

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Study Area

The Local Area Plan comprises a total area of approximately 219 hectares lying immediately north of the Garvoge River between Sligo City to the west and Lough Gill to the east. The masterplan encompasses the townlands of Ballinode and Hazelwood Demesne, including small areas of Rathquarter and Farranacardy.

Figure 1 shows the study area in the context of the town and environs, while the delineation of the study area is shown in Figure 2. It is bound by the Garvoge River to the south, Molloway Hill to the west and the Calry Road to the north. The eastern boundary of the masterplan is a laneway and associated woodland belt in Hazelwood.

The area lies within the administrative jurisdiction of both Sligo Borough Council and Sligo County Council.



1. Aerial view of the centre of the masterplan with the cSAC woodland in the foreground.

## 1.2 Background and Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this masterplan is to provide a development and urban design framework for the future development of the area. In essence, its role is to coordinate development of lands within separate ownership in an area that is considered by Sligo Borough Council and Sligo County Council to be of considerable amenity value.

The Development Plan process, by its very nature can only provide a 'broad-brush' approach to the development of an area through zoning and development objectives. The purpose of this document is to provide a greater level of detail as to the development of the area.

This Local Area Plan (LAP) is founded on a Draft document prepared in 2001. However, that draft document was seen as premature as the context for the area's development had not been properly established in the Sligo and Environs Development Plan, which only formally came into effect in January, 2004. This revised document integrates the LAP into the Development Plan framework.

It is the primary aim of this masterplan to provide a detailed framework for the future development of this extensive area having regard to topography, environmental character, landownership patterns, archaeology, existing development patterns in the area, future land uses, access and circulation, open space needs, the need for neighbourhood centres and social infrastructural considerations.

In particular the masterplan addresses the following issues:

- The need for rezoning of land.
- The provision of infrastructural services - ESB, Telecom, and C.M.I.
- Sites of Archaeological importance/potential.
- Public transport plans.
- Realignment of Calry Road and any other road proposals for the area.
- Social Infrastructure - social facilities around the area in terms of schools, churches, local shopping facilities, the need for recreation facilities, etc.
- The provision of a variety of house types and tenures to cater for the growing needs of the Sligo and Environs.

2. Aerial photo of study area—January 2000  
(Ordnance Survey of Ireland).



In order to promote quality development patterns in the study area, urban design guidelines are also included. These address issues such as residential/street layout and design, residential densities, landscaping, and specific guidelines on key architectural buildings.

Careful consideration will also be given to the extensive designation of the candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) that lies in the southern portion of the site and is proposed by the National Parks and Wildlife division of the Department of the Environment and Local Government.

### **1.3 Executive Summary**

The vision is to create a model high quality urban extension to Sligo Town, with a variety of uses and services set in a high quality landscape setting, that will enable the area to be developed into a new quarter or district, the focus of which is the development of two new neighbourhood centres with land in their immediate vicinity developed as an 'urban village'.

The principle of sustainability is a central theme throughout the document. The masterplan assessed the landscape character and quality of the area, identifying features such as woodlands, wetlands, streams, important habitats/ecosystems and areas of higher topography (these have been referred to as environmental parameters - see section 4). The plan also examined other features of interest, such as man-made features and in particular sites of archaeological interest (section 5). These features were mapped for protection and incorporation into the future development framework. These were generally integrated into an open space network which established links and connections between open space of different and varying types (including active and passive; formal and informal). Thus, the framework for a sustainable urban structure was established.

An alluvial woodland extends along the southern areas of the masterplan. This has been identified by the Department of the Environment and Local Government as a proposed Special Area of Conservation given its distinct hydrological nature and associated flora. This area will be protected and a buffer area of open space provided between it and future development areas. Within it, stormwater retention facilities and reconstructed wetlands will be provided so as to maintain the distinct hydrology of the area and protect this important habitat.

Having identified the most important landscape areas to be protected, the masterplan proposes two neighbourhood centres serving the surrounding residential developments. The location of the neighbourhood centres has been carefully chosen having regard to the need to serve the greatest number of people within 500 metres or a reasonable walking distance. Higher densities are identified for those areas in relative proximity to the neighbourhood centres. In order to provide a balance and mix of house types and sizes in the overall masterplan, some of the areas peripheral to the neighbourhood centres - in areas adjacent to landscape components of high amenity value - have been selected for lower residential densities. Densities have been expressed in ranges and the area has the potential to serve a future population of between 4,000 and 7,200 persons.

The provision of the neighbourhood centres - providing a range of local retail services and community facilities - should reduce the need to travel by car and promote a sustainable urban structure. This is further enhanced by the provision of a series of pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the masterplan along the most direct routes and anticipated

'desire lines.' These provide direct routes of connection between neighbourhood centres and for example, the town centre and in some cases these are segregated from vehicular traffic routes in the interests of safety and amenity. Additional walkways and trails have been established along the natural woodland areas that exist throughout the study area and these provide circuits for walkers and strollers. There are also proposals to provide walks through the woods to provide waterside viewing points.

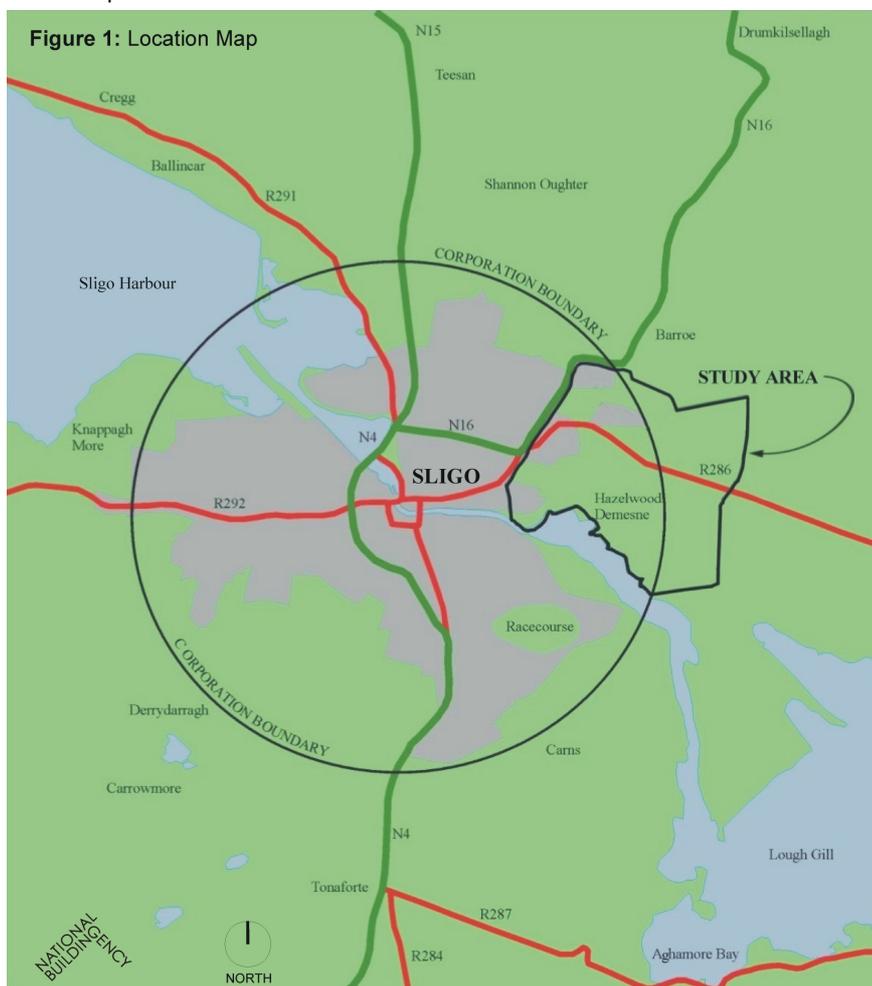
The road system has also been organised in such a manner so as to enable the development of an extended bus public transport system in the future.

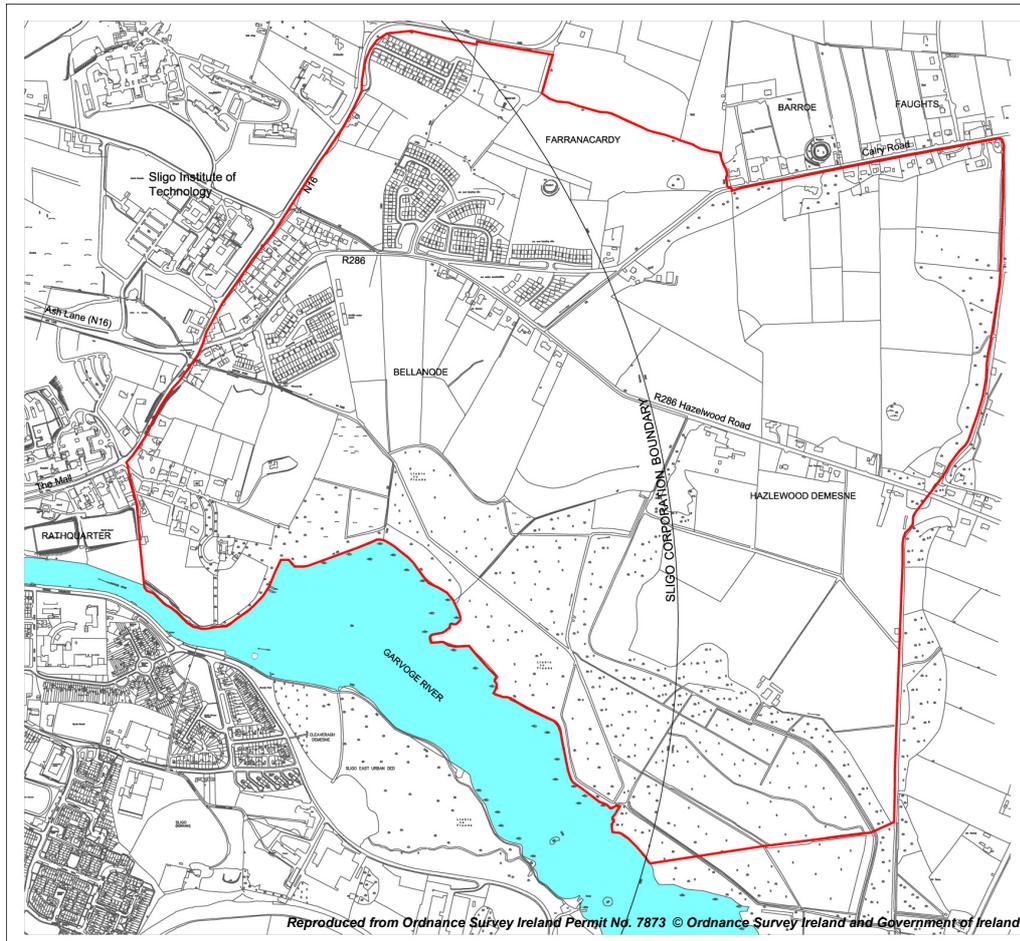
The masterplan has been developed along the principles of sustainability to provide for mix of residential development types, local retail developments, the provision of community facilities and services, education, and opportunities for employment and economic development. These have been organised within a highly integrated open space network to serve the area's future residents, employees and visitors.

### 1.4 The Legal Framework

The masterplan is prepared in accordance with Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, and Sections 8 and 9 of 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 implementation of the masterplan's is likely to be carried out over a period of ten years or more and therefore the Planning Authority may at any time amend or revoke this local area plan.

Figure 1 Study Area Context Map showing the relationship between the site of the masterplan and Sligo Town and Environs.



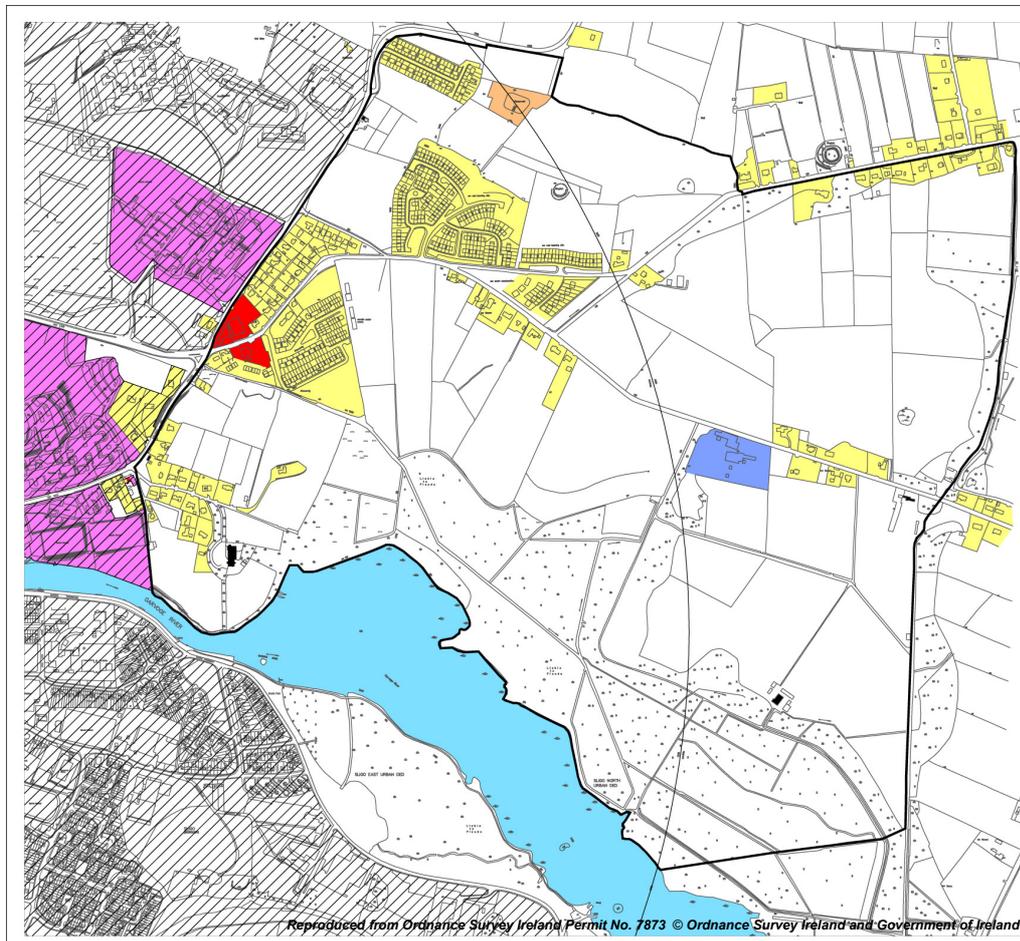


**Hazelwood - Ballinode  
Local Area Plan 2004**

**Figure 2:**  
Study Area

— Study Area

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**Hazelwood - Ballinode  
Local Area Plan 2004**

**Figure 3:**  
Existing Land Use

- Residential
- Commercial
- Public/Institutional
- Public Utility
- Industrial
- Vacant
- Adjoining Built Environment
- Agricultural / Natural Environment

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