



## Section 1: Strategic Context

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Overview of Enniscrone Town

## 1. Strategic Context

### 1.1 Background and Purpose of the plan

The development plan process, especially on a county level, can only by its very nature provide a 'broad-brush' approach to the development of an area. The purpose of this Local Area Plan is therefore to provide a greater level of detail as to the desired manner and pattern of growth for the Enniscrone area. It is the primary objective of this local area plan to ensure the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, and as such it must be consistent with the objectives of the current County Development Plan.

This plan provides a detailed framework for the future sustainable development of Enniscrone having regard to social, economic and environmental requirements, as well as the associated infrastructural needs, of those living, working and visiting the area. Particular regard is had for natural landscape features, archaeological/historical features of interest, open space needs (active and passive), and existing topography. The plan will guide and regulate development through land use zoning measures, planning policies and development objectives (see section 4). Appendix A contains the Strategic Environmental Assessment prepared in accordance with Section 19(4)(a) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*.

#### 1.1.1 The Legal Framework

The *Enniscrone Local Area Plan* is prepared in accordance with sections 18, 19 and 20 of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* and the *Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002*, which sets out provisions for the preparation of 'Local Area Plans'. The Plan will be in effect for a period of six years following its adoption. However, the relevant planning authority may at any time amend or revoke a local area plan.

#### 1.1.2 Vision Statement

The aim/vision of this Local Area Plan is to bring a cohesive and rational structure to the development of Enniscrone. The main objectives of this plan will focus on improving the residential land supply, commercial fabric and tourism product of the town. This shall be carried out in a sustainable manner by improving existing amenities and open space areas, protecting the natural environment (in particular designations by DoEHLG), as well as ensuring an improved supply of the necessary physical and social infrastructure (such as water, sewerage network, road links, community facilities) to enable future development.

In order to promote quality development patterns in the study area specific guidelines on key development projects and an urban design framework is included. This addresses issues such as street layout, design and landscaping.

#### 1.1.3 Location and Study Area

Enniscrone is located along the west coast of County Sligo, bounded by Killala Bay and the Atlantic Ocean on its western front. The town lies approximately 43 miles (69km) west of Sligo City and the nearest centre of significant population is Ballina, which is located 8.5 miles (14.3km) south west. The R297 forms the main road through Enniscrone, connecting to the N59 6km from the centre of the town, providing the link to both Ballina and Sligo City. Located approximately 50km from Enniscrone is Sligo Regional Airport.



Coastal view of Enniscrone

The study area is illustrated on Map 1. In determining the development boundary, the current linear form of development and the desire for a more compact urban form was considered. Emphasis has been placed on the sustainable policy of locating new development in existing towns and villages where the basic social and infrastructural services are available and where such services may be expanded or provided easily. The study area includes undeveloped land around the town, which is intended to form part of the overall development strategy within the timeframe of this plan, i.e. 6 years. The entire area lies within the administrative jurisdiction of Sligo County Council and incorporates the townlands of Carrowhubbuck South, Carrowhubbuck North, Frankford, Trotts, Bartragh and Muckduff.

## **1.2 Relevant Policies and Guidance**

In developing a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Enniscrone, account needs to be taken of existing documents which influence the area, such as the *Sligo County Development Plan 1999-2004*, *Sligo County Council/Borough Council Housing Strategy 2001-2007*, *County Sligo Integrated Strategy 2002-2012*, the *Pilot Tax Relief Seaside Resort Scheme*, and national policy embodied in the *National Spatial Strategy* and the *National Development Plan*.

### **1.2.1 Sligo County Development Plan**

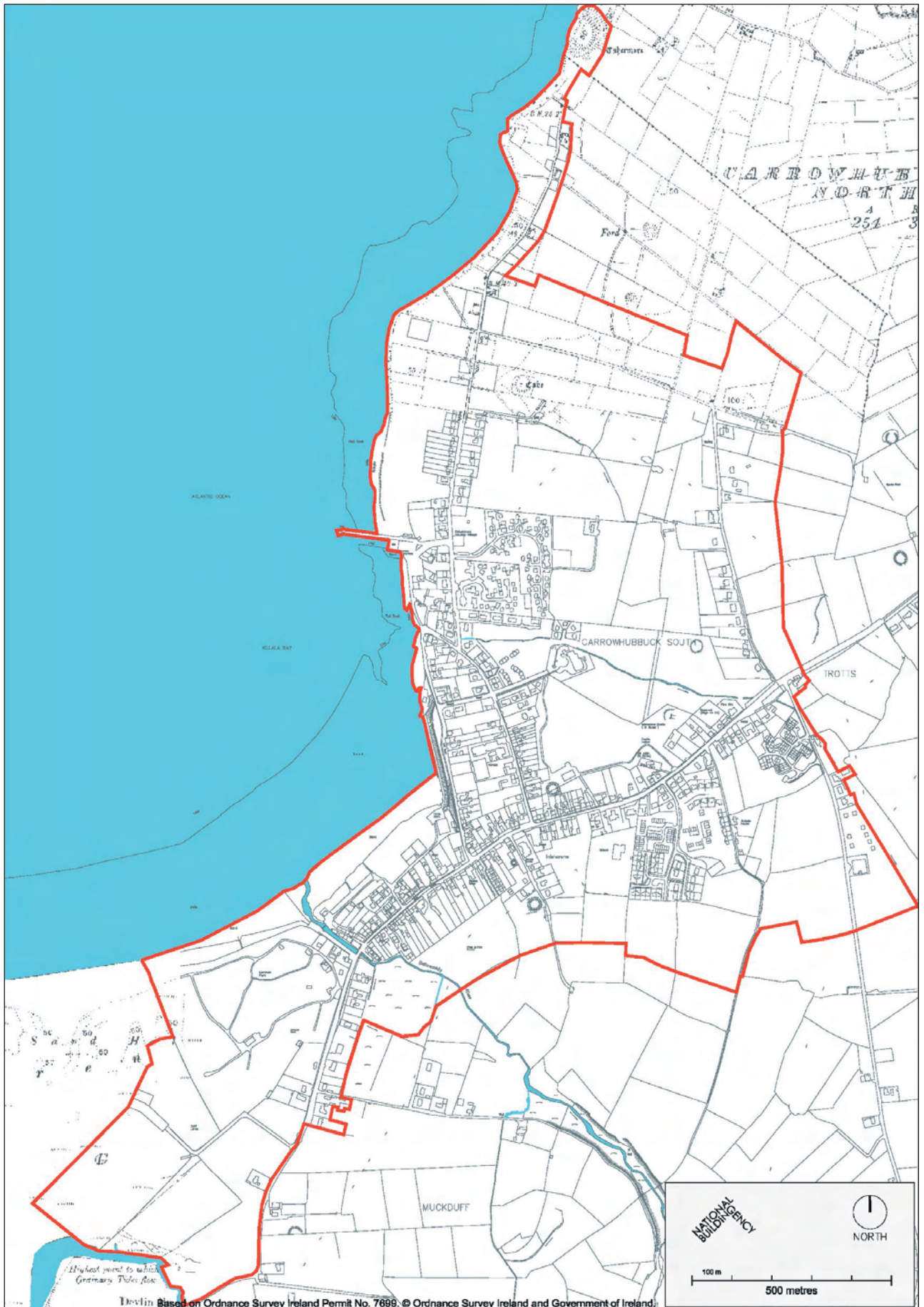
The *County Development Plan* encourages new development to locate in existing towns and villages. This policy is aimed at strengthening existing centres in order to encourage increased retailing and employment opportunities, to provide an increased range of social and recreational facilities, and to protect rural areas, especially those designated 'Sensitive Rural Landscapes' and 'Scenic Routes'. Such a settlement strategy can enable people to live in close proximity to where they work, to avail of adequate social and physical infrastructural services, and overall will ensure that this coastal community is sustainably developed.

The *County Development Plan* encourages small indigenous industry in providing local employment and in helping to stimulate economic activity among local communities. In terms of social infrastructure, the County Council will work with the local community to support the provision of community centres, crèches, playing fields and other such facilities where necessary.

The western coastline is a major resource, which acts as a significant tourist attraction. The protection of the unspoiled beauty of the whole coastline is of importance in ensuring that its recreational and tourism potential can be sustainably developed. Appropriate access, public facilities and parking will be facilitated in scenic areas where this is feasible and not detrimental to the landscape. The visual appearance of towns and villages can be improved through the continuance of environmental schemes, design control guidelines and the removal of dereliction.

The County Plan also places strong emphasis on safeguarding the traditional visual character of the County, strengthening the local identity and vernacular architecture, retaining hedgerows and local stonewalling. In particular, the regional route R297 from Castleconor to Dromore West is identified in the *County Development Plan* as being a scenic route, views from which are to be preserved. Therefore development along this section of road is to be restricted in accordance with this objective.

Map 1: Study Area



### **1.2.2 Sligo County Council/Sligo Borough Council Housing Strategy 2001-2007**

The housing strategy was developed under Part V of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* and sets out the current and future housing requirements, in particular for social and affordable housing.

The housing programme aims to direct the provision of residential developments into various towns and villages. Sustainability is a focus, with the approach of consolidating existing settlement forms, reducing the need to travel and encouraging a form of residential development that reduces sprawl. Enniscrone is identified as a settlement (alongside 7 others) in need of a zoning plan, which can accommodate the need for additional housing.

Eight hectares of land for residential use have been proposed for zoning as part of the *Sligo County Council/Sligo Borough Council Housing Strategy, 2001-2007*, for the spatial distribution of future new housing. It is projected accordingly in the plan that 156 new houses could be developed within this urban settlement between 2001-2007, with the 20% social/affordable housing standard applied. In practice, more than this amount of land would be zoned for residential purposes to make provision for land that may not, or can not, be developed. It also provides choice and variety for location. The 20% breakdown may be weighted towards affordable housing, reflecting the needs of the local population.

### **1.2.3 County Sligo Integrated Strategy 2002-2012, by the County Development Board**

The Sligo County Development Board (CDB) was established in 2000, to develop an *Integrated Strategy for the Economic, Social and Cultural Development of the County from 2002 to 2012*. The CDB was established in order to develop a framework for the planning of public policy at County level. Bringing together key players at local level to determine a 10 year integrated strategy. Consultation was carried out involving representatives of local government, local development interests, state agencies, the community and voluntary sector, social partners and the general public. The primary goal of this strategy is “to achieve balanced spatial development, social inclusion, and the enhancement of our living culture”.

Some of the key findings of the CDB, which are relevant to Enniscrone, are listed below:

- Develop the necessary infrastructure to link Sligo regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Create vibrant and viable rural communities by sustaining the contributions of agriculture to the economic, social and cultural life of County Sligo and maximising the potential of rural tourism as an alternative source of income.
- Develop and sustain rural services.
- Continue to develop accessible and affordable sporting and recreational opportunities.
- Optimise tourism development by maximising the local value of visitors to rural areas, clustering smaller attractions, overcoming transport, accommodation and marketing constraints and catering for the skill requirements of the industry.
- Ensure all developments take place in an economic and environmentally sustainable manner.



Holiday Homes, Enniscrone

#### 1.2.4 Pilot Tax Relief Seaside Resort Scheme

Under the 1995 Finance Act, tax incentives were applied to a number of seaside resort towns in order to encourage their regeneration; Enniscrone was identified as one such town. The main effect of this scheme was the extensive development of tourism accommodation in the form of self-catering holiday homes. This has shaped the face of development within Enniscrone, leading to a focus on the development of one type of tourism accommodation, with an underdevelopment of other tourism resources. As the tax reliefs on this type of development have now reached their conclusion, this may have a knock-on effect on the housing market in Enniscrone, with the possibility of some of these holiday home developments coming onto the open market for sale as private homes. This factor will be taken into account when considering the housing needs of Enniscrone and also in the consideration of the future needs of the tourism industry.

#### 1.2.5 National Policy

The National Spatial Strategy is a 20-year strategy to guide and achieve balanced social, economic and physical development between regions. Such a strategy will allow all areas in the country to develop to their full potential. With this aim in mind, Sligo City has been designated a Gateway City and Ballina is now referred to as a hub. These designated urban centres have an influence on Enniscrone, in terms of its social and economic development. The strategy recognises the interdependence of urban and rural areas and the role, which rural areas play within the spatial network in terms of flows of people and services. As such, Enniscrone due to its location and environmental quality should be developed as part of the network of urban and rural centres in this region, with particular regard to the strengthening of this coastal town in terms of its physical development, economic development and protection of the natural environment and landscape.

In relation to strengthening rural areas, in particular villages and towns, the NSS has categorised different types of rural areas. Enniscrone fits mainly into the category entitled 'Areas that are Changing', where there is a recognition of the changing rural environment due to population change and agricultural decline. This area should be consolidated through spatially targeted and integrated measures. Other categories also relate to Enniscrone, such as the category 'Areas that are Culturally Distinct'. There is a recognised need to enhance accessibility, strengthen existing developments and conserve cultural identity.

The Enniscrone Local Area Plan must comply with the principles of development espoused at national level through the NSS. The Planning and Development Act, 2000 specifically requires planning authorities to have regard to ministerial guidelines from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and hence the following national policy documents have also been regarded:

- Sustainable Development, A Strategy for Ireland, 1997
- National Development Plan 2000-2006
- The White Paper on Rural Development, 1999
- The Rural Transport Initiative, 2001
- National Anti-Poverty Strategy, 1997-2007
- National Children's Strategy, 2000
- Coastal Zone Management - A Draft Policy for Ireland, 1997
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities:
  - Childcare Facilities (2001)

Housing Supply (2000)

Residential Density (1999)

Retail Planning (2000)

Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures (1996)