



Draft Westport Local Area Plan
Planning Section
Mayo County Council
Aras An Chontae
Castlebar
Co Mayo
F23WF90

via portal: consult.mayo.ie

3 November 2023

RE: DRAFT WESTPORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2023-2029

A Chara,

I refer to your notification on 26 September of the Draft Westport Local Area Plan 2023-2029 (WLAP). The Northern and Western Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') wish to thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

This submission examines the WLAP in the context of its consistency with relevant objectives in the RSES. It is acknowledged that the WLAP includes the ambitions for Westport set out in Section 3.9 of the RSES and that some of these ambitions have already been achieved, e.g. the N5 upgrade and the Northern Relief Road for the town. Westport is described in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy ('RSES') as a town with regional potential (along with Athenry, Carickmacross and Virginia) and the Mayo County Development Plan recognises the regional potential of Westport.

The various chapters in the LAP are presented consistently, coherently, and concisely. There are 13 chapters in all, and they follow a logical progression. Climate is given a prominent location in Chapter 3. There is a specific chapter on Westport House, which, considering its importance to the town, is a welcome approach. Each chapter sets the national, regional and local context, provides a short discussion on relevant issues and concludes with a series of policies and objectives.

The WLAP comes from an environment where there is a high level of consistency between the Mayo CDP and the RSES. This is reflected in the assessment of the Assembly which found relatively few major issues of concern in respect of the Draft Mayo CDP. It can be taken as read that aside from the observations below, the remainder of this Draft WLAP presents no issues with consistency with respect to the RSES. However, the Assembly make the following observations:

Observations

- Residential densities are generally to be determined on a site-to-site basis. The Assembly accepts that such flexibility is appropriate. Clarity could, however, be given as to the range of densities which may be acceptable in different areas of the town. The Draft guidelines for Sustainable and Compact Development could be referenced in this respect. The Assembly further notes that Table 2.1 shows the quantum of lands zoned to be 17Ha and yet there are over 24Ha of lands zoned new residential lands in Appendix 1. The land areas could result in relatively low densities if fully developed and clarification should be provided on the figures given.
- There are very few references to serviced sites in the LAP and those that are linked in their development to the RZLT. This is a very narrow proposition and could be considered to be inconsistent with RPO 3.7. It is suggested that targets and locations be identified for the provision of serviced sites.
- The Assembly welcomes the identification of opportunity sites in the town and suggests that the LA assume the responsibility for preparing a rolling program of masterplans rather than leaving it to developers to do so. This action would build on the analysis in the plan and would copper-fasten the move away from developer-led to plan-led development.
- Timelines and Prioritisation – the plan may benefit from more of the above e.g. preparation of a Building Heights Study, Timelines and prioritisation for decommissioning combined sewers, feasibility study for park and stride.
- In the section on waste infrastructure, there is no reference to the existence, identification and zoning of such areas for C&D landfill/reuse facilities.

Conclusion

There is a good to high level consistency in the WLAP with the relevant policy objectives in the RSES and the Assembly commends Mayo County Council on the presentation and preparation of the Draft Plan and consider it to be of a high standard. The Assembly suggests that the above observations be taken into account in the further consideration of the Draft Plan.

Finally, the Assembly wish to thank the Council for the opportunity given to engage in the process. If you have any queries in respect of the above, then do not hesitate to revert.

Mise le meas



Denis Kelly
Director