

Chapter 5. Spatial strategy

Urban sustainability, based on the principle of allowing present generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs, can be achieved through a range of means, connecting the economy, society and the environment.

In spatial planning terms, the pursuit of sustainability can be undertaken through the development of a growth framework for the city that offers opportunities for increased energy savings and reduces the need to travel while avoiding or minimising damage to the environment.

The concept of sustainability underpins the spatial strategy for Sligo City, which seeks to integrate land use and transport by co-locating trip-generating activities and promoting the establishment of mixed-use areas to accommodate complementary activities.

Translating the vision for Sligo and reflecting the selected growth model, the spatial strategy builds on the existing land use, promoting urban consolidation through densification, infill development and the redevelopment of underutilised or brownfield sites.

In physical terms, the spatial strategy is based on a “hard” frame – the transport corridors – and a “soft” axis – the Garavogue River, from Lough Gill to Sligo Bay. The strategy is also designed to avoid or minimise damage to sensitive areas and landscapes.

The spatial approach to developing the Gateway seeks to optimise the use of available land and existing/planned infrastructure, while supporting the creation of new economic and recreational opportunities in a spatially coherent manner.

5.1 Integration of land use and transport

The location and nature of land use is a key factor in determining the Gateway’s transport needs, while transport systems can both facilitate and reinforce development patterns and provide for high-quality, liveable places. Together, land use and transport are “city shaping”.

The aim of integrating land use and transport is to ensure that urban structures, building forms, land use locations, development designs and street layouts contribute to:

- improving access to housing, jobs and services by walking, cycling and public transport;
- increasing the choice of available transport and reducing reliance on private cars;
- reducing travel demand including the number of trips generated by development and the distances travelled, especially by car;
- supporting the efficient and viable operation of public transport services;
- providing for the efficient movement of goods.

Table 5.A Existing land use in the SEDP area (summer 2008)

Existing land use	Area in use (ha)
residential uses	441.78
residential uses (multi-household)	8.20
commercial uses	39.10
office/professional uses	9.73
multiple uses	3.63
industrial uses	72.19
public/institutional uses	118.16
public services, utilities and/or facilities	15.24
retail warehousing	8.75
warehousing	4.84
open space	134.81
brownfield / under construction	59.03
car-parks	16.54
vacant lands	44.42
agricultural buildings and yards	20.41
quarry and related activities	33.24
lands in agricultural use	895.27

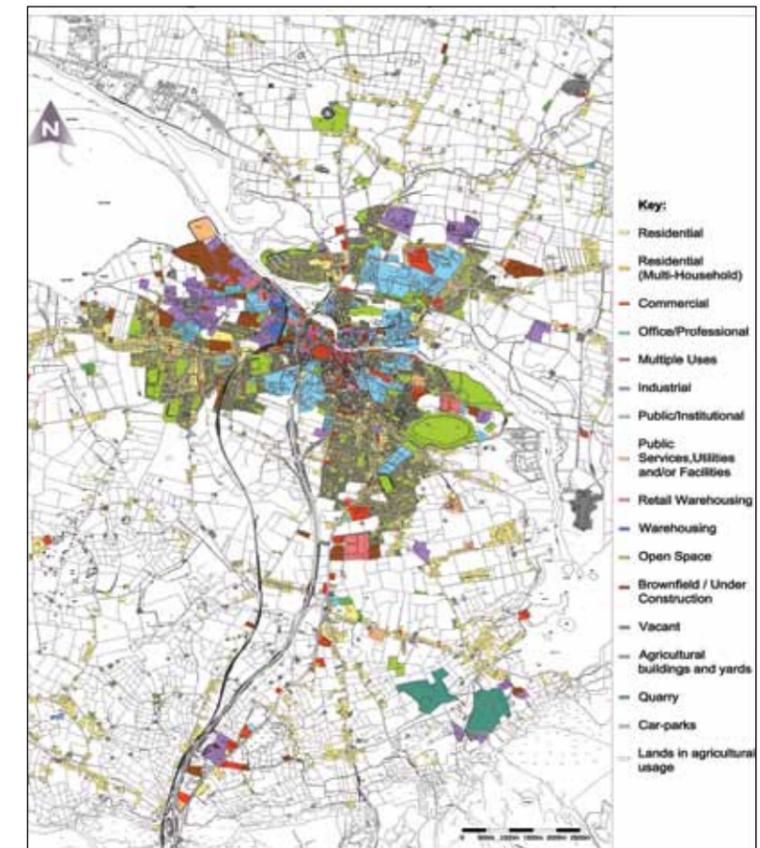


Fig. 5.B Existing land use (summer 2008)

5.1.1 Existing land use

The existing land use map (Fig. 5.B) shows that the city has developed predominantly towards the west (along Strandhill Road) and to the south (towards Carrowroe). Significant development opportunities remain in the south-western quarter (Caltragh-Carrowroe), the eastern area (Hazelwood-Ballinode) and the northern fringe (Teesan-Lisnalgur).

New, realigned and upgraded roads and bridges are planned to facilitate the development of these areas and the compact growth of the city from the centre outwards.

5.1.2 Transport corridors, existing and planned

North-South – Sligo’s main traffic artery is the N15 national primary road /N4 Inner Relief Road, running through the city in a north-south direction. These two national roads together with the N16 (Enniskillen Road) are the city’s main connections with other large urban centres.

This “hard” axis provides the opportunity to develop a corridor of high-intensity mixed uses or an *Economic Spine* that would eventually extend from Carrowroe in the south to Lisnalgur in the north.

A warehousing, industry, transport and logistics spine is already developing along the old N4, between Carrowroe and Belladrihid.

East-West – A secondary traffic axis runs east-west, from Calry, Hazelwood and Ballinode through the city centre and on to Strandhill Road. The regional roads R292 and R286 link urban residential quarters with the city centre, while also facilitating access from dormitory settlements such as Strandhill or Dromahair (in Co. Leitrim).

Western Distributor Road – The Western Distributor Road is intended to provide direct access from Carrowroe/Caltragh to the west of the city and facilitate the development of greenfield lands in the south-western quadrant of Sligo and Environs.

Eastern Distributor Route – The planned Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads Scheme will provide a north-south link in the city, connecting communities on each side of the river with major facilities on the other side (e.g. direct access from Ballinode to Cleveragh Regional Park, direct access from Cranmore to the General Hospital and Institute of Technology).

Bypass of the City – this longer-term project will carry through-traffic, including traffic with destinations to the north and south of the city, leaving the rest of the transport network to cater for local circulation.

5.2 Future City form

5.2.1 City structure

The envisaged city structure responds to current and anticipated needs while reinforcing the historic urban shape and acknowledging more recent development. The city centre and its commercial function will be strengthened by extended pedestrianisation and traffic management measures that will ensure adequate parking provision and a reduction in vehicular traffic. The proposed city structure also makes provision for a variety of new residential and recreational areas.

Centre

The city centre's role as a hub of commercial activity must be retained and consolidated especially by encouraging a diverse mix of uses, particularly of the retail and leisure type, complemented by residential and office uses. The centre's public realm quality will be substantially enhanced by pedestrianisation and enhancement/redesign of selected streets and squares.

Inner ring

A traffic-managed "inner ring" will keep through-traffic out of the shopping, recreational and cultural core, with multi-storey parking structures located at key points. This inner orbital traffic route should facilitate direct vehicular links from shopping and cultural facilities to local distributor routes, regional roads and the transit "backbone", the Inner Relief Road.

Main transport axis

The Inner Relief Road will continue to be the main artery for north-south traffic until such time as a City Bypass is constructed. There is an ongoing need to continue to increase the capacity of the junctions along this road, so as to improve linkages into the city centre and reduce congestion and delays, including those related to west-to-east traffic. The next challenge will be to transform this busy road into an urban boulevard by softening its edges and connecting the town core with the Docklands area via pedestrian-friendly crossings and footbridges.

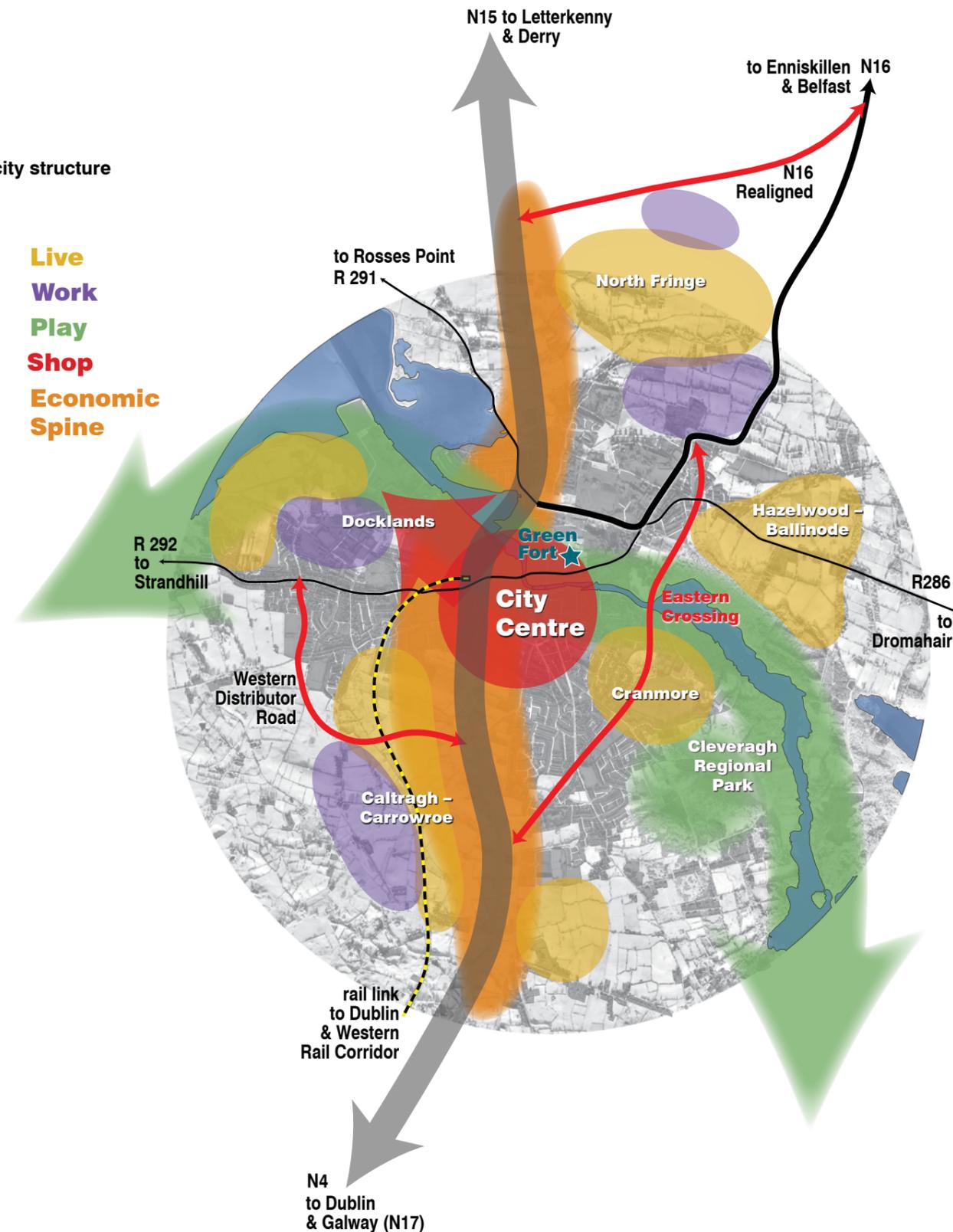
Lough Gill–Garavogue–Sligo Bay — the "soft" axis

The city centre, lying east of the intersection of the north-south and east-west axes, is crossed by the Garavogue River, which brings a picturesque quality and a sensitive ecosystem right into the heart of Sligo. The river originates in Lough Gill, whose banks, east of the city centre, are almost continuously covered by forests – Hazelwood and Cleveragh Wood.

To the west, hundreds of years of filling on the south side of the Garavogue estuary have led to the creation of an industrial/shipping waterfront, currently poorly utilised and semi-derelict.

The Garavogue offers the unique chance of creating a "soft" axis for the city – a walkable/cyclable natural amenity corridor with direct links to residential neighbourhoods, city-centre car-free areas, existing and future cultural and recreational facilities.

Fig. 5.C Future city structure



Cleveragh Regional Park will be the most important component of the green recreational infrastructure envisioned in the SEDP.

It will also strengthen the spinal role of the Garavogue River, facilitating walking and cycling on quasi-continuous routes from Lough Gill through the city core to the Docklands and on to the shores of Sligo Bay.

New residential areas

An essential goal of this Plan is to promote the compact growth of the city. It is envisaged that new housing schemes will be built primarily on brownfield lands and in the existing greenfield "gaps" within the development limit.

- **Cranmore:** It is intended to undertake the regeneration of Cranmore within the context of a local area plan for the Cranmore-Cleveragh area.
- **Ballinode:** Substantial private and public residential development is already planned for Ballinode, in accordance with the existing Hazelwood-Ballinode Local Area Plan.
- **North Fringe:** Up to 3,200 new residents can be accommodated in the Teesan-Lisnalurg area, as detailed in the North Fringe Local Area Plan (prepared as part of this Development Plan).
- **Docklands:** The Docklands area will also be the subject of a local area plan, to be prepared following the adoption of this Development Plan.
- **Caltragh-Carrowroe:** The Caltragh-Carrowroe area – the last major gap inside the SEDP development limit – will also be developed in the longer term, in accordance with the provisions of a local area plan, to be prepared at a later date.

Economic spine and business parks

The north-south economic spine running parallel to the Inner Relief Road should ideally be developed gradually from the centre outwards, and should be co-ordinated with the construction of the Western Distributor Road.

More specialised business or industrial activities will be able to locate in the planned business parks at Oakfield and Lisnalurg, in addition to the existing Finisklin business park.

Warehousing, industry, transport and logistics-related uses will continue to be accommodated in the dedicated area between Carrowroe and Belladrihid.

Green/recreational network

The provision of an amenity corridor from the shores of Lough Gill to the Garavogue estuary and Sligo Bay would encourage walking, cycling and would promote the use of other planned recreational facilities by residents of both north and south city areas.

The waterside recreational corridor will be complemented by a network of cycle and pedestrian ways linking residential areas with the city centre, public squares, employment areas, pocket parks, playing fields and the natural environment beyond the city boundaries.

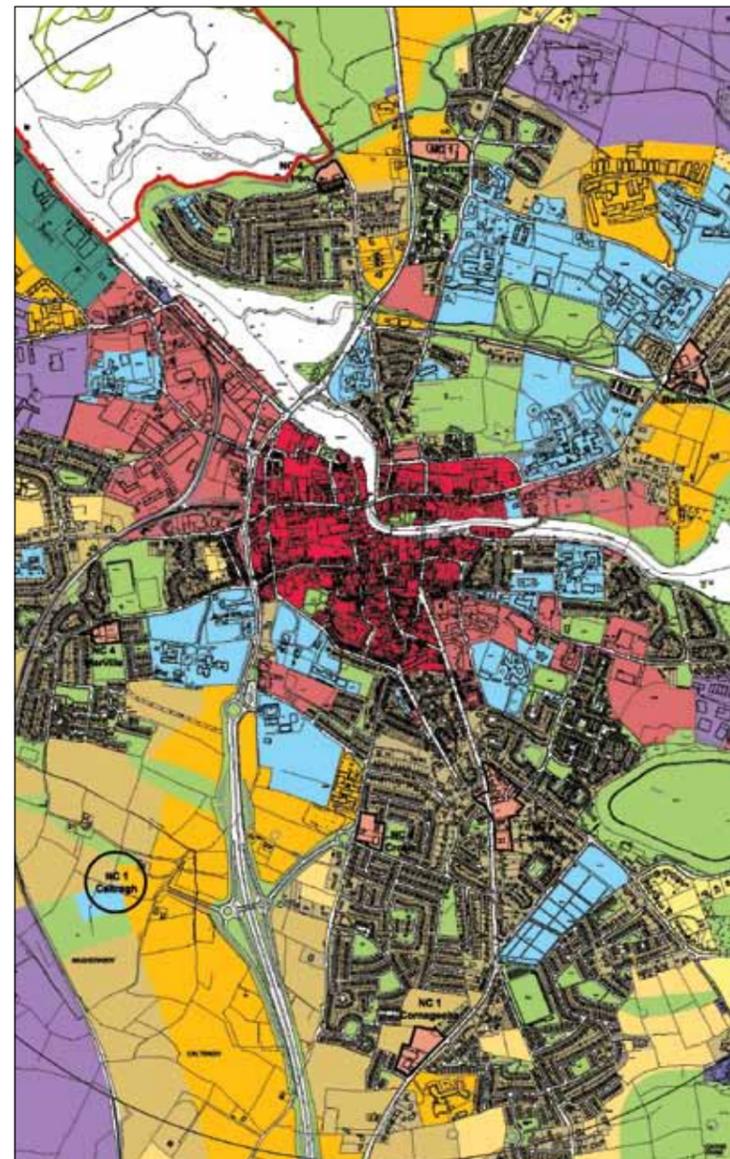
5.2.2 Zoning principles

The purpose of land use zoning is to indicate the intended uses of all lands within the SEDP limit – in accordance with the spatial strategy, the envisaged city structure and the policies and objectives of the Plan – and to prevent the co-location of incompatible or conflicting uses.

The overall approach to zoning is based on a set of strategic policies outlined below.

Any rezoning proposal that might be considered during the lifetime of this Development Plan should be assessed against the Strategic Zoning Policies and the principle of sequential development (see box 5.E).

Fig. 5.D Zoning detail - City Centre and Inner City



Strategic Zoning Policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- SP-Z-1** Promote the growth of a compact Gateway City with a strong commercial/retail core and economic base.
- SP-Z-2** Ensure that sufficient land is available for a wide range of uses at appropriate locations in order to achieve the balanced development of the city in the long-term.
- SP-Z-3** Facilitate mixes of uses appropriate for each area with a view to reducing the need to travel between home, work and local facilities.
- SP-Z-4** Encourage the redevelopment of underutilised and brownfield lands especially in the inner city area, thus increasing the efficient use of essential infrastructure.
- SP-Z-5** Protect designated nature conservation sites, landscape, archaeology, valuable natural amenity areas, water and natural resources, while allowing for the possible further expansion of the city in the long-term.
- SP-Z-6** Safeguard and improve existing amenities.
- SP-Z-7** Make adequate land reservations for the development of future infrastructural projects.

Box 5.E Principle of sequential development

In order to maximise the utility of existing and future infrastructure provision and to promote the achievement of sustainability, a logical sequential approach should be taken to the zoning of land for development:

- i. Zoning should extend outwards from the centre of the urban area, with undeveloped lands closest to the core and public transport routes being given preference (i.e. "leapfrogging" to more remote areas should be avoided);
- ii. A strong emphasis should be placed on encouraging infill opportunities and better use of under-utilised lands;
- iii. Areas to be zoned should be contiguous to existing zoned development lands.

Only in exceptional circumstances should the above principles be contravened, for example, where a barrier to development is involved, such as a lake. Any exceptions must be clearly justified by local circumstances and such justification must be set out in the written statement of the development plan.

Rezoning proposals should be based on a proven need, on the capacity of environmental, transport and social infrastructure, and should avoid any interference with the integrity of designated heritage sites, archaeological monuments/sites and sensitive landscapes.

5.2.3 Zoning objectives

A total of 24 zoning categories are proposed in this Draft Plan.

Each category is linked to a zoning objective supported by policies, objectives and development management standards set out in Chapters 6 to 15 of the Draft Plan.

The zoning objectives shown on the Zoning Map and listed in the Zoning Matrix are detailed below.

C1 – city centre uses

Objective: Protect and upgrade the retail function, supported by a range of complementary functions, within the city’s commercial/retail core and encourage the establishment of commercial/retail activities in the areas reserved for the centre’s expansion.

C2 – commercial and mixed land uses

Objective: Promote the development of a mix of uses centred on retail, office space, high-density housing, high-amenity open space and compatible uses.

MIX-1 – mixed uses (non-retail)

Objective: Promote the development of a dynamic mix of uses able to create and sustain vibrant residential and employment areas.

Commercial (non-retail), residential, leisure, employment/enterprise uses are encouraged by this zoning.

MIX-2 – mixed uses (optional retail warehousing)

Objective: Encourage mixed-use development emphasising employment/enterprise, residential, leisure and commercial uses, with retail warehousing open for consideration.

RE – existing residential areas

Objective: Protect and enhance existing residential amenity.

The introduction of compatible/ancillary uses, redevelopment and regeneration may be considered in these areas, as long as the dominant use remains residential.

Increases in density may be considered in the case of redevelopment (depending on the site context) and regeneration of existing residential areas.

R1 – low-density residential areas

Objective: Promote the development of housing within a gross density range varying between 3 and 19 dwellings per hectare (1 to 7 dwellings per acre).

R1 zones, which are located on the fringes of the urban area, are intended to provide an alternative to single houses in the countryside and thus decrease the pressure of urban-generated housing on rural areas.

R2 – low/medium-density residential areas

Objective: Promote the development of housing within a gross density range varying between 20 and 34 dwellings per hectare (8 to 13 dwellings per acre).

In R2 zones, blanket construction of three- and four-bedroom houses will be discouraged.

All new residential development will have to recognise and reflect the changing demographic structure in the house type and design, site layout and the additional facilities proposed.

While housing is the primary use in these zones, recreational structures, crèches/playschools, educational facilities, community buildings, sheltered housing and corner shops will also be considered.

R3 – medium/high-density residential areas

Objective: Promote the development of housing within a gross density range varying between 35 and 50+ dwellings per hectare (14 to 18+ dwellings per acre).

R3 zones are of particular importance, being generally located close to the city centre, employment sources, transport corridors and neighbourhood centres.

Innovative layout and design will be required in R3 zones, with high-quality landscaping and pedestrian/cycle connections with the surrounding areas.

NC – neighbourhood centres

Objective: Require the provision of a mix of retail, office, community and recreational uses while limiting the residential element, in order to serve the immediate needs of people living and working in the surrounding areas.

CF – community facilities

Objective: Protect existing facilities or retain existing uses and provide for the establishment of new/additional community and institutional uses, such as schools, community centres etc.

Cemeteries, church yards, allotments and other similar uses will be accommodated on lands zoned for community facilities.

RP – retail park

Objective: Facilitate the provision of dedicated retail areas where warehouse-type units are generally restricted to the sale of bulky household goods, including carpets, furniture, automotive products, white electrical goods, DIY items, garden materials, bulky office equipment, industrial plant and equipment.

BITP – business, industry and technology park

Objective: Promote the development of office-based businesses, technology companies and industrial units in dedicated business-industrial parks at Finisklin, Oakfield, Rathbraghan/Ballytivnan and Doonally (North Fringe).

WILT – waste management, industry, logistics, transport-related uses

Objective: Encourage the consolidation of activities such as waste management, light industry, logistics/transport in a designated area, conveniently located and easily accessible at Belladrihid/Carrowgobbadagh.

Non-conforming uses of similar nature currently operating in other areas of the City are also encouraged to relocate to this area.

PF – port facilities and related uses

Objective: Retain the port as a viable infrastructural and commercial entity, supported by port-related industries and/or business activities.

OS-PUB – public open space

Objective: Ensure adequate provision and maintenance of public open space, to be developed and used for parks and playgrounds. Green areas associated with housing development become public open spaces only after they are taken in charge by the relevant local authority.

OS-PRI – private open space

Objective: Require the retention and maintenance of private green areas that have traditionally been open for public enjoyment, i.e. parks and gardens located on existing or former institutional lands (e.g. former St Columba’s Hospital, currently the Clarion Hotel).

OS-SPO – sports and playing fields

Objective: Support the development of designated areas to be used primarily as playing fields, tennis courts, golf courses, bowling greens etc.

These facilities can be provided either by the local authorities or by other organisations such as sports clubs and associations.

OS-NAT – natural/semi-natural open space

Objective: Require the protection and enhancement of natural/seminatural green areas such as wetlands, forests, water-edge habitats, and ensure that any development that may be permitted in such areas does not damage its surroundings.

OS-COR – green corridors

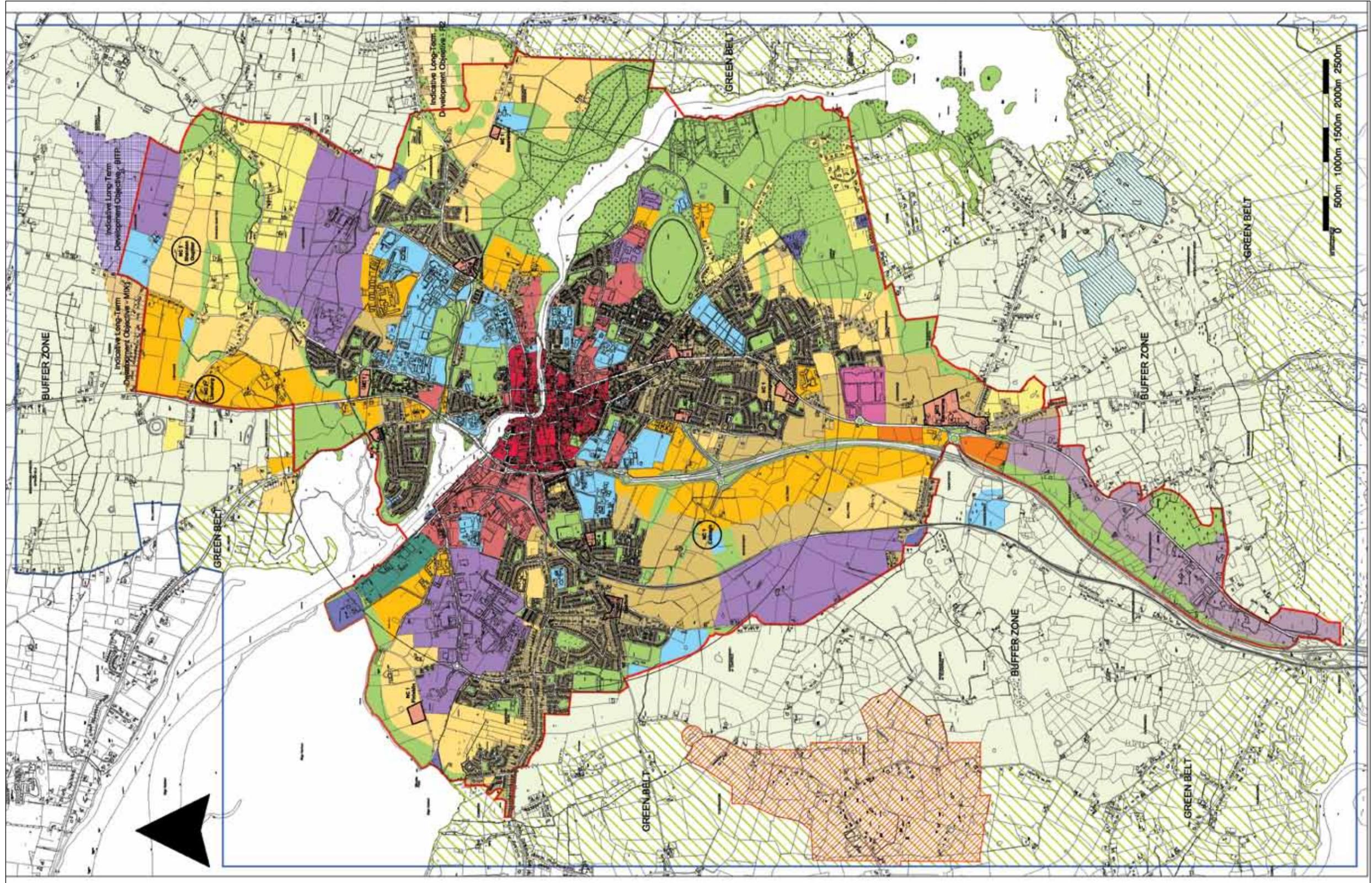
Objective: Reserve sufficient land for the provision of pedestrian and cycle routes that will connect green areas (parks, playing fields, natural/seminatural open space) and urban spaces in a coherent network.

The pedestrian/cycle corridors are to be provided by both local authorities as part of their roads, parks and other projects, as well as by the private sector as part of new commercial and residential development.

NR – mineral resource reservation

Objective: Protect all known unworked mineral deposits from development that might limit their scope for extraction. Within the NR zone, only extraction and associated activities will be permitted.

Fig. 5.F Land use zoning within the SEDP area - refer to the separate **Map 1. Zoning Map** for details



PU – public utilities

Objective: Facilitate the provision and improvement/upgrading of essential services/utilities such as power supply, telecommunications, water supply, wastewater treatment etc.

AA – archaeological amenity zone at Carrowmore

Objective: Protect and conserve the archaeological monuments and their landscape setting at Carrowmore.

It is noted that the archaeological amenity zone is larger than the Zone of Archaeological Protection (ZAP) in the same area.

BUF – buffer zone

Objective: Contain and consolidate the city, while safeguarding land for its future expansion and the provision of strategic infrastructure.

The buffer zone is to be used principally for agriculture. New roads and buildings in the buffer zone should be constructed so as to minimise their visual and environmental impact.

Within the buffer zone, the rural housing policies shall apply, subject to normal planning consideration.

GB - green belt

Objective: Prevent encroachment of development on environmentally-sensitive and visually vulnerable areas.

The rural housing policies shall apply in the green belt, subject to environmental and visual considerations.

5.2.4 Proposed land-use zoning

Generally, the proposed zoning of lands in the new SEDP is consistent with existing zoning under the current Development Plan 2004-2010.

Relatively minor changes have been made, for several reasons:

- to allow the zoning of lands to take account of the routes of new or realigned roads
- to reflect strategy adjustments regarding the provision of housing, schools, neighbourhood centres, open space, mixed-use zones, and retail warehousing;
- to give effect to certain rezoning suggestions received as part of the pre-draft public consultation stage in early 2008

Table 5.G indicates the extent of land allocated to each land-use zoning category.

Table 5.G Zoned land in the SEDP 2010-2016

Proposed land-use zoning	Area zoned (hectares)
Total area within the Plan limit	5,164.15
Area inside the development limit	2,015.71
C1 city centre uses	36.79
C2 commercial and mixed land uses	63.96
MIX-1 mixed uses (non-retail)	175.07*
MIX-2 mixed uses (optional retail warehousing)	8.71
RE existing residential development	277.16
R1 low-density residential development	111.44*
R2 low/medium-density residential development	214.99*
R3 medium/high-density residential development	114.71
NC neighbourhood centres	18.72
CF community facilities	117.73*
RP retail park	12.25
BITP business, industry and technology park	220.16
WILT waste management, industry, logistics, transport	73.64
PF port facilities and related uses	13.31
OS open space	544.29
PU public utilities	12.79

* Areas zoned outside the SEDP development limit:

Mix-1	1.68 ha at Shannon Eighter	CF	6.41 ha at Carrowroe
R2	7.27 ha at Shannon Eighter	R1	2.83 ha at Lisnalurg

5.3 Local Area Plans

5.3.1 Legal framework

Local area plans (LAPs) must be prepared for towns with more than 2000 residents, but may also be prepared for any areas for which such plans are considered suitable by the planning authorities, and in particular “for those areas that require economic, physical and social renewal, and for areas likely to be subject to large-scale development within the lifetime of the development plan” (Planning and Development Act 2000).

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002 requires a local area plan to be consistent with the objectives of the development plan, which is thus the “parent” or superseding document. It is therefore necessary to review local area plans following adoption of a new development plan, to ensure consistency of policies and objectives.

According to the publication *Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG, 2007), development plans should indicate the areas for which local area plans will be prepared, should set out a clear context for their preparation and should give an indication of particular policies or objectives that may need to be included therein.

The *Development Plans Guidelines* also specify the Minister’s intention to issue guidelines in relation to the preparation of local area plans, under section 20, subsection (4) of the 2000 Act.

These guidelines will assist in matters such as determining the circumstances in which it may be appropriate to prepare a local area plan (other than in cases where the preparation of such a plan is mandatory) and will provide guidance on the preparation and content of such plans. Local area plan guidelines had not yet been issued by the time of adopting this Plan (November 2009).

5.3.2 Local Area Plans within the SEDP area

This Development Plan establishes a clear strategic policy framework for the sustainable development of Sligo and Environs, within which more detailed plans – i.e. local area plans (LAPs) – can be drawn up for specific parts of Sligo local authorities’ areas.

One such LAP – Hazelwood-Ballinode Local Area Plan – has already been in place since the 1st of November 2004.

A second LAP was prepared in parallel with the SEDP 2010-2016 – the North Fringe Local Area Plan. This local area plan is published as a separate document.

Further LAPs are envisaged for areas in need of regeneration, consolidation or where greenfield development is expected to take place at some point in the future. During the lifetime of the SEDP 2010-2016, it is anticipated that at least two LAPs will be prepared, for Cranmore-Cleveragh and for the Docklands area. In the longer-term, a LAP will also be prepared for Caltragh-Carrowroe.

5.3.3 Hazelwood–Ballinode LAP

The Plan's vision is to create a model extension to Sligo city, with a variety of uses and services in a high-quality landscape setting. The masterplan – which is the main component of the Plan – outlines an urban quarter that includes two new neighbourhood centres with lands in their vicinity developed as “urban villages”.

The LAP specified that it would be in effect for a period of six years following its adoption. However, there has been only limited progress in the implementation of the masterplan – a process which is likely to take ten years or more.

In accordance with planning legislation, Hazelwood-Ballinode LAP must be reviewed before the end of its lifetime, i.e. by the 1st of November 2010. The revised LAP will have to be consistent with Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016.

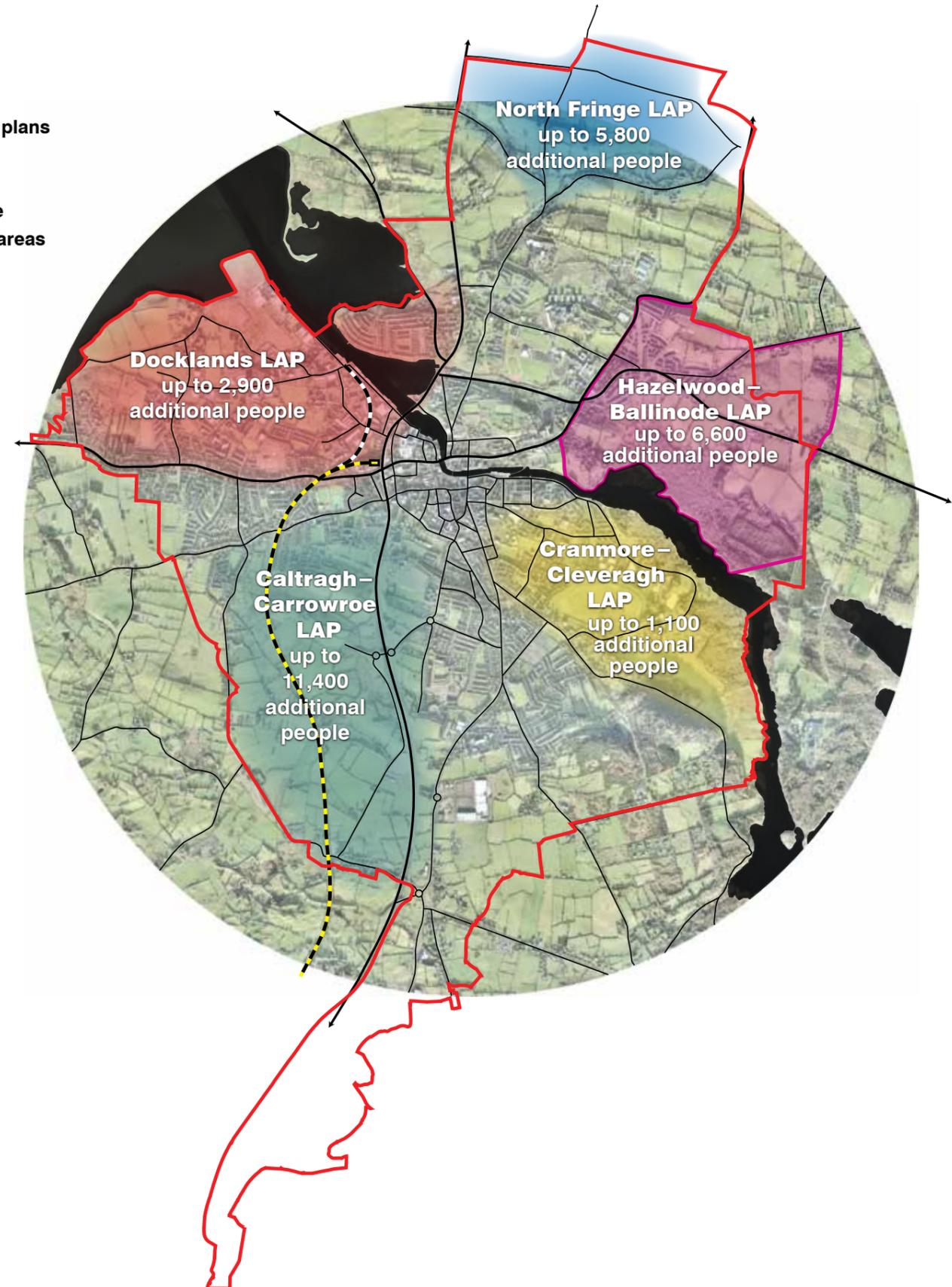
5.3.4 North Fringe LAP

The North Fringe Local Area Plan comprises circa 153 ha of mostly green-field lands in the townlands of Lisnalurg, Shannon Oughter and parts of Teesan, Carncash, Doonally and Rathbraghan.

The LAP sets out an urban development framework combining residential, educational, sports, business/enterprise and mixed uses, together with an extensive linear park and a coherent open space network.

The LAP identifies seven development cells, characterised by different zonings and development densities. Within its residential and mixed-use cells, the North Fringe area will be capable of accommodating up to 3,200 people in circa 1,300 new residential units.

Fig. 5.H The five local area plans have the potential to accommodate over 27,000 people in new residential areas



Local Area Plans – objectives

It is the objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- LAP-O-1** Pursue the adoption of the North Fringe Local Area Plan by the end of 2009.
- LAP-O-2** Review Hazelwood-Ballinode LAP by the end of 2010.
- LAP-O-3** Prepare a Local Area Plan, including a masterplan, for Cranmore, Cleveragh and adjoining areas located in the south-eastern quarter of Sligo and Environs, during the lifetime of the SEDP 2010-2016.
- LAP-O-4** Prepare a Local Area Plan, including a masterplan, for the Docklands and adjoining areas located in the north-western quarter of Sligo and Environs, during the lifetime of the SEDP 2010-2016.
- LAP-O-5** In the longer term, prepare a Local Area Plan, including a masterplan, for Caltragh-Carrowroe and adjoining areas in the south-western quarter of Sligo and Environs.
- LAP-O-6** Incorporate a Strategic Transport Assessment to inform land-use and access proposals as part of the preparation of all future Local Area Plans.

5.3.5 Docklands LAP

In 2006, ownership of the Port of Sligo was transferred from Sligo Harbour Commissioners to Sligo County Council. There were approximately 90 acres of land under the control of the Harbour Commissioners, most of which had been reclaimed from the sea since the 19th Century. In 2006 it was estimated that approximately 75 acres (36 properties) were leased for both port-related and non-port-related purposes.

Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2004-2010 included a range of policies and objectives relating to an area obviously larger than the lands transferred from the Harbour Commissioners. This area was referred to as “the Docklands”, “the Port” or “the Harbour”.

In 2006-2007 it became evident that piecemeal development was not a good option. Instead, a comprehensive redevelopment framework should be prepared for a clearly defined area, which would encompass the Port/ Docklands/Harbour as well as other lands that are underutilised, derelict, possibly contaminated, or are critical for the future provision of essential infrastructure and various other facilities.

The detailed policy sections of this Development Plan include a range of provisions and requirements with direct application to the Docklands area. The main specific proposals included in the SEDP are:

- retention of the Port as a valuable piece of commercial/industrial infrastructure;
- reduction in the area reserved for port-related activities;
- remediation of the former landfill and other potentially contaminated lands;
- revised street/road layout and improved connectivity with the city centre via pedestrian-friendly crossings of the Inner Relief Road;
- extended mixed-use zoning, including both retail and non-retail uses;
- more land reserved for housing and a relocated neighbourhood centre;
- enhanced provision of open space in the form of linear parks and cycle/pedestrian routes;
- support for the regeneration of the Sligo Docklands through the provision of a cultural landmark building and the innovative reuse of former industrial buildings located in the area as work-space for creative enterprises and new community uses.

In February 2008, the DoEHLG recommended that the Sligo local authorities “harness all the powers” of the new SEDP to secure the redevelopment of key areas such as the Docklands.

Recognising the strategic nature of the lands, the local authorities intend to prepare a local area plan for the wider Docklands area. The LAP will also include a detailed masterplan.

The formal LAP preparation will commence as soon as possible after the adoption of the SEDP 2010-2016.



Fig. 5.I Potential extent of the future Docklands LAP

5.3.6 Cranmore–Cleveragh LAP

Cranmore, a housing estate built by Sligo Corporation in the 1970s and 1980s, is not only the largest of its kind in Sligo, but also in the North-west of Ireland, with approximately 1,800 residents living in over 500 houses. The accumulation of local authority housing since the 1970s, combined with a lack of investment in infrastructure and minimal private sector investment has created a disadvantaged urban environment.

The economic disadvantage experienced in the area has had a detrimental effect on the Cranmore community in social terms, and a visible negative physical impact – abandoned houses, dereliction and dilapidation. The estate lacked adequate youth, sport, childcare and other community facilities, while the green “mounds” were almost unusable as public open space.

In order to facilitate the social and physical regeneration of Cranmore, the housing estate has been designated as a RAPID area (Revitalising Access through Planning Investment and Development) in 2002.

The Cranmore Regeneration Project came about as a result of consensus between elected representatives, officials, local community representatives and public service providers that concerted action needed to be taken to reverse the ongoing social, environmental and physical decline in the area. An Interagency Steering Group was established in 2004 to oversee the development of a framework plan which would address both the physical decline of the area in addition to the social issues undermining quality of life in the area.

After working with Sligo local authorities to develop long-term regeneration proposals for Cranmore, in February 2008 the DoEHLG recommended



Fig. 5.J Potential extent of the future Cranmore–Cleveragh LAP

that a masterplan be prepared for Cranmore and its wider environs, including lands to the north and east of the estate.

Accordingly, it is the intention of Sligo Borough and County Councils to prepare a local area plan – incorporating a masterplan – for the wider Cranmore-Cleveragh area during the lifetime of the SEDP 2010-2016.

Physical regeneration – through large-scale redevelopment of the estate – will be the core aim of this LAP, complemented by the provision of much-needed community facilities, a mix of services (e.g. commercial, health-care etc.), employment opportunities, high-quality green/recreational areas and improved connections with the rest of the City, including public transport routes and cycle/pedestrian links.

5.3.7 Caltragh–Carrowroe LAP

The Caltragh-Carrowroe LAP will propose a framework for the development of an urban extension containing substantial employment areas – in the form of Oakfield Business Park and the southern portion of Sligo’s Economic Spine – effectively integrated with new, high- and medium-density residential areas.

The development of the south-western quarter of Sligo and Environs is dependent on the provision of a major piece of infrastructure – the Western Distributor Road and associated access streets. Given the economic circumstances, it is not clear how long it will take to deliver the Western Distributor. However, the Local Area Plan for Caltragh-Carrowroe should be prepared as soon as resources permit.

Chapter 6. The economy

6.1 Planning policy context

The economic development and employment strategy for Sligo for the Plan period and beyond is based on the policy framework set by the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) and Sligo County Development Board's Strategy and Action Plan.

National Spatial Strategy (NSS)

Identified as a Gateway in the National Spatial Strategy, Sligo is well positioned to energise economic and social development in County Sligo and the North-West.

Border Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs)

The competitiveness of the Border Region is a fundamental factor in its development. Competitiveness relies not just on building physical infrastructure, but also on research and development, innovation, links between third-level institutions and industry, the development of technology, the location of facilities and the development of economic corridors and clusters.

The Gateways and Hubs, in particular, must provide a favourable environment by meeting enterprise requirements at the appropriate standard and scale. Sligo has an important role to play in the economic development of the Border Region, as one of the three Gateways in this Region.

Box 6.A Enterprise support needs of the Gateways according to the Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2004

- Explore potential of economic development corridors
- Strategic development zones - DoEHLG/Forfas/local authorities
- Sites and buildings - business and technology parks
- IDA, enterprise parks - Enterprise Ireland, industrial estates
- Local authorities/County Enterprise Boards/private
- Third-level educational facilities - including Institutes of Technology and outreach centres
- Centres of excellence for R&D - potential for PPP broadband
- Development of managerial capability

County Development Board (CDB)

At local level, Sligo County Development Board is seeking to develop, oversee and manage an inter-agency strategy designed to promote innovation and entrepreneurship, increase job opportunities and generally underpin the development of Sligo as a Gateway City.

The CDB has established an Innovation/Job Creation Working Group, which has prioritised the development of e-commerce, tourism, cultural and creative industries along with training and upskilling of the workforce.

6.2 Employment overview

Sligo serves as an administrative, employment, commercial, healthcare and education centre for the North-West, which accounts for many of the professional services and administration jobs in the area. The services sector is the primary employer in the City.

Sligo also acts as a distribution centre in the North-West and continues to retain a number of manufacturing jobs.

The IDA has two business parks in Sligo, one at Finisklin and another at Cleveragh, which accommodate mainly knowledge-based industries and small engineering companies.

The pharmaceutical industry is significant, with several companies producing goods for this sector, most notably Abbott (Ireland) Ltd. Abbott is the largest employer in Sligo and has undertaken significant expansion at its Ballytivnan operation.

Occupations and industries

Within broad occupational groups, professional, technical and healthcare workers are a sizeable percentage of the labour force in Sligo at 18%, with clerical, managerial and government workers forming 15.9% of the workforce.

This illustrates the importance of (decentralised) government agencies, local authorities and the regional hospital as a source of employment.

Educated workforce

The percentage of the population over 15 years who has finished full-time education at third-level degree or higher was 16.1% in 2006, an increase from the 2002 ratio of 13.1%. More professional-related employment sources would need to be attracted to the city in order to retain third-level graduates. With the increase in the capacity of Sligo Institute of Technology and St. Angela's College, Sligo has the ability to provide the workforce for the professional-related sector.

Labour force growth

Between 2002 and 2006 there has been significant growth in the labour force nationally and in each county in the west of Ireland. However, according to statistics compiled by the Western Development Commission from Census data, the labour force in County Sligo had the lowest growth rate in the country at 12.4% for the period 2002-2006. This compares with 16.8% nationally and 17.4% within the Western Region.

The labour force comprises the employed and the unemployed. The labour force participation rate is an important measure of the dynamism of an economy. The higher the labour force participation rate, the higher the proportion of the population actively engaged in the labour market, either working or seeking work.

Nationally the total labour force participation rate was 62.5% in 2006, while in the Western Region it was 60.1%. Among counties within the Western Region, Clare, Galway and Sligo have the highest participation rates, the percentage for Sligo being 60.3% in 2006.

Table 6.B Persons aged 15 years and over classified by principal economic status in Census years 1996, 2002 and 2006

Principal economic status	Persons 1996	Persons 2002	Persons 2006	Change 1996-2002	Change 2002-2006	Change 1996-2006
At work	6,803 (46.74%)	8,214 (51.05%)	8,670 (53.24%)	+ 1,411 or rise of 20.74%	+ 456 or rise of 5.55%	+ 1,867 or rise of 27.44%
Total unemployed	1,335 (9.17%)	980 (6.09%)	1,022 (6.27%)	- 355 or fall of 27.67%	+ 42 or rise of 4.28%	- 313 or fall of 23.44%
Student	2,156 (14.81%)	2,502 (15.55%)	2,245 (13.78%)	+ 346 or rise of 16.04%	- 257 or fall of 10.27%	+ 89 or rise of 4.13%
Looking after home/family	2,182 (14.99%)	1,676 (10.42%)	1,415 (8.69%)	- 506 or fall of 23.19%	- 261 or fall of 15.57%	- 767 or fall of 35.15%
Retired	1,566 (10.76%)	1,836 (11.41%)	2,055 (12.62%)	+ 270 or rise of 17.24%	+ 219 or rise of 11.93%	+ 489 or rise of 31.22%
Unable to work	513 (3.52%)	665 (4.13%)	794 (4.88%)	+ 152 or rise of 29.63%	+ 129 or rise of 19.40%	+ 281 or rise of 54.77%
Other status	348 (5.12%)	217 (1.35%)	85 (0.52%)	- 131 or fall of 37.64%	- 132 or fall of 60.83%	- 263 or fall of 75.57%
Total number of persons aged 15+ years	14,555 (100%)	16,090 (100%)	16,286 (100%)	+ 1,535 or gain of 10.54%	+ 196 or rise of 1.22%	+ 1,731 or rise of 11.89%

6.3 Economic strategy



Abbott plant at Ballytivnan



Abbott offices



Entrance to IDA Business Park, Finisklin

Sligo has only a limited number of large employers, among which the most important are Abbott, the Health Service Executive (including Sligo Hospital), the Institute of Technology, St. Angela's College and the local authorities.

Sligo needs a significant boost in terms of employment opportunities. It needs university status for the Institute of Technology and perhaps a Centre of Excellence in Sligo General Hospital. Due to rising manufacturing costs in Ireland, it is unlikely that another employer of Abbott's importance will locate in Sligo in the short-medium term. However, three or four major projects, able to bring circa 300 jobs each to the City, could create a critical mass of labour force, thus driving economic and population growth in the Gateway.

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

- earmarking key sites and reserving sufficient land in suitable locations for business/enterprise development;
- providing and supporting the provision of essential infrastructure, including high-speed/high-capacity telecommunication networks;
- ensuring the availability of energy from clean and reliable sources;
- facilitating appropriate education and training initiatives to ensure a suitably-skilled local workforce;
- encouraging research and development links between industry/business and local third-level institutions;
- forging mutually-beneficial links with regional and cross-border bodies;
- securing high standards of environmental protection;
- offering a good quality of life to those who live and work in the Gateway.

The principles outlined above are clearly reflected in the strategic economic policies adopted by Sligo Borough and County Councils.

Strategic economic policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- SP-ECON-1** Facilitate and encourage the business, enterprise and industrial development of Sligo as a Gateway City and economic growth driver for the North-West.
- SP-ECON-2** Support the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy of the County Development Board.
- SP-ECON-3** Promote Sligo as a location for government decentralisation and facilitate government offices to locate in the southern part of the Economic Spine.
- SP-ECON-4** Liaise with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and other relevant bodies to attract international and indigenous industry, enterprise and employment to the city.
- SP-ECON-5** Ensure that employment-related development is maintained and consolidated, in particular with regard to the city's promotion as a major centre for retailing, services, tourism and culture.
- SP-ECON-6** Promote an expanded education and research sector in Sligo.
- SP-ECON-7** Provide or facilitate the provision of adequate transport, environmental and broadband telecommunication infrastructure to support business, enterprise and industrial development in Sligo City and Environs.
- SP-ECON-8** Encourage and facilitate the retention, expansion and diversification of healthcare and associated services in the Gateway.

6.4 Business, enterprise and industry

Economic development depends heavily on the overall Gateway growth strategy, underpinned by the spatial strategy for Sligo and Environs and supported by the policies and objectives set out in other sections of this Plan.

The spatial strategy for the Gateway is based on a balanced land-use structure integrated with an expanding transport network. A key element of the strategy is the development of the Economic Spine – an employment/mixed-use corridor along the Inner Relief Road (N4) from Carrowroe in the south, through the city centre, to Lisnalgry in the north.

The Economic Spine establishes high-profile sites within easy reach of the city centre, residential areas and amenities. Office-based business activities will be encouraged to locate within this corridor.

Industrial-type activities will be accommodated in a range of business/enterprise/industrial parks that are or will be well-connected to the transport network and adequately serviced in terms of environmental and telecommunication infrastructure.

6.4.1 Business, industry and technology parks – BITP

The existing business/enterprise/industrial parks at Finisklin, Ballytivnan and Cleveragh will be complemented by two other parks proposed at Oakfield and in the North Fringe (Carncash Td.)

Finisklin

Sligo Borough and County Councils recognise the importance of the IDA industrial estate at Finisklin. The area is a suitable location for business, industry and technology activities, it is easily accessible and close to the city centre. However, as the park is approaching maximum capacity, there is a clear need to provide new business/enterprise parks within the SEDP area.

Oakfield

In this context, the development of Oakfield Business Park is considered to be of strategic importance for the economic future of Sligo. The Oakfield area will be served by the Western Distributor Road and is also close to the railway line (where a future transit stop could be provided).

Cleveragh

The BITP-zoned lands at Cleveragh are identified as suitable for small-scale industrial activity, in addition to office and general business use. Small-scale retail workshops (maximum 100 sq.m. net selling space) will be permissible within Cleveragh Business Park, provided they are ancillary to an adjacent industrial or business unit and are restricted to selling bulky goods. (Regarding the definition of bulky goods, the same set of guidelines should apply as is applied to retail warehousing in subsection 6.5.6 Retail Warehousing). The provision of this type of development uniquely applies to the Cleveragh Business Park and is not considered appropriate in other BITP zones in the plan area.

Ballytivnan

Abbott, a pharmaceutical company, has undergone an expansion at its Ballytivnan site to the north of the city. This site is appropriate for business/industrial expansion due to its good connection to the transport network and the proximity to the Institute of Technology.

In order to ensure a north-south balance in terms of business/industrial development within the SEDP area and to support the development of the north-south economic corridor, provision has been made for another business/industry/technology park in the North Fringe area, at **Carncash**, as an integral part of a new urban quarter whose development will be facilitated by major upgrades of the transport network.

Table 6.C Persons at work in Sligo and Environs, by industry, in Census years 1996, 2002 and 2006

Industry	Persons employed in 1996	Persons employed in 2002	Persons employed in 2006	Change 1996-2002	Change 2002-2006	Change 1996-2006
Agriculture and forestry	77 (1.13%)	60 (0.73%)	60 (0.69%)	- 17 or loss of 22%	0	- 17 or loss of 22%
Mining, quarrying and turf production	9 (0.13%)	15 (0.18%)	n/a	+ 6 or gain of 66%	n/a	n/a
Manufacturing industries	1,476 (21.70)	1,338 (16.29%)	1,309 (15.10%)	- 138 or loss of 9.34%	- 29 or loss of 2.16%	- 167 or loss of 11.31%
Electricity, gas and water supply	56 (0.82)	60 (0.73%)	n/a	+ 4 or gain of 7.14%	n/a	n/a
Construction	310 (4.56%)	418 (5.09%)	671 (7.74%)	+ 108 or gain of 34.83%	+ 253 or gain of 60.56%	+ 361 or gain of 116.45%
Wholesale and retail trade	n/a	1,073 (13.06%)	1,996 (23.02%)	n/a	+ 923 or gain of 86.02%	n/a
Hotels and restaurants	n/a	519 (6.32%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Transport, storage and communications	348 (5.12%)	356 (4.33%)	340 (3.92%)	+ 8 or gain of 2.29%	- 16 or loss of 4.49%	- 8 or loss of 2.29%
Banking and financial services	1,293 (19.01%)	213 (2.59%)	n/a	- 585 or loss of 45.24%	n/a	n/a
Real estate, renting and business activities		495 (6.03%)	n/a		n/a	n/a
Public administration and defense	534 (7.85%)	684 (8.33%)	553 (6.38%)	+ 150 or gain of 28.09%	- 131 (- 19.15%)	+ 19 or gain of 3.55%
Education	n/a	644 (7.84%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Health and social work	n/a	1,318 (16.05%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Professional services	1,770 (13.67%)	n/a	2,020 (23.30%)	n/a	n/a	250 or gain of 14.12%
Other community, social and personal service activities	930 (13.67%)	299 (3.64%)	n/a	+ 91 or gain of 9.78%	n/a	n/a
Industry not stated		722 (8.79%)	n/a		n/a	n/a
Other areas of activity	n/a	n/a	1721	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total employed	6,803	8,214	8,670	+ 1,411 or rise of 20.74%	+ 456 or gain of 5.51%	+ 1866 or gain of 27.44%

Note: Census information as published does not permit direct comparison between the number of persons employed in certain industrial areas in 1996, 2002 and 2006. Where comparison is possible between all three Census years' figures, the rows are highlighted in green. Where comparison is possible between two Census years' figures, the rows are highlighted in blue.



6.4.2 Office development

Currently the main concentration of office development in Sligo is within the city centre, primarily along Wine Street and Stephen Street. Government offices located in Cranmore and Caltragh are also significant in terms of office-based employment. Office uses have been provided in new developments off Mail Coach Road and within the Finisklin industrial estate.

Smaller-scale office developments will be encouraged in the city centre and in neighbourhood centres. Larger office facilities will be encouraged to locate to the north and south of the city centre, adjacent to the necessary infrastructure within the mixed use zone (MIX-1), and in the Docklands (C2 zone). Former institutional buildings can also provide a suitable base for office and enterprise activity.

New forms of working

Sustainable types of working practices – such as working from home in live/work units – will be encouraged. With the development of broadband telecommunications and information technology, this way of working is becoming more feasible and more prevalent in businesses. The local authorities recognise the need for flexibility in the zoning of areas to encourage the creation of live/work units.

6.4.3 Waste management, industry, logistics and transport-related uses – WILT

Waste management, light industry, logistics and transport-related uses are encouraged to locate on lands to the south of Sligo, lying between the old and the new N4/Dublin Road. A substantial proportion of this zone is undeveloped, as the area relies on the provision of wastewater treatment for future development to occur.

Large-scale developments that require substantial sites with good road and environmental infrastructure facilities, and uses/activities unsuitable for the town centre locations (e.g. industrial units) will also be generally encouraged to locate in the WILT zone subject to environmental review and assessment.

6.4.4 Industrial and enterprise development outside designated zones

Developments of an industrial and enterprise nature should normally be located within appropriately zoned and serviced industrial or employment-generating use lands. It is accepted that there are certain limited categories of enterprise that may have specific locational requirements which can be more readily accommodated outside lands zoned for business, enterprise and industrial uses.

Where no suitable alternative sites are available in designated areas, the Planning Authority will consider employment-generating uses in the Buffer Zone if the respective activities serve primarily the adjoining rural community, are sympathetic to the surrounding area and do not degrade the visual, cultural and residential amenity of the area. These small-scale enterprises will generally be family-owned and operated businesses and will need to satisfy traffic, public health and amenity and environmental requirements.

Business, enterprise and industry objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- O-BEI-1** Promote and facilitate the realisation of a new business, industry and technology park at Oakfield on lands zoned BITP to the west of the N4 (Inner Relief Road), off the Caltragh Interchange.
- O-BEI-2** Promote and facilitate the realisation of a new business, industry and technology park in the North Fringe on lands zoned BITP at Carncash.
- O-BEI-3** Promote and facilitate the realisation of a new business, industry and technology park in Cleveragh, where small-scale workshops with retail functions will be permissible, provided the retail is ancillary to an industrial or business unit. The retail spaces shall be restricted to a maximum of 100 sq.m. and shall be limited to bulky goods.

Business, enterprise and industry policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-BEI-1** Ensure that there are sufficient lands zoned for business, enterprise and industrial development.
- P-BEI-2** Encourage the integration of employment locations with other land uses and the transportation network, and in particular, ensure that employment-intensive land uses are located in proximity to existing and planned strategic routes, where public transport is most viable.
- P-BEI-3** Facilitate development proposals for industrial units or business enterprises in the Buffer Zone only where:
 - a. the proposed use has locational requirements that can only be accommodated in a rural area and this has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority

AND

- b. the resultant development is of a size and scale that does not impact negatively on the character and amenity of the surrounding area

AND

- c. the proposal demonstrates that it has taken into account traffic, public health, environmental and amenity considerations and is in accordance with the policies, requirements and guidance contained in this plan.

In all instances, it should be demonstrated that the proposal would not generate traffic of a type and amount inappropriate for the character of the access roads, and would not require improvements that might affect the character of these roads.

- P-BEI-4** Encourage office development close to strategic transport corridors, in the city centre, in neighbourhood centres and in mixed-use zones.
- P-BEI-5** Facilitate the accommodation of business starter units.
- P-BEI-6** Support the concept of live/work units in mixed-use zones and residential areas, subject to compatibility with predominant uses in the area.
- P-BEI-7** Apply a flexible zoning approach in relation to the location of entrepreneurial start-up businesses and small-scale industrial activities, where it can be demonstrated that the proposed use would have minimal adverse impacts on adjoining uses and properties. In such cases, a sequential approach to the location of the development will generally apply, with a general preference order of city centre, edge-of-centre and then out-of-centre locations, depending on the nature and type of business.
- P-BEI-8** Encourage the reuse of vacant public/institutional buildings for office and enterprise activity, where community and services facilities are no longer necessary.
- P-BEI-9** Provide for a differentiation of uses between the business and enterprise parks zoned BITP, to accommodate various types and levels of industrial/business activity, and allow limited retail uses specifically on the lands zoned as BITP at Cleveragh.
- P-BEI-10** Encourage high-quality, innovative design in all new industrial/business/enterprise parks, in terms of building design and materials, layout and landscaping, in particular within Oakfield Business Park and along the Inner Relief Road.
- P-BEI-11** Where industrial sites are developed adjacent to residential areas, ensure there is adequate screening in the form of tree planting and landscaping.

6.5 Retail Strategy



6.5.1 Legal requirements

All local authorities are obliged to have regard to the DoEHLG's *Retail Planning Guidelines for Local Authorities* (January 2005).

The government has stipulated in the Retail Planning Guidelines that established centres should be the preferred locations for retail developments. Edge-of-centre sites, followed by out-of-centre sites should only be considered where it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable central sites. This is referred to as *the sequential approach* to the location of retail development.

The Retail Planning Guidelines also indicate the matters to be included in Development Plans:

- confirmation of the retail hierarchy, the role of the centres and the size of the main town centres;
- definition of the boundaries of the core shopping area of town centres;
- a broad assessment of the requirement for additional retail floor space;
- strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail development;
- preparation of policies and action initiatives to encourage the improvement of town centres,
- identification of criteria for the assessment of retail developments.

Sligo County Council commissioned consultants in 2008 to prepare a joint Retail Strategy for Sligo City and County. The implications of the guidelines, as well as the surveys and analysis, are presented in detail in the *Sligo City and County Joint Retail Planning Strategy 2010-2017*, a separate report that accompanies the SEDP.

In the summer of 2008, three surveys were undertaken: a retail floor space survey, a shopper survey and a telephone household survey. This section summarises the survey findings and the consultants' recommendations, and formulates policies and objectives accordingly.

6.5.2 City Centre — current retail situation

Sligo City is the primary retail centre in the County and the focus for comparison retail development. It currently supports 81,377 sq.m. of retail floor space (City and Environs) of which 49,851 sq.m. is for comparison goods and 8,042 sq.m. is for convenience goods. Notably, retail services have increased significantly since the last plan period. (see table 6.D below).

The city centre has undergone major redevelopments with the opening of the Quayside shopping centre and Johnston Court shopping centre. The trend is a movement in retailing in a westerly direction focusing on O'Connell Street and the new developments to its west. Additional retail developments have been permitted or are going through the planning process within the Centre Block and phase 2 of the Quayside Shopping Centre.

Sligo City Centre provides the main venue for higher-order comparison goods and "fashion" goods within the county of Sligo. According to a report published in 2008 by the UK market research firm Experian, Sligo is at the top of the hierarchy within the Border Region in terms of shopper expenditure, with an estimated €266 million spent on comparison goods.

The Retail Strategy proposes, in line with national guidance, that this dominant position of the City Centre be maintained and consolidated, particularly in terms of higher-order comparison goods.

6.5.3 Challenges for Sligo City

Sligo's distinctiveness is a combination of characteristics and qualities that give the place its own particular identity and atmosphere.

Distinctiveness is not just about how the city looks, it is also about the perception of the people who work, live and visit Sligo.

Local distinctiveness is essential because it gives meaning to the city, and meaning is an important factor in attracting people to live, work, visit or invest in Sligo.

As part of protecting and enhancing its distinctiveness, Sligo faces the challenge of ensuring that additional retail development is provided in a way that is efficient, equitable and sustainable, whilst fostering a pleasant and stimulating shopping environment that will appeal to long-distance "event" shoppers.

In particular, Sligo needs to provide further sites for larger units in the city centre, to accommodate name-brand retailers or multiples. The provision of these types of store is crucial, as they will act as key attractors for the city centre.

While recent developments including the Quayside shopping centre and Johnston Court have attracted multiples, more attractors are required to continue the growth in the retail sector. This is further supported by the household and shopper surveys, where specific retailers are identified as desirable to improve shopping in Sligo.

Sligo also has an interesting variety of local independent stores contributing to the city's unique retail mix. Sligo must continue to provide an environment where specialist, independent retailers can flourish, thus adding to the diversity of urban life. Research shows that the presence of high-quality indigenous local shops is crucial in maximising a centre's overall appeal to the shopper. The smaller, specialist units have the effect of acting as a backup to the big-name multiples.

The breakdown of retail activity in Sligo is shown in Table 6.D below. Vacancies are found in outer-city neighbourhood centres and also in streets to the south-east of the city centre, most notably High Street, Old Market Street, Castle Street and Connolly Street. Vacancy and dereliction rates increase the greater the distance from O'Connell Street.

Overall, convenience and comparison stores in Sligo now occupy a less significant proportion of retail units than in 2002, owing to the rapid growth in the number of retail service outlets.

Table 6.D Summary of retail and service outlets in Sligo and Environs, 2008

Type of retail unit	Number of outlets		Outlets as percentage of total number of outlets		Total floor space (sq.m)	
	2002	2008	2002	2008	2002	2008
Convenience	51	51	11.8%	9.0%	6,638	8,042
Comparison						
- mainstream goods	n/a	170	n/a	30.1%	n/a	24,086
- bulky goods	n/a	51	n/a	9.0%	n/a	25,765
Total comparison	203	221	46.9%	39.1%	37,377	49,851
Retail services	125	215	28.9%	38.1%	16,994	12,524
Vacant	54	78	12.5%	13.8%	8,329	10,959
Total	433	565	100%	100%	69,338	81,377

Sources: Roger Tym and Partners Retail Floorspace Survey 2008 and *Sligo City Centre Retail Strategy 2004-2010*

6.5.4 Sligo’s catchment and future growth in retail floor space

The household and shopper surveys carried out in the summer of 2008 helped to confirm Sligo’s retail catchment for convenience and comparison goods, previously defined in the Sligo City Centre Retail Strategy 2004-201.

The catchment area extends across County Sligo, North County Roscommon and most of County Leitrim, with an estimated population of 93,446, projected to grow to 115,653 by 2020.

The shopper survey identified that the majority (76.6%) of persons visiting Sligo’s city centre lived within Sligo City or County, with 84% of the visits related to a regular shopping trip. Only 17% of the shoppers surveyed lived outside the defined catchment area.

At the same time, the non-residents (i.e. persons living outside the defined catchment area) accounted for 44% of the centre’s comparison goods turnover, as opposed to only 7% of the convenience goods turnover.

Convenience shopping

Sligo City satisfies the convenience shopping demands of its residents, with food stores heavily concentrated in the city centre. Food retailing in the city centre is provided by Tesco, Dunnes, Lidl and a number of small-scale outlets, including independent butchers and greengrocers.

While the convenience shopping function of the city centre is important to its ongoing vitality, it is also necessary to ensure that convenience retail facilities are available across the City as a whole, in neighbourhood centres.

The retail survey undertaken in 2008 indicates that since 2002, convenience floor space has increased by 21% while the number of convenience stores in Sligo has remained constant, .

The household survey suggests that, in terms of convenience shopping, Sligo dominates its own zone and urban outskirts, but elsewhere it faces strong competition from Ballina, Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon, as they are closer to parts of County Sligo than Sligo City.

Larger settlements in the County, however, retain their share of local convenience shoppers. This is the case with Ballymote, Tobercurry, Collooney, Grange and Enniscrone.

In accordance with Sligo’s Gateway designation, it is considered essential that Sligo City retains and strengthens its role in relation to convenience shopping.

Comparison shopping

In terms of comparison shopping, Sligo’s city centre achieves a market share of over 70% in Sligo City and Environs, falling below 50% outside this area. This is due mainly to strong competition from Ballina, Carrick-on-Shannon and Boyle. Expenditure leakage for comparison goods also goes to large shopping centres in the Dublin region – such as Blanchardstown and Liffey Valley – and to other urban centres like Galway and Enniskillen.

Relating to comparison goods, the shoppers’ most common suggestion – as indicated by the shopper survey – was to improve the range of shops or to provide a particular shop in the city centre, along with traffic and parking improvements.

In order to retain and build on Sligo’s role as a regional centre for comparison shopping, qualitative deficiencies in the city centre need to be addressed. At the same time, additional comparison floor space should be concentrated in Sligo City centre.

The Retail Strategy supports the further development of higher-order comparison shopping facilities in Sligo, consistent with its Gateway designation.

Additional floor space requirements

The *Joint City and County Retail Planning Strategy* examines the implications of the three population change scenarios for growth in Sligo.

The preferred scenario – High Growth – envisages the population of the Gateway rising to 32,986 by 2016 and to 37,000 by 2020. The total population of Sligo’s retail catchment area would grow to over 115,000 by 2020 under this scenario.

The analysis demonstrates that the envisaged population increases in Sligo’s catchment area, combined with increases in expenditure, will result in demand for new retail floor space for both convenience and comparison goods.

The most likely minimum estimates of these requirements are outlined in Table 6.E below.

Table 6.E Minimum additional floor space requirements in Sligo City, above the 2008 floor space

Year	2015	2020
Convenience goods	1,280 sq.m.*	4,190 sq.m.
Comparison goods	4,050 sq.m.**	12,670 sq.m.

Source: Roger Tym and Partners – *Sligo City and County Joint Retail Planning Strategy*, 2008

* The analysis outlined a sales density figure of €12,820 per sq.m., much higher than the expected average of €8,000 to €9,000. The projected floor space requirements do not take into account the potential for an additional 3,700 sq.m. which would be required to bring current estimated turnover to an average level.

** The projected comparison floor space takes into account extant planning permissions (developments that have been permitted but not yet constructed).

Location of new retail floor space

Careful monitoring of implementation is required to ensure that Sligo can continue to provide an appropriate scale and quality of retail floor space, sufficient to meet the needs of its future population and fulfil its strategic role within the North-West.

Accordingly, in cases deemed appropriate by the relevant local authority, proposals for retail developments may need to be accompanied by retail impact statements to justify any proposed additional floor space.

Sligo’s principal advantage lies in its compact nature. Development of the large central sites currently available within the city centre must remain a priority, in accordance with the sequential approach. This certainty thus gives developers and traders a secure framework within which to propose new development.

Lands to the west of the Inner Relief Road, in the Docklands, and to the east and south-east of the city centre will offer the most suitable edge-of-centre locations for retailing expansion after commercial development will have been substantially completed on all available city-centre sites. These edge-of-centre areas are accessible by foot, by public and private transport, and contain a certain amount of brownfield and under-utilised sites.

Any proposal for significant retail development in the Docklands will be required to be accompanied by a traffic impact assessment indicating the potential effects of the development on the Inner Relief Road.

Although an “edge-of-centre” area has not been strictly defined, it is considered that locations within 300 to 400 metres from the retail core fall within this definition, although the distance can vary according to the level of pedestrian accessibility. However, edge-of-centre locations (including the Docklands) will not be considered suitable for retail development in the absence of demonstrable strong pedestrian links to the city centre.



6.5.5 Strengthening the City Centre



In order to reinforce Sligo's role as a regional shopping centre, the city centre must be strengthened. This can be done by increasing its retail offer, revitalising the south-eastern quadrant of the centre, developing retail outlets at The Mall/Connaughton Road area (Green Fort), improving the public realm, providing more and better-located car parking, and attracting key retailers.

Revitalising the south-east quadrant

The retailing core of the city has migrated westwards from the Market Cross area towards the Quayside Shopping Centre and the Wine Street Centre Block. The declining south-east city centre area has the potential to rebuild upon its traditional attractiveness and become a hub for specialist and independent shops, as well as cafés and restaurants. The presence of such outlets will assist in attracting event shoppers and tourists to Sligo and will act as a "browsing back-up" for the larger retailers. The proposal to build a multi-storey car park at Abbey Street and the envisaged redevelopment of the Courthouse Block should further encourage the regeneration of this traditional shopping area.

Developing retail at The Mall/Connaughton Road

Facilitating retail uses ancillary to the County Museum and the Model Arts :: Niland Gallery within The Mall/Connaughton Road (Green Fort) area will increase the range of retail outlets within the city centre and broaden the city's attraction of event shoppers.

Improving the shopping environment

Improvements to the quality of the shopping environment, the public realm in general, would make the City Centre a place to dwell for shoppers and would encourage event shoppers.

Such improvement measures would include a high standard of shop front and signage design, refurbishment works to pavements to improve pedestrian access, public lighting and the provision of street furniture and landscaping.

Providing better parking

Despite the availability of several large car parks, car parking is perceived to be a significant challenge, as evidenced by the results of the household and shopper surveys. The provision of multi-storey car parks within easy-walking distance of the city centre is promoted within the car parking strategy in Chapter 10 Mobility. Combined with traffic and pedestrian management, the provision of advance signage for car parks will improve the accessibility and user-friendliness of the city for shoppers.

Increasing the retail offer

An increase in the variety of shops and the location of key attractor retailers within Sligo City centre would also strengthen the centre and encourage event shoppers.

6.5.6 Other types of retail development

In addition to the comparison retail in the city centre, Sligo is served by a range of retail types which are important in providing a variety of goods: from food and groceries in large and discount food stores, convenience retailing in local neighbourhood centres, to bulky household goods in retail warehouses.

Large food stores

Large foodstores serve mainly the weekly convenience-goods shopping needs of high volumes of shoppers. They generally require large, single-level areas of floor space together with adjacent car parking spaces. The majority of this type of shopping is undertaken by car, but a proportion of customers visit by other means, including public transport.

Large foodstores should be located in the city centre or on the edge of the centre. However, an out-of-centre location may be considered where it has been demonstrated that it is not possible to bring forward sites which are in or on the edge of the city centre, because of the site size requirements of large foodstores, urban design constraints or because the road network does not have capacity for additional traffic and service vehicles.

Discount food stores

Discount food stores have a significant potential in extending the choice of retailing. Their customer catchment and retail offer is different to the mainstream superstores and supermarkets and their trade draw will be different. They provide a specialised form of predominantly convenience shopping.

This will be relevant when assessing impact, although the effect on neighbourhood centres and other shops should also be considered. Discount food stores can effectively anchor neighbourhood centres as well as complementing existing convenience shopping. Proposals for such developments will be considered in relation to the provisions of the Development Plan concerning the sequential approach, the design, layout and retail impact of developments.

Street markets

Street markets are a popular form of traditional retailing which meets local shopping needs, often with a range of other specialist and tourism-related shopping. Such markets can add greatly to the attractiveness and the vitality of a city centre.

Markets are sometimes perceived as creating adverse environmental effects such as noise, litter and traffic congestion. Effective management and regulation can improve their operation while also minimising adverse impacts.

Retail warehousing

Retail warehousing is characterised by large, single-level stores specialising in the sale of bulky goods such as furniture and DIY items. Due to their size and parking requirements, retail warehouses are not appropriate in a city centre and as such need to be considered separately from standard retailing, in terms of location.

Retail warehouses depend heavily on good access to the national road network, and also benefit from being clustered on single sites so as to minimise the number of trips by car. Retail warehouses can play a positive role in the retail hierarchy. If they are of appropriate scale and are restricted to bulky comparison goods, they need not have a material adverse impact on an existing city centre. Individual units should also accord to the relevant policies concerning scale and design requirements.

Retail warehousing in Sligo is focused on the existing Sligo Retail Park at Carrowroe, Cleveragh Retail Park and is also found in individual units or small clusters in the Docklands, at Cleveragh and at Ash Lane.

A retail warehouse park of not more than 5,000 sq.m. will be permissible in the North Fringe area on lands zoned BITP. This northern retail warehousing cluster will encourage a competitive retail climate in Sligo.

The Carrowroe and North Fringe Retail Parks will ensure a north-south balance in the provision of retail warehousing and may help reduce the amount of retail warehousing scattered around the Docklands, thereby assisting in a more comprehensive development of those lands.

Piecemeal development of retail warehousing in the city, at locations other than those specifically designated on the zoning map, will be discouraged.

6.5.7 Local retail needs - a network of neighbourhood centres

A number of effective neighbourhood centres, which include a significant retail element, are designated in Sligo's suburbs. The location of neighbourhood centres seeks to ensure that all future residential areas are adequately serviced by local facilities, including commercial and community centres.

Neighbourhood centres provide a valuable service and cater for the daily needs of nearby residents, particularly the elderly, the less mobile, families with children and those without access to a car. Typically these should be located so that all residents are within reasonable walking distance (about 500 metres) of the facilities, which should also have good road access.

A mix of uses will be encouraged in the neighbourhood centres, with primarily retail units at ground-floor level and residential uses or offices on the upper floors.

Neighbourhood centres comprise elements of the following retail provision: convenience stores, newsagents, pharmacies, butchers, post offices, restaurants, take-away, video/DVD rental, laundry facilities, hairdressers and public houses.

The neighbourhood centres designated for the period of this development plan are marked on the Zoning Map.

The Plan provides for a network of centres with a range of size thresholds from 1,500 sq.m. overall net retail floor space to 2,750 sq.m. net retail floor space (at Carrowroe and Lisnalurg).

Standard retail development will generally be restricted outside the city centre and identified neighbourhood centres. However, shops serving purely a local need (i.e. small convenience stores, video rental and dry-cleaners) will generally be considered acceptable in all mixed-use zones.

Strategic retail planning policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

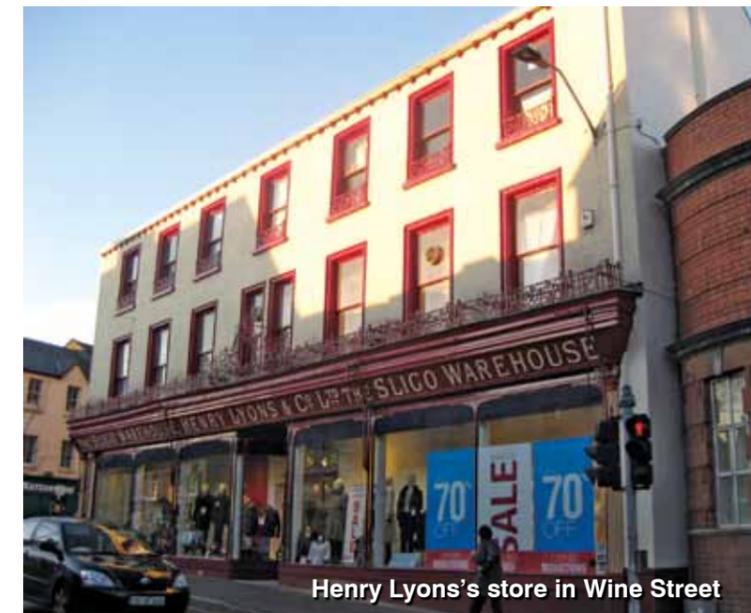
- SP-RP-1** Consolidate Sligo's role as a regional shopping centre and Gateway City.
- SP-RP-2** Assist the city in making the transition from a third-tier to a second-tier shopping centre in the national retail hierarchy.
- SP-RP-3** Provide overall retail space in line with projected requirements outlined in Table 6.E and the *Joint Sligo City and County Retail Planning Strategy*.
- SP-RP-4** Facilitate a competitive and healthy environment for retail in Sligo.
- SP-RP-5** Ensure that retail development is accessible by both public transport and private car, so as to ensure accessibility to all groups of the population, particularly the elderly and families with young children.



Courtyard off Teeling Street



Weekly farmers' market on the grounds of IT Sligo



Henry Lyons's store in Wine Street

City centre retail planning policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

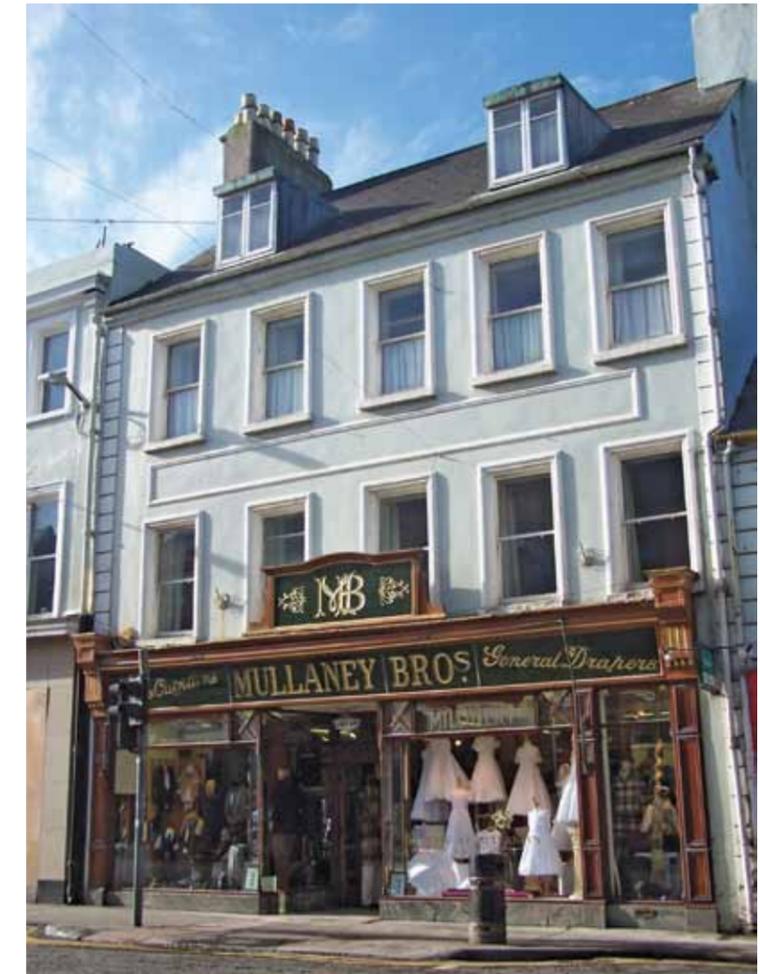
- P-RP-1** Encourage a range of shopping facilities in Sligo's City Centre.
- P-RP-2** Encourage national-chain retail branches and retail department stores to locate within the city centre by ensuring the provision of medium- to larger-sized retail units in new developments.
- P-RP-3** Reinforce existing retail areas, in particular the Market Cross/Castle Street and High Street area, by facilitating the realisation of a multi-storey car park at Abbey Street.
- P-RP-4** Oversee the successful implementation of the Centre Block Masterplan.
- P-RP-5** Generally discourage changes of use from retail or service (including banks and similar institutions with over-the-counter services) to non-retail or non-service uses at ground-floor level within the following areas: O'Connell Street, Grattan Street, Castle Street, Market Street, High Street, Rockwood Parade, Tobergal Lane, Abbey Street and Stephen Street.
- P-RP-6** Encourage specialist retail shops on Castle Street/Old Market Street and at The Mall, in conjunction with the Green Fort project.
- P-RP-7** Seek to preserve and enhance existing traditional shop fronts of high quality.
- P-RP-8** Discourage certain types of commercial and retail development at ground-floor level on Rockwood Parade, JFK Parade, Kempton Promenade and in the vicinity of Stephen Street Car Park, where the proposed use is likely to detract from the ambiance of the riverside area.

Uses that generate activity and contribute to the pedestrian realm and/or facilitate window-shopping will be viewed favourably.

The following class of retail or service outlet will generally be considered acceptable in these areas: restaurants, cafés, bars, clothing, footwear, books, arts/crafts, newsagents, bakeries, gifts, china, glass and leather goods, florists, jewellers/clocks, sports, toys, hobbies, hairdressing and beauty/health.

A high standard of urban design and shop front fascia is expected, in keeping with the area.

- P-RP-9** Encourage modern shop fronts which respect context, where existing shop fronts are not worthy of preservation.





General retail planning objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- O-RP-1** Assess the provision of new retail development in accordance with the sequential test, as outlined in the *Sligo City and County Joint Retail Planning Strategy*.
- O-RP-2** Promote the Centre Block and Quayside shopping centre as the priority areas for the provision of new medium- and large-scale retail units in Sligo, to accommodate multiples and key attractor stores.
- O-RP-3** Create an arts, crafts, antiques, organic foods and gastronomy-focused street market on the site of Stephen Street Car Park.
- O-RP-4** Encourage specialist and small-scale tourist-related retail outlets to locate on the south side of Abbey Street. Suitable uses include antiques, crafts, gifts and cafés. Commercial and office uses and/or apartments would be suitable on upper floor levels.
- O-RP-5** Seek to regenerate and encourage specialist retail units along Grattan Street/ Castle Street and Old Market Street.
- O-RP-6** Seek to refurbish the pedestrianised O'Connell Street to provide a pedestrian-friendly space.
- O-RP-7** Encourage the provision of retail uses ancillary to the proposed County Museum and Model::Niland Gallery within the Greenfort area.

General retail planning policies

Neighbourhood centres
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-RP-10** Facilitate a network of neighbourhood centres outside the city centre, accommodating a range of retail floor spaces. (see also Neighbourhood Centre objectives in Section 7.2.4)

Large and discount food stores
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-RP-11** Facilitate the provision of both large and discount food stores subject to compliance with the sequential approach and/or retail impact assessment.

Retail warehousing
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-RP-12** Accommodate retail warehousing to the north of the city, in order to provide a north-south balance at the main Gateway access points.
- P-RP-13** Confine retail warehouse developments to the sale of bulky goods or goods generally sold in bulk and ensure these developments are of appropriate scale. Maximum 20% of the net floor space may be used for the sale of comparison goods ancillary to the main bulky goods, if the connection between the two types of goods can be clearly demonstrated and if it can be shown that the city centre would not suffer adverse impacts.

Assessing individual developments
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-RP-14** Adhere to the requirements of the sequential approach to retailing in line with national guidance.
- P-RP-15** Encourage the provision of retail development in locations that facilitate multi-purpose shopping, business and leisure trips on the same journey.
- P-RP-16** Ensure that the amount of convenience floor space to be provided in the city centre is commensurate with existing and projected population requirements.
- P-RP-17** Require a detailed retail impact assessment to accompany planning applications where appropriate, to demonstrate the need for the additional retail space.
- P-RP-19** Require high-quality design and layout, encouraging active and engaging frontages where appropriate.

Neighbourhood Centres objectives

It is the objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- NC-1** Promote and facilitate new neighbourhood centres with a maximum net retail floor space of 1,500 sq.m. at the following locations:
 - Cornageeha
 - Shannon Oughter
 - Finisklin
 - Ballytivnan
 - Hazelwood
 - Caltragh
 - Oakfield
- NC-2** Promote the development of suburban, larger neighbourhood centres with a maximum net retail floor space of 2,750 sq.m. of which up to 1,750 sq.m. net floor space can be dedicated to convenience retail units, to allow for small supermarket provision at the following locations:
 - Carrowroe
 - Lisnalurg
- NC-3** Support the enhanced provision of convenience retail units at two locations in the Inner City where characteristics of neighbourhood centres are existing or emerging, and encourage their development towards levels of provision similar to those of suburban neighbourhood centres (NC-2). These locations are:
 - Cleveragh
 - Ballinode
- NC-4** Reinforce and encourage the consolidation of neighbourhood centres with a maximum net retail floor space of 1,750 sq.m. in the following areas:
 - Merville
 - Cartron
 - Crozon

6.6 Tourism



Knocknarea

Sligo is situated between the ocean to the west and the shores of Lough Gill to the east. This location, in an area of outstanding beauty, favours tourism. Ben Bulbin and Knocknarea provide a magnificent backdrop to the north and west of the City. Sligo's Gateway role on the main touring route between the West and the North-West, plus the variety of its offer in terms of cultural, urban, coastal and upland interests, means that Sligo is ideally positioned in terms of tourism. According to figures published by the Western Development Commission, a total of 156,000 tourists visited Sligo County in 2006, generating revenue of €39 million.

Culturally, Sligo is associated with archaeology, the Yeats family, traditional Irish music, soccer, surfing, walking – all having significant potential for tourism development.

Lough Gill can become another important tourist attractor, due to the significant natural amenity it provides. Environmentally-friendly tourist developments – such as boat tours – are currently provided in summer. Local amenity access should also be considered, especially for local fishing, boating/sailing groups, and panoramic viewing areas along walking trails should be promoted.

Sligo City lacks an image or theme in terms of tourism promotion despite its appeal. There is also a lack of opportunity for visitors to spend money in the City and Environs, outside the obvious domain of pubs, accommodation and restaurants.

Although the city has some good restaurants, in general there appears to be a need for a greater diversity and an improvement in quality. Some restaurants are discretely located on the upper floors of buildings and while this is good for the vitality of the city centre, their overall impact is not as obvious to the visitor. Restaurants located on the ground floor make a positive contribution to the ambiance of the city centre, especially in the evening time. Places that could offer a good location for new restaurants and cafés include Rockwood Parade and Market Street.

The development of a number of attractions in the area of arts and culture have reinforced Sligo's tourism offer over recent years (refer also to Chapter 9 Culture for more details). Festivals, whether of music, comedy, arts etc., can improve the image of a place, providing a significant draw for visitors and tourists.

An achievement well worth mentioning is the cycle route which passes through Sligo – the North-West Trail.

Tourism policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-TOU-1** Ensure that future development of tourist-related facilities is carried out in a sensitive and sustainable manner.
- P-TOU-2** Promote the Abbey as a key tourist attraction in the city and examine opportunities to open up views, vistas and physical connections between it and the river.
- P-TOU-3** Support the establishment of Sligo as a key destination for Yeats-related tourism.
- P-TOU-4** Promote the development of specialist tourist shops, including arts and crafts, along Abbey Street, along The Mall, and in particular look into re-using some of the shops immediately opposite the Model::Niland Gallery.
- P-TOU-5** Improve the signposting of scenic routes, walks, riverside trails, historic and archaeological heritage features in an attractive and well-designed manner, in order to promote the walking and cycling tourism product.
- P-TOU-6** Facilitate the sustainable development of eco-tourism and other leisure activities in the environs of Sligo, outside the urban edge (development limit), such as equestrian centres, outdoor recreational centres, bird-watching, boat clubs and canoe rental.
- P-TOU-7** Support and promote, with the co-operation of private landowners, public access to heritage sites and features of archaeological interest.
- P-TOU-8** Work with North West Tourism, The Arts Council and other relevant bodies to promote and develop the tourism sector in Sligo.
- P-TOU-9** Explore the potential promotion of the city's churches and graveyards as historical elements of interest to tourists.
- P-TOU-10** Reinforce Local Authority and Heritage signage through enforcement action against illegal signage.
- P-TOU-11** Support the County Development Board in developing a tourism strategy for Sligo City and County.



Ben Bulbin

Tourism objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- O-TOU-1** Explore the provision of fishing stands and other facilities (e.g. jetties) on the shores of Lough Gill, so as to enhance the attraction for fishermen/anglers, boating/rowing clubs etc., and concomitantly explore the provision or improvement of access, parking facilities and, where appropriate, boat access to these facilities.
- O-TOU-2** Explore the possible provision of a heritage trail in the City and Environs that might include such features as St John's Cathedral, the Courthouse, City Hall, Old Market Street, the Abbey, Forthill, the Model::Niland, the County Museum, the Famine Graveyard and the archaeological features of Carrowroe and its vicinity.
- O-TOU-3** Develop a new tourist office within the city centre, within easy-walking distance of the bus station, railway station and commercial core. This would provide information to visitors and tourists as they arrive to the city (from the proposed transport interchange) on tours, walks, hotels and accommodation, etc.
- O-TOU-4** Improve and enhance access to Carrowmore Passage Tomb Cemetery by means of road improvements and co-ordinated signage from the city centre and main approach roads.
- O-TOU-5** Encourage the refurbishment and re-usage of Hazelwood House, to provide a tourist, recreational, cultural and/or heritage attraction.

6.7 Agriculture

With the envisaged development of a compact city within the confines of the Development Limit, development in the Buffer Zone and Green Belt will generally be limited to agriculture and other rural resource-based activities.

Agriculture policy

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-AG-1** Facilitate sustainable agricultural activities within the Buffer Zone and the Green Belt.

Agriculture objective

It is the objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- O-AG-1** Protect high-quality agricultural land within the Buffer Zone and Green Belt.



6.8 Mineral extraction – natural resources

The importance of the mineral extraction industry to Sligo is recognised, as is its contribution to the local economy by the creation of employment and the provision of building materials. The aggregates (stone, sand and gravel) and concrete products industry contributes significantly to economic development. It is therefore important that the local authorities, particularly the County Council, strive to ensure a continued supply of aggregates and concrete products, by safeguarding valuable and unworked deposits for future extraction.

Extractive industry and associated development in the SEDP area will be required to minimise any adverse effects upon the environment and local community. To ensure this, all such industries will be required to follow an environmental code of practice and include in the plans for such sites rehabilitation programmes for worked-out quarries. It is necessary to view the continued development of these quarries in the context of achieving a balance of social, economic and environmental costs, ensuring that extraction and development are consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

In assessing development applications relating to existing or proposed quarries, the Planning Authorities will have regard to the guidance document *Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG, 2004).



Natural resources policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-NR-1** Ensure that the extraction of natural resources is consistent with the principles of sustainable development.
- P-NR-2** Seek to safeguard valuable, unworked deposits for future extraction.
- P-NR-3** Ensure that on completion of quarrying operations, sites are restored and left in a satisfactory state to be of beneficial after-use.
- P-NR-4** Seek the reuse of worked-out quarries for recreational, industrial, ecological and other appropriate uses following appropriate restoration.
- P-NR-5** Ensure that aggregate extraction, processing, delivery, and associated concrete production are carried out in a manner which minimises adverse effects upon the environment and the local community.
- P-NR-6** Encourage the recycling of construction/demolition waste, particularly from local authority projects, as an additional source of aggregates for future developments.
- P-NR-7** Minimise the impact of quarrying on residential and natural amenities through rigorous licensing, development management and enforcement measures.
- P-NR-8** Encourage sustainable development proposals – subject to normal planning criteria – that can demonstrate a commitment to good environmental management through the implementation of recognised environmental management practices approved by the Planning Authorities.

Natural resources objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NR-1** Protect the natural resource reservation and existing quarrying operations at Aghamore and Carrowmadoo, by ensuring that any developments in the vicinity do not have a negative impact on the existing or future potential quarrying operations.

Chapter 7. Housing

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

The local authorities' role is to formulate policies offering a range of options towards direct housing provision and assistance towards persons unable to house themselves from their own resources, to consider planning applications for private housing, and to ensure that sufficient lands are zoned to meet the projected housing demand. The Councils are both the housing authorities and the planning authorities, and in these roles they have the capacity to influence the supply, location and scale of new housing within their functional areas.

Table 7.A Additional households in need of accommodation in the SEDP area 2010–2020

Population change scenario	Additional no. of households in need of accommodation between 2010 and 2017	Additional no. of households in need of accommodation between 2017 and 2020	Total no. of households in need of accommodation between 2010 and 2020
Low-Growth Scenario	2,314	779	3,093
High-Growth Scenario	3,406	1,340	4,746
Revised NSS-target Growth Scenario	4,056	1,210	5,266

Source: Roger Tym and Partners & Jonathan Blackwell - *Sligo City and County Joint Housing Strategy 2010-2017*



Ard Finn residential development

7.1 Housing Strategy

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires planning authorities to prepare Housing Strategies for their areas and include the key provisions in the Development Plans.

Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council have prepared a Joint Housing Strategy for the period 2010–2017. The document is an integral part of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010–2016. It will also be incorporated into the County Development Plan.

The Housing Strategy reflects the objectives contained in the Regional Planning Guidelines in relation to housing.

The key findings of the Housing Strategy are presented below.

- On the basis of a continuing decline in projected household sizes and population figures corresponding to the three population change scenarios (refer to Section 4.1), it is estimated that the number of additional households (i.e. in addition to the 2006 census figures) requiring accommodation in the Sligo and Environs area by 2020 will be a minimum of 4,185, and a maximum of 8,345 (see Table 7.A for requirements post-2010). For the period up to 2017, the figures will be a minimum of 3,406 and a maximum of 7,135.
- It is estimated that between 2010 and 2017, the number of social and affordable housing units required in the whole County will range from 1,342 to 2,247 under the Revised NSS-target and High Growth scenarios, and from 1,006 to 1,680 under the Low Growth scenario.
- Within the Sligo and Environs Development Plan area, social and affordable housing unit requirements during the period 2010–2017 are estimated to range from 560 to 935 under the Low Growth scenario, 827 to 1,385 under the High Growth scenario, and from 981 to 1,642 under the Revised NSS target scenario.
- During the period 2010 to 2017, direct social and affordable housing provision is estimated to be in the region of 600 units in total in the County Council and the Borough Council areas, subject to DoEHLG funding arrangements.
- The capacity of lands already zoned for residential development in the SEDP 2004–2010 is adequate to meet the overall housing requirements during the lifetime of the SEDP 2010–2016.
- In Sligo County as a whole, any future land zoning should be based upon the Settlement Strategy adopted as part of the County Development Plan 2005-2011 and acknowledged by this Plan, with the Gateway City of Sligo given priority for future development.

Strategic housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- SP-HOU-1** Encourage an increased supply of private housing in the Sligo and Environs area and support the creation of sustainable communities through the provision of an appropriate range of housing types and high-quality residential environments.
- SP-HOU-2** Ensure that the needs of older citizens, people with disabilities and other special-needs persons and households are adequately and sustainably catered for in new developments.
- SP-HOU-3** Implement refurbishment and improvement schemes to maximise the utilisation of the existing social and affordable housing stock in the Sligo and Environs area.
- SP-HOU-4** Establish a register of eligible households interested in acquiring affordable housing.
- SP-HOU-5** Set aside 20% of eligible sites, which are the subject of new residential development (or a mix of uses including residential) for the development of social and affordable units, in accordance with the Housing Strategy and Part V requirements.

Strategic housing objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- SO-HOU-1** Implement the Joint Housing Strategy of Sligo Borough Council and Sligo County Council.
- SO-HOU-2** Continue to monitor the extent of zoned lands in the Sligo and Environs area to ensure that sufficient land is zoned to accommodate housing demand over the Plan period.
- SO-HOU-3** Ensure that 20% of all sites eligible for Part V is set aside for the development of new social and affordable residential units.
- SO-HOU-4** Continue with the programme of refurbishment and regeneration of existing local authority housing stock.

7.2 Existing and future housing development

The land use pattern in the Sligo and Environs area is characterised by limited residential development within the city centre, combined with expansive low-density housing estates and ribbon development in the outer city and on its fringes. The typically low densities of outer-city estates do not support sustainable development or the provision of community services and facilities within or close to these areas, such as public transport, shops or crèches, as indicated by vacant shop units in existing neighbourhood centres in Cartron and Crozon.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Residential Density Guidelines of 1999¹, developments in recent years have adopted a higher density range, with an increased number of apartments built particularly in the City Centre.

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

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

Development should be designed to promote efficient use of land and energy, and should provide an attractive living environment which respects its context.

The approach towards future housing provision will largely depend upon the location and context of a particular proposed development. Detailed policies regarding the future provision of housing at various locations are set out in sections 7.2.1 to 7.2.5.

1. The 1999 Residential Density Guidelines have been updated with the publication of the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas - Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG) in December 2008.

2. A live/work unit is a property combining a workplace (usually small business unit) and a home, in which the operators of the workplace / business use the unit as their principal residence. The commercial aspect of the unit is secondary and is restricted to uses that are compatible with the protection of adjoining residential amenities.

3. Home zones are residential streets or areas which are designed so as to ensure that pedestrians, cyclists and residents have priority over the car.

General housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

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

GP-HOU-2 Require high quality and innovation in the layout and design of new residential developments, particularly with regard to:

- a. environmental sustainability and energy efficiency;
- b. site layouts and internal layouts that may incorporate live/work units² and/or home zones³;

GP-HOU-3 Ensure the provision of a suitable range of house types and sizes to facilitate the changing demographic structure of modern society, and in particular the increasing trend towards smaller household sizes.

In private housing schemes, the following mix of house types should generally apply:

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

GP-HOU-4 Ensure, through the development management process, that access points to backland areas are reserved or that adequate road frontage is reserved to provide future road access to enable comprehensive backland development.

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

GP-HOU-6 Ensure that all apartment and mixed-use developments provide for estate management so as to preserve the amenity, quality and visual character of the development, to ensure adequate maintenance of common facilities and areas, and encourage tenant involvement and participation in estate management. (refer also to the Development Management Standards - Chapter 16).



Semi-detached houses at Rusheen Ard



Apartments at Rusheen Ard



Residential units at Strandhill Road

7.2.1 The City Centre

The increase of population within the city centre, with its range of employment, recreation, educational, commercial and retail uses can help to curtail travel demand. Higher population in city-centre areas can also assist in urban regeneration, as it will support local services. In order to maximise city-centre population numbers, no upper limit on residential density is proposed for these areas, subject to compliance with the various quantitative and qualitative standards set out in this Plan. Particular potential exists with regard to the infilling of gap sites and the redevelopment of brownfield sites.

The traditional city centre of Sligo is defined as those lands zoned C1 (refer to the Zoning Map). It is anticipated that the city centre will expand into adjoining lands zoned C2 and, accordingly, the same principles will generally apply to areas zoned C1 and C2.

Within the city centre, streets such as Wolfe Tone Street, John Street, Mail Coach Road, Church Street and Chapel Street have a strong residential character. Whilst the zoning objectives for these areas allow for a mix of uses, the protection and promotion of residential uses within the city centre is crucial to creating a vibrant and safe city centre. The recent trend towards apartment living in the City Centre is encouraging. With a national and local trend toward smaller household sizes, combined with Sligo's high percentage of young workers and students, the demand for apartment accommodation and smaller housing units is likely to continue to increase in the coming years.



Old houses at John Street



City-centre housing at Mail Coach Road

7.2.2 The Inner City

Established residential areas

The inner city, immediately outside the city centre, incorporates old residential areas and public/institutional lands. While the relative merits of these established uses are acknowledged, there may be scope for additional residential development in appropriate cases.

Regarding the older established residential areas, the Councils recognise the value of such areas in providing a range and variety of housing types close to the centre. These areas have also built up substantial social and community linkages. It is therefore important to protect the residential character and social relations that exist in these areas.

At appropriate locations, however, there may be opportunities for infill development, subdivision of existing units or replacement of structures with more suitably designed proposals. The Borough Council will therefore consider such proposals whilst acknowledging the need to ensure a balance between the reasonable protection of existing residential amenities, the established character of the area and the need to provide for sustainable residential development.

While large-scale, comprehensive redevelopment of established residential areas may be appropriate in certain cases, this should be dealt with in the context of preparing local area plans for selected parts of the city.



Institutional lands

A considerable amount of developable land is in institutional use and / or ownership, and enjoys an excellent location that is convenient to the City Centre and existing residential areas. Such properties usually contain large buildings set in substantial open lands, which in some cases may offer a necessary recreational or amenity open space opportunity required by the wider community.

The Councils have acknowledged the potential of some of these sites for residential uses and zoned land accordingly to allow for the development of these lands, subject to the appropriate retention of the open character of these lands. To compensate for the open space retention, higher densities should apply in appropriate parts of these sites.

City Centre housing policies	
It is the policy of Sligo Borough Council to:	
P-CC-HOU-1	Ensure that a high priority is given to locating residential development within the existing city centre, utilising brownfield sites, infill/gap sites, and upper floors of city centre areas ("living over the shop").
P-CC-HOU-2	Promote apartment and higher-density development in the City Centre (areas zoned C1 and C2).
P-CC-HOU-3	Encourage the retention of residential uses in existing residential properties within the city centre in order to maintain the distinct visual and social character of various city-centre areas.

Inner City housing policies	
It is the policy of Sligo Borough Council to:	
P-IC-HOU-1	Encourage, where appropriate, redevelopment and regeneration in existing residential areas, including proposals for additional residential units and the introduction of new uses that are compatible with residential development.
P-IC-HOU-2	Improve the residential amenities of existing residential areas where necessary, through traffic calming, environmental improvements, provision of open spaces, landscaping, tree planting and the provision of community facilities.
P-IC-HOU-3	Ensure a balance between the reasonable protection of existing residential amenities, the established character of an area, and the need to provide for sustainable residential development.
P-IC-HOU-4	Consider the large-scale, comprehensive redevelopment of established residential areas in the context of Local Area Plan preparation.
P-IC-HOU-5	Ensure that any proposals for redevelopment of institutional lands incorporate the retention of suitable existing open spaces and landscape features for the use and enjoyment of the general public.

Inner City housing objective	
It is the objective of Sligo Borough Council to:	
O-IC-HOU-1	Support the redevelopment of institutional lands zoned for mixed residential and commercial uses at Summerhill College, Ursuline College and the Grammar School.

7.2.3 The Outer City

The vast majority of greenfield sites zoned for residential development are found in the outer city areas, which vary significantly in terms of available infrastructure and environmental sensitivity. There is therefore a need to distinguish between the development potential of outer-city areas in terms of appropriate residential density levels.

Higher-density areas

Lands that are well served by existing/planned infrastructure (particularly transport infrastructure) and are close to employment areas and local services are considered suitable for higher-density residential development.

In Sligo, such lands can generally be identified as stretching from Carrowroe, along either side of the Inner Relief Road and railway line, to Caltragh and further to Finisklin. Accordingly, the majority of lands zoned for medium- and higher-density residential development are located in this area.

Generally, all lands zoned MIX-1 and MIX-2 are considered appropriate for medium/high-density residential development. In certain cases, however, depending on the site context, lower densities may be necessary.

Lower-density areas

The outer city also contains areas which are more sensitive in ecological, environmental and visual terms. It is important that such areas provide an appropriate transition between the built-up continuum and the countryside.

For example, at locations such as Carns Hill, Tonaphubble, Farranacardy, Rathbraughan and Shannon Oughter, elevated topography imposes visual constraints, while lands in the vicinity of the Garavogue River and Lough Gill present a combination of visual, environmental and ecological constraints.

In order to minimise environmental and visual impacts, most residential lands in these areas are zoned for low- and medium-density development. The provision of quality housing at lower densities also ensures a greater choice of house types within the Sligo and Environs area. This may assist in counteracting an unsustainable demand experienced in County Sligo for the development of one-off housing in the countryside, or alternatively in small rural settlements within the Sligo Subregion.



Medium-density housing at Tonaphubble

Outer city housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-OC-HOU-1** Promote apartment and higher-density development in suitably zoned areas of the outer city, particularly in mixed-use development zones, neighbourhood centres, along strategic transport corridors and close to public transport nodes.
- P-OC-HOU-2** Facilitate lower-density development within the outer city on lands zoned R1 and, in appropriate cases, on lands zoned R2.

Neighbourhood Centres objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- O-NEC-1** Facilitate the regeneration of the neighbourhood centres at Cartron and Crozon by encouraging a variety of new uses, including small-scale business and enterprise units or starter units, in addition to community and neighbourhood uses.
- O-NEC-2** Promote and facilitate new neighbourhood centres at the following locations:
 - o Cornageeha
 - o Caltragh
 - o Finisklin
 - o Lisnalurg
 - o Hazelwood (as identified in the Hazelwood-Ballinode LAP)
 - o Shannon Oughter (as identified in the North Fringe LAP)
 - o Ballytivnan
- O-NEC-3** Reinforce and encourage consolidation of development in the following areas, where characteristics of neighbourhood centres are existent or emerging:
 - o Crozon
 - o Merville
 - o Ballinode
 - o Cleveragh
 - o Carrowroe
 - o Cartron
 - o Oakfield

7.2.4 Neighbourhood Centres

Section 6.5 Retail Strategy (Subsection 6.5.7) outlines a future structure of neighbourhood centres in Sligo City.

The envisaged neighbourhood centre network seeks to provide strong focal points for residential areas, thereby creating a sense of place and community.

The purpose of designating neighbourhood centres is to reinforce some existing places with emerging neighbourhood-centre features (i.e. Ballinode) or to create new neighbourhood centres to serve existing or future residential areas (i.e. at Caltragh).

To be successful, a neighbourhood centre needs to be well connected to surrounding residential areas, with good access for pedestrians and cyclists. In order to maximise the potential catchment population of neighbourhood centres, high-density residential development will be permitted at these designated locations, if appropriately balanced with the provision of other local services and facilities.

Two neighbourhood centres in Sligo – Cartron and Crozon – have failed to provide some of the essential elements aimed for. In order to address some of the difficulties they are experiencing, small-scale business and enterprise units or starter units will be encouraged to locate at these centres. The planning authority will take a flexible view towards the redevelopment of vacant units for other uses.

Neighbourhood Centres policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-NEC-1** Promote the development of neighbourhood centres to serve the needs of new or expanding residential areas with basic facilities, such as local convenience shops, community facilities, childcare facilities, children’s play-grounds etc.
- P-NEC-2** Encourage mixed-use developments at all neighbourhood centres, with a horizontal as well as vertical mix of uses, e.g. apartments or offices over shops.
- P-NEC-3** Facilitate the development of new residential units where this helps to consolidate existing neighbourhood centres by increasing the population needed to sustain local facilities such as shops, crèches, schools and public transport. Any such proposals should retain an appropriate balance between residential and commercial uses.
- P-NEC-4** Support social inclusion through the development of neighbourhood centres with a range of facilities catering for people of different ages, incomes and social backgrounds.

7.2.5 City Fringes – rural housing

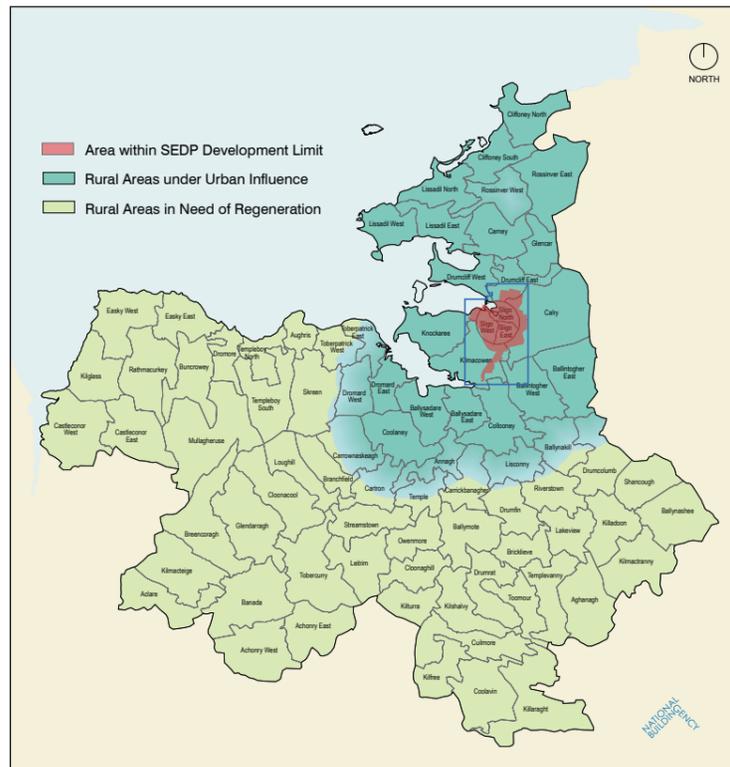


Fig. 7.B Sligo - Rural Housing Policy Map (CDP 2005-2011)

The rural environs of Sligo City continue to experience strong pressure for one-off housing development. Government Policy on rural housing is set out in the Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2005),

The Guidelines state that piecemeal and haphazard development in rural areas close to large urban centres (i.e. rural areas under strong urban influence) can cause problems in relation to the orderly and efficient development of urban fringe areas, by obstructing the alignment of future infrastructure.

Piecemeal development undermines the viability of public transport provision, because of low densities, and creates further problems in terms of demands for higher public expenditure on social and physical infrastructure.

Sligo's rural environs contain a spectacular natural environment and heritage, along with natural resources, which have been identified for protection in other chapters of this Plan. Uncontrolled growth of piecemeal development in rural areas could damage these assets irremediably.

As highlighted in the DoEHLG Guidelines, it is important to distinguish between different types of rural areas. In this context however, the entire rural area of the Plan (i.e. the area between the Development Limit and Plan Limit) is considered as a rural area under strong urban influence.

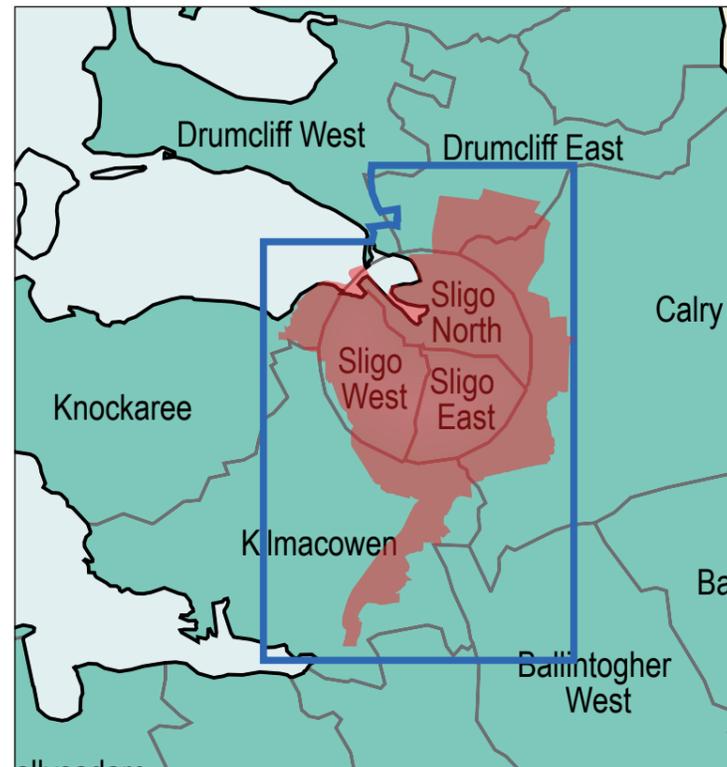


Fig. 7.C The SEDP rural area is under strong urban influence

Rural-generated housing

Within the designated rural area under urban influence, it is necessary to distinguish between rural-generated housing needs and urban-generated housing needs. The Councils acknowledge the long tradition of people living in this rural area and the important social and economic links that exist in certain circumstances. Therefore, suitable rural-generated housing proposals will be facilitated, subject to all other standard design and servicing requirements.

Rural-generated housing is defined as the housing needed by:

- persons whose primary employment is in a rural-based activity with a demonstrated genuine need to live in the locality of that employment base, for example, those working in agriculture, forestry, horticulture etc.;
- persons with a vital link to the rural community in which they wish to reside, by reason of having lived in this community for a substantial period of their lives, or by the existence in this community of long-established ties with immediate family members;
- persons who, for exceptional social or other circumstances, can demonstrate a genuine need to reside in a particular rural location;

In applying sympathetic consideration to bona fide farmers, returning emigrants and such applicants claiming exceptional circumstances, the overriding concern of the Councils will be the resultant net community benefit accruing to an area by permitting further residential development.

Urban-generated housing

Urban-generated housing can be defined as housing in rural areas sought by persons living and/or working in urban areas who do not have a vital link to the rural area in question. It includes proposals for the provision of second homes and holiday homes. Frequently, this demand takes the form of ribbon and/or sporadic development, thereby introducing the various problems outlined earlier.

Proposals for urban-generated housing development will be discouraged, in the interests of sustainable development and the preservation of the rural environment. Exceptions to this policy may include proposals for replacement of existing dwellings, including derelict dwellings which clearly exhibit the fundamental characteristics of a dwelling (i.e. external walls and roof are substantially intact).

Consideration may also be given to proposals for one-off houses on gap sites that exist within areas where ribbon development is already substantially in place.

Rural housing policies	
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:	
P-RHOU-1	Facilitate one-off rural housing in the cases of genuine rural-generated housing need, whilst discouraging urban-generated one-off rural housing proposals.
P-RHOU-2	Ensure that any proposals for one-off housing on zoned lands within the development limit do not adversely impact on the potential for comprehensive and co-ordinated development of surrounding lands.
P-RHOU-3	Ensure that one-off rural housing proposals do not adversely impact on the rural landscape or surrounding properties by reason of character and scale. In particular, proposals in areas which are visually and/or environmentally sensitive will be strictly controlled.
P-RHOU-4	Require that all one-off rural housing proposals comply with EPA standards and guidelines for effluent treatment, and all other development management criteria and standards.
P-RHOU-5	Facilitate suitable proposals for replacement dwellings and for the provision of infill development on gap sites within established patterns of substantial ribbon development.



Terraced housing at Holborn Street



Local authority housing at Rathbraughan



Houses at Connaughton Road

7.3 Social and affordable housing

In addition to private sector provision, housing needs can be met from a variety of sources, including local authority development and the voluntary and co-operative housing sector, under an array of different tenure and contract forms.

Local authorities are required to prepare comprehensive multi-annual plans for the delivery of social and affordable housing programmes in line with national policy and social partnership agreements. These multi-annual plans also deal with the regeneration, refurbishment, maintenance and management of the existing local authority housing stock and address provision by the voluntary and co-operative housing sector.

Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council have prepared a *Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan*, which continues to be reviewed twice annually in conjunction with the DoEHLG and brought in line with achievable targets and available budgets.

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended by the Planning & Development (Amendment) Act 2002) is another means through which the local authorities can provide social and affordable housing.

In accordance with the provisions of Part V of the Act, it is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to require 20% of all land zoned for residential uses (or for a mix of residential and other uses) to be reserved for the purpose of social and affordable housing. (Refer to Section 7.1 and the Strategic Housing Policies). Prior to commencement of development, applicants will be required to enter into an agreement under these provisions.

The Councils recognise the need to avoid undue over-concentration of social housing in any particular area, especially adjoining existing social housing estates. The Councils will have regard to this concern in dealing with all new housing development proposals.

Social and affordable housing objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- O-SA-HOU-1** Prepare and implement an updated *Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan* to address direct housing provision and assistance towards housing provision.
- O-SA-HOU-2** Continue with the programme of refurbishment and regeneration of existing Council housing, including the preparation of a masterplan for the Cranmore area and adjacent lands, in the context of the envisaged Cranmore-Cleveragh Local Area Plan.

Social and affordable housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-SA-HOU-1** Promote social inclusion by ensuring that social and affordable housing is well distributed throughout all residential areas rather than concentrated in a few locations.
- P-SA-HOU-2** Ensure that development in areas subject to an agreement under Section 96 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 is integrated with the rest of the surrounding development, so as to avoid undue social segregation.
- P-SA-HOU-3** Ensure that the supply of housing units under the Housing Strategy reflects the current and anticipated demographic characteristics and household sizes.
- P-SA-HOU-4** Encourage linkages between existing public and private housing areas through the provision of shared facilities, services and pedestrian/cycle and vehicular connections, as appropriate.
- P-SA-HOU-5** Maintain the condition of existing social housing units and continue to carry out essential remedial works as funding permits.
- P-SA-HOU-6** Implement a broad-based *Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan* in line with national policy and funding commitments.
- P-SA-HOU-7** Promote joint ventures or public-private partnership arrangements with the private and voluntary sectors for the provision and management of housing.
- P-SA-HOU-8** Purchase houses on the open market as part of the annual housing programme in areas where a housing demand exists and where the houses represent value for money.
- P-SA-HOU-9** In lieu of building new Council housing, where practicable, improve or extend privately-owned houses, to eliminate defects or overcrowding problems.
- P-SA-HOU-10** Where a particular need is identified, provide housing schemes designed for the needs of older people and/or those with special needs. Otherwise, housing schemes shall be provided as a suitable mix of house types and designs which can be easily adapted to accommodate special housing needs.

7.4 Traveller accommodation

The 2006 Census recorded a total of 128 families (319 persons) living in temporary housing units in County Sligo. The more recent (2008) Assessment of Traveller Accommodation Needs carried out within Sligo Borough and County indicates that there are approximately 87 Traveller families living within the County.

The local authorities recognise the distinct culture and lifestyle of the Traveller community and will endeavour to provide suitable accommodation for Travellers who are indigenous to the area, using the full range of housing options available, such as standard lettings in local authority estates, lettings in voluntary housing schemes, group housing schemes, halting sites, single/stand-alone housing where required etc.

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

The local authorities carried out an assessment of Traveller accommodation needs during 2003 and prepared a *Traveller Accommodation Programme* for the years 2005–2008. The local authorities are currently in the process of reviewing this Programme, and a new *Traveller Accommodation Programme* will be prepared in 2009 for the period 2009–2012.

Traveller accommodation objectives	
It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:	
O-TA-HOU-1	Provide appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of Travellers through the implementation of the <i>Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005–2008</i> and the subsequent <i>Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009–2012</i> , when adopted, and the Joint Housing Strategy.
O-TA-HOU-2	Provide Traveller accommodation at Alma Terrace, Glenview Park (Ash Lane), Finisklin, Cleveragh and Bundoran Road (refer to the Objectives Map).



Student accommodation at Clarion Village

7.5 Student accommodation

With the recent expansion of the Sligo Institute of Technology and its student numbers, it is important that adequate student accommodation is provided. The 1999 Finance Act introduced a new scheme of tax relief (which expired in 2008) for investors in student accommodation. Largely due to the incentives of this scheme, recent years have seen a significant increase in the quantity and quality of student accommodation on lands that were reserved for such uses in accordance with the previous Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2004–2010.

Having regard to the extent of student accommodation already provided in the city, and the expiration of the Section 50 Student Accommodation Scheme, it is anticipated that there will be no demand for additional student accommodation during the period 2010–2016. However, the local authorities will monitor this situation.

Student accommodation policies	
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:	
P-ST-HOU-1	Facilitate student accommodation on student campuses or in locations with convenient access to the third-level colleges (particularly by foot, bicycle and public transport), in a manner compatible with surrounding residential amenities.
P-ST-HOU-2	Apply the <i>Guidelines on Residential Developments for Third Level Students</i> (Department of Education and Science, 1999) to all planning applications for student accommodation, particularly in relation to location and design.
P-ST-HOU-3	Promote the provision of adequate accommodation for students with disabilities.
P-ST-HOU-4	Monitor the need for the reservation of additional lands for student accommodation

7.6 Voluntary and cooperative housing

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

Although delivery in Sligo has been modest to date, the Councils will continue to involve the voluntary and cooperative housing sector in the provision of social housing in their functional areas and discussions are ongoing regarding existing and future proposals, particularly regarding the provision of housing to meet special needs categories.

Traveller accommodation policies	
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:	
P-TA-HOU-1	Provide for the accommodation needs of Travellers, as far as is reasonable and practicable, using the full range of housing options available to the local authorities and having regard to the policies outlined in the <i>Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009–2012</i> .
P-TA-HOU-2	Consider the submissions of Travellers, their representative organisations and those of the local communities in relation to the siting, planning and design of prospective halting sites or group housing schemes, so as to avoid social conflict and promote social inclusion.
P-TA-HOU-3	Provide and manage halting sites in a manner compatible with the local environment and the needs of the Traveller community, based on management plans set up in co-operation with Traveller families. Halting sites will be subject to the detailed design standards outlined in the Department of the Environment's <i>Guidelines for Residential Caravan Parks for Travellers</i> (October 1997), and normal development management standards.

Voluntary and cooperative housing policies	
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:	
P-VC-HOU-1	Assist voluntary and non-profit cooperative housing associations in the provision of housing and encourage a more active involvement of these sectors in the housing market.

7.7 Special-needs housing

Sligo Borough and County Councils recognise the need to accommodate the housing requirements of those with special needs and those in circumstances that require a particular approach to housing needs.

7.7.1 Older people

The changing demographics and the aging of the nation's population pose strategic challenges for society in general, and particularly for the development of responsive health and social policies.

As a key social policy area, housing is a function that needs to adapt in order to meet changing needs in terms of the growing numbers of older people. The Councils will therefore work with various bodies and agencies, as well as the private sector, in facilitating suitable proposals for the accommodation of older people.

7.7.2 Accommodation for persons with special needs

Where the housing requirements of such persons are identified, these needs can be met by direct provision of accommodation by the local authorities within their Building Programme, or in conjunction with the HSE or the voluntary sector. It is noted that over 10% of Sligo residents have a disability – the seventh highest county rate in the State (CSO 2006).

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

7.7.3 Accommodating homeless persons

Sligo Borough Council has enlisted the services of two agents in dealing with homelessness in Sligo, namely Sligo Social Services Ltd and Finisklin Housing Association Ltd. Through close liaison with these organisations, the needs of homeless persons can be proactively addressed.

The DoEHLG has published a *Homeless Strategy 2008–2013*. On the basis of the Strategy's recommendations, it is anticipated that the Councils will prepare a new Homeless Action Plan in consultation with the Sligo Homeless Forum.



Globe House - temporary refugee accommodation

7.7.4 Refugees

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

Special-needs housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-SN-HOU-1** Continue to support independent living for older people and the provision of specific, purpose-built accommodation.
- P-SN-HOU-2** Continue to meet the housing needs of persons with special needs both by direct provision of accommodation and by facilitating the provision of housing by the voluntary sector and the HSE.
- P-SN-HOU-3** Continue to implement the following grant schemes: Housing Adaption Grant for People with Disability, Mobility Aids Grant and Housing Aid for Older People Scheme.
- P-SN-HOU-4** Promote a partnership approach between the HSE, disability interest groups, voluntary housing associations and the local authority in meeting the particular needs of people with disabilities and the elderly.
- P-SN-HOU-5** Facilitate the provision of suitable accommodation for the homeless and for those in need of emergency accommodation.
- P-SN-HOU-6** Implement the provisions of DoEHLG's *Homeless Strategy 2008–2013*.
- P-SN-HOU-7** Ensure that housing developments accommodating the elderly, the disabled and the households least likely to own cars have easy and convenient access to local facilities and to public transport.
- P-SN-HOU-8** Support proposals for the provision of sheltered housing, and work with the various bodies and organisations responsible for the provision of this type of accommodation.

Special-needs housing objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- O-SN-HOU-1** Prepare and implement an updated Homeless Action Plan.

Chapter 8. Community facilities



St Michael's Family Life Centre

Social infrastructure in Sligo consists of a diverse range of social clubs, recreation and sports organisations, community development, residents' associations and support groups, in addition to educational and health services that mark the city's importance as a regional centre.

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

Community facilities - objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-CF-1** Reserve a site at Carrowroe for the construction of a private hospital, respite home, GP unit, consultants' suites and ancillary facilities.

8.1 Delivering community facilities

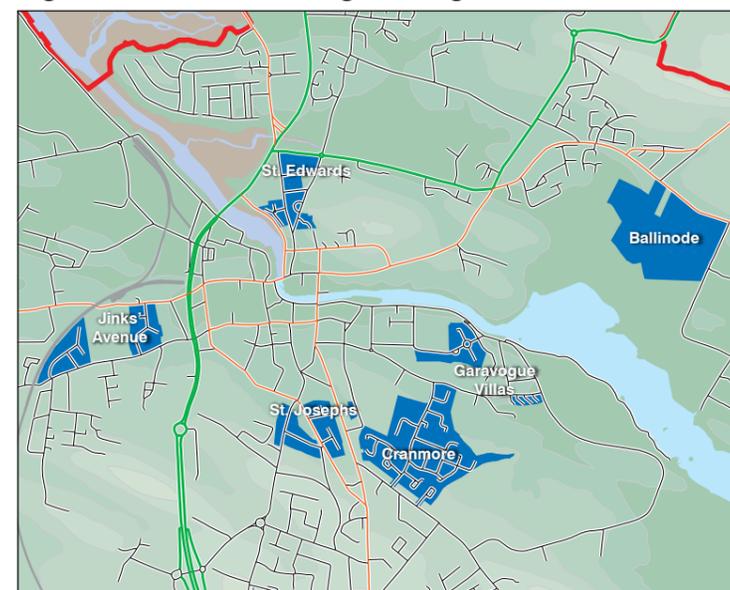
The Council recognises the importance of community participation in the improvement of existing community facilities, and encourages increased involvement of local groups, independently and in association with the relevant statutory bodies, in the future development of the city.

Despite the broad range of services on offer, the level and standard of current provisions are deemed to be inadequate, with improvements in local services and local community facilities required. The Borough and County Councils will ensure that local-level participation is facilitated and reinforced through stronger partnerships, thereby enabling the development of an effective social infrastructure to cater more adequately for the needs of the current and future population.

One of the mechanisms through which this can be more easily achieved is the local area plan process, where specific requirements and needs can be identified and addressed at the local or neighbourhood level.

Another structure in which the local authorities are involved is the RAPID Programme (Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development), which is a focused Government initiative to target the most disadvantaged urban areas and provincial towns in the country. Under this programme, community representatives from the designated RAPID areas engage with state agencies involved in service delivery in their estates, and issues are resolved through prioritising resources and ensuring service integration.

Fig. 8.A RAPID areas in Sligo Borough



Community facilities – general policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- GP-CF-1** Assist as far as possible in the provision of community facilities by reserving suitably-located land, by assisting in the provision of finance for their development (where appropriate and if resources are available), and/or by the use of the development management process to ensure provision is made for such facilities as the Councils consider appropriate.
- GP-CF-2** Encourage high standards in the design and finish of community facilities.
- GP-CF-3** Continue to apply development levies to provide for recreational and community facilities relating to new developments
- GP-CF-4** Optimise existing and proposed physical resources and infrastructure by supporting multi-functional building use and provision.
- GP-CF-5** Recognise the importance of community participation in the improvement of existing community and recreational facilities, and encourage increased involvement of local groups, both independently and in association with the relevant statutory bodies, in the future provision of such facilities.
- GP-CF-6** Encourage the siting of community facilities in suitable locations, especially within large residential / neighbourhood areas, or in close proximity to existing facilities / services and public transport routes.
- GP-CF-7** Work with relevant agencies in identifying areas for the provision of quality social infrastructure.
- GP-CF-8** Promote social inclusion by exploring ways to integrate minority groups into the community and by supporting the development of fully-integrated communities, catering for people of different ages and incomes.
- GP-CF-9** Encourage the establishment of specific bodies and programmes to facilitate the integration of those with special needs, and people of all age groups.

8.2 Education facilities

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

Sligo has a wide range of education facilities from primary schools to third-level colleges, catering for approximately 10,000 students. There are fifteen primary schools, five post-primary schools, two third-level institutions, a Youthreach programme, an Adult Arts Education facility, and a FÁS training centre.

The Department of Education and Science has estimated that, if Sligo were to accommodate 35,000 additional residents, 27 acres would be required to serve an additional school population of 4,200 in six new primary schools, and 36 acres would be required for 2,975 pupils in three new post-primary schools.

It is considered that education and related uses should be favourably considered within a variety of land-use zoning categories, thereby ensuring sufficient flexibility to accommodate these future needs.



Institute of Technology, Sligo

With regard to third-level education, the Institute of Technology (IT) and St. Angela's College are connected with Sligo City. There are plans for the further expansion of the IT, with an overall aim to eventually reach university status and the potential to serve up to 6,500 students.

St. Angela's College, of the National University of Ireland Galway, currently serves over 800 students. While the College is not situated in the Plan area, it has an important role to play in the local economy of the City and Environs.

The Adult Arts Education Centre, the Youthreach Training Centre and a Regional FÁS Training Centre in Sligo complement the existing primary and post-primary educational structure. The FÁS centre provides apprentice and adult training in basic and advanced industrial skills to meet the needs of local businesses.

There are three special-needs schools for young children in the Sligo and Environs area. The educational services for those with special needs are limited, with the existing facilities stretched due to their wide catchment area (there are only five such schools in total in the County).

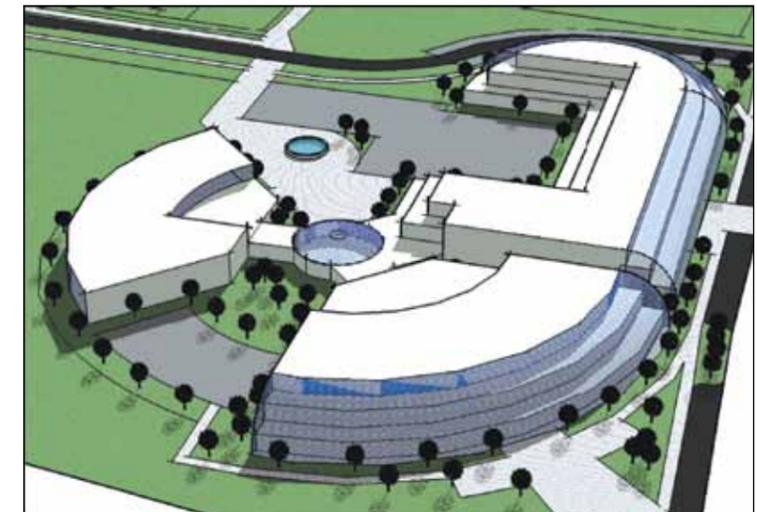
Education facilities policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-CF-ED-1** Support the provision of additional land for educational uses through the consideration (on suitable sites) of such facilities in a wide variety of land-use zoning categories, in particular lands zoned for community facilities, mixed uses and residential development.
- P-CF-ED-2** Promote the location of new schools close to areas with significant population or where residential expansion is proposed, and preferably near community facilities (such as community centres, playing fields and libraries) and public transport services.
- P-CF-ED-3** Support the educational institutions in their plans to expand and develop, in particular the Institute of Technology and its potential development towards university status.
- P-CF-ED-4** Promote the development of facilities connected with outreach programmes between businesses and the third-level institutions (e.g. Business Innovation Centre at Sligo IT), whereby Sligo can develop as a centre for excellence in research and development.
- P-CF-ED-5** Encourage and support the development of further educational facilities and training programmes to ensure a suitably skilled local workforce, including those for children and adults with special needs.
- P-CF-ED-6** Encourage facilities connected with the integration of those with special needs into the education system of streamlined schools.
- P-CF-ED-7** Support Sligo's schools in the upgrading and modernisation of their building stock so as to ensure that these institutions can accommodate the anticipated population growth.
- P-CF-ED-8** Ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided concurrent with the development of an educational facility. Such infrastructure may include footpaths, pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes, parking facilities, ramps and facilities for those with special needs.



Summerhill College



A possible design for an environmentally-friendly school

(extract from the Draft North Fringe Local Area Plan prepared by the National Building Agency on behalf of Sligo County Council)

8.3 Healthcare, social and crisis facilities

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

Sligo is served by a range of public and private health care services and facilities, including Sligo General Hospital, the Mental Health Service on St. Columba Road, Markiewicz House Day Centre, St. John's Hospital (all of which are run by the HSE) and St. Joseph's Hospital (a private hospital).

There are also general practitioners, consultants, opticians and dental surgeons in private practice in the city.

In relation to facilities for the disabled and those with special needs, there is a small number of primary schools and day care facilities. However, this area is not adequately resourced, with these bodies covering a catchment area that includes Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan. There is a lack of facilities for those aged over 18, with a limited number of places available in training programmes.

There is currently a shortage of emergency accommodation available, with a further facility/land required. There is presently no crisis accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic violence in Sligo or Leitrim. The nearest women's refuges are at Longford, Castlebar or Letterkenny.

Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (DVAS) is a not-for-profit group funded by the HSE to deliver support services. DVAS is involved in the development of a crisis refuge in Sligo City in partnership with Sligo County Council and the HSE.

Healthcare, social and crisis facilities policies	
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:	
P-CF-HSC-1	Support health service provision for people with learning disabilities and special needs.
P-CF-HSC-2	Encourage the integration of health services and facilities with new and existing community facilities, where feasible.
P-CF-HSC-3	Promote the location of health services and care facilities on sites convenient for pedestrian access and public transport.
P-CF-HSC-4	Facilitate the needs of Sligo Social Services and DVAS, particularly in relation to the development of emergency accommodation for homeless people and victims of domestic violence.
P-CF-HSC-5	Support existing healthcare facilities in their plans to develop and expand.

8.4 Facilities for older people

As highlighted by the 2006 census, 13.2% of the combined population of Sligo Borough and Environs is 65 years and older (the percentage was 11% nationally in 2006), with an upwards trend that will have important implications for the demand for care services in the future (the proportion for Sligo and Environs was 12% in the 1996 Census).

At present, Nazareth House, St John's Hospital, Garden Hill and Mowlam Nursing Home provide care for older people. Due to the increase in this age cohort nationally and in Sligo, it is important that the needs of the older people are catered for in the future, with additional nursing care capacity and sheltered housing to be provided.

There are several community groups catering for the needs of older people in various residential areas of the City. The Councils will continue to support the work of these community groups. There is a notable gap in older persons' social and day-care activities in the West Ward.

Facilities for older people - policies	
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:	
P-CF-OP-1	Facilitate further development in the area of health and social care facilities for older people.
P-CF-OP-2	Support community groups who cater for the needs of older people, where appropriate and feasible.

8.5 Childcare facilities

National policy recognises that childcare facilities are integral to economic and social wellbeing. Sligo County Childcare Committee (SCCC) is the body responsible for the co-ordinated delivery of quality childcare within County Sligo. The Committee operates under the National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010 (NCIP). SCCC has developed a Strategic Plan for the period 2007-2010, which outlines the framework for the implementation of the NCIP within County Sligo.

According to the 2006 Census, 16% of the combined Sligo Borough and Sligo Environs population was aged between 0 and 14 years (national average was 20.3%, County average was 19.5%). This has implications in terms of the social infrastructure in the city, particularly with regard to childcare facilities.

The key findings and recommendations of the SCCC Strategic Plan, in relation to the Sligo and Environs Plan, are as follows:

- childcare provision in RAPID areas is almost exclusively community-based (90%);
- provision in non-designated areas of the city is predominantly private (73%).



Nursing home at Nazareth House

- community-based facilities focus mainly on sessional activities and an increased range of provisions (i.e. full-day care, drop-in services) should be encouraged.
- an expansion of school-age childcare services (i.e. catering for 4-14 year-olds outside of school hours) is required, and the shared use of school facilities should be encouraged.

The Councils will consider the SCCC Strategic Plan in dealing with the future provision of childcare facilities, and will also have regard to the DoEHLG's 2001 publication *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.

Childcare policies	
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:	
P-CF-CC-1	Work with the Sligo County Childcare Committee in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2007-2010 and successor documents in the City and Environs area.
P-CF-CC-2	Consider childcare needs in future local area plans and residential development proposals.
P-CF-CC-3	Encourage the establishment of appropriate childcare facilities in suitable locations, such as neighbourhood centres, areas of concentrated employment, in the vicinity of schools, adjacent to public transport corridors and /or pedestrian areas, and in larger new housing estates.
P-CF-CC-4	Have regard to the DoEHLG's <i>Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> (2001). In applying standards regarding the provision of childcare facilities in larger residential developments, the Planning Authorities will practice flexibility by considering the provision of multi-purpose community facilities in certain cases, as appropriate.
P-CF-CC-5	Support proposals that provide an improved variety of childcare services (both in terms of childcare providers, i.e. private/community, and childcare type, i.e. sessional services/full-day care), having particular regard to the deficits identified in the SCCC Strategic Plan 2007-2010.

8.6 Community development

Sligo has a number of community centres, which perform a variety of functions. These community centres enable local groups and organisations to offer a range of services to the local community including: educational resource help, childcare, employment training, services for older people and the socially excluded and recreational facilities.

In order to facilitate community groups, a range of improved facilities for these community halls, alongside improved funding, is required. The Councils recognise this vital and vibrant community resource and are committed to supporting these groups in their endeavours.

To this end, the local authorities will work as co-ordinators between the local groups and statutory bodies, to assist in the future planning and development of the city from a local level. Sligo RAPID Programme supports the development and resourcing of these groups within the RAPID areas.

Community development policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-CF-CD-1** Facilitate and assist, where possible, social and community development in Sligo City and Environs.
- P-CF-CD-2** Encourage a partnership approach between local community groups, statutory bodies and other organisations in the identification, provision and maintenance of community facilities, such as community centres and related indoor/outdoor recreational facilities.



St Anne's Youth Centre

8.7 Burial grounds

The previous Development Plan (2004-2010) included the reservation of lands (3.48 acres or 1.41 hectares) to the north-east of the existing cemetery for future expansion of burial grounds. These lands have not yet been used and it is proposed to retain this reservation in order to suitably provide for burial needs in the future.

Taken in conjunction with the remaining spaces in the existing cemetery, and having regard to current demand trends, it is estimated that the cemetery has sufficient capacity for a further 50–60 years.

In enabling the sustainable use of this land, account should be taken of the most efficient use of the cemetery land for present and future generations, as well as alternatives to burial, such as cremation.

The expansion area should be designed along the principles of a green-lawn cemetery, where plots are defined by individual headstones, but do not require individual stone sets around each plot (i.e. non-kerbed spaces).

In addition, it is recommended that an area be set aside as a Garden of Remembrance to accommodate columbaria¹ and provide a tranquil area for reflection.



Sligo Cemetery has enough capacity for another 50-60 years

Burial ground policy

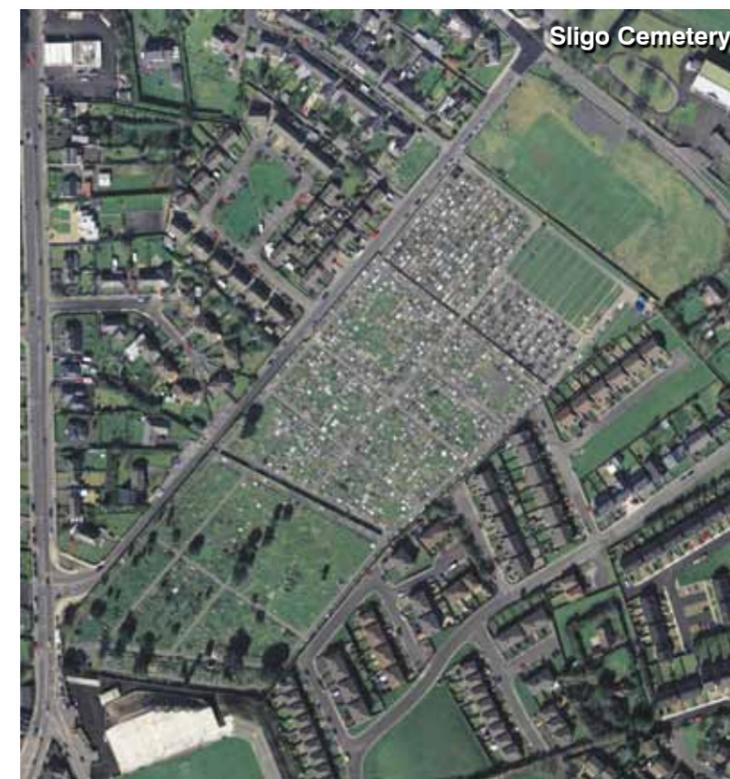
It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-CF-BG-1** Encourage sustainable use of burial ground lands, including the consideration of alternatives to burial and innovative burial ground layout and design.

Burial grounds objective

It is an objective of Sligo Borough Council to:

- O-CF-BG-1** Reserve lands for cemetery expansion to the north-east of Sligo Cemetery.



1. A columbarium (pl. columbaria) is a structure of vaults lined with recesses for urns containing ashes of the cremated dead.

Chapter 9. The value of culture in place-making



Sligo Museum and Model::Niland Gallery extension (Sheridan Woods Architects + Urban Planners)

Culture is a broad term which, in addition to cultural services, such as Libraries, Arts, Museum and Heritage, encompasses a range of characteristics which help to define an area and its population, including customs and traditions, language and literature. A city's culture also finds expression in its architecture, its urban design and the relationship its people have with their natural environment and the public realm. Sligo's rich cultural heritage reflects a history which dates from Norman times to today's modern, vibrant society. The city's culture finds expression in a range of cultural buildings and amenities, including art galleries, theatres, libraries and public buildings generally, while it is also reflected in its architecture, built form and public realm.

Culture underpins quality of life for individuals and communities in addition to forming part of urban value systems. It underpins city identity and is important in how cities project themselves, develop profile and compete in the international arena for investment. As a Gateway city Sligo needs to have a high standard of cultural and arts infrastructure in order to maintain its attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit.

9.1 International experience

Over the past twenty years, many cities around the globe have come to recognize the economic and social benefits that flow from the creative economy, and are now implementing proactive policies to nurture and promote creative and cultural activity.

In world cities like New York, Berlin or Barcelona, in smaller centres like Austin (Texas), Newcastle, Rotterdam or Antwerp, to historic towns such as Mantua in Italy, Randers in Denmark, Kronoberg in Sweden, the development of the creative economy has become a strategic priority, and not only for generating wealth and employment opportunities.

Creative and cultural activity enhances a city's quality of place, helps to reclaim and revitalise neighbourhoods and shapes a city's identity in the face of increasing competition for talent, investment, and recognition. Creative and cultural activity is also a powerful vehicle for community development and engagement, providing opportunities for economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods and social groups. The local public library and art centre are now one of the few publicly accessible buildings acting as a free and democratic forum within communities.

The benefits

- Evidence suggests that by helping to create positive images, the cultural sector has a direct impact on inward investment. Many place-marketing strategies, for example, focus on new cultural offerings, on the presence of artists and creative people and cultural industries in general.
- In addition, there is vast literature showing that spending on cultural activities has a 'multiplier effect' of a factor of approximately 1.5 on income and employment with regard to local economies. People going to the major arts venues – theatres, galleries, museums, cinemas and festivals – spend money on bus or taxi fares, on meals in restaurants, on related publications and so on. This produces significant

medium- to long-term effects on the local economy in terms of employment, income and domestic product.

- A broader and more strategic issue than that of the 'economic benefits of the arts' as traditionally understood is the recognition of the key role of contemporary cultural industry development in forms ranging from publishing to television, video production and design. The cultural industries are claimed to be the fourth or fifth fastest growing sector in the world's developed economy. In global cities such as London or New York, the cultural industries employ more than 500,000 people. In both these cities, investment in culture is seen as a key goal of their global competition strategies.
- Cultural activity is also increasingly used as a key catalyst in urban regeneration projects. Examples of culture-led regeneration projects might be the design and construction, or re-use, of an ex-industrial building for public use or for hosting creative businesses. In the UK, for example, the Baltic and Sage Music Centre in Gateshead, Tate Modern in London or the Lace Market in Nottingham are examples of the positive effects of culture-led urban renewal.
- Culture's role in tourism is key – tourism offers are now increasingly focused on what is unique in a place. Tourism is one of the main sources of economic growth for some countries (regions, or cities) with international indicators suggesting that tourists are increasingly less interested in "showpiece" resorts and destinations, and more interested in the unique environmental, cultural, heritage, ethnic and historical features of a place. Cultural tourism, in particular, represents an average of 6% to 8% of a nation's GDP in Europe, so a

9.2 Cultural policy and planning in Sligo

Culture and cultural policies can provide a crucial contribution in terms of urban development. In Sligo, the strategic development plans of the local authorities' Cultural Services (i.e. Library Service, Heritage Service and Arts Service and the Community and Enterprise Department) provide the basis for the safeguarding and development of the cultural and artistic life of Sligo City and County. Collectively, these services provide the best possible pre-conditions for further development opportunities, within the framework of the municipal cultural policy. The cultural planning remit of the County Development Board is set out in the Integrated Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development 2002-2012 and its associated action plans, together with the work of Sligo Leader Partnership, add another important dimension.

9.3 Cultural infrastructure

Sligo city already has a number of quality public arts and cultural institutions including art galleries, theatres and public buildings, such as Hawk's Well Theatre, the Factory Performance Space, Sligo Art Gallery and the Yeats Memorial Building.

It is a key objective of this Plan to bring this infrastructure to the highest international standard with the re-development of the Model Niland and the development of a new Museum and Central Library.

Sligo Borough and County Councils recognise the contribution made by artists, including visual and performing artists, to the city's cultural life. Emerging artists, in particular, often experience difficulty securing both living accommodation and working space when competing on the open market. It is recognised that Sligo Borough and County Councils have a responsibility for direct provision of infrastructure to meet their needs. This can mean providing for studio and exhibition space in addition to rehearsal and performance space. Urban regeneration can provide opportunities for the provision of such spaces in formerly vacant buildings or as part of new mixed use developments.

9.4 Public art

Sligo Borough and County Councils are committed to the development of art within the public realm and the provision of art through the Percent for Art scheme. Large mixed use schemes can also provide opportunities to ensure the provision of public art through the development control process. The exhibition of artistic features on a temporary basis in public places will also be encouraged.

The Model with rear extension (courtesy Sheridan Woods)



9.5 Culture and place-shaping

The spatial framework and fabric of Sligo, in both the city centre and outer city, is evolving in response to the economic and cultural energies and needs of its population. The ability of Sligo Borough and County Councils to harness these energies, and to direct change in a way that creates attractive and dynamic urban places, is dependent largely on making a commitment to urban values.

Urbanism is concerned with the culture of cities and the elements and qualities that are to be found in successful urban places e.g. legibility, connectedness, strong identity, intensity, diversity and quality in the public domain. Urban philosophy acknowledges complexity and diversity as essential characteristics of innovative and creative cities, and incorporates strategies to structure and manage these characteristics in a holistic way.

The extent of critical challenge outlined above must find expression in a breadth of vision which prompts not only a reflection and focus on the role of Sligo city as the Gateway to the North-West, but stresses the need to integrate social, economic and cultural dimensions into a coherent and developing spatial structure.

Sligo's lively and well developed cultural infrastructure provides an excellent basis to consolidate its reputation as a cultural centre from which to develop the cultural and artistic potential of the city on a long-term basis. However, in order to achieve the benefits highlighted, cities and smaller places must be treated in a sustainable way (socially, economically, environmentally) by respecting their cultural values. In other words, to be effective and sustainable, tourism, cultural and regeneration strategies need not only to work across disciplines and local government departments, but also, crucially, they need to be based on a thorough assessment of the distinctive cultural and urban character of a place. This means that given the economic, environmental human and social resources that we have in the city, all our actions should ensure that these resources are maintained and enriched.

The development plan offers a flexible framework to foster a sense of place and develop community identity in the city core and outer fringe areas. It proposes a sustainable vibrant city focusing on the intensification of the core area and it protects the future of Sligo City Centre as the heart and pulse of the North-West Gateway region. The spatial challenge is nothing less than the creation of a Twenty-First-Century heart for Sligo City. The plan looks at the need to integrate an economic, cultural and social vision, while achieving necessary and sustainable densities within co-ordinating development frameworks.

Critical elements of this framework include the development of a series of local character areas within the inner city as a way of understanding the overall structure of the city and its component parts. Character areas in the city centre are geared to promoting diversity, building local identity and facilitating a local area management approach. Exploiting valuable elements such as the river, major urban spaces and key pedestrian routes are geared to create unity in how the city is used.

Cultural clusters can help give definition to these character areas. Thus a priority will be to embrace the emergence of cultural clusters which are seen to be increasingly important in underpinning quality of life and developing depth in Sligo's national and international profile. A legibility study is proposed for the city to identify a coherent new spatial structure based on character areas located across the city centre. Linkages between cultural buildings can also be developed through pedestrian routes or heritage trails, which also link into the wider public realm and help to connect major public spaces.

Many of the city's cultural amenities are concentrated in the city centre at the The Mall, Hyde Bridge, Quay Street, John Street and Temple Street. However, there is now increasing awareness that other areas of the city, including the Docklands and Cranmore, also have a rich cultural heritage. Masterplans and other types of development frameworks promoting the regeneration of these areas should make provision for new cultural amenities. The identification of clusters of cultural amenities in these areas, and the development of linkages between them and the city centre, will help to attract visitors to areas previously regarded as remote from the central core.

9.6 Cultural planning

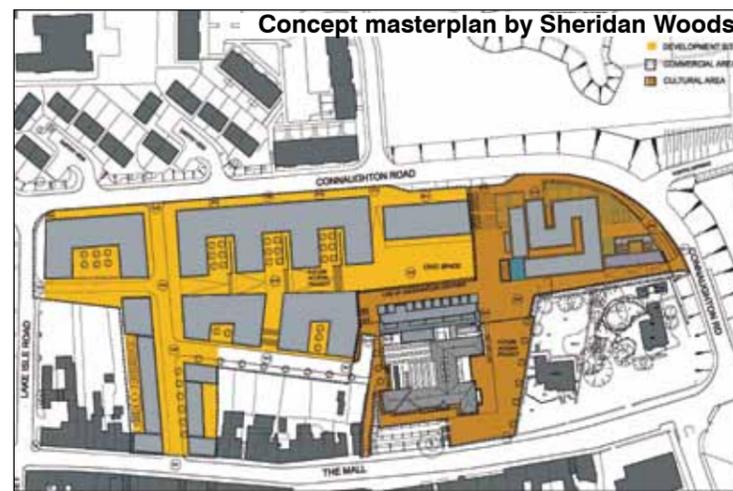
Cultural planning is a powerful tool in achieving good urbanism as it draws on the distinct culture and resources of a place. In cultural planning, the ecosystem analogy has been used to support the following principle: “a place is made up of diverse resources which need to be surveyed, acknowledged and understood before policy can intervene”.

In this case, the cultural identity of a community comprises who the people are and their backgrounds, tastes, rituals, experiences, diversity, talents and aspirations for the future. The cultural richness of a place is also governed by local heritage attributes and the natural and built qualities that attracted residents to the area. These are also resources, which make up the distinctive cultural DNA of a place.

Cultural mapping is a technique that can be used to define a community’s activities, capacities and needs. Such broad-spectrum mapping of the local culture can provide vital information to policymakers about the best way to respond more effectively to local needs while maximising opportunities.

Cultural planning often challenges existing “received” perceptions about the culture of a place. It takes a holistic, rather than a service or department viewpoint, and is not bounded by the responsibilities of a specific department or committee. It seeks to make links with other existing plans and to create bridges between different local constituencies and groups of interest so that duplications of tasks are avoided, new energy is injected into the policy-making task and innovative ideas can be explored and implemented.

The cultural planning method is shown to be effective in delivering innovative solutions for tackling either image problems, city-to-city competitiveness, economic and social capital development or, cultural tourism issues.



9.7 Culture-led regeneration in the Green Fort area

Sligo County Council’s Cultural Planning Working Group applied the cultural planning method when considering the potential, image and distinctive assets for culture-led regeneration in the Green Fort area.

The distinctive and unique sense of place and character of Sligo City and County are largely formed by its landscape, history and heritage. These merge in a spectacular manner at the Green Fort in the north-east inner city, a point that provides 360° panoramic views of Sligo Town, Ben Bulbin, Cope’s Mountain, Killery Mountain, Slieve Daeane, Carns Hill, Knocknarea and Sligo Bay from the city centre.

9.7.2 Development potential in the Green Fort area

There is huge potential for change in the north-east inner city due to the number of significant projects actively engaged in, or considering, redevelopment proposals. These include:

- the Model::Niland Gallery redevelopment and new Museum opening onto a new civic square;
- Sligo Regional Hospital and proposed co-located private hospital;
- development of the new City Library;

- the mixed-use (PPP) development project between Connaughton Road and The Mall;
- Forthill Park.

Together with the Eastern Garavogue Bridge project, the redevelopment of these sites could realise the potential for a pedestrian-dominated and accessible part of city with good permeability and connectivity. This will empower local communities, improve the viability of the cultural institutions and public spaces, facilitate economic development, and – crucially – attract people to live or spend more time in the city centre.

9.7.3 A “touchstone” and orientation point

There is an opportunity to optimise the potential synergies between the above-mentioned developments in the Green Fort area to address many of the core challenges facing Sligo City today including:

- a. encouraging creative and cultural activity to build on Sligo’s reputation and enhance the identity of the city;
- b. creating an animated civic space for people, that reflects the richness and diversity of contemporary and traditional culture of Sligo in its design and programming;

- c. facilitating a focal point for enterprise and entrepreneurship partnership initiatives linked to the IT, Hospital and cultural centres to contribute to sustainable economic development;
- d. attracting people to live in the city by enhancing local amenity, places to go and things to do;
- e. engaging with visitors to the county and encouraging longer stays in the city;
- f. creating a more legible and animated public domain through the Public Art Programme to create liveable streets and connected “streets of play and creativity” along walking routes;
- g. encouraging a modal shift from the culture of car use to the use of public transport, cycling and walking;
- h. providing suitable coach parks and drop-off areas for tourists to explore the city.

The Green Fort area has the potential to provide a “touchstone” or orientating point that will engage people with the city and landscape, highlighting topographical, archaeological and artistic features throughout the city and wider environs. This can be appreciated on numerous different levels and reflected in the design and programming of the civic space in particular.

The civic space can therefore play a pivotal role for a wide range of people of different ages and interests. The space is much more than a destination – it is an entrance point to many diverse facilities and a crossing point on key routes through the city.

Forthill Park has the potential to become a major public space for all people living in or visiting the city, be they residents, commuters, shoppers, tourists, users of the Regional Hospital or students. The civic space can be an integral part of the success of the Park, by providing support amenities and a main linkage space with the city.

9.7.4 Encouraging footfall

The challenge of increasing footfall and overcoming the peripheral perception of the area can be achieved through encouraging sustainable and complementary commercial uses, providing an outdoor public events programme for families, young and older people, and by facilitating collaborative enterprise initiatives and connections with other destination points in the city (Hospital, IT, Forthill Park). The project can also support the aim to increase residential density and living in the city through the provision of quality, “green”, sustainably-designed homes adjacent to the new City Park.

Careful consideration of vehicular access to Forthill Park, the proposed mixed-use development and the General Hospital will allow the creation of a series of attractive and safe public spaces linking the IT with the Docklands along Connaughton Road and across the river, and the transport hub at the railway/bus station with the IT along Wine Street/The Mall.

This will contribute to the regeneration of Connaughton Road and the Mall, and promote transition points in a north-south direction, most notably at the Model, where the Green Fort area can connect down to the river.

The civic square at the Model and Museum (the proposed Museum Square) will therefore be at a crossing point of several routes through the city linking key destinations by foot or cycle.

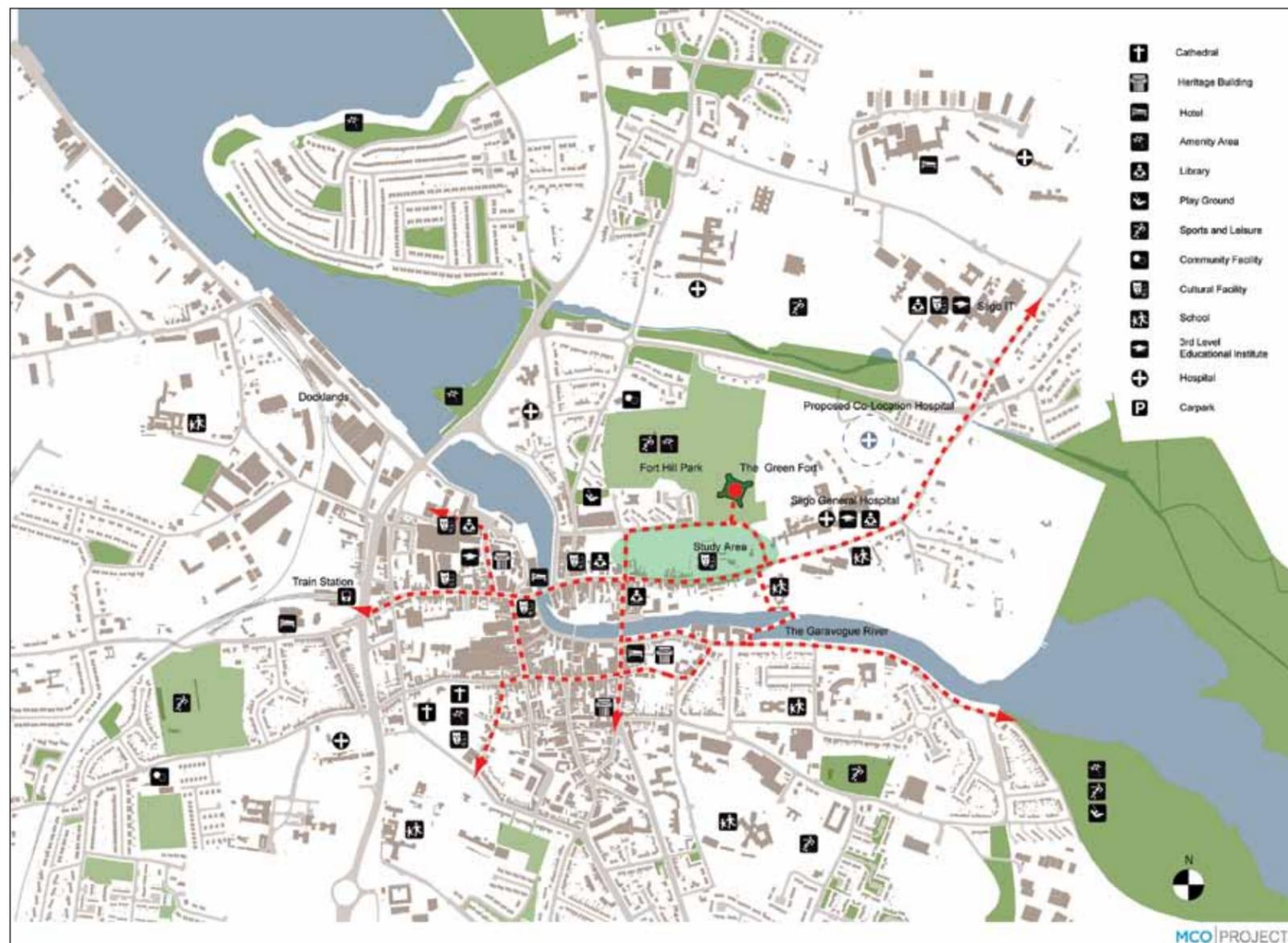


Fig. 9.A The Green Fort’s central, prominent location and 360° panoramic views of Sligo’s surrounding landscape make it suitable to become an orientation point for visitors and a high-amenity area for residents (map of links and facilities courtesy of MCO Projects)

9.7.5 Economic development

Future development around the Green Fort area presents an opportunity to reflect the character of Sligo and contribute to the city as “creative space”, clearly connected physically, conceptually, and through enterprise and social initiatives in partnership with the local community, local authorities, the private sector, development agencies, the HSE and the Institute of Technology.

The aim will be to cluster activities that harness and inspire a culture of creativity in Sligo, resulting in significant economic benefits.

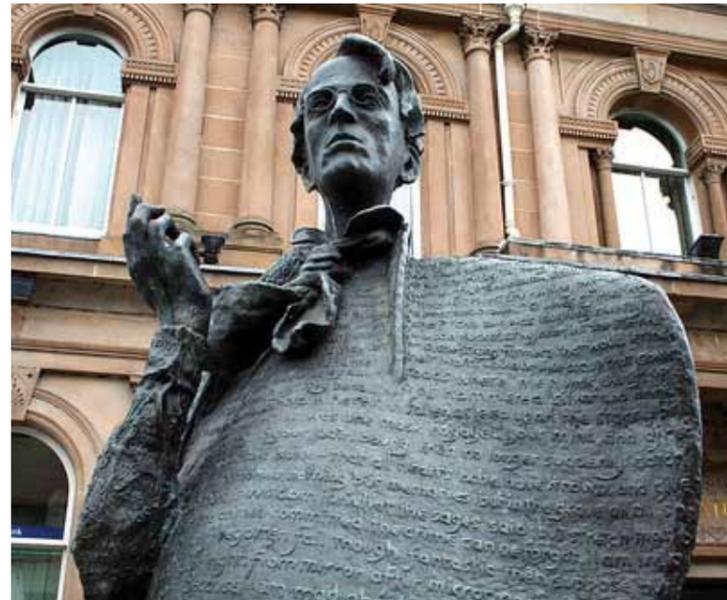
9.8 Cultural tourism and Sligo's Yeatsian legacy

A key component of this "urban and cultural ecosystem" is the promotion of cultural continuity through respect for historical assets (architecture and archaeology) and the promotion of cultural activities (such as those related to the Yeats family, traditional music, literature and painting etc.).

Such support for cultural projects could provide significant opportunities for the development of major new tourism "honeypots", and the promotion of Sligo as a *must-visit* destination.

The City and Environs could benefit greatly from a strengthened image or theme in terms of tourism promotion. Although firmly established by the work of the Yeats Society, Fáilte Ireland, the local authorities and others, Sligo's world-renowned connection with the Yeats family has been under-exploited in terms of achieving the level of destination brand-awareness that should be possible, given the significance of the family's contribution to twentieth-century world cultural heritage.

There is a unique opportunity to provide strategic leadership and to support the establishment of Sligo as a key destination for the Yeats legacy.



Cultural development objectives

It is an objective of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- O-CD-1** Examine, in conjunction with the Arts Council and other relevant bodies, the feasibility of:
 - establishing live-work units and work spaces for artists;
 - establishing a number of shared storage and rehearsal spaces for theatre, film, music and the visual arts in low-cost locations.
- O-CD-2** Provide a pedestrian trail along the north and south banks of the Garavogue and Lough Gill as part of an overall linear park system.
- O-CD-3** Explore the possible provision of a heritage trail in the City and Environs that might include such features as the St. John's Cathedral, the Courthouse, the City Hall, Old Market Street, the Abbey, Forthill, the Famine Graveyard and the archaeological monuments of Carrowmore.
- O-CD-4** Promote the development of a venue building and/or concert hall in the Docklands that could be used for a variety of live entertainment, music concerts, recitals, drama, comedy and dance, including events such as the Sligo Choral Festival.

The development of such a facility could be provided as part of a public-private partnership project.
- O-CD-5** Improve and enhance access to Carrowmore Passage Tomb Cemetery by means of road improvements and co-ordinated signage from city centre and main approaches.

Cultural development policies

It is the policy of Sligo Borough and County Councils to:

- P-CD-1** Identify cultural and/or heritage clusters and ensure the provision of appropriate linking infrastructure, including signage, pedestrian routes and heritage trails, to ensure that cultural and heritage buildings are linked to one another and to the wider public realm as part of a coherent spatial structure.
- P-CD-2** Ensure a high-quality public domain in the vicinity of cultural and heritage buildings and, where possible, ensure that such buildings are linked to public spaces and to the wider open space network. A priority of this plan will be to support the development of high-quality, imaginative solutions to public space linkages for Forthill Park, the Green Fort and the area of the Civic Space.
- P-CD-3** Recognise the unique role of the city centre in providing a focus for the performing arts, including drama and music, and the extent to which these contribute to the vitality of the city centre. To this end, Sligo Borough Council will encourage and facilitate the development and retention of high-quality cultural amenities. Priorities of this plan include the redevelopment of The Model Niland as a contemporary art centre with a dedicated gallery for showcasing the Niland Collection. The space will also include the proposed new state of the art Museum and Civic Space which is intended to link the gallery and the museum and comprise a mix of housing and commercial activity. The buzz of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurialism generated by the clustering of cultural production and consumption in the Greenfort area will make Sligo a more attractive place for city living.
- P-CD-4** Ensure that all of the city's residents have access to cultural amenities including the arts, theatre and music. Sligo Borough Council will actively encourage and support the provision of local arts initiatives in the four wards of Sligo city.
- P-CD-5** Add to the cultural diversity of the city by facilitating the provision of new spaces for artists to live, work and exhibit. In particular, support the regeneration of Sligo's Docklands area through the provision of a cultural landmark building and the innovative reuse of former industrial buildings located in the area for workspace for creative enterprises and new community uses.
- P-CD-6** Promote the provision of public art, including temporary art and sculpture, through such mechanisms as the government-supported Per Cent for Art scheme and the development management process.
- P-CD-7** Promote the exhibition of sculpture and other works of art in parks, open spaces and other focal points in the city.
- P-CD-8** Facilitate street theatre and outdoor performance through the development or enhancement of appropriate public spaces with the necessary lighting, cabling, sufficient wall space for outdoor projection, surfaces etc.
- P-CD-9** Meet the cultural needs of disabled and mobility-impaired persons.
- P-CD-10** Identify areas around the city where carnivals, circuses etc. can perform on an annual basis, thus adding variety and colour to the local area.



Public Art at Salmon Point

The public art installation at Salmon Point amenity area was commissioned by Sligo Borough Council and Sligo County Council and funded by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government "Per Cent for Art" Scheme to mark the construction of the Sligo Wastewater Treatment Plant opened in 2009.

Nine sculptural artworks have been installed at Salmon Point. The sculptures have been specifically designed for the area by artist Stephen Hurrel.

By introducing colour and intriguing shapes to the amenity area, the artist hopes that more people will find the site interesting and welcoming.

Each of the five wood and steel constructions is based on designs of nautical signal flags.

*Each signal flag represents a message as well as a letter of the alphabet. The 'hidden message' in the five pieces spells out **SLIGO**.*

