aim to maximise linkages for pedestrians and cyclists to the rest of the village or town while minimising pedestrian conflicts with motor traffic. In particular, pedestrian and cycle links to neighbouring schools and shops should be given careful consideration. The Council will have regard to *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* in terms of proposals for and effecting roads and streets, including consideration of the provision of cycle paths where appropriate.

A site specific Design Statement will be required in the case of large-scale or sensitively located residential developments. A design statement is a short document which enables the applicant to explain why a particular design solution is considered the most appropriate for a particular site and it should demonstrate how design policy and issues of accessibility have been taken into account. Furthermore, multiple unit residential development proposals should include reference to the residential capacity of the area relative to surrounding housing (finished/unfinished, occupied/unoccupied/typology), environmental services and social infrastructures.

Figure 4-4 Village Extension – Site Analysis

Example of Village Extension Site: Site Analysis



Example of Village Extension Site: Concept Proposal

Concept Proposal

There is rarely only one possible solution to the development of a site, even if the character and movement analysis seem to strongly indicate a preferred route forwards. There is, however, usually one option that stands above the others in terms of its potential to provide a highly sustainable, well designed place that people want to live in.

The best way to uncover the best possible solution for the development of a site is to sketch up a series of options that demonstrate different interpretations of the development brief and various analyses. Each option should in itself be compliant with relevant policy and guidance and be capable of being delivered. Options that have been drawn up to make up the numbers without any thought should not be accepted as they will not provide a sufficient basis for the testing of the design objectives.

Once options have been generated, the design team should set about testing them. The testing process should include:

1. How the option will deliver the vision that has been established at the start of the process
2. Consideration of whether the development is viable in economic terms
3. Whether the option will allow for the creation of usable buildings and space
4. How the proposal contributes towards sustainable development

After full and rigorous consideration and testing of the options, a preferred way forward will emerge that satisfies the requirements of the development brief and represents the best outcome for the development site. Such an outcome should be able to demonstrate that it makes the most of the opportunities created by the development whilst minimising as many as possible of the negative aspects of the development. The preferred option should also be demonstrably viable and deliverable in economic and practical construction terms.



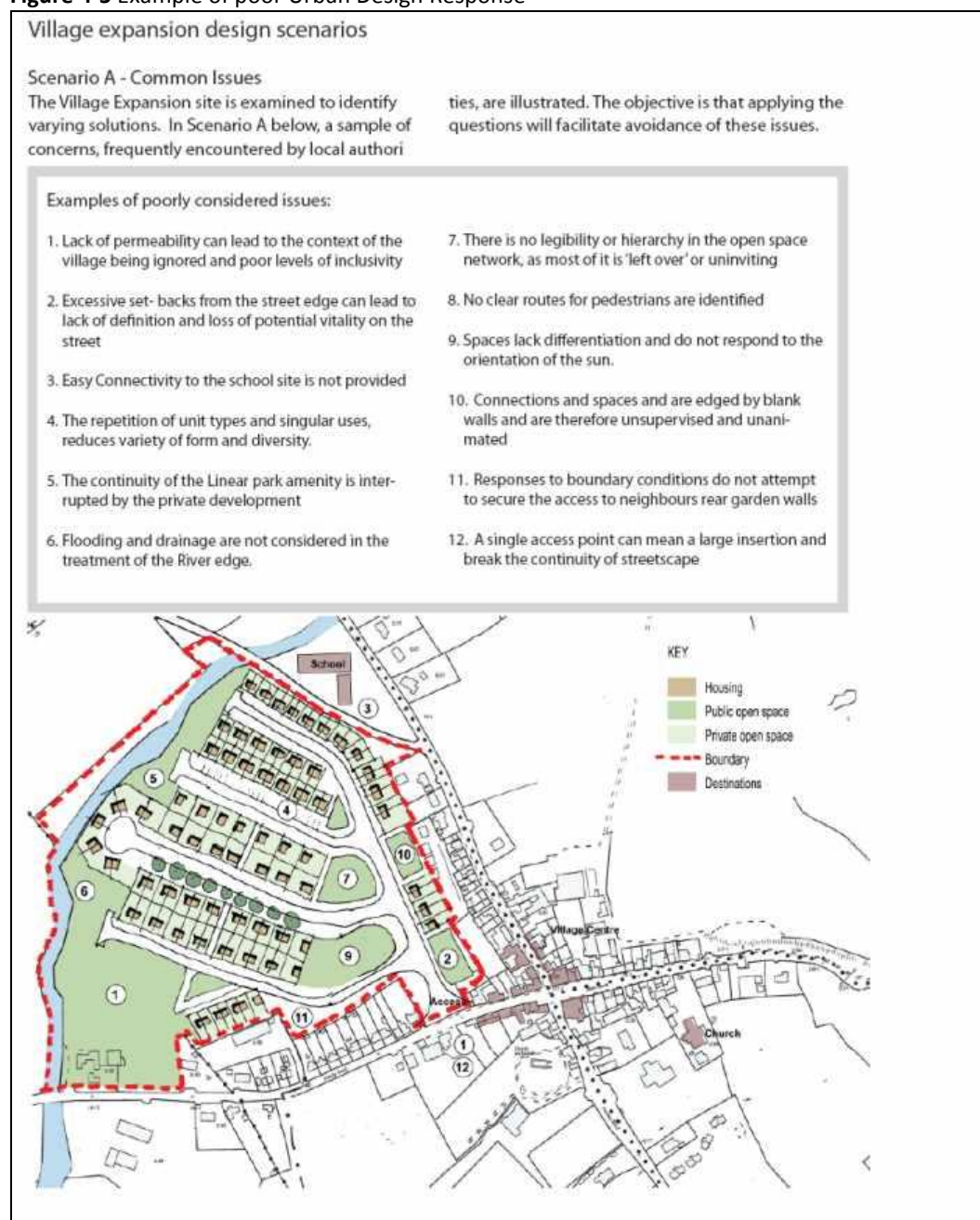
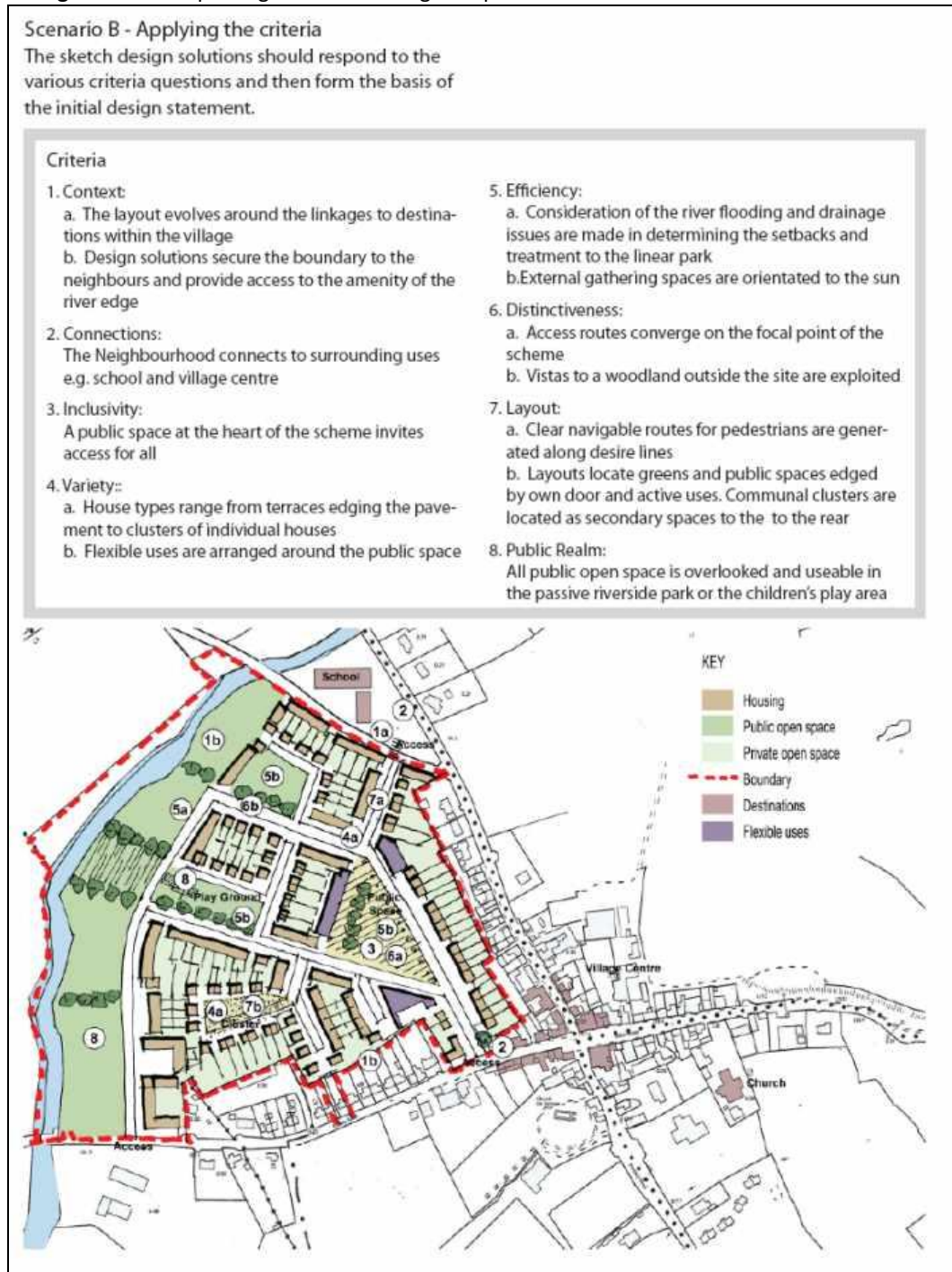
Figure 4-5 Example of poor Urban Design Response

Figure 4-6 Example of good Urban Design Response

4.3.1 INFILL & BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

In built-up areas - for example, within existing village envelopes - there may be opportunities for development proposals that either consolidate or enhance the form and pattern of existing development. Development within the village envelope will be encouraged. A mix of different house types will be encouraged.

Regard must also be had to the availability of childcare facilities. In larger developments the Council may require the provision of a crèche within the development (70 dwellings or more), if adequate provision is not available within the town.

4.3.2 URBAN REGENERATION AND RENEWAL

The Council will have regard to the need to remove dereliction and obsolescence when considering applications for permission to redevelop restricted infill sites within town and village centres. The Council may invoke the provisions of the *Derelict Sites Act 1990* to assist in the removal of dereliction. The Authority will encourage infill development to take place; but will require that the development be in sympathy with the existing character of the areas, in terms of height, density, building line, roof pitches, materials used and window types.

4.3.3 DENSITY

Generally the Council will encourage higher density of dwellings in towns and villages that are deemed to have adequate physical, social and economic infrastructure. Proposals should provide rationale for the density levels proposed relative to existing or proposed infrastructure and the surrounding town or village character and environment.

Proposed development should also have regard to the density of adjoining development, the nature of the adjoining development and site characteristics, the availability of services and the particular layout proposed. Densities will also have to ensure appropriate provision for open spaces, adequate privacy for each household, a design that integrates successfully into the existing environment and adequate car parking facilities. Higher residential densities may be considered in brownfield sites close to town/village centres.

4.3.4 NAMING OF RESIDENTIAL ESTATES

Bilingual road names of the standard Council type shall be erected on all housing estate roads. The Council desires that names of residential developments should reflect local and Irish place names, local geographic features or historic associations. The naming of residential estates shall be approved by the Planning Authority in order to avoid duplication or confusion. All dwellings are to be provided with numbers visible from the public road.

4.3.5 OPEN SPACE PROVISION IN HOUSING SCHEMES

It is intended that residents of all new housing estates will have convenient access to adequate open space for passive and active recreation.

Generally such open space should be provided directly by the developer. However where the Planning Authority is satisfied that adequate open space is already available for residents, or where the proposed development is so small that the provision of public open space would not be reasonable or useful, the Planning Authority may impose conditions accepting payment for the improvement of existing recreational facilities and/or the provision of alternative recreational facilities, in *lieu* of direct provision.

Generally, however, in new residential estates of 20 units or more, a minimum of 15% of the site area shall be reserved as functional open space (excluding road margins and residential open space). The open space shall be conveniently located to the development, preferably as a single unit and shall be appropriately finished by the developer prior to the completion of the scheme. The Council will favour the location of open space so that as many houses as possible face onto it, providing passive supervision.

Public open space to the rear of houses will not be acceptable. However, each development will be judged on its merits. In this regard the open space requirements will depend on the nature of the scheme design, the character of adjoining development, the characteristics of the site and the quality of the open space available and proposed. Contributions may be sought through Development Charges for the provision of open space facilities.

Refer to Section 4.6.3 for further details relating to development contribution.

The open space should be on a hierarchical system - from small children's play areas located in sight of their homes to larger areas where older children can indulge in casual ball games. Where scope exists, proposed open space should be located adjoining or abutting existing open space of an adjoining development.

In certain instances infill housing schemes in the central areas of towns and villages may not be required to comply with the open space provision requirements, provided adequate play areas are provided in the village, together with areas provided with hard landscaping and suitable for passive recreation. The suitability of each such scheme in this respect will be considered on its individual design merits.

Where apartments/flats are provided over existing commercial or retail activities in town/village centre locations, generally the open space requirements will not be required. In such situations, however, contributions may be sought through Development Charges for the provision of open space facilities.

A detailed landscape plan shall be submitted. Landscape schemes should be designed to maximise the amenity value of existing features such as mature trees, hedgerows, streams and wetlands. Where relevant, proposals for the preservation of existing trees or other amenity features shall be supported by a tree survey of the site.

A Landscape Management Plan shall be submitted with the application stating how the open space in the development will be maintained.

4.3.6 SERVICES

All services, including electricity, telephone and TV, shall be provided underground. Provision should be made for the siting of transformer stations, control boxes, pumping stations and other necessary service buildings in unobtrusive but accessible locations. Siting with potential to cause obstructions to pedestrians, people with disabilities, cyclists or vehicular traffic will



not be acceptable. Early discussions with utility companies are advisable. Pole-mounted equipment such as transformers will not be permitted.

All services shall be provided in accordance with DoELG *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas 1998*. All services must be a minimum 300mm below ground level under grass verges and 600mm below roads, footpaths and other paved areas. Water services must be a minimum 600mm below ground level in all cases. Landscape features and utilities should be co-ordinated, with services bunched where necessary, to avoid tree pits.

4.3.7 TAKING-IN-CHARGE OF ESTATES

Where satisfactorily completed the Council will take in charge all public areas in residential estates, including public open space, roads, footpaths and public lightning in accordance with its obligations under the *Planning and Development Act*.

The Council adopted a taking in charge policy in June 2008, in line with the requirements of Departmental *Circular PD 1/08*. Developers wishing to have their developments taken in charge, will be required to comply with the policies as set out therein [or as amended over time], before any development will be taken-in-charge by the Local Authority.

Where developments are not completed to the required standards the Council may seek to resolve the issue through the use of enforcement action and/or the security bond or cash deposit as the case may be.

4.3.8 APARTMENTS

The design and layout of new apartments should provide satisfactory accommodation for a variety of household types and sizes, including families with children, over the medium to long term.

Applications for apartment developments will be assessed having regard to the DoECLG Guidelines, *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments*.

The Appendix to the above document contains recommended minimum standards for: -

- floor areas for different types of apartments;
- storage spaces;
- sizes for apartment balconies/patios and;
- room dimensions for certain rooms.

All of these minimum standards should be adhered to in the design and layout of new apartment buildings.

Refer to Appendix B Volume 2 of this Plan for further guidance.

It is critically important that construction works comply with all relevant requirements of the *Building Regulations*. Particular attention should be paid to meeting requirements in relation to *Fire Safety (Part B)*, *Sound Insulation (Part E)*, *Conservation of Fuel and Energy (Part L)* and *Access for People with Disabilities (Part M)*. The Building Regulations and associated Technical

Guidance Documents can be downloaded from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government website⁴⁵.

Apartment developments should be of high quality, incorporating car and bicycle-parking facilities (see Table 24 and Table 25); adequate general storage facilities for each apartment and refuse storage areas for the use of all residents. Refuse stores should be conveniently located, well-ventilated and comply with all public health and fire-safety requirements, including the Council's Waste Presentation Bye Laws.

Where combined kitchen/living areas are proposed, the apartments should have separate facilities for clothes washing and drying.

Entrance hallways, stairs and corridors should be well designed with good lighting and ventilation.

Service ducts serving two or more apartments should, as far as practicable, be accessible from common circulation areas for maintenance purposes. The number of apartments served by a single lift/core should not exceed 24 no. units.

Private open space for apartments should ideally be provided in the form of terraces, balconies or patios directly accessible from each individual apartment. However the provision of some or all of the space as communal open space may be acceptable. In such cases a management plan for the maintenance of the space must be provided.

The Council will require that an adequate level of private and public open space be provided for residents. Where it is not possible to provide an adequate level of open space on the site of the apartment block, the developer will be required to make a contribution to the Council towards the provision of public open space, existing or proposed, that facilitates the occupants of the apartments.

A residential management plan regulating the future management and maintenance of the development will normally be required as a condition of a grant of planning permission.

4.3.9 RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES

Any applications for residential care homes and for the conversion of houses to care homes will not be permitted unless: -

1. the amenities of adjoining occupiers are not unduly affected and;
2. adequate land is available for usable private open space, car parking and servicing facilities.

4.3.10 HOUSE EXTENSIONS

Proposals, which involve the alteration, improvement, or extension of an existing dwelling should reflect and enhance the existing building, adjoining properties, and the setting in terms of scale, design and materials. Extensions should: -

⁴⁵ Accessible at www.envron.ie



1. be subordinate to main building;
2. not have a negative effect on visual amenities of the area;
3. not detrimentally impact on neighbours;
4. not result in unacceptable reduction of open space.

4.3.11 MULTIPLE-HOLIDAY HOME DEVELOPMENT

Any residential tourism-development must demonstrate that, *inter alia*, it: -

1. Does not place unsustainable demands upon the existing or planned infrastructure capacity of the area;
2. Does not conflict with the maintenance of the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
3. Consolidates existing tourism facilities.

4.3.12 SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA

The use of renewable energy sources such as solar energy, geothermal resources, wind, biomass and small-hydro electrical schemes, as integral parts of new developments, extensions and restoration projects (commercial and private) will be encouraged, especially where development is proposed in remote areas, subject to ensuring the protection of the landscape and environment.

The Council will encourage waste minimisation and disposal of waste on site in an environmentally- friendly manner where appropriate. Composting facilities should generally be provided on site in new development, especially housing. The use of reed-bed filtration systems to polish treated effluent will be welcomed. For larger developments, the use of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) techniques will be favoured.

4.4 INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

The Planning Authority is aware of the importance of commercial and industrial development to the economy of the County.

4.4.1 INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Industrial/Commercial development should generally be located in or adjacent to settlements where infrastructure has been provided and in line with the principle of sustainable development. In assessing an application for development the Planning Authority will weigh the development against the criteria for sustainable development (including social and economic factors) and its impact on the environment.

In individual area plans, land will be identified for employment purposes. Land will be safeguarded for the establishment of quality sites for high technology, manufacturing, research and development and/or prestige offices and must include: -

1. extensive tree planting, high-quality landscaping and berming;
2. development of the highest quality in terms of design and materials;
3. less than 50% of each individual site area devoted to operational and built requirements.

The main forms of industry that are appropriate in a rural locations includes: -

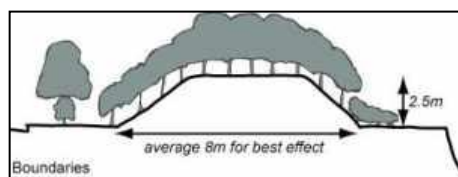
1. The conversion of existing buildings in rural areas for small-scale employment purposes will be allowed subject to policy;
2. Existing employment concerns will be allowed to expand onto adjoining land provided the extension accords with policy;
3. Agricultural-related industry, involving the processing of farm produce where it is unsuited to an urban situation;
4. Business directly related to farming, such as the servicing and repair of farm machinery, land reclamation, drainage work, agricultural contracting etc. Showroom facilities for selling equipment and plant, however, would be expected to locate in a town or village;
5. Local community initiatives which reasonably require a rural setting;
6. Large-scale industries that have specific requirements, for example, extensive sites or segregation from other land-uses that preclude location in urban areas or in established industrial estates. Such proposals are exceptional and will be assessed on their industrial merits, including their impact on the environment and on local communities;
7. Small-scale enterprises, especially start-up businesses, preferably using vacant farm buildings, old mills, industrial buildings, quarries *etc.*;
8. 'Tied' industries and enterprises related to rural/natural resources particularly forestry, mariculture and extractive industry. Such developments will be assessed on their individual merits including impacts on the environment and local communities. Expansion of existing industries and enterprises will be preferred to 'greenfield' development proposals;
9. Farm-based processing of natural resources sourced on farms, to provide downstream added value.

All other industrial developments should be located within designated industrial areas or on suitable land in towns and villages.

The Council will encourage pre-application consultation on all large-scale manufacturing and service sector development.

The good neighbour principle will apply on all applications within this category.

Figure 4-7 Planting and Berming required to provide Successful Visual and Noise Screening



Adequate landscaping, and in appropriate cases, buffer zones between different uses will be required as necessary. All commercial and industrial development will be subject to a detailed landscaping scheme to be implemented and completed by the developer within two years of the development commencing. This landscaping should be designed to provide effective screening from the public road or residential areas and integrate the development into the surrounding landscape.

Areas zoned specifically for enterprise and employment use will be protected from development of any other nature.

All proposed uses should be compatible with existing established uses.

Car parking commensurate with usage will be required to be provided, in accordance with Table 24. All car-parking areas to serve employees and visitors shall be provided within the curtilage of the site and to the rear of established building lines, where they exist.

Car parking areas shall be landscaped and planted with trees to minimise the visual impact; utilise permeable surfacing and source-control measures for surface water run-off.

Enterprises employing a large number of employees should prepare a mobility-management plan. Car parking standards for large enterprise developments may be relaxed if mobility-management plans are implemented.

Generally sightlines should be in accordance with Table 26. The Council must be satisfied that the road infrastructure is capable of sustaining the anticipated traffic demands the development is likely to generate. Developments of strategic importance, which by their nature are most appropriately located outside urban areas and where the locations concerned have specific characteristics that make them particularly suitable for the developments proposed may be afforded access onto national primary roads. Actual or estimated likely cost of road improvement consequent of the development of such activity shall be recoverable from the enterprise concerned. In addition, any localised road damage attributable to the said enterprise shall be recoverable. The Council will have regard to the DoECLG Guidelines, *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines*.

4.4.2 COMMERCE

Generally new offices, warehousing and wholesaling businesses should have town or village locations. Whilst it is unlikely that new businesses of this nature would have special circumstances justifying a rural location, proposals to extend or consolidate existing businesses located in rural areas may be appropriate, depending on the scale and anticipated impacts of the proposal.

4.4.3 RETAIL SERVICES

Retail development decisions will be informed by the *Leitrim County Retail Strategy 2015-2021*, the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012* - including accompanying *Retail Design Manual* and the policies, objectives and statements contained under the 'Retailing' Section of this Plan. Proposals comprising new shopfronts should refer to guidance provided in *Leitrim County Council Guidelines on Shopfront Design*.

Convenience Retail

Where practical, new convenience retail development should be located within town centres. Accessibility is key to the success of such developments and such proposals should be easily accessible by all modes of transport including pedestrians and cyclists. As large convenience shops attract customers carrying out weekly shopping, it is important that such development should also be served by adequate car parking.

Focus in providing new retail floorspace within Tier 1 and 2 towns of the County Retail Hierarchy will help to strengthen the town centres and clearly establish their primacy in terms of retailing roles and functions. Future retailing proposals which cannot be accommodated within established town centres will be steered towards proposals for occupying the existing vacant retail units at edge of centre sites. Retail proposals will be required to clearly delineate the extent of floorspace intended for the sale of convenience and comparison goods.

Comparison Retail

Over the period of the Plan it is anticipated that the vast majority of demand for comparison retail growth will be centred upon Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements. Changes in shopping habits are having a growing impact on comparison shopping trends. Carrick-on-Shannon retains the vast bulk of comparison shop floorspace and proposals to strengthen the performance of the County town and Tier 2 towns will be supported, particularly where this reduces retail expenditure leakage from the County, subject to compliance with Plan policies and objectives.

Bulky Goods/Retail Warehouses

It is noted in the *Retail Planning Guidelines* that there should, in general, be a presumption against further development of out-of-town retail parks. The quantitative assessment in the Retail Strategy details a high level of vacancy for retail warehousing centred on Carrick-on-Shannon. In this regard, it is envisaged that there will be a limited demand for further retail warehouse development in the County over the period of the Plan. Any application for further retail warehouse development should be considered carefully in the context of the ongoing level of provision. The range of goods sold in existing or planned parks should be restricted to bulky goods as defined in Annex 1 of the *Retail Planning Guidelines 2012*.

Consideration should also be given to alternative uses for existing vacant retail warehouses, provided proposals are not contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The occupancy of these units for purposes deemed compatible with the adjacent land uses in the area provides a better alternative than to allow these units to remain vacant and inevitably fall into a state of disrepair.

Retailing in Small Towns and Villages

Small towns and villages play an important role in the lives of the communities that they serve and provide valuable day-to-day retail facilities and services to those communities. Development in such villages and small towns should be focussed in the core village/town centre area and should complement existing retail provision.

The key objective is to provide and maintain a range of retail facilities and services to serve the day-to-day needs of the village/small towns' catchment area. In some small towns in the County, there is a clear need to enhance the convenience retail offer. The scale of such provision, should however, be cognisant of the retail role and function of such centres within the retail hierarchy.

Retailing in Rural Areas



Plan policy has been formulated so as to best attempt to serve to facilitate the maintaining of rural services. Few proposals for additional retail space in rural areas are expected over the lifetime of the Plan with a growing concern for retaining the existing retail base. Proposals for retailing in rural areas should be directed towards existing settlements; however, in certain circumstances retail development in rural areas may be appropriate. These include:

- 1) A retail unit which is ancillary to activities arising from farm diversification;
- 2) A retail unit designed to serve a tourist or recreational facility, ancillary to the main use;
- 3) A retail unit attached to a craft workshop;
- 4) A small scale retail unit (not in excess of 100 sq. metres gross) designed to serve a dispersed rural community.

Such proposals shall be considered on their merits in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Casual Trading

Casual trading, including farmers' markets and street markets, can make a valuable contribution to the local economy and contribute to the vitality and viability of a retail centre. Such activities should be properly regulated as per the provisions of the *Casual Trading Act 1995* and consideration should be given to the quality on offer of such casual trading.

Forecourt Retailing & Motor Fuel Stations

Existing motor-fuel stations often provide an important function as the local shop or small supermarket. The most suitable location for motor fuel-filling stations and associated commercial developments is at edge-of-centre locations. Traffic movements associated with such developments can interfere with the safety and free flow of traffic on the road. The slower traffic speeds within urban speed limit areas reduce the risk of such interference. Fuel-filling stations will not be permitted at locations where they would result in traffic hazard or be injurious to the amenities of an area because of their appearance, noise and fumes. Any grant of permission will be dependent on a satisfactory layout which shall include appropriate landscaping proposals advertising and maintenance proposals.

Retail sales from fuel-filling stations will be limited to those required to meet local need. The operational requirements of the filling station must remain unaffected. The Council discourages fuel-filling station forecourt retailing in excess of 100 sq. metres, as per the *Retail Planning Guidelines*. Where permission is sought for floorspace in excess of 100 sq. metres in retail units associated with fuel-filling stations, the 'sequential approach' to retail development shall apply. The design and layout of the fuel station in such instances should reflect the primacy of the convenience retail function over the fuel retail function. Conflict between pedestrian movements to the retail outlet with forecourt vehicle manoeuvres needs to be designed out of the scheme.

4.4.4 ADVERTISING

All advertisement and advertisement structures, other than those constituting exempted development shall be subject to a formal planning application or licence as may be appropriate. Proposals for advertisements should have reference to '*Council Policy relating to the Erection of Advertising & Directional Signage on Public Land*' (2012). The over-riding principle is the avoidance of visual clutter and an improvement in the quality of the

commercial character of the towns and villages throughout the county. It is also regulated in the interests of road safety.

Applicants should note that signposting requires a licence from the Local Authority and the requirements of the *Traffic Signs Manual* (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports, 2010) should be adhered to.

Advertisements in Towns and Villages

The size and scale of signs should not conflict with those existing structures in the vicinity. Signs will not be permitted if they compete with road signs or otherwise endanger traffic safety. Signs attached to buildings are preferable to those on free-standing hoarding. Signs should not interfere with windows or other features of the façade or project above the skyline. Signs should not exceed 5.4m².

Advertisements in the Open Countryside

No advertising hoarding will be permitted in the open countryside. Consideration may be given to the provision of advertising panels at lay-bys outside built-up areas where facilities in these areas can be listed and the traders can advertise in a fashion which would provide information to road users without interference with the amenities of the areas. Such signs should not exceed 2.7m².

Tourism Information

Signs that are designed as guides to the location of tourist facilities such as hotels, restaurants and guest houses will be permitted under licence outside built-up areas subject to: -

- Compliance with the *Policy on the Provision of Tourist & Leisure Signage on National Roads* (NRA, 2012);
- Generally limited to fingerpost signs;
- Limitation in number to a maximum of two per premises;
- Licenses must be renewed annually. Redundant and unlicensed signs must be removed.

4.4.5 SHOP FRONT DESIGN STANDARDS

The Council requires a high standard of shop front design and advertising. Existing traditional shop fronts should be retained where possible, especially in the town centre.

The Council will encourage good shop front design, either of traditional or modern design, provided that they are constructed of appropriately robust materials and are in scale and proportion to the building and neighbouring buildings. The design must be approached in an integrated way, including signage, advertising and lighting.

Building and plot divisions should be retained externally, even when the internal divisions have been removed.

The use of external roller shutters and the permanent removal of shop fronts leaving the shop open to the pavement are unacceptable. Security shutters should be mounted behind the



window glazing; be of the open grill type and coloured to blend with the overall shop front. Alternatives to roller shutters, such as removable timber shutters or open grills are preferred.

Externally mounted loudspeakers are unacceptable.

Internally lit neon signs, flashing, reflectorised or glitter type signs located on or visible from the exterior are unacceptable. Signs and advertising of excessive size or number, or projecting above the parapet/eaves height or outside the bulk of the building are unacceptable.

Plastic/Vinyl banner-type signs will be discouraged. Projecting signs, banners and flagpoles will be restricted in size and number to prevent clutter.

Where brand or corporate signage is permitted it will be expected to be in a form and design which is compatible with the streetscape. Compatibility with the streetscape and individual buildings will be considered more important than the uniformity between branches of a company. Projecting brand signs, of whatever type or design, are unacceptable.

4.4.6 QUARRIES, EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES, MINING, OIL AND GAS

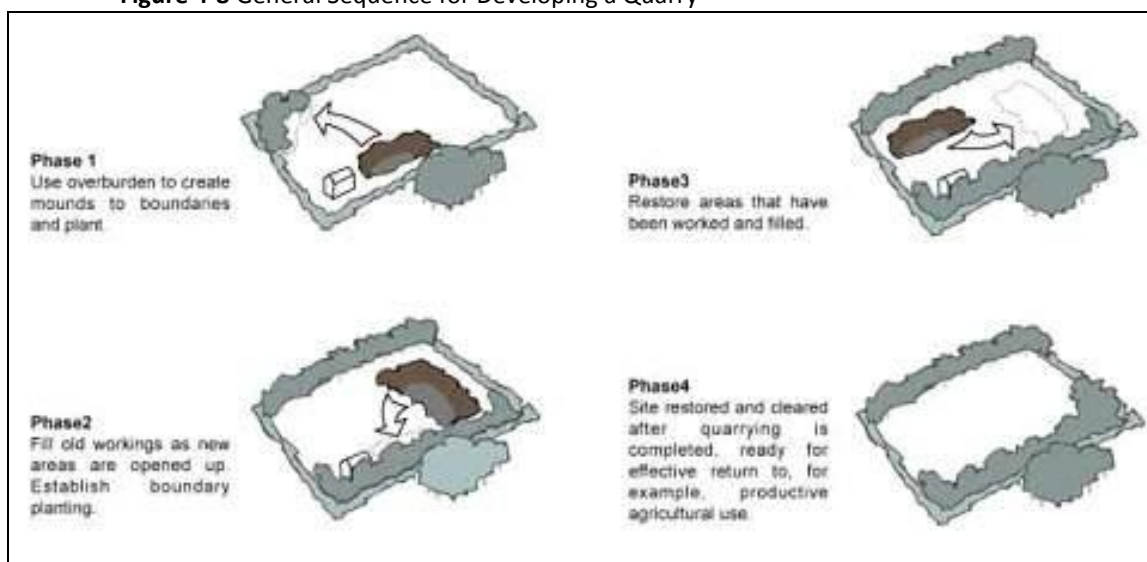
The Council will consider proposals in respect of the Quarrying and Extractive Industries; Mining; Oil and Gas sectors in accordance with National and Regional policy and guidance and accord with the policies and objectives as outlined herein.

Policy 72, Policy 73, Policy 74 and Policy 129 to Policy 131 inclusive are relevant.

The Council will require the payment of a cash deposit by the developer/operator of the quarry or mine.

Detailed site specific landscaping proposals will be required for each development.

Figure 4-8 General Sequence for Developing a Quarry



Assessment of quarries shall be in accordance with *Quarries and Ancillary Activities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, as published in 2004 by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; the *'Environmental Management Guidelines - Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry'*, as published by the Environmental

Protection Agency in 2006; *'Archaeological Code of Practice'* between the DoEHLG and the Irish Concrete Federation, 2009; *'Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry'*, 2008 and *'Wildlife, Habitats and the Extractive Industry- Guidelines for the Protection of biodiversity within the Extractive Industry'*, NPWS 2009.

As stated in Section 3.7.7, Policy 74, it is the policy of the Council that transportation of extracted material from the source must be carried out without causing nuisance to other road users. In certain instances the public road may be deemed by the Council to be inadequate to carry the size of the loads proposed. The Council will include a condition requiring a contribution towards the maintenance and/or upgrading of the road and may specify alternative routing of these loads.

In assessing any application for mining, quarrying, oil or gas extraction operations, the developer and/or transport operator will be required to submit a proposed transport scheme showing details of location of the activity, nature of activity, routes proposed to be used, the timing of the operation and details of the vehicles to be used. Lands shown as designated for such activities will be safeguarded for the said purpose. Other development will not be permitted thereon if it would prejudice the carrying out of the activity for which the land is designated.

The Council will consider granting planning permissions with a life of up to 25 years if the scale of the proposed operation warrants such a time scale. The onus will be on the developer to demonstrate that the size of the deposits to be extracted warrants such a lengthy permission.

Conditions governing operating times will be determined in the interests of neighbouring residential amenity.

4.4.7 FORESTRY

Forestry development will require strict adherence by developers to the *'Fisheries'*, *'Archaeology'*, *'Biodiversity'*, *'Water Quality'*, *'Landscape'*, *'Harvesting & Environmental'* and *'Protection'* guidelines published by the Forest Service (and any additional or revised guidance which may be published by that service or the Council) and should not give rise to pollution or deterioration of quality of ground waters or surface waters, particularly drinking water sources.

Forestry schemes should not interfere with traffic sight lines along public roads; adequate measures should be taken so as to ensure that no damage occurs to public roads, culverts, drainage or bridges as a result of planting, maintenance or harvesting programmes. Planning permission may be required for road access from plantations. Foresters are advised to consult with the Planning Authority on access onto public roads, alternative routes and remediation works.

Forestry should not obstruct protected views, existing rights of way or access to available water sources; and well maintained fire breaks shall be required. Furthermore, no trees shall be planted within falling distance of any habitable house, place of public resort or public road in the interests of public safety.

Guidance on the most appropriate locations for forestry in the landscape is to be found in section 3.7.3 of this plan.



The thinning, felling or replanting of trees, forests or woodlands (not including the replacement of broadleaf high forest by conifer species) and the construction or maintenance of a forest road are exempted development under section 4 of the *Planning Act*. However, the 2010 amendment to the *Planning Act* makes it clear that the construction, maintenance or improvement of public roads and accesses to public roads is not exempted development.

Transportation of felled timber from a forestry plantation must be carried out without causing nuisance to other road users. In certain circumstances, the public road may be deemed by the Council to be inadequate to carry the size of the loads proposed. The Council will include a condition requiring a contribution towards the maintenance and/or upgrading of the road and may specify alternative routing of these roads.

Before commencement of tree felling and transportation of felled timber, the developer and/or transport operator will be required to submit a proposed transport scheme showing details of the location of the activity;; volume of produce to be transported;; details of vehicles to be used;; routes to be used and the timing of the operations. The implementation of the '*Good Practice Guide for Managing Timber Transport*', produced by the Forest Industry Transport Group, will be supported by the Council, as appropriate.

4.4.8 WIND FARMS

With respect to wind-farm energy generation proposals, the Council will require detailed information to Environmental Impact Assessment standard in submissions on large scale installation proposals with significant anticipated environmental impact.

Assessment of wind farms shall be in accordance with the *Wind Energy Development Guidelines*, published by the DoECLG in 2006, and will have regard to visual impact;; noise;; electro-magnetic interference;; ecological impact;; safety and land use implications. Control conditions attaching to any grant of permission may include requirements for siting and layout design;; blade rotation;; unit numbers;; design and colour;; power lines and access roads;; acoustical design and noise levels;; electro-magnetic interference suppression;; 'shadow flicker' control;; heritage preservation;; bonding provision; and landscaping and site restoration upon decommissioning of power generation plant and equipment.

Development proposals for wind farms must have regard for aircraft safety and navigation.

4.4.9 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

It is the aim of Leitrim County Council to provide for the orderly development of telecommunications infrastructure throughout the County;; recognising the necessity of providing modern infrastructure, while having due regard to the diverse views and concerns, of the various interested parties and acknowledging the concerns of the people with regard to public health.

As stated in Section 3.11.8 it is the policy of Leitrim County Council to support the provision of a modern telecommunications infrastructure throughout the County;; while seeking to ensure that such equipment is so sited, that it will not adversely impact on the visual or residential amenities of any areas within the County;; or on the natural beauty or archaeological heritage

of the county;; or give rise to genuine public concern on health grounds; having regard to standards of the International Radiation Protection Association and the World Health Organisation.

Whereas reason must apply in all cases, only as a last resort should free-standing masts/antenna be located within, or in the immediate surrounds of, smaller towns or villages;; within a residential area;; or within the vicinity of schools or private dwellings. Any proposal under this clause must demonstrate clearly that to do otherwise would not be reasonable in terms of meeting technical requirements. The applicant shall provide satisfactory evidence that this is the only location possible to meet specific requirements and that all other alternatives have been examined, but are not capable of being exploited for stated specific reasons. Commercial competition in this instance will not be acceptable as a reason for locating in these areas. This should not be interpreted as to preclude development where the applicant has full knowledge of the location of an existing mast.

In rural areas, masts should be placed in forestry plantations provided that the antennae are clear of obstruction. The developer will be required to retain a cordon of trees around the site which will not be felled during the lifetime of the mast and include the written agreement of the landowner to this requirement. In unforested areas, softening of the visual impact shall be achieved through judicious design;; and through the planting of shrubs, trees etc. as a screen and backdrop.

Where there is an existing mast in a rural area every effort should be made to share it. All applicants will be encouraged to share and will be obliged to satisfy the Planning Authority that they have made every effort to do so. Where it is not possible to share a support structure the developer should share the site or an adjacent site so that masts and antennae can be clustered. Developers of new masts will be expected to enter into Section 47 agreements with the planning authority obliging them to make the mast available to other telephone companies at reasonable cost.

Proximity to archaeological sites and other monuments should be avoided.

Masts are not generally to be located in an Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where they can be clearly visible from vantage points accessible to the general public.

The Council will be guided in the management of Telecommunication Antennae and Supporting Structures by the Department of the Environment, Communication and Local Government Guidance document *"Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures 1996"* (as amended by Circular PL 07/12 issued on 19th October 2012) or by any updated version of the Guidance document.

4.4.10 MARINAS

Marinas should be located in areas where boating activity is already present or where there is substantial demand for such a facility.

Marinas should provide adequate water depth at all times;; berthing arrangements for pleasure craft;; direct access/walkway to boats;; navigation aids;; pontoon lighting;; fire safety equipment;; car parking;; administration services;; toilet facilities; and pump out facilities.

Marina developers will be expected to enter into Section 47 agreements with the planning authority to facilitate a number of berths (generally 20%) remaining available for public use at a reasonable cost.



4.4.11 OTHER TOURISM FACILITIES

New or expanded tourism facilities will normally be favourably considered provided the applicant can demonstrate that the location is essential to the nature and purpose of the facility and that detailed development management issues can be addressed.

New hotels will primarily be located in or on the edge of main settlements and off major junctions of regional and national roads.

Proposals for chalet and holiday home developments, where forming part of an overall scheme for tourism or rural recreation, will be considered favourably; subject to extensive landscaping and compliance with other development management standards and policies of the Plan. The provision of tourism facilities as a supplementary activity on a farm will be favourably considered.

4.4.12 FORMAL AND INFORMAL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Applications involving the loss of formal and/or informal recreational facilities will not be permitted unless:-

- a) replacement recreational facilities are provided in a location which will serve the same community and which are of an equivalent community benefit in terms of quality and accessibility.
- b) the redevelopment of a small part of the site will result in the retention and enhancement of the recreational facilities on the balance of the site.

4.4.13 AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

While the Council is committed to facilitating agricultural development and support services, and encourages participation in the REPS, especially in environmentally sensitive areas, it also recognises that agriculture remains a significant source of eutrophication of surface waters; be it water course or water body. While most agricultural development is currently exempt from planning, where an agricultural development requires planning permission and which involves the storage of effluent, it must be accompanied by a Nutrient Management Plan and documentation to demonstrate that the development will meet the following requirements:

- a) Generally a minimum storage requirement for the storage of slurries, soiled water and silage effluent will be 21 weeks, with 300mm freeboard. Higher standards of storage may be required in poor ground conditions;
- b) All silage slabs shall incorporate kerbing and channels so as to prevent discharge to watercourses;
- c) Unsoiled roof runoff/rainwater shall be channelled separately away from the farm complex and shall not be allowed to enter soiled water channels or effluent storage tanks;
- d) Slabs shall be laid out at appropriate gradients and shall be designed to facilitate cleaning throughout the farming season;
- e) Water harvesting shall be encouraged.

4.5 ROADS AND PARKING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

4.5.1 GENERAL ROADS AND PARKING STANDARDS

In all developments the Planning Authority will normally require the provision of car parking spaces within or convenient to the site of the development. The provision should be based on the extent to which the development is likely to generate demand for additional parking spaces. The parking standards given in Table 24 below shall apply.

Table 24 Car Parking Standards

LAND USE	MINIMUM CAR-PARKING REQUIREMENTS
Residential	
Apartments	1.5 spaces per apartment
Dwellings	2 car spaces per unit
Commercial	
Banks/Financial Institutions	1 car space per 20 m ² gross floor area
*Bars/Lounges/Function Rooms (including such uses in Hotels etc)	1 car space per 5 m ² of public floor space
Car Wash	5 waiting spaces without interference to other spaces or to the public road
Caravan/Camping Site	1 car space per pitch
Cash & Carry	1 car space per 50 sq.m. gross floor area
*Cinemas, Theatres, Stadium	1 car space per 4 seats (0.25 space per seat)
Conference Centre	1 car space per 10 m ² of public floor space
Guest House/B&B	1 car space per bedroom & 2 spaces for owners
Hotel	1 car space per bedroom
*Hot Food Takeaways	1 per unit subject to max. 10 m ² of public floor space
Hostel	1 car space per 2 bedrooms or 1 car space per 10 bed dormitory
*Motel	1 car space per bedroom
*Night Club/Dance Hall/ Discos	1 car space per 10 m ² of dance floor, seating area & bar
Offices (town centres)	1 car space per 25 m ² of gross floor space
Office Park	1 car space per 20 m ² of gross floor space
*Petrol Station	2 car spaces per pump plus requirements for any other uses on site
*Restaurants/Cafes	1 car space per 6 m ² of public floor space
Retail (<250 m ² gross)	1 car space per 24 m ² of gross floor space
Retail (250 - 1000 m ² gross)	1 car space per 18 m ² of gross floor space
Retail (>1000 m ² gross)	1 car space per 12 m ² of gross floor space
Retail Warehousing > 1000 m ² gross	3 per 100 m ² gross floor space
Community & Health	
Bowling	3 car spaces per lane
Church	1 car space per 4 seats
Clinics & Group Medical Practices	2 car spaces per consulting room + 1 additional space for reception area
Community Centre	1 car space per 10 m ² of public floor space
Creche/ Pre-School Facility	1 car space per employee & 1 per 8 children & 1 set down



LAND USE	MINIMUM CAR-PARKING REQUIREMENTS
	area per 5 children
Funeral Home	1 per 5 m ² of gross floor space
Golf Driving Range	1 car space per Bay
Golf/Pitch & Putt Courses	2 car spaces per hole
Hospitals	1 car space per bed
Library	1 car space per 25 m ² of gross floor space
Nursing Homes	1 car space per 2 beds
Playing Pitch	15 car spaces per pitch
*Pool/Gym/Sports Club/Court	1 car space per 10 m ² of public floor space & 2 per court
School - Primary	1 car space per classroom
School - Secondary	2 car spaces per classroom & 1 per 20 students
Industrial	
Garages (Service Only)	2 car space per workspace/300m ² of gross floor area
Man. Ind./Light Industry	1 car space per 50 m ² of gross floor area
Car Showrooms	1 car space per 100 m ² of gross floor area
Warehouses	1 car space per 100 m ² of gross floor area
Staffing	
*Staffing Requirements	1 car space per 2 staff

Note: Land Use categories depicted with an * require 1 car space per 2 staff in addition to the listed minimum car parking requirements stated above.

Large or complex developments may be assessed separately with regard to the circumstances.

The Council reserves the right to alter the above requirements having regard to the circumstances of each particular development and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The Council will require that adequate provision be made for parking for drivers with disabilities in all new commercial, retail and industrial developments and new public buildings.

The Council recognises that the parking needs of developments are dependent to a great extent on the availability of spare parking capacity in close proximity to the proposed development therefore each development will be considered on its merits.

4.5.2 SHARING OF CAR PARKING SPACES

The Council will reserve the right to alter the car parking requirements having regard to the circumstances of each particular development and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. In certain instances, for example with hotels, consideration will be given to the fact that a number of the facilities are likely to be used by the one user, thereby reducing the over car parking requirements for the particular development. In such cases, the use of a UK computer-based system, the UK TRICS analysis (Trip Rate Information Computer System), to determine actual parking demands will be required (Note: Irish data has been included in the TRICS system in recent years).

4.5.3 SET-DOWN REQUIREMENTS AND CAR-PARKING BAY SIZES

In addition to car parking standards sufficient space will be required within the curtilage of the site for all service vehicles involved in the operation of the business or building. Set down areas and/or bus circulation areas may also be required depending on the nature of the proposed development.

The minimum size for a car parking space shall be 2.5m x 5m with circulation aisles a minimum 6m in width. In cases where the car parking is parallel to a kerb the space requirement will be 6m x 2.5m. Parking bay widths for disabled persons will be a minimum of 3m in width. Loading bays shall be a minimum 3m x 6m for small vans and 15m x 3m for HGV's.

4.5.4 PARKING FOR THE DISABLED

In accordance with the document *Building for Everyone* as published by the National Disabilities Authority the following number of disabled parking bays will be required for all buildings to which the public have access: -

- i. 1 no. space for the first 25 no. standard car parking spaces being provided;
- ii. A minimum of 3 no. spaces where up to 50 no. spaces are being provided;
- iii. A minimum of 5 no. spaces where between 50-100 no. spaces are being provided.

4.5.5 DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION FOR CAR PARKING

Where the provision of car parking is required by this plan, such provision may be met by providing the required spaces within the development or, where the Council require, by a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme (refer also to Section 4.6.3). When dealing with planning applications for change of use or for replacement buildings credit will be given for the existing authorised use in calculating the required standards.

4.5.6 BICYCLE PARKING

The Council will require the provision of a minimum level of cycle parking facilities in association with new development and a change of use. Where the provision of cycle parking facilities are intended for use by the staff of that particular development, stands should be located within the curtilage of the development to ensure effective security and supervision. Cycle stands for use by visitors should be located to maximise convenience to the entrance of buildings, and positioned so as to ensure safety, security and supervision.

The Council will also encourage the provision and enhancement of cycle-parking facilities where possible at the railway station, public buildings, retail centres and leisure facilities.



Table 25 Bicycle Parking Standards

Type of Development	Relevant Cycle Parking Standards
House and flats	1 stand per dwelling
Student Residences	1 stand per bedroom
Shops	1 stand for every 200 m ² of gross floorspace
Supermarkets & Large Stores	1 stand for every 200 m ² of gross floorspace
Offices	1 stand for every 200 m ² of gross floorspace
Industry	1 stand for every 200 m ² of gross floorspace
Warehousing	1 stand for every 250 m ² of gross floorspace
Theatre, Cinema, Church & Stadium	1 stand for every 20 seats
Hotels & Guesthouses	1 stand for every 4 bedrooms
Lounge/Bars	1 stand for every 30 m ² of public floorspace
Restaurants	1 stand for every 30 m ² of public floorspace
Function-room, Dance Halls & Clubs	1 stand for every 30 m ²
Playing Fields	4 stands per pitch
Schools	1 stand per 10 pupils
Nursing Homes	1 stand per 8 members of staff

Note: Large complex developments may be assessed separately with regard to the circumstances.

4.5.7 ACCESS TO PUBLIC ROADS

4.5.7.1 General

Houses should access onto estate roads/minor roads where possible and be located in such a manner to ensure that public safety is not endangered by way of a traffic hazard. The location of access points onto the public road network shall be such as to achieve sight distances which accord with the minimum sight distance requirements. In looking at access points the Planning Authority has had consideration to the *Sustainable Housing Guidelines* as issued by the DoECLG.

Preference will be given to the sharing of an existing road entrance (not more than 2 houses using the same entrance) where sight lines are adequate. Sight lines should generally be in accordance with Table 26. The entrance must be designed to ensure no surface water runs off the site onto the public road or impede the drainage of the public road.

Planning applications for significant development proposals should be accompanied by Transport and Traffic Impact Assessment (TTIA) Reports and Road Safety Audits (RSA). The cumulative impacts of the project should be assessed, in association with their neighbouring developments. The assessments and reports shall be carried out by suitably competent consultants, in accordance with the Guidance given in this respect in the National Transport Authority document *Traffic Management Guidelines*, the NRA document *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* and the NRA *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines*.

As supporting documentation with planning applications, the Planning Authority will encourage the preparation and submission of Mobility Management Plans (MMP) to promote

sustainable land-use and transportation practices. Mobility Management Plans will not be viewed as an alternative to TTIA and/or RSA, where these are required.

4.5.7.2 Regionally & Locally-Important Roads

There are a number of regional roads within the county which provide important linkages between the key and supporting towns of the county [internally] and also to the wider region regional and national centres. These routes are considered as important Strategic Regional and Local Roads, whose carrying capacities are to be retained and improved in the interest of the economic viability of the county. Accordingly, the creation of new access onto these routes will be strictly controlled by way of sight distance requirements as set out in Table 26, and in the Government *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines*. The consideration of new access points onto other regional roads will be assessed with a view to: -

- a) Avoiding unnecessary new accesses, for example where access could be provided off a nearby local road;
- b) Ensuring that necessary new entrances are located in such a manner as to provide effective visibility for both users of the entrance and users of the public roads so that opportunities for conflicting movements are avoided, taking account of all relevant considerations such as traffic levels, typical vehicle speeds, plans for realignment;
- c) Avoiding the premature obsolescence of regional roads in particular through creating excessive levels of individual entrances; and
- d) Securing recent investment in non-national roads such as the substantial strengthening and realignment programme underway under the National Development Plan by minimizing the provision of new entrances onto realigned stretches of regional roads in particular.

The regionally and locally-important routes are shown on the Core Strategy Map 1.7 and include the following: -

- The R199 {Ballinamore to the Cavan County Boundary}
- All of the R201 {from the junction of the N4 at Annaduff, via Carrigallen, to the Leitrim Cavan County boundary}
- All of the R202 {Dromod to Cavan County Boundary}
- The R208 from junction of the R280, to Junction of R202
- The R209 from the Junction of the R280 to the Junction of the R210
- All of the R210 {Junction with R209 to junction with R208}
- All of the R287 from the Junction of the R280 to the Leitrim/Sligo boundary
- The R289 from the Junction of the R280 to the junction of the R287.
- All of the R299 {N4 to R280}.
- All of the R288 and its continuation along the R286, via Park's Castle, to the Sligo Leitrim/Boundary

4.5.7.3 Strategic Links (National Primary Roads and the Regional Road R280)

In considering any application for development on or adjacent to a national road or the R280 the Planning Authority will have regard to National Policy as set out in Ministerial Guidelines Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012) and the provisions of the County Plan.



Generally direct access, or the generation of increased traffic, onto national roads and the R280 will not be permitted outside the areas where the 50/ 60 km per hour speed limit applies, in accordance with the above policy. Only in exceptional circumstances and where alternative access cannot be achieved, will new developments be granted permission when required to be serviced by means of direct access onto a national road or the R280.

Exceptional circumstances, wherein access to the National roads or R280 may be allowed, will be generally restricted to: -

- a) The provision of a new house where the existing house which currently accesses the National Road, is substandard and in need of replacement and no other access is possible;
- b) In exceptional circumstances, where a house is required by a farmer or a member of a farmers family and no other access is possible, (subject to a Section 47 agreement) [Applies to the R280 only];
- c) The creation of a new access not involving additional development which leads to the elimination of a traffic hazard;
- d) Developments of strategic importance which by their nature are most appropriately located outside urban areas and where the locations concerned have specific characteristics that make them particularly suitable for the developments proposed.

Refer to Objective 30 (a), Section 3.6.6 in respect to access to national roads in exceptional circumstances

4.5.8 ACCESS ONTO PUBLIC ROADS AND SIGHT LINES

All developments providing for access onto public roads must show that the access proposed will not create a traffic hazard nor interfere with the free-flow of traffic along such roads. Generally sight lines should be in accordance with either Table 26 and/or the NRA *TD41-42/11 Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions and Vehicular Access to National Roads* plus NRA *TD9/12 Road Link Design* published by the National Roads Authority. Each case will be assessed on its own merits and the operational speeds on the roads in question will also be taken into account.

Table 26 Sight Lines

Road Status	100 km per hour	80 km per hour	60 km per hour (or less)
National Primary Roads & R280	215m	215m	80m
Regionally & Locally Important Roads	215m	160m	80m
Other Regional Roads	N/A	160m	80m
County Roads	N/A	120m*	70m

Note: *except where operational speed is 60kph or less, 90m may be considered satisfactory.

These sight distances are measured at a height of 1.05m above ground level from a point 3.0m back from the edge of the carriageway, to a point on the road 260 mm over the surface level of the road.

A relaxation of these sight distance requirements may be considered satisfactory in exceptional circumstances where it can be clearly demonstrated that no other suitable alternative proposal is available and where the proposal would be in accordance with the provisions as set out in the *NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges - NRA TD 41-42/11* or the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Street*, as appropriate.

4.5.9 SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE AT ENTRANCES

In addition an entrance must provide for a surface water disposal system so as to ensure that no surface water is discharged onto the public road and, where roadside drains are affected, adequate provision for piping of such drains shall be made.

4.5.10 ROADSIDE BOUNDARIES

The line of existing roadside boundaries in rural areas should where possible be retained, particularly in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;, in areas of High Visual Amenity;, in areas with Protected Views; and along scenic roads.

Any new roadside boundary shall consist of a hedgerow of broad leaved species native to the areas and/or stone walls of local materials. Decorative walls or concrete block walls shall be discouraged.

4.5.11 PROTECTION OF ROAD ROUTES

No development will be permitted where it is likely to prejudice the implementation of proposed road schemes once possible routes for new roads or the realignment of existing roads have been identified.

4.5.12 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Development will not be permitted where a public right of way will be affected, unless the level of amenity is minimised by: -

- i. the footpath/bridleway being diverted by the minimal practical distance and the route continuing to be segregated from vehicular traffic;
- ii. Appropriate legal procedures have been undertaken to extinguish the existing right of way and to establish the new right of way to replace it.



4.6 OTHER DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

4.6.1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Council will require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out for proposed development listed in Schedule 5 of the *Planning and Development Regulations* or other developments which it considers likely to have significant environmental effects. The decision as to whether a development is likely to have significant effects on the environment shall be made in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations*.

Where an EIA is required to be carried out the Council shall require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to be submitted as part of the planning application. The applicant may request the Council to give a written opinion on the information to be contained in the EIS. The Council will have regard to the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment* (DoECLG, 2013) and any updated version of these Guidelines when assessing relevant cases.

All developments, to which these regulations apply, including proposed public authority projects, will be required to submit detailed Environmental Impact Statements as part of the planning process.

4.6.2 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

The Council will ensure that any plan or project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Natura Impact Report/Statement to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the *EU Habitats Directive* are fully satisfied.

Where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment and analysis of potential effects on the site must be obtained and presented in a Natura Impact Statement/Report, in accordance with legislative requirements. The plan or project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan or project is deemed imperative for reasons of overriding public interest, all in accordance with the provisions of article 6(3) and 6(4) of the *EU Habitats Directive*. An Bord Pleanála and the DoECLG (NPWS section) have issued guidelines to Planning Authorities in respect to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

4.6.3 DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

The Council will require financial contributions in accordance with a development contributions scheme adopted by the Council under Section 48 and 49 of the *Planning and Development Act* (or other relevant legislation as may be enacted from time to time). Such contributions are in respect of the capital expenditure necessary for the provision of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the County, and that is provided, or that it is intended will be provided, by or on behalf of the Council.

The Planning Authority, taking into consideration the capital expenditure necessary for the provision of infrastructure required to facilitate development, will require financial contributions in relation to drainage, roads, open space, footpaths, public lighting, education, health recreation, amenity and car parking. The Planning Authority will implement the terms of the *National Water and Waste Water Planning Policy* in the calculation of appropriate financial contributions from developers.

The Council has prepared a schedule of development contributions in accordance with its obligations under Sections 48 and 49 of the *Planning and Development Act*, which will be reviewed during the lifetime of this plan. Any review will be undertaken cognisant of the Ministerial Guidelines: *Development Contribution Scheme Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013)*.

The Council may update on an annual basis the amount of contribution having regard to the rise in the building cost index or in the consumer price index, as appropriate. Developers are advised that Development Contributions payable under any grant of planning permission do not cover the Council's connection fees to either foul drainage systems or water supplies. Connection fees are paid separately to the Water Services Department or Irish Water as appropriate. Exemption from Development Contributions, under the Development Contributions Scheme should not be construed as including any exemption from Connection Fees.

4.6.4 CASH DEPOSITS AND BONDS

Prior to the commencement of the development, developers will be required to lodge a Cash Deposit or Insurance Bond for the satisfactory completion of residential and other developments and their ancillary services until such time as they may be taken in charge by the Council. Approved developments will be required to submit as part of Construction Management Plans, phasing proposals. The Council will adhere to any future Government guidelines with respect to security for planning proposals.

Deposits/Bonding will be required in residential, industrial estate development and other developments, as the Council considers necessary. It is Council policy that all residential developments, with the exception of gated developments, will be taken-in-charge on completion and upon certification of satisfactory completion of all aspects of the development. The amount of the bond will be related to the estimated cost of the development works and services.

4.6.5 CARE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

As stated under Section 3.4.7 and Section 3.5.5 it will be the policy of the Council, in carrying out its development management functions, and in the provision of public buildings or amenities, to provide for adequate provision for access for people with disabilities. It will also be the policy of the Council to seek to ensure that all buildings comply with the *Building Control Act* and related regulations with regard to access for people with disabilities.



4.6.6 NOISE

The Council will seek to ensure that new development does not cause an unacceptable increase in the noise levels affecting surrounding properties and that new development, in turn, will not suffer from unacceptably high-noise levels. Generally noise levels should not exceed 55dB (A) 1m outside the most exposed window of any residential unit.

Noise standards appropriate for the receiving environment shall be applied when assessing any application for development, where noise may be an issue. The Council recognises that received noise standards for various types of properties, including residential properties, in Town Centre locations will be different to those where the property is in a peri-urban, suburban or rural location, and the standards applied will be appropriate for the location and established ambient noise levels

Where any development is proposed within the zone of influence of existing or planned national road routes or proximity of the development to a national road would result in a breach of the National Roads Authority's design goal for '*sensitive receptors exposed to traffic noise*', the Planning authority will require planning applications to identify and implement appropriate noise mitigation measures. The cost of implementing such required mitigation measures shall be borne by the developer. Applicants should refer to the Council's *Noise Action Plan* for further guidance.

4.6.7 LIGHT POLLUTION

It will be the policy of the Council to seek to minimise the effects of external lightning on the environment. Light pollution includes glare, the spilling of light beyond the boundary of the property on which the light source is located, and the brightening of the night sky above both urban and rural areas. In addition to the nuisance, traffic hazard and ecological effects, excessive lighting wastes electricity and thereby contributes to the unnecessary emission of greenhouse gases. It can be substantially reduced without detriment to the lighting task by avoiding over-lighting;; switching off lights not required for safety, security or enhancement of the night-time scene;; and by designing lighting schemes to minimise glare and light spillage.

4.6.8 RADON IN BUILDINGS

The requirement to protect against the adverse impacts of radon in buildings is governed by the Building Regulations. Under the Building Regulations, all new buildings must incorporate radon protection measures. These Regulations are reviewed on an on-going basis. Guidance in respect of the impact and control of Radon in buildings is available from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government website at;

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/EnvironmentalRadiation/Radon/>

The Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) have produced a map showing higher Radon areas around the country, refer to <http://www.rpii.ie/> for further details.

SECTION 5 – STATEMENT ON THE LIKELY IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT OF IMPLEMENTING THE POLICIES OF THE PLAN



5 STATEMENT ON THE LIKELY IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT OF IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

5.1 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004)* transposed the *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC* into Irish Law. A SEA is a formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed plan or programme. The SEA is carried out prior to the adoption of the plan or programme. The Department of the Environment Community and Local Government has issued guidelines to Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities on the implementation of *SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)*.

The County Development Plan is accompanied by an Environmental Report and an Environmental Statement, prepared in accordance with the above legislative requirements.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is similar to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS) insofar as it attempts to assess in a systematic way the consequences for the environment of implementing proposals. Unlike an EIS however, an SEA attempts to assess the impact on the environment of implementing a whole plan rather than a particular project. Consequently it must take a more strategic approach than an EIS. The Environmental Report was prepared under a wide range of topics, namely: -

- i. Non-Technical Summary
- ii. Relevant Policy, Plans, Programmes and Guidelines
- iii. Alternative Approaches to the making of the Draft Plan
- iv. The Draft County Development Plan 2009 – 2015
- v. Population and Socio-Economic Profile
- vi. Human Health
- vii. Settlement Strategy
- viii. Water Quality
- ix. Bio-Diversity
- x. Landscape/Geology (including Soils)
- xi. Climate Change and Flood-Risk Management
- xii. Agriculture & Forestry
- xiii. Cultural Heritage (including Archaeology)
- xiv. Air Quality
- xv. Material Assets
- xvi. Significant Environmental Issues & Additional Mitigation Measures
- xvii. Assessment of Strategic Aims, Policies and Objectives
- xviii. Likely evolution of the environment without the implementation of the plan
- xix. Interrelationships
- xx. Monitoring, Environmental Objectives and Indicators
- xxi. Mitigation Measures

The various policies of the plan are assessed against sustainable development principles and presented as a matrix in the SEA Environmental Report. Policies are considered on the basis of the likely significant impact they will have on the environment if implemented. The impacts are assessed as to whether they will be positive, negative, neutral or insignificant or uncertain.

Policies are considered positive if, on balance, they are likely to lead to the conservation or enrichment of the environment;; negative if, on balance they are likely to lead to the degradation of the environment;; neutral or insignificant if they are unlikely to have a significant impact one way or the other; and uncertain if the impact depends on the nature and scale of development.

Thus for example policies on *Protection of the Natural Environment* are likely to have a positive impact by restricting development where it may impact on sensitive habitats or the built heritage. The impact of development associated with *Employment and Industry* will depend on the nature and scale of the development

Strategic Environmental Assessment must be considered as a process rather than an end product. It entails a systematic assessment of the environmental consequences of implementing the plan carried out at the various stages of drawing up a plan.

As one of the principal reasons for drawing up and implementing a development plan is to ensure that development is environmentally sustainable it is to be expected that none of the policies are anticipated to have a significant negative impact on the environment. The SEA does highlight developments that have the potential to impact on the environment. However, the Planning Authority is confident that such impacts can be eliminated or mitigated to an acceptable level and would therefore not be significant.

5.2 NATURA IMPACT REPORT

A *Natura Impact Report* of the *Draft Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021*, has been carried out in accordance with the methodological guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the *Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, as published by the European Commission.

The Report finds that it can be objectively concluded that there are not likely to be significant effects on the network of *Natura 2000* sites as a result of the *Draft County Development Plan, as amended*. The Plan has been formulated to ensure that uses, developments and effects arising from developments, based upon the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any *Natura 2000* site.

Therefore, in accordance with the Methodological guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the *Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, it is concluded that the *Draft County Development Plan 2015 – 2021* does not require any further assessment, to demonstrate compliance with the Directive.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment/Appropriate Assessment (SEA/AA) Determination was carried out in respect to the Material Alterations to the Draft Plan in accordance with legislative requirements.





Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council

