Proposed Material Amendments to draft
REGIONAL SPATIAL AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY
for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly
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1 Introduction

The Northern and Western Regional Assembly is in the process of preparing and adopting a Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Region. A Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy has been prepared, which was subject to public consultation between November 2018 and February 2019. The Assembly considered submissions/Observations made in respect of it and has decided to propose Material Amendments to it. The Assembly is now seeking your views respect of the Proposed Material Amendments before deciding whether to include these proposed Material Amendments, with or without further non-material amendments.

What is an RSES?

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy provides a high level development framework for the Northern and Western Region, which supports the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and economic policies and objectives of Government. It provides a 12 year strategy with a vision to 2040 and it provides a solid foundation to deliver transformational change that is necessary to achieve the objectives of the NPF. It provides a framework for investment to better manage regional planning and economic development throughout the Region.

Purpose of this report

This report is presenting the proposed material amendments to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The Regional Assembly at its meeting of 26th April 2019 considered the submissions received during the public consultation of the draft RSES and proposed amendments to the draft RSES. This report contains the Material Amendments that were proposed.

How to read this report

The Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region are numbered and set out in this document.

The proposed material amendments are set out in a sequential order following the layout and as they appear in the Draft RSES – it follows the same chapter and section numbering as the draft RSES, and should be read in conjunction with the draft RSES.

The document identifies the section to which the Material Amendment is proposed; the Ref No of the Material Alteration Proposed and a Description. The Description is colour coded, Green font provides a further explanation regarding the location of the proposed material Amendment within the section and new RPOs are identified in red font, whilst amended RPOs are identified in blue font.

Where possible RPOs that are being replaced or amended, the original wording and proposed wording are shown (ie. From: ‘original wording’ To: ‘proposed wording’).

To assist in the interpretation of the proposed material amendment to the RPOs an appendix has been included which provides the detail of all the RPOs in the draft RSES and where there are proposed amendments to these RPOs. In addition a draft working document (in development) with the proposed amendments, both material and non-material, is accessible on the NWRA website, to provide an indication of how the proposed amendments may integrate into the general structure and presentation of the final document to be considered by Members.

For information purposes the Director’s Report and Addendum Report prepared in relation to submissions received to the Draft RSES consultation is also available on www.nwra.ie for viewing.
Process to date

The Assembly commenced the process with an Issues Paper that was made available for public comment between 20th November 2017 and 16th February 2018. It sought submissions on relevant strategic planning and economic development matters. 171 submissions were received during the consultation process and a Director’s Report on the submissions was prepared.

The Northern and Western Regional Assembly commenced a pre-draft consultation on the RSES on 27th November 2017, which concluded on 16th February 2018, coinciding with the publication of Project Ireland 2040 (National Planning Framework) and the National Development Plan. 124 submissions/observations were received to this consultation. A series of consultations were undertaken with a variety of stakeholders and evidence gathered and the comments received informed the Draft RSES.

The Northern and Western Regional Assembly resolved to make the Draft Plan at its Meeting on 9th November 2018 and the consultation process on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) subsequently commenced on 19th November 2019 and closed on 8th February 2019 with 1055 submissions/observations.

A Director’s report on the submissions was prepared for the Assembly and as required under section 24(8) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Members considered the Draft Plan and the Director’s Report on submissions or observations made during the public consultation process. At this meeting the Assembly proposes material amendments to the Draft RSES and determined that an SEA and AA were necessary on these proposals. The Assembly further decided on 26th July to publish the material amendments from 4th August 2019 to 11th October 2019 and invite submissions from the public.
Note:

Public Consultation

It is only the Proposed Material Amendments that are being placed on display and to which submissions can relate. An Environmental Assessment Report has been prepared to supplement the SEA Environmental Report; Regional Flood Risk Appraisal Report; and Natura Impact Report previously prepared on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031.

A copy of the Proposed Material Amendments, the Determination that a Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment are required, together with the above mentioned Environmental Assessment Report are now placed on public display and a copy may be inspected during normal office hours from 4th August 2019 to 11th October 2019 (both dates inclusive) at the following locations:

1. The Office of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly, The Square, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon.
2. Throughout the Local Authority network within the region.
3. On the NWRA website at www.nwra.ie

Written submissions or observations with respect to the Proposed Material Amendments or the updates to the Environmental Report or Natura Impact Report may be made between 4th August 2019 and 5pm on 11th October 2019 (both dates inclusive) through one of the following media:

Online: www.nwra.ie/RSESMA
Email: rsesma@nwra.ie

The Regional Assembly will consider all submissions or observations made in writing in respect of the Proposed Material Alterations within the stated period before making the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy with or without the proposed material amendments.

Please note that submissions or observations may be published on our website and will be subject to Freedom of Information legislation.

Next Stages

Following the public consultation of the proposed material amendments the members of the Regional Assembly shall make the regional spatial and economic strategy with or without the proposed material amendments.
## 2 Material Alterations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section of Draft to which Material Alteration relates</th>
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<th>RPS SEA/AA/FRA Cross reference #</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>MA1</td>
<td>New RPO – OVERARCHING ENVIRONMENTAL REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVES (Page 39 Draft RSES)</td>
<td>Page 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. The Assembly supports the integration of biodiversity considerations in a positive, proactive and precautionary way and promotes the protection of the environment and biodiversity conservation as key principles of the strategy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.6B &amp; 3.6D</td>
<td>MA2</td>
<td>The Assembly has decided that a consistent approach to Regional Centres be adopted and to this end the following text in relation to Letterkenny and Athlone be included in the RSES instead of that at Section 3.6B and 3.6D, thus replacing the text in the Draft RSES at Page 82 – 109 and Page 136 – 137</td>
<td>Pages 42 - 49</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LETTERKENNY REGIONAL GROWTH CENTRE STRATEGIC PLAN</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>See section 2.3 for Letterkenny RGCP</td>
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<td>ATHLONE REGIONAL GROWTH CENTRE STRATEGIC PLAN</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>See section 2.4 for Athlone RGCP</td>
<td>Pages 50 - 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>MA3</td>
<td>Add after 1st paragraph (Page 70 Draft RSES) New RPO</td>
<td>Pages 32</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>It is an objective to establish a collaborative approach between the Regional Assemblies (NWRA, SRA), the Local Authorities and other stakeholders to enable all their metropolitan areas to collaborate with each other to harness their combined potential as an alternative to development of Dublin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.6A</td>
<td>MA4</td>
<td>The prioritisation framework for projects in the MASP are identified using the following notations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Short Term (S) 0 – 6 years</td>
<td>Page 32</td>
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<td>Medium Term (M) 6 – 12 years</td>
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<td>Long Term (L) 12 – 20 years</td>
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<td><strong>The notation is included with particular objectives below. Include the New Objectives:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1. Support the delivery of the infrastructure projects outlined below in order to develop the MASP as outlined in the strategy (S)</td>
<td>Page 33</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A. Galway City Ring Road (S)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>B. Galway East main Drainage Wastewater Treatment Plan (S/M)</td>
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<td>C. Galway Transport Strategy (S/M/L)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>D. Galway Drainage Area Plan (S/M)</td>
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<td>E. Galway City Water Supply Scheme (S)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>F. Galway City Main Rehabilitation Contract (S)</td>
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<td>2. Support the regeneration and development of the city centre sites at Galway Harbour, Ceannt Station and Headford Road (S/M)</td>
<td>Page 34</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. 50% of new homes for the population target shall be constructed within the existing City Development Envelope, 40% of these shall be constructed on infill and/or brownfield sites.</td>
<td>Page 35</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>4. Support the provision of a dual railway track between Galway and Athlone (M/L)</td>
<td>Page 36</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Support the delivery of lands for employment uses at Knocknacurra/Rahoon, Mervue, Dangan, Parkmore, Briarhill, Airport and Oranmore.</td>
<td>Page 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Support the provision of Childcare, Education and Health Services within the same timeframes as the residential and employment uses outlined above.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7. The Assembly supports the preparation of an Urban Framework Plan for the Airport Site and its immediate hinterland for residential, community and employment use. The plan will pertain to the area shown on the map below:

8. The Assembly supports the retention of existing agricultural land within the MASP and only in exceptional circumstances would it support the development of new residential or commercial uses on un-serviced green field sites.

9. The Assembly supports the designation of a technological University in the Region which will be partially located in Galway; in order to complement existing 3rd level educational facilities and to foster the innovative knowledge-based economy of the region.

10. It is an objective of the Assembly to support the delivery of a modern hospital at Merlin Park that will serve the city and the region (M/L)

11. The Assembly supports the delivery of a strategic Greenway Network for the GTS to include National Dublin to Galway Cycleway, Oranmore to Bearn Coastal Greenway and the Galway to Clifden Greenway (S/M)
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.6A</td>
<td>MA4 Continued</td>
<td>12. The Assembly supports the preparation of a Building Heights Study, a strategy to guide future sustainable development which takes into account the historic culture and infrastructure features of the city. In developing this strategy, areas of high density will target minimum rates for residential of 50 units/ha. The default rate for other areas will generally be 35 units/ha.</td>
<td>Page 39</td>
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<td>13. The Assembly will support the concept of reverse commuting to encourage the increased and efficient use of resources particularly public transport.</td>
<td>Page 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6A</td>
<td>MA5</td>
<td>The MASP is amended to include Moycullen and the area between Moycullen and the MASP boundary delineated in the Draft RSES. The proposed new MASP for Galway is shown on map below:</td>
<td>Page 41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Map showing proposed extension to MASP and Galway Draft MUZ boundary]
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.6A</td>
<td>MA6</td>
<td>New RPO</td>
<td>Page 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Assembly supports the preparation of an Urban Framework Plan for the Airport Site and its immediate hinterland for residential, community and employment use. The plan will pertain to the area shown on the map below:</td>
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<td><img src="image" alt="Map" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.6A</td>
<td>MA7</td>
<td>New RPO Section 3.6B, 3.6C, 3.6D</td>
<td>Page 5</td>
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<td>The Assembly supports the retention of existing agricultural land within the RCSP boundaries and only in exceptional circumstances with it support the development of new residential or commercial uses on unserviced greenfield sites.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.6A</td>
<td>MA8</td>
<td>New RPO</td>
<td>Page 5</td>
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<td>The Assembly will support the concept of reverse commuting to encourage the increased and efficient use of resources particularly public transport.</td>
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<td>Include as No.13 in objectives for Galway MASP</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.7.9</td>
<td>MA9</td>
<td>Replace SDZ Section of Draft RSES with text below (Page 156 of Draft RSES)</td>
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</table>

SDZ – Ireland West Airport - Knock

The presence of an airport in the region acts as a magnet to draw people and investment to the region, driving economic activity in the form of business and investment as well as tourism and travel. The Airport acts as an international gateway to the West of Ireland as well as the North, North West and Midlands areas. The Northern and Western Region is home to many world leading multi-nationals, local companies with global success as well as yet untapped economic sectors. Together with the high quality of life offered in the West and North West, the region has much to offer with the ability to expand and grow based on its resources. In this regard the concept of the place-based approach which requires tapping into the inherent potential of the area is central to the future growth of the region. In terms of business and enterprise, investment in the creation of ‘place’ is important to realising regional potential and to position itself so as to attract skills/talent, to grow businesses and to embrace creative and innovative economic activity.

The National Planning Framework includes High-Quality International Connectivity as a National Strategic Outcome and recognises the crucial role that the provision of high-quality international connectivity has for overall international competitiveness and addressing opportunities and challenges from Brexit through investment in our ports & airports, in line with sectoral priorities already defined through National Ports Policy and National Aviation Policy. The development of the EU Ten-T designation is desirable for international connectivity and integrated performance of road, rail and air.

The regional and international connectivity provided by an airport significantly broadens the transport network capacity of a region, providing catalytic as well as direct, in-direct and induced economic and social benefits. In this regard, Ireland West Airport Knock plays a significant role as an economic driver for the region and has a major impact on the social and economic infrastructure of the surrounding area.

It is considered that the best route to harness the potential of Ireland West Airport as an economic driver for the region is through the fast-track planning framework of a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ). The SDZ offers a spatial planning approach to the future development and expansion of the airport and surrounding lands.
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<tr>
<td>MA9 Continued</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Strategic Development Zone at Ireland West Airport represents a shared outlook for the future economic development of the West/North West region and represents a significant gamechanger for the region and the Atlantic Economic Corridor. As we are currently entering a period of renewed growth in Ireland, Ireland West Airport is well placed to expand its share of economic development. The Planning Scheme and implementation framework of the SDZ will provide a clear blueprint for development offering certainty to potential applicants, developers or investors which is time-saving and in turn beneficial to economic development. The SDZ will also play an important role in the delivery and implementation of higher level infrastructure for the area. Insert RPOs as follows: 1. To promote and support the strategic role of IWA Knock SDZ as a significant regional economic driver and to promote the SDZ location as regional economic business and enterprise hub. 2. To support and promote the implementation of the approved Planning Scheme for the designated SDZ at IWA Knock which provides the framework for the expansion of the Airport in terms of its transport and business operations; and as a new business &amp; enterprise destination. 3. To support the development of the SDZ in tandem with required infrastructure for both the expansion of the Airport and in the delivery of the regional business and enterprise hub.</td>
<td>Page 6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>MA10</td>
<td>Replace RPOs 24 – 26 (page 171 of the Draft RSES)</td>
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<td>From:</td>
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<td>24. To protect, conserve and enhance those natural, built and cultural heritage features that form the resources on which the regions tourist industry is based. These features will include areas of important landscape, coastal scenery, areas of important wildlife interest, historic buildings and structures including archaeological sites, cultural sites including the Gaeltacht areas, arts and cultural sites and the traditional form and appearance of the built environment.</td>
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<td>25. Promote and integrate trends in international tourism, measures will include Smart tourist destinations Tourism based on experiences Bedrock industries (the connection of sectors of the rural economy with technologies) Hyperconnected and multi-channel digital tourism (mobile applications and services) of complex and highly automated new productive environments.</td>
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<td>26. Encourage and facilitate investment by Fáilte Ireland in the delivery of suitably scaled tourism related developments at appropriate locations that leverage increased visitor numbers through Wild Atlantic Way; Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands and Ireland’s Ancient East whilst protecting and conserving environmentally sensitive sites.</td>
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<td>To:</td>
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<td>24. To support working with relevant landholders and recreational / tourism agencies to increase access to the Countryside and to our Coastal area’s, and to ensure maintenance and access to the existing network of trails, paths, ways etc.</td>
<td>Page 8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>25. To support the maintenance of, and enhanced access to state lands, such as National Parks, Forest Parks, Waterways together with Monuments and Historic Properties, for recreation and tourism purposes.</td>
<td>Page 9</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>26. To support the preparation and implementation of Visitor Experience Development Plans (VEDPs) within the Northern &amp; Western Region, to underpin the overarching regional tourism benefits and to promote the natural and cultural assets of the Regions.</td>
<td>Page 11</td>
</tr>
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<td>3.6A</td>
<td>MA11</td>
<td>Replace RPO 31 (Page 175 Draft RSES) with replacement RPO Page 39 of Directors Report as below: From: • To ensure provision is made for the expansion in accommodation and facilities within Candidate Destination Towns. Supporting infrastructural investment will also be provided, including improvements to public realm, Transport Links, Accommodation, night time economy and the sustainably development of our natural and built heritage. To: • To ensure provision is made for the expansion in accommodation, and facilities within key destination towns, such as Carrick on Shannon, Cavan, Roscommon Town &amp; Athlone, together with necessary supporting infrastructural investments, including improvements in the public realm, Transport links, accommodation, the night time economy, and sustainable development of our natural &amp; built economy</td>
<td>Page 12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MA12</td>
<td>New RPO to be included after RPO 34 in Draft RSES Page 176 The Assembly supports the implementation of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan and the securing of adequate resources and investment to achieve this.</td>
<td>Page 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MA13</td>
<td>New RPO (Insert after RPO 54 on Page 187 of Draft RSES) The Assembly supports the future proofing of Infrastructure Planning to allow for the potential upgrading of existing industrial sites to bio-refining plants while also supporting the use of bio-renewable energy for production of bio-based products.</td>
<td>Page 15</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>MA14</td>
<td>Replace RPO 62 to that below Page 191 Draft RSES From: To support the expansion &amp; upgrade of Galway Harbour &amp; Galway Port (under IROPI) as part of the overall vision to grow Galway as a City Region. To: The Assembly supports the designation of Galway and Killybegs as Tier 1 Ports, subject to environmental and visual considerations as well as transport and economic viability requirements.</td>
<td>Page 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>MA15</td>
<td>New RPO – Insert Section 5.2 Page 205 Draft RSES</td>
<td>Page 18</td>
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<td>The Assembly will support the preparation of local climate strategies by CAROs and Local Authorities to address vulnerability to climate risks and prioritise actions in accordance with the principles within the National Adaptation Framework and the National Mitigation Plan.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>MA16</td>
<td>New RPO - Insert Section 5.5 Page 208 Draft RSES</td>
<td>Page 19</td>
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<td>The Assembly supports the advancement of the zone of North Sligo/North Leitrim (Ben Bulben and its hinterlands) and the area surrounding Lough Arrow/Lough Key as potential National Parks/National Recreation Areas. It also supports collaboration in this regard with stakeholders including NPWS, Local Authorities, Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>MA17</td>
<td>New RPO – Insert Section 5.8 Page 216 Draft RSES</td>
<td>Page 21</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>The Assembly supports the further development of Greenways as part of the Outdoor Recreational Plan for Public Lands and Waters in Ireland 2017 – 2021, as part of an overall improvement of facilities to entrance health and well being across society.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>MA18</td>
<td>New RPO – Insert Section 6.5 Page 231 Draft RSES</td>
<td>Page 22</td>
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<td>The capacity and safety of the Regions Land Transport Networks will be managed and enhanced in order to ensure their optimal use, this gives effect to National Strategic Outcome No.2 and maintaining the strategic capacity and safety of the National Roads Network including planning for future capacity enhancements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA19</td>
<td>Section 6.5 Page 231 of Draft RSES – Amend RPO 110</td>
<td>From: The delivery of the following projects shall be pursued through pre-appraisal, early planning and thereafter to construction as priority projects to be delivered to an appropriate level of service in the medium term: • N59 enhancement (N59 Westport to Mulranny; N59 Ballina to Crossmolina; N59 Ballina Relief Road; N59 Oughterard by-pass; N59 Clifden to Oughterard) • N61 Athlone to Boyle improvement • N63 Roscommon to Longford improvement • N56 Inver to Killybegs • N15 Stranorlar to Lifford • N13 Stranorlar to Lifford</td>
<td>Page 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To: The delivery of the following projects shall be pursued, in consultation with and subject to the agreement of TII, through pre-appraisal, early planning and to construction as priority projects to be delivered to an appropriate level of service in the medium term. • N15 Sligo to Bundoran • N16 Sligo to Blacklion • N13 Manorcunningham to Bridgend/Derry • N59 enhancement • N61 Athlone to Boyle improvement • N63 Galway to Longford improvement • N56 Inver to Killybegs • N15 Stranorlar to Lifford • N13 Stranorlar to Letterkenny • N3 North of Kells to Enniskillen, via Cavan and the A509 in Fermanagh; • N54 (NS) Cavan to Monaghan Town; • N55 (NS) Cavan to Athlone; • N26 and N58 (NS) linking Ballina to N5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA20</td>
<td>New RPO – Insert Section 6.6 Page 233 of Draft RSES</td>
<td>The Assembly supports the alternative appropriate uses for disused rail corridors including use as Greenways where it does not prevent future use for railway transport</td>
<td>Page 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section of Draft to which Material Alteration relates</td>
<td>Material Alteration number</td>
<td>Description of Material Alteration</td>
<td>RPS SEA/AA/FRA Cross reference #</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA21</td>
<td>Amend RPO 136</td>
<td>From: Support the roll-out of the National Broadband Plan and grow the regional digital economy To: Support the roll-out of the National Broadband Plan within the lifetime of this strategy and grow the regional digital economy</td>
<td>Page 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA22</td>
<td>Amend RPO 169 – Insert Page 264 Draft RSES</td>
<td>From: Supports the provision of third level education in the Cavan/ Monaghan sub-region To: Support the provision of 3rd level education in Roscommon, Leitrim, Cavan and Monaghan</td>
<td>Page 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA23</td>
<td>New RPO – Insert Section 7.6 Page 266 of Draft RSES</td>
<td>The Assembly supports the specific designation of lands in development plans and local area plans for nursing homes and sheltered housing.</td>
<td>Page 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA24</td>
<td>Amend RPO 206 – Insert Page 285 Draft RSES</td>
<td>From: Prioritising investment to improve storm water infrastructure to improve sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in the urban environment. To: Prioritising investment to improve storm water infrastructure to improve sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in the urban and rural environment.</td>
<td>Page 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section of Draft to which Material Alteration relates</td>
<td>Material Alteration number</td>
<td>Description of Material Alteration</td>
<td>RPS SEA/AA/FRA Cross reference #</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA25</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Include an Implementation Timescale matrix as part of the Appendix to the RSES which contains the collected RPOs.</strong></td>
<td>Page 27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XX: Regional Policy Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RPO Ref No.</th>
<th>Implementation Timescale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short (2026)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MA26</th>
<th>Insert after Section 10.4 Page 300 Draft RSES</th>
<th>Draft RSES Oversight Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Regional Assembly will review the RSES every 6 years, and this review will if necessary modify, or revoke Policy should the need to do so arise. In this respect, the following Regional Policy Objectives apply:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. RSES Oversight Committee: Within 6 months of the adoption of the RSES, an RSES Oversight Committee will be established to ensure oversight of the implementation, monitoring and reporting of progress in implementation of the RSES, as well as identifying opportunities to drive Regional Development, and suggest sources of funding, fostering partnerships / new collaborations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. The RSES Oversight Committee will assess (i) Issues that impact upon the effectiveness or performance of the strategy. (ii) Evaluate the progress made across all Regional Policy Objectives, including those of the Galway MASP, and the Regional Growth Centre Strategic Plans for Sligo, Letterkenny &amp; Athlone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. a) The Northern &amp; Western Regional Assembly will every 2 years prepare a report which monitors the progress in implementing the RSES (b) As part of the RSES review process, the NWRA will publish (and update) an infrastructure tracker, and progress report every 2 years. This report will update the status of all major Regional Infrastructure Projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>4. It is an objective to carry out a review and update of baseline data for the purposes of monitoring and reporting of progress in implementing the RSES. Said data shall be published on the NWRA website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section of Draft to which Material Alteration relates</td>
<td>Material Alteration number</td>
<td>Description of Material Alteration</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.6C</td>
<td>MA27</td>
<td>The text of the Sligo RGCP at EC-2 Liveable Sligo (p.96 of Consolidated RSES doc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**From:**

EC-2 Promote Local Heritage & Culture in order to deliver high-quality cultural and tourism products of Regional & National Significance.

**To:**

EC-2 Promote Local Heritage & Culture in order to deliver high quality cultural and tourism products of Regional & National significance, and as part of the forthcoming Sligo & Environs Development Plan, to prepare a Tourist Strategy, which will focus on visitor offer, access, accommodation, and additional infrastructural needs, whilst taking into account all Natura 2000 sites within the environs of Sligo, Strandhill & Rosses Point.
2.1

3.6 (A) | GALWAY METROPOLITAN AREA STRATEGIC PLAN

Note:
Section 3.6 relates solely to Galway MASP and incorporates Section 3.6A of the Draft RSES, which has been reconfigured and non-material amendments made to text. These are shown in red font.
RPO’s in red font are described as new within the MASP, as they have been relocated from different parts of the Draft RSES (they are non-material changes).
RPO’s in blue font are also new but they are also Material Amendments.
The Assembly determined that the prioritisation of projects was a material amendment and these are identified by blue font:
(S)- short term (2026)
(M)- Medium (2031)
(L) – Long (2040)
3.6 | INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

3.6.1 Introduction and Context

A key ambition of the RSES strategy is to grow globally competitive urban centres of scale that shall be compact, connected, vibrant and inclusive places for people and for businesses to grow. The primary centre identified for growth in the region is Galway City and its environs, through it’s designation as a Metropolitan Area in the NPF. The next tier identified comprises the Regional Growth Centres of Athlone, Letterkenny and Sligo. The RSES amplifies the provisions of the NPF and this MASP sets out the strategic direction the city will grow to achieve compact growth, as envisaged within the first national strategic outcome in the NPF.

The importance attributed to metropolitan areas for the development of the regions requires the preparation and delivery of a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP). This new focus for national development offers an opportunity to build a new dynamism in residential, commercial, social, educational, recreational and infrastructural development.

The delivery of compact growth will be achieved through collaboration between all stakeholders in the community. The MASP in the RSES is the template, the ownership of the plan will be taken by the local authorities through their development plans and local area plans which will provide the fine grain for the detailed development for all areas in the MASP.

As the only MASP in the region Galway has a pivotal function in the development of the region. Its immediate influence is illustrated in Map No X below, which is based upon the 15% commuting area for the city, (west to Clifden, north past Tuam, east near Ballinasloe and south past Gort). Galway is not alone however at a national level and it is one of four MASPs in the country the others being Cork, Limerick/Shannon and Waterford. There is a willingness at regional level that the cities outside Dublin cooperate and collaborate with each other to foster and grow a collective urban alternative to Dublin. The policy below encapsulates these ambitions.

NEW RPO

It is an objective to establish a collaborative approach between the Regional Assemblies (NWRA, SRA), the Local Authorities and other stakeholders to enable all their metropolitan areas to collaborate with each other to harness their combined potential as an alternative to Dublin.
Influence of Galway MASP

Masp boundary to be amended on these maps if proposed material amendment to extend boundary is ultimately made.
Summary Insights

GALWAY CITY
COUNTY GALWAY

Summary demographic review of the town to establish the socio-economic profile of residents, population change, relevant housing, household composition and significant physical and environmental assets.

NOTE: MASP boundary to be amended on this graphic if material amendment to boundary is ultimately accepted.

POPULATION TARGETS
SOURCE: CSO & FUTURE ANALYTICS CONSULTING

POPULATION, 2016 SETTLEMENT AREA
94,075

INCREASE IN SETTLEMENT POPULATION BETWEEN 2011-2016
3.8% +3,476

RESIDENT POPULATION

2016

WORKFORCE (15-64)
66,855 (71.14%)

YOUNG (0-14)
16,876 (17.94%)

OLD (65+)
10,344 (11.04%)

DEPENDENT POPULATION

AGE PROFILE & SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS, 2016
SOURCE: CSO & FUTURE ANALYTICS CONSULTING
3.6.2 Vision for MASP

The MASP provides a strategic focus on the city and sets out how it is envisaged the NPF will be implemented in the regional context of the RSES. The vision for Galway is that it will be a leading European city renowned for its quality of life, its history, its culture and its people. It is and will be a place that embraces modern technologies, high standards of education, competitive and sustainable enterprises. The challenges to the city’s development will be met by the integrated and timely provision of infrastructure much of which is included in this strategy.

All of the above will be managed in an environmentally sensitive manner, retaining and protecting the valuable natural assets that are within and surrounding the MASP area, and that contribute to making it the place that is known worldwide.

The Galway City region has an extensive reach (See Map XX above) and is located at a pivotal location on the Atlantic Economic Corridor, from where the influence of Ireland’s southern Atlantic cities (Cork and Limerick) extends northwards to the Regional Centres of Sligo and Letterkenny within the cross-border Derry City Region context. It is home to existing internationally recognised world class clusters in Medical Devices and ICT. It is becoming a major technology hub, particularly around internet and collaborative working technologies; Galway City and the County hinterland alone are home to 9 of the top 10 ICT companies. All of this is supported through third level institutions embedded within the city, providing for a highly educated and vibrant workforce.

3.6.3 Strategic Growth Areas

3.6.3.1 Population And City Homes

Galway Metropolitan Area has considerable land capacity that can significantly contribute to meeting the housing demands based on population targets set out in the NPF and the RSES. The targets are that:

1. Population of Galway MASP to grow by 25,000 to 2026 and by 38,300 to 2031 with the population of the City and Suburbs accommodating 19,200 to 2026 and 28,000 to 2031.
2. Deliver at least half (50%) of all new homes that are targeted within the MASP to be within the existing built-up footprint.

The strategic sites of scale that present the opportunity and capacity to deliver the quantum of housing on the appropriate sites, subject to the adequate provision of services are summarised as follows and are shown on the map below:

i. Consolidation of the existing neighbourhoods of Knocknacarra, Rahoon, Castlegar and Roscam.
ii. Development of Regeneration Lands at Ceannt Station Quarter, Inner Harbour and Headford Road
iii. Ardaun
iv. Murrough
v. Baile Chláir, Béarna, Oranmore, Briarhill

Masp boundary to be amended on this map if proposed material amendment to extend boundary is ultimately made.
NEW RPO
The Assembly supports the proposition that 50% of new homes for the population targets will be constructed within the existing city development envelope, 40% of these shall be located on infill and/or brownfield sites.

CONSOLIDATION OF EXISTING NEIGHBOURHOODS - KNOCKNACARRA, RAHOON, CASTLEGAR AND ROSCAM
This is a tenet of compact growth and will have general application throughout the city. Alternative arrangements may pertain to Architectural Conservation Areas and areas with high incidences of protected structures. The existing neighbourhoods of Knocknacarra, Rahoon, Castlegar and Roscam have the potential to develop c.170ha of residentially zoned land suitable for higher density development. The future development plans for the city will prioritise the staged release of serviced lands to meet the population targets set out in s 3.6.3.1 above of this strategy.

NEW RPO
The Assembly supports the preparation of a Building Heights Study, a strategy to guide future sustainable development which takes into account the historic, cultural and infrastructure features of the city. In developing this strategy areas of high density will target residential density of 50 units/ha. The default rate for other areas will generally be 35 units/ha.

ARDAUN
To the east of the City, Ardaun will accommodate up to 25% of the residential growth anticipated for the city. Ardaun is a highly accessible location and is well placed to link through sustainable transport modes with the City Centre and key employment areas such as Parkmore, Ballybrit, Mervue and strategic IDA sites at Oranmore and Athenry.

Ardaun provides opportunities for high density residential development structured and co-ordinated with essential services and community facilities. It has currently a Local Area Plan which sets out a framework for development and is a designated Major Urban Housing Delivery Site under Rebuilding Ireland. It also has potential for a high level of connectivity, to the National Motorway Network and close to the main line station at Oranmore (Garraun).

The Ardaun area comprises 2 main development phases. Phase 1 which is the lands south of the M6/ N6 including 29 hectares of residential zoned lands and 20 hectares of urban village centre zoned lands which will have significant residential content. Phase 2 is the lands to the north of the M6/ N6 comprises 61 hectares of residential zoned lands. In the longer term, it is envisaged that Ardaun will develop eastwards.

MURROUGH
The LAP lands at Murrough, although primarily designated for recreation and amenity purposes, will also sustain mixed uses including residential uses. The total area of these lands is 34ha, one third of which will be reserved for residential and other uses (11ha).

OTHER MASP AREAS
The areas outside the city and suburbs including the established settlements of Bearna, Maigh Cuilinn, Oranmore, Baile Chláir have zoned and serviced lands of circa 67ha 8, 53 and 70ha respectively. These are adequate to accommodate the projected growth out to 2026 as things stand. In the event that further capacity is required, delivery of the infrastructural plans referred to elsewhere in the Strategy will meet this demand.

The policy framework is to meet this projected demand through promoting the development of sustainable high quality neighbourhoods, sustainable densities incorporating high design standards and key urban design principles. The Strategy is to provide for integration of housing with transportation infrastructure fostering sustainable transport patterns. This provides for a co-ordinated approach with investment and the delivery of essential infrastructure, services and community facilities. It also must promote a range of house types, sizes and tenures suitable for households with different income levels or those who may have specific requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAND CAPACITY - LANDS AVAILABLE FOR HOUSING</th>
<th>APPROXIMATE LAND AREA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Residential zoned lands – high density</td>
<td>172 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regeneration Lands – min 30% residential content</td>
<td>10ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardaun LAP Phase 1 –</td>
<td>49 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardaun LAP Phase 2 –</td>
<td>61 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrough LAP (one third mixed use)</td>
<td>11ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyre Square East Quarter</td>
<td>c2ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baile Chláir</td>
<td>34 7.12ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bearna</td>
<td>8 14.36ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oranmore</td>
<td>34 33ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maigh Cuilinn</td>
<td>12ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

It is important to specifically refer to the student population of the city as it comprises a significant quantum of the city population (in excess of 24,000 students attend third level colleges in the city) and there is a particular demand for student niche accommodation in the city to meet their needs. The objective of the MASP is to support the provision of purpose built student accommodation both on and off campus at appropriate locations. Delivery of this type of accommodation can be met on a variety of mixed zoned sites and is beneficial in freeing up existing private house stock within existing housing developments. This type of accommodation also has the potential to meet tourism accommodation demands outside term time.

3.6.3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF REGENERATION LANDS CÉANN STATION QUARTER, INNER HARBOUR AND HEADFORD ROAD AREA

Regeneration Lands at Ceannt Station Quarter (circa 6ha), Inner Harbour (circa 9ha) and Headford Road (circa 15ha) present opportunities to develop a significant quantum of residential development and importantly present scope for significant employment generation.

The Ceannt Station and the Inner Harbour offer a sequential solution to the expansion of the city centre, linked with a transportation hub, reinforcing the prime role of the city centre in both the city, the Metropolitan Area and the wider region.

The Headford Road area is also a key area for expansion of the city centre. It has considerable potential for intensification and for increased retail floorspace and commercial office type employment opportunities. It also has the benefit of having a large publically owned site with development potential (Dyke Road surface car park).

Expanding the city centre into these Regeneration Lands not only responds to future commercial floorspace demand but it also can, with good design solutions, enhance the image of the city, its regional tourism function and allow for an expansion to a scale commensurate with that envisaged under the National Planning Framework and this RSES.

There are also smaller city centre sites at for example Nuns Island and Eyre Square East which can contribute to regeneration.

NEW RPO

• The Assembly supports the regeneration and development of city centre sites at Galway Harbour, Ceannt Station and Headford Road (S/M).

Masp boundary to be amended on this map if proposed material amendment to extend boundary is ultimately made.
3.6.3.3 ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT LOCATIONS

Galway city plays an important regional role in providing for a diverse range of economic activities, services and employment opportunities and has considerable potential for further development and capacity for new enterprises.

The economic development strategy for the city is to focus on City Centre Regeneration and on strategically located industrial/enterprise lands throughout the city.

CITY CENTRE

The objective of the MASP is to present a strong policy focus to preserve and enhance the city centre as the primary commercial area within the city supporting a range of retail, commercial, tourism, social and cultural activities. This together with protection and enhancement of the historic core and making improvements to the city centre public realm, will contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the city centre and reinforce the positive image of the city as a place to live, work, visit and shop. The historic core captures the character of the city and its continuation is of the utmost importance.

While there is scope for infill development and refurbishment of existing commercial space, the city centre is constrained being located in the historic core and cannot easily meet significant future commercial floor space demand. The Regeneration Lands are ideally placed to meet these future demands.

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL LANDS

Lands are currently zoned that can meet the anticipated demand for a range of employment types and at locations that are integrated with the strategy for sustainable transportation and co-ordinated with the settlement strategy. Outside of the city centre, the focus is to prioritise investment and expansion in high tech manufacturing, research and development at existing strategic key locations at Mervue, Parkmore, Briarhill, and Dangan. These areas have a strong FDI presence which is reflected in the manufacturing industries including the medical technologies sector and the internationally traded ICT services and software sectors. These areas have potential for additional employment opportunities with good opportunities for expansion through densification and re-organisation. There are also opportunities for growth in the general manufacturing and commercial/trade sectors on these lands.

In Knocknacarra/Rahoon, lands are set aside also for a significant level of employment opportunities which will focus on the technology/office based industries thereby providing potential employment close to this large residential neighbourhood linking land use and transport requirements sustainably. Development on these lands will complement the existing commercial/community developments associated with the designated Knocknacarra district centre. There is also capacity for job creation within Ardaun as part of a co-ordinated development strategy for this area.

Significant IDA lands are also available on the IDA lands at Parkmore (38ha) and Oranmore (27ha) which have huge potential to accommodate future large scale employment.

The Galway Airport Site is also a key opportunity site in the ownership of Galway City and County Council with significant development potential. A number of options for its future use are emerging from a feasibility study carried out on the site.

Proposals that emerge from this process will be further developed in due course and as part of a future development plan process.

New RPO Support the delivery of lands for employment uses at Knocknacurra/Rahoon, Mervue, Dangan, Parkmore, Briarhill, Airport and Oranmore.

New RPO The Assembly supports the preparation of an Urban Framework Plan for the Airport Site and its immediate hinterland for residential, community and employment use. The plan will pertain to the area shown on the map below:
RETAIL

The retail strategy for the city is to protect and enhance the city centre, designated as the most important shopping area in the city and county and to facilitate a mixed expansion of services including high order comparison retailing in conjunction with service retailing, cultural and entertainment facilities through appropriate and sensitive re-development, infill and the development of the Regeneration Lands.

The strategy is also to designate District Centres on lands near the main areas of population and anticipated growth centres such as that at Knocknacarra, Doughiska, Westside and Ardaun to accommodate an appropriate range of retail, non-retail, community and leisure services. The scale and nature of these District Centres must be such that they will not threaten the prime function of the city centre core shopping area.

Neighbourhood Centres are designated at a number of locations including Salthill, Ballinfoyle-Castlegar, Renmore. At these locations there are opportunities for a mix of local services and community facilities including retailing of a basic, predominantly convenient nature that are so located to be easily accessible by the catchment they serve.

At the lowest level of the hierarchy are small scale local shops in residential areas, they fulfil an important role in the provision of day to day convenience needs. It is considered appropriate that the MASP will fully embrace this hierarchy and adopt it as being the roadmap for the future development of its area.

TOURISM

Policy to promote and support tourism in the city recognises the range of economic activities and employment opportunities associated with the tourism industry in the city. There is huge potential to develop tourism and extend bed nights as a gateway to the North and West Region with potential to further develop urban, culture/heritage/food tourism. The location of the City mid way along the Wild Atlantic Way is also an opportunity for expansion of the tourist product.

The success of the City as a festival City is a significant tourism product, sustaining services and ensuring year round bed nights with the Galway Races, the Arts Festival, the Film Fleadh and SeaFest being significant revenue generators. The designation as European Capital of Culture 2020, will raise the profile of tourism in Galway and will give opportunities for the development of cultural infrastructure and enhance and diversify tourism in the MASP area.

The unique environment of Galway City and the surrounding area also plays an important tourism role. The extensive coastline, Lough Corrib, River Corrib, waterways and the city canal system are unique assets in the MASP area. Silverstrand and Salthill beaches which have blue flag beach status and Salthill promenade are part of a range of important coastal amenities within the city. Rinville Park and adjacent Galway Bay Sailing Club (just outside MASP) play an important recreation and tourism role for Galway.
MARINE SECTOR

Galway has a strong maritime culture and tradition being located in an area with a long trading history. This is reflected in policy support for the sustainable growth of enterprise activities associated with the Marine Sector. Galway Harbour is ideally placed along the western seaboard to tap into emerging marine enterprises in particular, in the sustainable energy sector and offshore renewable energy. The harbour is an important facility serving the City and wider region. The proposals for redevelopment and extension of Galway Harbour includes for commercial quays, a deep water docking facility, fishing quays and provision of marina and water based sport facilities. Improvement of harbour facilities is of strategic importance and has the potential to contribute significantly to the economy of both the City and the region, increasing connectivity and contributing to the tourism, enterprise and offshore energy sectors.

There is also considerable scope for marine diversification into new applications for health, medicine and technology. Marine research at the Marine Institute in Oranmore linked with the environmental, marine and energy research at the Ryan Institute NUIG are key players in the future growth of this sector in the Northern and western region. The Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMRU) in NUIG and Marine and Freshwater Research Centre (MFRC) in GMIT also play an important role.

There are also significant amenity benefits within the marine sector with a range of beaches, open spaces and walkways offering tourism and leisure opportunities and enhancing health and well being. Biodiversity and environmental benefits are significant also, with high quality bathing waters, and a rich and diverse range of habitats and species reflected by the presence Galway Bay Special Area of Conservation and the Inner Galway Bay Special Protection Area within the city.

CREATIVE/CULTURE SECTOR

Culture and creativity is at the heart of life in Galway City and it has a global reputation as the home of Druid Theatre Company, Galway International Arts Festival and Macnas. There is also a vibrant community arts sector that gives a strong cultural identity to the City and the wider area.

The strength and potential of the creative sector is evidenced in particular by designations such as the UNESCO City of Film and European Capital of Culture 2020. There is considerable scope for the establishment of the metropolitan area as a hub for the Creative and Cultural Industries, building on the distinctive culture and creative legacy in the City environs. The development of film, media and entertainment, design and craft has potential to add significant value to the overall economy and strengthen the identity of the MASP area.

A significant area of the MASP has Gaeltacht status parts of the city, Béarainn, Maigh Cuillinn and Baile Chláir - and Galway is a bilingual city and is a service centre for the Connemara Gaeltacht. The use of the Irish language is part of everyday life in Galway and the drive to achieve official status for the City as ‘Bilingual Capital of Ireland’ reflects the strong Gaeltacht culture and identity within the City.
SECTION 3.6.4 STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE

CONNECTED CITY

Inter-urban and inter-regional connectivity has progressed in recent years. The completion of the M6 motorway considerably reduced travel times from Dublin to Galway and has made the City more accessible nationally.

The completion of the M17/M18 Gort to Tuam motorway has significantly reduced travel time to Shannon Airport and has made considerable time savings between the City and IWAK. It also adds to the accessibility of the City and improved strategic linkage within the whole region. The objective is to continue to improve the road network around the city and in particular to support the delivery of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) including the N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR).

Galway city has a significant commuter population. This reflects the important regional economic role of the City and demonstrates that people are willing to travel long distances to access education and employment in the City owing to the quality and range of job opportunities. It also indicates the synergies that exist between the City and its hinterland. However, commuter travel patterns indicate a heavy dependence on car usage in particular travel to work and school trips. These patterns give rise to significant congestion on the road network particularly during peak times which negatively impacts on the economy and the experience of the urban environment.

GALWAY TRANSPORT STRATEGY (GTS) AND CITY CENTRE TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT PLAN (CCTMP)

Within Galway City and environs, the promotion of integration of land use and transportation is reflected across all plans and strategies, including in particular the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) which is a joint Galway City Council and County Council 20 year strategy prepared in partnership with the National Transport Authority.

The GTS supports opportunities that will reduce congestion and car dependency through increased capacity of reliable and sustainable public transport and the promotion and facilitation of cycling and walking, which in turn promotes the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The strategy includes traffic management, giving priority to walking, cycling and bus movements, modifications to the traffic network, management of parking activities and heavy goods vehicles, improvements to the public realm and use of ‘smarter mobility’.

As part of the GTS a detailed, City Centre Transport Management Plan is being prepared and will provide for the implementation of a city centre access network with measures for bus priority routes, bus only routes, cycling and pedestrian links through and within the city centre with opportunities for enhanced public realm. The development of park and ride facilities on the approaches to the city is an important part of improved connectivity.

Key Transportation Components for MASP

1. N6 GCRR:

The provision of a new N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR). This road is classified as part of the TEN-T road network in Ireland functioning in accordance with the European Unions (EU) TEN-T transport policy which aims to create connectivity between regions, remove bottlenecks that hamper access to markets and that promotes a sustainable multi modal network. The N6 GCRR will support the economic and social development of the region and connectivity and accessibility to the city and to areas west of the city. It also will focus on supporting trips that cannot be facilitated by measures such as City bound, cross-City and cross County movements. This will relieve congestion in the city and in turn improve the quality of the city environment and increase opportunities for reallocation of existing road space for sustainable transportation.

2. PUBLIC BUS TRANSPORT:

- Development of a cross- city network of bus services which can serve the major trip attractors with 5 core bus routes to provide a minimum 15minute frequency service during the peak periods and sustain a high frequency service throughout the day.
- Provision of the Tuam Road Bus Corridor and Dublin Road Bus Corridor
3. **CYCLE NETWORK**

- Provision of a core, secondary and feeder cycle network which includes segregated cycle routes, on-road cycle lanes and/or wide bus lanes to cater for both buses and cyclists along the same route.
- Provision of a primary network of cycle routes comprising of two greenways connecting into the county settlements – the Oranmore to the City Centre and onwards to Béarna Greenway and City Centre to Oughterard Greenway.
- Provision of additional primary routes including cross-city routes to the north of the city and some key north–south links.
- Develop a secondary cycle network that will comprise connections from residential areas and areas of employment to the primary network accessing key destinations.

4. **WALKING**

- Provision of measures to reduce traffic volumes in the city centre core, additional pedestrianisation and pedestrian priority, improvement of pedestrian facilities in particular safe crossings, improvements to the public realm and use of universal design.
- Provision of new river crossings - a new bridge adjacent to the Salmon Weir Bridge, a new link from the Headford Road area to NUIG campus via a bridge on the piers of the old rail line and a new crossing linking Newtownsmoy with Gaol Road.
- Improvements to permeability within suburban residential areas, improving the pedestrian networks and increasing connectivity and permeability within and to places of employment, in particular the business and technology parks on the east side of the city at Parkmore and Ballybrit.

5. **PARK AND RIDE**

- Provide for Park and ride facilities on the periphery of the city linked in with the bus network to reduce the amount of commuter traffic entering into the city.

6. **RAIL**

The City is a significant rail destination with direct intercity services to Dublin via Athlone and to Limerick via Ennis. It also provides a valuable commuter service to towns such as Ballinasloe, Athenry, Craughwell and Oranmore. It is envisaged that the long term redevelopment of Ceannt Station Quarter as a new major multi-modal transport interchange will involve rail services expanding in frequency where there is sufficient passenger demand and usage.

The potential for double tracking of the railway line from the City to Athlone, or a more limited accommodation of stopping bays and the provision of a rail freight service from Galway harbour are also strategic projects that will enhance accessibility and connectivity in the region to 2040.

New RPO  The Assembly supports the delivery of the infrastructure projects outlined below in order to develop the MASP:

- Galway City Ring Road (S)
- Galway Transport Strategy (S/M/L)

New RPO  The Assembly will support the concept of reverse commuting to encourage the increased and efficient use of resources particularly public transport.

New RPO  The Assembly supports the provision of a dual railway track between Galway and Athlone (M/L)
Core bus routes (GTS 2016)

Proposed cycle network (GTS 2016)
Section 3.6.5 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Galway City is a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) European Healthy Cities Network since 2006. The Galway Healthy Cities Project recognises the tangible benefits to health that come from living in a good quality and clean environment and ensures that health and well being is incorporated into the policy framework of local agencies in the City. Other initiatives in the City which include Child Friendly City, Age Friendly Galway and the Sports Partnership all have enhanced health and well being as primary goals. The designation of Galway as European Green Leaf City 2017 also reflects the quality of the environment in the City and these initiatives are to be supported.

HEALTH

A significant element of employment in the city is concentrated in the hospitals. Galway is a centre for regional health care services for the whole Region with Galway University Hospitals (Merlin and UHG) providing a secondary, regional and supra-regional service in respect of cardiology and cancer services. They are also one of eight major academic teaching hospitals in Ireland. The Bon Secours and the Galway Clinic are also important private health care providers. The capacity for hospital expansion through intensification and re-development of their existing sites and/or buildings needs to be supported. There is sufficient undeveloped lands in the Merlin Park Campus with the potential to deliver a 21st Century facility to serve the MASP and increased population planned for the region.

New RPO

• Support the provision of Childcare, Education and Health Services within the same timeframes as the residential and employment uses outlined above.

• It is an objective of the Assembly to support the delivery of a modern hospital at Merlin Park that will serve the city and the region (M/L)

EDUCATION

Within the city there are 31 primary schools, 12 second level schools and 3 third level colleges and there are also a number of private colleges and language schools. In recent years four new schools and a number of extensions to existing schools have been accommodated. These schools serve wide catchments well beyond the city boundary and even beyond the MASP area which has an impact for commuting and travel into the city. Policy to support the improvement and expansion of the educational sector in the city recognises the significant city, regional and national role played by this sector.

Within the MASP there are currently zoned lands that are suitable for additional new schools where required. To accommodate emerging populations on the east of the city, lands are available at Ardaun to accommodate schools.

The National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) and Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) are huge assets to the city, with the latter having the potential to develop as a Technological University as part of the Connaught /Ulster Alliance. They add significant value to Galway City in terms of being a significant employer, playing a major role in education provision and though the development of a knowledge economy. Both NUIG and GMIT have collaborative research and training roles with industry which is supported also by national investment research programmes such as REMEDI and GMedTech. Research competencies have been growing particularly in the life sciences area in NUIG and also in the medical technologies research group at GMIT.

Having third level institutions of such calibre in Galway City is a key factor for companies choosing to locate in Galway as they have access to a very highly educated and skilled workforce at their doorstep. They are also responsive to the research demands of industry. The presence of a third level student population of over 24,000 is also a significant contributor to the local economy and adds to the vibrancy of diversity of the City and this needs to be built upon.

New RPO The Assembly supports the designation of a technological University in the Region which will be partially located in Galway; in order to complement existing 3rd level educational facilities and to foster the innovative knowledge-based economy of the region.
GREEN NETWORK

The City also has a rich diversity of natural resources including Galway Bay and an extensive coastline, woodlands such as Merlin Park, Bearna Woods and Terryland Forest Park and waterways such as the River Corrib and the canals. The City Council’s Recreation and Amenity Needs Study (RANS) 2008 provides a coordinated framework for future planning and management of recreation facilities and activities within the city, based on current and projected future needs. Galway, through the extent and protections offered to its Green Network fits well as a Natural Place (Urban) with the Growth Ambition 1 – Natural Place developed later in the Strategy.

A fifth of the total land area of the City is designated as protected habitats, recreation and amenity open space and agricultural land and comprise a green network within the city. These spaces are a vital part of everyday urban life in Galway and this high quality environment contributes to the attractiveness of the City and the health and well being of the population. As such there is strong policy support to protect and enhance recreation and amenity space within the city.

New RPO

- The Assembly supports the delivery of a strategic Greenway Network for the GTS to include National Dublin to Galway Cycleway, Oranmore to Bearna Coastal Greenway and the Galway to Clifden Greenway (S/M)
Section 3.6.6  Environment

LIVING ENVIRONMENT BUILT HERITAGE

Galway has strong links with the past which are evident in the built form, architecture and archaeology of the City, in particular the historic City Core, and which are significant elements in the definition and experience of the urban environment and engender a strong sense of place. The designation of Architectural Conservation Areas, Protected Structures and archaeological monuments including the remnants of the medieval town wall reflect the importance of the built and archaeological heritage in the city. These are part of the experience that is Galway.

PUBLIC REALM

Investment in public realm adds to the attractiveness of the city and contributes to the quality of life of those who live and work in the city. The development of a Public Realm Strategy for the City Centre shall be undertaken and used to inform the future management and use of the public realm in a manner that complements measures set out in the Galway Transport Strategy. It should set out the details of phased co-ordinated projects that will enhance and improve the way the city functions on a day-to-day basis, resulting in long-term socio-economic, cultural and environmental benefits.

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

The strong tradition of organised community and cultural activity with an array of structures and initiatives within the City contributes to the City as a successful place. The image of Galway, paralleled with an inclusive community, local distinctiveness and attractive lifestyle, is a critical asset for sustaining communities and good placemaking as well as for the attraction of inward investment. The Cultural Sustainability Strategy 2016-2025 highlights the uniqueness of Galway culture and its richness and diversity and its importance to the future of the City and County enhancing the lives of those living and working in Galway and the surrounding region. The implementation and further development of this strategy is a key objective of this MASP.

CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE

Climate change represents a significant challenge for the city and the reduction in our carbon footprint must be embedded through, for example, the delivery of sustainable land use patterns, sustainable transportation initiatives, protection and enhancement of the green network and enhancement of biodiversity, promotion of renewable energy technologies and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

The city is vulnerable to the harmful effects of climate change, in particular sea level encroachment and extreme weather events. The CFRAMs study has set out a Flood Risk Management Plan for the city which identifies a range of measures to manage flood risk in the city. The implementation of these measures is an objective of the MASP and is important in the future development of the city.

New RPO  The Assembly supports the retention of existing agricultural land within the MASP and only in exceptional circumstances would it support the development of new residential or commercial uses on un-serviced green field sites.

Support the delivery of the infrastructure projects outlined below in order to develop the MASP as outlined in the strategy: (S)

- Galway East main Drainage Wastewater Treatment Plan (S/M)
- Galway Drainage Area Plan (S/M)
- Galway City Water Supply Scheme (S)
- Galway City Main Rehabilitation Contract (S)
2.2

3.6 (D) 3.7.1 | ATHLONE REGIONAL GROWTH CENTRE STRATEGIC PLAN:
The National Planning Framework (NPF) identifies Athlone as the Key Regional Growth Centre in the Midlands. It is one of five towns nationally that have been designated as a Regional Growth Centre, on the basis that it functions in a similar manner, but at a different scale to the bigger cities.

The NPF has identified the urban structure within the Northern and Western Region to be weak. As a means to addressing this weak urban structure, this RSES targets at least 40% population growth in the Regional Growth Centres of Letterkenny, Sligo and Athlone, with a further 30% population growth target (minimum) targeted for the designated Towns. This RSES provides a Regional Growth Centre Strategic Plan for Letterkenny and Sligo and whilst Athlone is substantively within the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly Area, a joint approach has been taken to identify shared Key Regional objectives for Athlone within the respective Strategies. Notwithstanding, this strategy provides additional context through this strategic framework for Athlone, reflecting that it is a regional driver in the same way as Sligo and Letterkenny are regional drivers for their respective catchments.

The strategic plan will deliver a roadmap for the continuation of Athlone, and its closest serviced satellite villages of Hudson Bay and Glasson, as the regional flagship for industry, retail services, educational facilities, tourism and residential development in the Midlands. It will also recognise the potential of its community, culture, heritage and landscape to generate an excellent quality of life for future generations. Athlone has direct national connectivity to Dublin and within a one-hour drive is Galway City and towns such as Longford, Mullingar, Maynooth, Portlaoise, Ballinasloe and Roscommon. The proximity of these settlements provides Athlone and its hinterland with potential to develop residential and employment uses which will place and maintain Athlone at the forefront in the goal to develop a modern resilient example of integrated development in 21st century Ireland.
2 | STRATEGIC GROWTH AREAS

2.1 Housing and Regeneration

The RSES for the Eastern and Midlands region envisages a population target of 30,000 for the entire settlement of Athlone up to 2031. This includes lands within the combined functional area of the two Local Authorities of Westmeath and Roscommon. The preparation and adoption of a Joint Development/Local Area Plan shall be a priority for Westmeath and Roscommon County Council. The joint Development/Local Area Plan under agreement of both local authorities is the appropriate mechanism to determine the functional urban area and plan boundary along with the distribution of population which should be generally in proportion to existing population levels in each local authority area, subject to agreement of each local authority and both Regional Assembly and ensuring that the proportion enables the other minimum population growth targets stipulated for settlements within the RSES for the Northern and Western Region to be achieved. In determining the extent of the Strategic Plan boundaries, the following criteria should be considered:

• The principle urban area of Athlone, as defined by the CSO defined town boundary, including any existing areas with a dense concentration of population, employment or service provision that is contiguous to it;
• Inclusion of those areas where >60% of the workforce commute to the defined principle urban area of Athlone;
• The principle urban area population of Athlone should account for at least 75% of the total population of the regional centre plan area;
• The existence of environmentally designated areas in the vicinity;
• The existence of transport strategies; and
• The existence of future development opportunities, including phasing and prioritisation of development infrastructure;
• Physical features and compact growth.

The delineation of Athlone as a regional growth centre should be ambitious and incorporate the satellite villages such as Hodson Bay and Glasson, which operate as part of the regional centre and are the nearest fully serviced and zoned areas to the town. These may provide alternative residential and employment options but the main growth driver will remain the principal urban area of Athlone, to support the achievement of compact growth targets with a minimum of 30% of new homes to be built within the existing built up area, supported by the planned delivery of existing Local Area Plan (LAP) lands at Curragh Lissywollen, Cornamagh, Cornamaddy and Monksland / Bellanamullia.

REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVE

1. A cross-boundary Joint Development/Local Area Plan shall be prepared by Westmeath County Council and Roscommon County Council in collaboration with the two Regional Assemblies to provide a coordinated planning framework for the future physical, economic and social development of Athlone. The plan shall identify Athlone’s functional urban area and adopt a boundary for the plan area in addition to the identification of strategic housing and employment development areas and infrastructure and investment requirements to promote greater co-ordination and sequential delivery of serviced lands for development, in order to realise Athlone’s status as a Regional Growth Centre.

The areas outlined above and in Fig.2 have the capacity to deliver on the population growth targets referred to above. The plan for the Regional Centre will provide additional refinement and prioritisation on the release of service land. In addition, regeneration areas in St. Mels and Loughanaskin are identified for mixed use development. In light of promoting and delivering the concept of compact development an objective to prepare a Building Heights Strategy for Athlone would be opportune.

REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVE

2. Support the regeneration of underused town centre and brownfield / infill lands along with the delivery of existing zoned and serviced lands to facilitate significant population growth and achieve sustainable compact growth target of 30% of all new homes to be built within the existing built up urban area.
2.2 Enterprise and Employment Uses

Athlone already has significant administrative, retail, industrial, tourism and services employment. In order to cater for the employment demands arising from increased population targets discussed above there are 4 specific areas identified. These are:

1. IDA Park/Garrycastle
2. Blyry
3. 3Creggan
4. Monksland

These areas comprise over 300 Ha. of undeveloped land and rather like the residential lands referred to above a prioritisation process for development and release of serviced areas may need to be considered for inclusion at joint Development/Local Area Plan level.

Athlone has a track record in manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, telecommunications and ICT. The consolidation and expansion of these areas will build on the success of Athlone.

These industries employ upwards of 5,000 people, many of them of high economic value and highly skilled. The qualities of life in Athlone is an attraction that needs to be nurtured and improved to give these industry groups the impetus to attract more highly skilled people to the area.

In tandem with these quality of life goals the delivery of the infrastructure projects outlined later in this section is an imperative to maintain the towns progress, potential and presence as the lead centre in the midlands.

Athlone is a regional growth centre for convenience and comparison shopping. This position has been retained through the economic downturn. There are a number of town centre sites that have the potential to maintain the retail status of the town, these include inter alia Station road, Loughanaskin and Lloyds Lane.

A Retail Strategy is to be prepared jointly by Westmeath and Roscommon County Councils is at an advanced stage of preparation and is presently in the consultation process. The study area should be informed by the
reach of Athlone and should also inform policy for the joint Development/Local Area Plan. The concept of compact growth and how this will influence future retail facilities is a feature that needs to be considered. The availability of existing floor space especially in premises that are vacant could meet much of the future demand. Retail is the largest employment type (25% of jobs) in the town and its importance to the regional economy is therefore significant.

REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVE

3. Promote Athlone as a key location for regional economic development supporting the provision of increased employment through the expansion of the existing enterprise ecosystem in Athlone and creation or expansion of distinct industrial specialisms that have developed through collaboration with the relevant enterprise agencies including the IDA, Athlone Institute of Technology and the Midlands Innovation and Research Centre and support the provision of physical infrastructure and zoned lands to realise the phased delivery of strategic employment lands in central accessible locations.
3.0 | STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE.

Health and Education

Athlone is the only designated regional centre that does not have a hospital, or a hospital in close proximity. The provision of a new hospital would complement the status of the town as a regional centre and an attractive urban area in which to live. The Assemblies support an investigation of the feasibility of providing a modern hospital in Athlone which would serve the needs of the over 130,000 population which reside within the 45 minute drive catchment.

A new primary care centre has operated in Athlone over the last few years, this is an addition to the various GP practices in the town. Athlone also has St Vincent’s Hospital which operates primarily as a care facility for the elderly.

Athlone has the leading third level institute in the midlands, Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT). There are over 5000 students (full time and part time) presently attending/participating in courses. It is not surprising therefore in terms of education attainment Athlone contains more graduates as a percentage of population than other areas in the midlands. AIT serves many of the surrounding counties and outside of Roscommon and Westmeath, students from Offaly, Galway and Longford form a significant portion of the student body.

There is an ambition to make AIT a technological University, this is fully supported by both Assemblies. AIT is an important community asset, the number of part time and mature students is indicative of its reach into the community. The institute has research capability in materials, bioscience and software, these are complementary to many of the industries in the Athlone area and is a strength that can be built on.

Athlone is also a regional centre for 2nd level education. There are nearly 3,000 students attending the four secondary schools in town, recent consolidation resulted in reduction of schools from 5 to 4. A Local Transport Plan for Athlone should be taken as an opportunity to improve sustainable travel patterns and infrastructure, the various schools throughout the town would be good starting points for the delivery of better and healthier ways of life and travel.

Fig 4. Education Facilities
Tourism

Athlone is at the centre of Ireland’s latest tourism experience. It is a more than suitable location to begin the exploration of Hidden Heartlands, being at the end of Lough Ree which opens into one of the country’s most scenic waterways and also having its urban heritage and culture which can itself deliver a worthwhile visitor experience.

The range and scope of Athlone’s attractions and its links to attractions within its hinterland for example Clonmacnoise and Rindoon to name but two make it an obvious regional centre for tourism development. This potential is recognised inter alia in the Lakelands Destination Development Plan which as a collaborative strategy is a good example of the way forward in Tourism as well as other aspects of future development including this RSES.

REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVE

4. Support the development of a cross sectoral approach to promote Athlone as a key tourism destination in the Midlands, building on Fáilte Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands brand and the forthcoming Shannon Tourism Masterplan to develop the recreation and amenity potential of waterways including the River Shannon and Lough Ree and the development of a greenway network including the Galway to Dublin Cycleway.

Transport

The national goal of having more compact growth generally and within MASP and Regional Centres in particular will increase the need and importance of providing more sustainably forms of transport and transport infrastructure in our urban centres. There is an overarching objective within the RSES to prepare Local Transport Plans in our cities and key towns, the initial momentum in this regard should concentrate on the cities and Regional Centres.

Athlone is well serviced by the national road and rail networks and this position makes it easily accessible to over 130,000 people (within 1 hour travel time). In order to improve this basic connectivity emphasis initially on links to cities of Dublin, Galway and Limerick and the regional centre of Sligo should be targeted, this applies to both road and rail infrastructure.

The improvement of public transport links within the town and its hinterland commensurate with the projected growth in population should be a key objective for the town. This approach is fully supported by the Assemblies. The promotion of walking and cycling within and through the town is also at the forefront of sustainable development. In this regard locally a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the Shannon would be an imperative for safe ease/west. Links within the town and regionally links to sustainable travel infrastructure along the canals could be attractive propositions along with links the development of a link to Galway City.
There are a number of strategic infrastructure projects whose delivery is necessary to service the growth targets discussed above. The integrated delivery and prioritisation at a regional level is necessary to ensure that Athlone will reach its ambitions within the timeframe of the RSES. The necessary projects we included in the regional objectives are set out below.

**REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVES:**

5. Support the phased servicing and development of lands identified in the RSES for residential and employment uses.

6. Support the proposal to make AIT a Technological University and for the development of a ‘smart cities’ approach to drive research, innovation and EU funding opportunities in Athlone.

7. Support the integrated provision of the infrastructure projects identified in this section

8. Support the promotion of Athlone as a destination centre for the development of Hidden Heartlands including the development of a Wilderness Park Project based around Lough Ree

9. Support the preparation of a joint retail strategy as set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012

10. Support the provision of integrated signage to promote Athlone as a single clearly identified entity

11. Support the implementation of the Athlone Waterfront Strategy Support to provide for public realm and amenity enhancements and tourist related developments along the waterfront.

12. Support the development of an Open Space Strategy with provision for a public park in Monksland with sustainable transport links along the Cross River and connections to the remainder of the Regional Centre. The strategy to include the provision of sustainable transport, recreation and amenity spaces to support existing and future populations.

13. Support the upgrading of the Water Supply System and the Sewage Treatment System (including a Drainage Area Plan) to meet the growth targets set in this strategy

14. Promote Athlone as a sustainable transport hub, of national and regional importance. The regional centre shall become a fulcrum for multi model transport facilities and services

15. Support the regeneration of underutilised town centre, Brownfield and infill sites identified in the strategy, with a target of 30% of all new homes to be constructed within the existing built-up urban area

16. Promote Athlone as a sustainable transport hub, of national and regional importance and support the preparation of a joint Local Transport Plan between Westmeath and Roscommon County Councils in collaboration with transport agencies and key stakeholders to improve sustainable mobility in the town.

**Environment**

Athlone is close to a number of designated areas and some of these are shown on the constraints map below. Their protection is inherently supported by the Assembly and the growth envisaged for the Regional Centre will take these and flood risk areas fully into account. The overarching environmental regional policy objectives in section 2.4 of the RSES apply fully.

**REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVES:**

17. Support ongoing implementation of flood risk management and flood protection measures to facilitate the growth of Athlone subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and taking account of the proximity of sites of international nature conservation interest.

18. The Assembly supports the retention of existing agricultural land within the RCSP boundaries and only in exceptional circumstances would it support the development of new residential or commercial uses on unserviced greenfield sites.
Key to be Repositioned
3.7.2 | LETTERKENNY REGIONAL GROWTH CENTRE STRATEGIC PLAN

CONTENTS:
1. Context & Vision
2. Strategic Goals & Objectives
3. Critical Enabling Infrastructure for Letterkenny
4. Enterprise & Employment – Future Economic Expansion
5. Implementation:
1 | Context & Vision

1.1 Letterkenny & its role within the North West Metropolitan City Region

Letterkenny is identified as one of the Regional Growth Centres within the region but it is also recognised as part of a Cross Border Network with Derry City, within the North West City Region. The North West Metropolitan City Region (Letterkenny / Derry / Strabane) is identified in the National Planning Framework (Ireland 2040) as being a key enabler of Regional growth, and prosperity across Donegal, Derry & Tyrone.

The co-ordination of further growth across jurisdictions is the subject on ongoing work between both Donegal County Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council, this is an ongoing project, and is being advanced through a Growth Partnership. This Metro Area includes other significant settlements within Donegal, including Buncrana, and Ballybofey / Stranorlar. This NWMCR context is elaborated upon within the All Island Cohesion chapter. It is centered on four key strategic outcomes – closely aligned with the national strategic outcomes and priorities of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the eight strategic aims of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035.

Those outcomes are:
- Building Inclusive and Compact Places;
- Investing in Connected and Accessible Places;
- Planning for a Vibrant Economy and Nurturing Communities; and
- Creating Resilient Places and Low-Carbon Infrastructure.
1.2 Letterkenny Regional Growth Centre Strategic Plan

Regional Growth Centres have been selected in the National planning framework because they are significant large towns that function in their areas in a similar manner, but at a different scale to the bigger cities. In the same way that the NPF requires Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASP) to be prepared for each of Ireland’s five cities, a Strategic Plan that responds to the lead role of each of the identified Regional Growth Centres is also required, with a similar focus.

This Strategic Plan for Letterkenny provides a framework for the strategic growth and investment in Letterkenny to deliver its function as a city and the primary urban centre within Donegal. It will chart the future growth of Letterkenny with an ambition to grow the population by at least 28,000 by 2040 and to ensure that commensurate employment growth is enabled, through appropriate investment in critical enabling infrastructure and support services, with strong emphasis upon the placemaking principles, as set out within the RSES. The goal is to ensure Letterkenny is a centre that offers sustainable choices in housing, employment, transport, and in the area of quality of life, health and well-being. The Strategic Plan should act as an instrument that enables this to happen.

The investment in Letterkenny is also vital to the future growth and development of all of County Donegal, with its reach and influence extending into all of the County and cross border, playing a key role in this part of the North West Region, including as a centre of employment, retail, health, education, social, cultural and community services etc for its extensive hinterland.

The existing employment provided in the public sector, retail, and major sectors such as Engineering, and ICT indicate that Letterkenny is already well placed to underpin the growth of the entire region of North & West Donegal. The successful growth and expansion of Letterkenny can be realised through increased, and significant capital investment in critical infrastructure, which will improve services, and accessibility, into and around the urban core, and a focus on enhancing quality of life for all its inhabitants.

Vision: Between 2020 and 2040 Letterkenny will grow to a centre of at least 28,000 people, and will encompass all the key characteristics of a future city, with an expanded employment base, an additional 4,000 houses, together with an expanded offering in education, public services, civic spaces, and a Regeneration & reconfiguration of the extended Town Centre. Letterkenny will offer sustainable choices in housing, employment, and is a centre which is pedestrian friendly, well served by public transport, with an emphasis on well being, supported by a healthy environment, and quality spaces in the public realm.
The Strategic Plan Area:

The boundary of the Regional Growth Centre Strategic Plan has been informed by identifying the main population and employment locations of the settlement that define the Principle Urban Area and those areas on the periphery with high commuting patterns. Geographical features and environmental considerations also inform the strategic plan boundaries. The boundary of the Letterkenny Regional Growth Centre Plan includes the Town Boundary as defined by the CSO, as well as incorporating additional small area's which are considered urban in character and accord with CSO small area boundaries. The boundary incorporates all main residential area's, employers, and education facilities. The surrounding towns / villages (e.g. Drumkeen, Ramelton, Kilmacrenan). Whilst these surrounding towns, and villages in the zone of influence of Letterkenny will retain their role in offering housing, and other activities the Growth Centre Plan is focused on Letterkenny and its current, and future role of the Town as an economic driver for the whole of Donegal.
2 | Strategic Goals & Objectives

2.1 COMPACT GROWTH & DELIVERY OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR AN EXPANDING REGIONAL CENTRE:

Letterkenny’s population currently stands at 19,300 (CSO, 2016). The total number of jobs within the town 11,400 (Powscar 2016), this is almost 30% of the overall jobs within County Donegal. The growth targets set out for Letterkenny are an overall growth in population of 40% to a population of approximately 28,000 by 2040. In tandem to this growth, it is anticipated that employment numbers will also increase by approximately 7,000 additional jobs, bringing the overall number of jobs to approximately 18,000. Accordingly, the Letterkenny RGCP needs to include all the elements to provide for this growth, including additional housing, employment lands, retail offer, a high quality of life offer, and community, social & recreational attractions which ensure this. It should be noted the Letterkenny & environs Local Area Plan is currently being prepared, and this RGCP is a high level & long-term documents to accompany the RSES, and is not intended to supersede the LAP.

<table>
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<th>Letterkenny 2016</th>
<th>Letterkenny uplift 2026</th>
<th>Letterkenny uplift 2031</th>
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<td>3,150</td>
<td>4,750</td>
<td>Population: 28,000</td>
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New Plan for Letterkenny: Initial Consultation of the development of a new Letterkenny & environs Local Area Plan for Letterkenny have recently concluded, and this new Framework for Letterkenny will provide the detail to ensure the delivery of the Regional Growth Centre Plan, including identification of zoning priorities, phasing of zoning, and detail on the regeneration & town centre design framework to be delivered over the lifetime of the RGCSP.

OBJECTIVES:

RGCO 1: To grow Letterkenny to a Regional Centre of approximately 28,000 by 2040.

RGCO 2: To grow the number of jobs in Letterkenny to approximately 16,000 by 2040.

RGCO 3: To ensure that at least 40% of all newly developed lands (Residential, Enterprise & Employment) are within the existing built up envelope of Letterkenny & its environs.

RGCO 4: To provide an additional 3,000 - 4,000 residential units within Letterkenny to facilitate the growth as set out at No.1, above.

RGCO 5: The Assembly supports the retention of existing agricultural land within the RCSP boundaries and only in exceptional circumstances would it support the development of new residential or commercial uses on unserviced greenfield sites.

The red line on the map notates the boundary of the Letterkenny & Environs Plan 2009 – 2015.
2.2 Regeneration & Renewal Projects

Key Regeneration / Renewal sites: There are a number of regeneration projects which have the potential to transform the town’s centre, including the Main Street, and area’s immediately surrounding the Main Street, and between the Main Street & Retail Park Area’s.

(i) Town Centre - Strategic Design Framework
(ii) Church Lane – Continued Regeneration & Restoration
(iii) Lower Main Street.
(iv) Opportunity Sites:
   (1) Donegal Creameries site,
   (2) Gortlee Site,
   (3) Unifi lands,
   (4) Lands at Port Bridge
   (5) Former Mart at Sentry Hill.

Each of the opportunity sites represents brownfield development within the Town, and the re-use of these sites would represent a key element of achieving the Compact Growth objective which is a central pillar of the NPF. The Letterkenny & Environs Plan will set out further detail in respect of these sites, and the parameters within which they can be redeveloped, the locations of these sites is mapped below.

Inter-Linkages across Town Centre: Creating a more coherent, and inter-linked town centre has been recognised as a key strategic goal for Letterkenny since before the 2009 Letterkenny & Environs Plan. The achievement of an improved inter-connectivity between the original Town Centre (Main Street Zone) and the new Retail Centre, including the Retail Park, and the Area surrounding Letterkenny Community Centre. The advancement of this Framework should include prioritisation of pedestrian friendly linkages, with identified walkways, crossing points, and similarly lanes and improved route availability for cycling. The Letterkenny & Environs Plan will set out further detail in respect of these sites, and the parameters within which they can be redeveloped.

The Social Enterprise Centre, (on the Neil T Blaney Road, and linking onto the proposed Joe Bonar Link Road) will not only provide a landmark building on a key site, but will serve to improve access to and open up lands in this area for regeneration, and potential large scale, mixed use projects in this edge of Town Centre location.
2.3 Residential Growth

Letterkenny is the key urban settlement within the Donegal. Since 2006, the population living within the Town Boundary has increased by almost 10%. The ambition in the coming 20 years is to significantly advance upon this growth giving Letterkenny many of the future requirements to build on its function as a regional city in its own right. Letterkenny has a number of established neighbourhoods with potential to develop new ones.

Established neighbourhoods:
- Glencar,
- Kiltoy,
- Lisnennan,
- Lismonaghan,
- Mountain Top,
- Ballymacool

Potential new area’s for Residential Development:
- Leck / Scibley,
- Windy Hall,
- Killylastin,
- Carnamuggagh.

To cater for projected growth, it is likely that at least an additional 4,000 new homes will need to be provided between now, and 2040. The phasing of this growth in residential units, will have to be done in tandem with the approximate growth figures outlined in the Table above.

Central to this future growth will be to ensure the delivery of 40% of future homes are within the built up envelope of Letterkenny. Achieving this will require the identification of lands which are already within the built up envelope of the town and can be located close to potential public transport corridors, or within accessible walking distance of the town centre.

Neighbourhoods: There are 8 distinct and recognised neighbourhoods and the forthcoming Letterkenny & Environs Plan presents an opportunity to re-examine them and to deliver further measures, such as neighbourhood centre’s, and additional consolidation measures depending on the extent of projected future growth of the area’s set out below, as well as any new residential centre’s.

In addition to the established neighbourhoods, there are a number of area’s where there are opportunities to provide infill and/or consolidating development that
would assist in expanding the growth of the Town, without significantly extending the overall urban footprint in an outward manner, such as greenfield lands between Carnamuggagh and Lisnennan, and between Windyhall and Glencar.

HOW CAN THIS BE ACHIEVED?

Delivering 4,000 new homes – How can this be achieved. measures include:

1. Ensuring the Zoned Lands are delivered sequentially in a phased basis, providing for compact and inclusive places.
2. To ensure that within the extended Town Centre area, that a mix of residential accommodation is included within mixed use developments, which cater for a wide variety of needs, including students, and smaller family units / single occupancy apartments based upon the housing needs of the town.
3. In the medium term to ensure the Southern Relief Road (Part of the Ten-T at Leck/Scribley) enables a greater extent of new residential growth to the South of the River Swilly, with enhanced links to the Town Centre, through a new crossing of the Swilly, and a new neighbourhood focal point.

OBJECTIVES for Regeneration & Compact Growth

RGCO 6: To develop a Town Centre Living Scheme within 3 years of the adoption of the RSES, and to ensure the main findings of this Scheme are implemented by 2025.

RGCO 7: To deliver a Masterplan, in Urban Regeneration & Linkages between the Main Street Area, and the New Retail Park within 4 years of the adoption of the RSES, ensuring this Masterplan is delivered and implemented by 2027.

RGCO 8: To expand Letterkenny’s bed-night capacity, and overall Tourist Offer as a Destination Town serving the Northern Headlands of the WAW.

RGCO 9: To consolidate existing neighbourhoods (hereinunder listed) through a series of targeted measures. Town Centre, Glebe / Kiltoy, Lisnennan, Carnamuggagh, Glencar Scotch, Glencar Irish, Ballymacool & Oldtown.

2.4 Liveable Letterkenny

Letterkenny is already well served with a number of outstanding public realm facilities, which include An Grainan Theatre, Aura Leisure Centre, Ballymacool Park at the Southern edge of the Town & Bernard McGlinchey Town Park. The challenge in the coming years is enhancing sustainable connectivity to some of these facilities. In order to ensure Letterkenny becomes a less car dependent large town, dedicated cycle networks are key to enabling more sustainable modes of transport across the Town. In tandem with such provision, will be a need to provide adequate bike facilities at the aforementioned locations, as well as a number of other identified strategic sites.
2.5 Education

LYIT has approximately 4,000 students, and has expanded by 40% in enrolment numbers in the last 10–15 years. The IT has in recent years secured a significant site on the Southern side of the Derry Road, opposite their existing campus, which will enable future expansion without the fragmentation of the student facilities. It is one of the key strategic aims for Letterkenny over the next 2 decades that this expansion is realised, and the range of courses, and number of under Graduates, as well as Post Graduates is increased incrementally between now and 2040. This expansion is expected to take place in tandem with University status for LYIT, as part of the Connacht / Ulster Alliance, where talks remain ongoing with Sligo IT, and GMIT.

Facilities at Primary School Level extend to 7 Schools. Three of these Schools (the 3 largest) are located outside the Town Boundary (Woodlands, Lurgybrack & Ilistrin). The provision of the new Educate Together Campus in 2018 has brought additional capacity to the Primary School system in the Town Environs. The future provision of a significant residential neighbourhood to the South of the River at Leck / Scribley, and the Southern Relief Road associated with the Ten-T project delivery may require an additional Primary School in this area.

There are 4 Secondary Schools in the Town, with Donegal County Council communicating with the Dept. of Education in relation to additional provision should the need arise. The re-development & enhancement of the St. Eunan’s Secondary School Campus is a priority in Educational infrastructure provision.
3 | CRITICALLY ENABLING STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE FOR LETTERKENNY

In order to achieve the population growth, economic advancement, including significant employment growth, and advancement in the overall offer for citizens, and visitors alike, Letterkenny has a number of key projects which must be delivered over the next 10-20 years, and indicative timeframe is attached for each, applicable from 2019:

Connected Letterkenny: Enabling Projects:

1. Ten-T Projects: The key infrastructure needs of Letterkenny & Donegal are set out in the RSES (Sec 6). The delivery of the Ten-T improvement schemes, including the provision of the strategic river crossing (Swilly) via the N-56 Bonagee Link and the significant upgrading of the road network approaching the Town from the South (Southern Relief Road). The combined significance of these investments, including reduced travel times to Letterkenny from East Donegal, and Northern Ireland will directly impact upon the Town, allowing for multi-modal access across Letterkenny, and providing more effective long term traffic management beyond 2040.

2. Regional Transportation Hub: Letterkenny currently does not have a multi purpose transportation point. There are multiple Private operators transporting patrons around Ireland, and wider Donegal on a daily basis, and the stop adjacent to the Oatfield Roundabout does not have sufficient capacity to cater for growing demand. The provision of a Transportation Hub, which is within the Town Core, and within walking distance of the Town Centre & LYIT is a priority piece of infrastructure to increase accessibility and connectivity in Letterkenny. Whilst a specific site has yet to be identified, the RTH is a critical priority in the coming years.

Critically Enabling & Transformative Projects for Letterkenny

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Indicative Timeframe Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Donegal Ten-T Improvement Scheme’s. Strategic Regional Connectivity (N-13, N-14, N-56 including Bonagee Link)</td>
<td>Short/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Letterkenny Urban Design &amp; Masterplan for Town Centre.</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Regional Transport Hub for Letterkenny</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. LYIT Campus Extension</td>
<td>Short/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Urban Greenway Development around Letterkenny: Letterkenny – Burtonport, River Swilly Greenway</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Development of Letterkenny Social Enterprise Centre.</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Creating a ‘Smart’ Regional Centre.</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Town Centre Living Scheme: Regeneration of Derelict &amp; Vacant Sites</td>
<td>Short/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Development of Town Centre Enterprise Quarter</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. **Cycle Lane & Urban Greenway:** Easy and safe Cycling and walking facilities will form a key priority for Letterkenny’s Centre, and Neighbourhoods over the next 2 decades. Secure cycling, and dedicated lanes for bicycles are recognised as a direct incentive for people to travel to school and work without being dependant upon the private car. A cycle route network will be prepared in the next 2-3 years, and this will include a Greenway along the River Swilly, as well as a full Landuse & Transportation Strategy to establish a number of key priority cycle routes which traverse the Town. Provision shall also be made for the Letterkenny – Burtonport Greenway, along the Former Donegal Rail Line, and onto the Cycle lane being provided along the newly realigned Section of the N56 at Illistrin / Coolboy.

5. **Public Transport Linkages:** A Local Transportation Plan (LTP) will be prepared in the short term for Letterkenny, the LTP should examine the current lack of alternatives to the car, and landuse patterns which can better effect a modal shift to public transport, as well as walking & cycling. A new Regional Transport Hub shall form a central part of this vision, as well as the potential of Bus corridors, Park & Ride facilities & neighbourhood services.

OBJECTIVES for Critical Infrastructure:

RGCO 10: To deliver the entire Ten-T network solution for Donegal & Letterkenny by 2028, including the N-56 Link, and the Southern Relief Road (Leck Road), the N-14 Manorcunningham – Lifford. & N-13 Letterkenny Bridgend.

RGCO 11: To facilitate the expansion of the LYIT Campus.

RGCO 12: To prepare (within 2 years of the adoption of the RSES), a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Letterkenny, which will include a multi-modal focus, and Public Transport roadmap.

RGCO 13: To develop a dedicated & integrated cycle network around Letterkenny, including the creation of a Greenway along the line of the River Swilly to offer residents a viable alternative to car based journeys.

RGCO 14: To deliver a multi-purpose Public & Private Regional Transport Hub within the Town Core of Letterkenny to serve County Donegal & the wider Region.

RGCO 15: To carry out a feasibility study which investigates the potential & viability of a Rail Link between Letterkenny & Derry in future decades.

RGCO 16: To deliver the Letterkenny Social Enterprise Centre, and associated improved access to lands to the West of Neil T Blaney Road, as part of a wider Urban Regeneration project.
4 | ENTERPRISE & EMPLOYMENT - FUTURE ECONOMIC EXPANSION:

4.1. INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT & FDI

Letterkenny is the economic driver of County Donegal. There are currently (CSO 2016) 11,400 Jobs in Letterkenny, which comprise approx. 28% of the overall jobs figure for County Donegal this share is anticipated to grow as the scale of the Town increases.

In tandem with the targeted population growth of approximately 8,000 additional people expected to reside in Letterkenny by 2040, the National Planning Framework (Ireland 2040) anticipates that employment growth will occur at a ratio of approximately 2:1 (people to jobs), this will equate to (a minimum) additional 4,000 workers employed in the Town over the next 15-20 years. In order to ensure this expansion is realised, it will be necessary to secure adequate provision of zoned land for a mix of enterprise and employment uses.

(i). General Employment.
(ii). Commercial Use.
(iii). Established Employment use.
(iv). Town Centre / Retail.

Employment growth in Letterkenny has continued apace over the last decade. In addition to expanded retail, and service employment. The emergence of the ‘Letterkenny Cluster’ in ICT includes multi-national and indigenous companies. This cluster includes Sita, Kirchoff, Optibelt, Pramerica, Zues, Optum, United Health. Paremerica alone employ over 1,400 staff, and there will be scope in the coming years to expand this cluster, with Donegal County Council, IDA & Enterprise Ireland the primary stakeholders tasked with delivering further sustainable employment for the North West Region.

The targeted Area’s for General Employment will include additional lands adjacent to and within the IDA Business Park along the N-56 Link, and the former Unifi lands at Kiltoy / between Carnamuggagh / Lisnenan.

The Mountain Top (Pinehill) supports approximately 40 business operators at present, and there is scope to introduce incremental environmental improvements which could enhance the general appearance of the area, and better separate pedestrian, and vehicle users.

4.2. RETAIL:

Letterkenny functions as County Donegal’s primary retail and shopping destination. The Retail area within Letterkenny can be summarised in a number of zones:

- The traditional Town Centre:
- Paddy Harte / Loop Road Retail Park.

A multi-purpose open / civic amenity space within the heart of the Town (aside from Market Square) would assist in helping the balance struck between vehicles, and pedestrians / cyclists, it would also encourage additional uses relating to events / activities.

In addition to the above, the incremental improvement of the Towns retail offer will include (i) Enhancing sustainable links between the 2 retail area’s. (ii) Providing public facilities at Letterkenny Retail Park, (iii) Targeted addressing of vacant retail floor space (iv) Emphasis on high quality urban design within the Town Centre, and on key strategic approach roads. Further detail in this regard will be set out in the forthcoming Letterkenny & Environs Local Area Plan. (LKLAP)

4.3. TOURISM

Letterkenny has been identified by Failte Ireland as a Destination Town (always on) owing to a number of factors.

(i). Bed Night Capacity (Approx. 4,200)
(ii). Proximity to Wild Atlantic Way (Donegal Headlands, including Discovery Points such as Malin Head & Fanad Lighthouse)
(iii). Proximity to Glenveagh National Park, Grianan of Aileach & Derryveagh Mountains.
(iv). Ability to offer attractions in its own right, including range of pubs, restaurants, and night-life.

It will be vital that given the significant growth in Tourist numbers visiting Ireland, and the potential to grow significantly the figures travelling on the Northern Half of the WAW, that Letterkenny continues to grow its offer as a Regional Centre of Scale to host, and support
visitors across all of North Donegal. In order to do this, a number of Objectives need to be progressed in the short to medium term:

1. Provide sufficient zoned lands to ensure additional Hotels, and Tourist Accommodation can be accommodated within reach of the Town Centre.

2. To Provide a Regional Transport Hub within Walking Distance of the Town Centre, so as to ensure onward Journeys (WAW & Glenveagh NP etc.) are within easy reach of the majority of Hotel Accommodation.

3. To ensure the advancement of the Letterkenny – Burtonport Greenway Project, along the Disused Donegal Rail Line.

4. To further enhance Public Realm Offer within Letterkenny to enhance visitor experience.
5 | IMPLEMENTATION:

Section 10 of the RSES sets out in further detail how the RSES will be reviewed, and implemented. Similarly, the Letterkenny RGCP will require an implementation panel, which periodically reviews the progress in terms of housing supply, infrastructure provision, as well as general well-being of the Town.


Following the adoption of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), Donegal County Council will continue with the already commenced work towards a Letterkenny & Environs Plan to ensure consistency with the Regional Growth Centre Strategic Plan (RGC SP) and all other relevant provisions of the RSES. Work is also ongoing in relation to the NW City Region, and this will further inform the growth, and direction for Letterkenny over the next decade and beyond.

Building upon the RGC Strategic Plan set out in the RSES, the LAP will set the detailed framework for decisions on investment and development proposals in Letterkenny’s main urban area.

National Development Plan funding

As part of Project Ireland 2040, the Government announced the establishment of two new funding streams:

- the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), which has an allocation of €2 billion in the National Development Plan (NDP) to 2027, primarily to support the compact growth and sustainable development of Ireland’s five cities and other large urban centres; and
- the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), which has an allocation of €1 billion in the National Development Plan (NDP) to 2027, primarily to provide investment to support rural renewal for suitable projects in towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas.

Donegal County Council are already proactively working to garner maximum funding from the NDP, in order help achieve the 16 Key Strategic Objectives set out in the Letterkenny RGC Plan.

Vacant Site Register

The register lists vacant sites in Letterkenny, zoned for housing and regeneration purposes, which have remained undeveloped. The Register is a land activation measure with the ultimate aim of encouraging the development and regeneration of key lands.

Sites entered on the Register for Donegal in general, and specifically Letterkenny, are subject to the Vacant Site Levy provisions introduced under the Planning and Development Act. It is likely that Donegal County Council will have to apply this levy to encourage movement on key lands across the lifetime of the RGCP, and this should be reviewed annually.

National Transport Agency (NTA) & Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII):

Donegal County Council will continue to work with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to ensure that any roads-related infrastructural deficiencies are addressed through their ongoing capital investment programme, and with the National Transport Agency (NTA) to ensure ongoing engagement in relation to the provision of a Regional Transport Hub for Letterkenny.

Irish Water investment:

Given the Donegal County Council will continue to work with Irish Water to ensure that any water and wastewater infrastructural deficiencies are addressed through the ongoing Irish Water capital investment programme.

Potential Delivery Constraints

The implementation of the Letterkenny Regional Growth Centre Plan and the strategic targets, and critical infrastructure listed therein may (over the 20 year period) be occasionally be constrained by factors such as the economic climate, political support, allocated local authority funding and the availability of funding from diverse sources.

However, it is the intention of the NWRA and of Donegal County Council to exercise all legal powers to ensure that the strategic objectives are implemented.