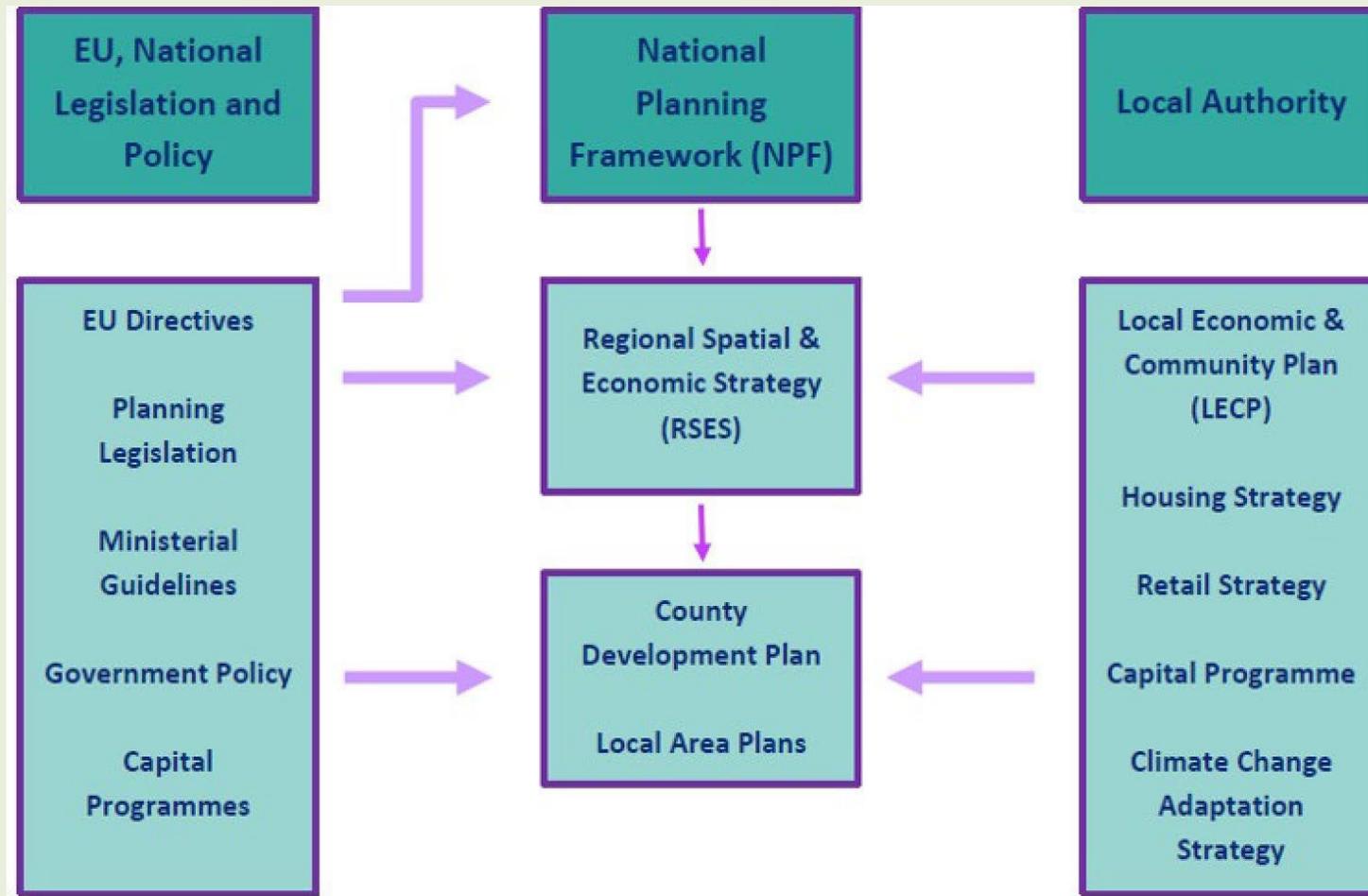


# Castlebar Town & Environs Local Area Plan Pre-Draft Issues Paper



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo  
Mayo County Council

# Context of Local Area Plan



# Pre-Draft Issues Paper Castlebar Town & Environs LAP 2021-2027

## Introduction

Mayo County Council is commencing the preparation of a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Castlebar town and its environs. The purpose of this LAP is to set out a land use strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area incorporating a framework for the development of transportation, housing, retail, heritage, employment, social and community facilities.

## Purpose of the Issues Paper?

The purpose of this Issues Paper is intended to get you thinking about the type of land-use issues that might be addressed in the new Castlebar Town and Environs LAP, and to encourage you to make a submission on these issues, or any other planning issues that you think are important. It is also providing an important opportunity for the residents of Castlebar to get involved in the plan preparation process.

We are interested in hearing from everybody, not just those directly affected by the LAP, to identify 'bigger picture' issues that need to be addressed in the LAP on how Castlebar should develop into the future. Whether you are a younger or an older person, an individual or a community/sports group, a business, a resident, an entrepreneur or a voluntary organisation, your opinion matters.

## What is a Local Area Plan?

A Local Area Plan (LAP) is a land-use plan which sets out the development strategy for an area within the lifetime

of the plan. The plan contains an overall vision for the area and includes specific land use objectives to guide future development to achieve this vision.

The new LAP will consider the current context of Castlebar, in terms of population trends, socio economic factors, land use changes, the need for distribution of facilities and amenities, availability of services and infrastructure, along with heritage and environmental considerations.

The LAP must be consistent with the objectives of the higher order plans, including the County Development Plan, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Region and the National Planning Framework.

The RSES seeks to support and grow the role of Castlebar, in tandem with the town of Westport, as a driver of economic development for County Mayo and wider region. Castlebar is a Key Town in the RSES.

As part of the new plan, a new zoning map will be prepared to take account of current and future population needs of Castlebar, subject to environmental and other planning considerations.

## Why replace the Existing Town & Environs Development Plan?

Following the abolition of Town Councils under the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the current [Castlebar Town & Environs Development Plan](#) is required to be replaced by a Local Area Plan once it expires.

## Key issues

### Population and Housing

The Core Strategy of the Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027 provides for a population allocation of 2,347 persons for Castlebar over the plan period, which equates to approximately 917 new houses. Mayo County Council are required to identify and reserve an appropriate amount of land in the correct locations to meet housing and population targets.

The current town and environs plan promotes a housing supply to meet the varied needs of the community and to provide an acceptable standard of living. Future housing supply in the town must be provided in a sustainable manner, aligning with the provisions of the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, and having regard to established and sustainable settlement patterns and the natural environment.

### Questions to consider

*Q. Do you believe there is adequately zoned housing land in the existing Town and Environs Plan?*

*Q. What are the priorities for housing in Castlebar, in terms of size & type of housing?*

*Q. Are more town centre apartments needed, family housing or specialist housing, for example older people?*

# Pre-Draft Issues Paper Castlebar Town & Environs LAP 2021-2027

## Compact Growth, Key Development Area / Regeneration

The sustainable growth of compact urban settlements is a top priority of the national planning policy, with emphasis on the regeneration and repopulation of urban cores and built-up areas. This approach focuses on maximizing the use of infill, vacant and underutilized sites and of buildings that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, amenities, jobs and services.

The potential exists for regeneration within the town core particularly the former Imperial Hotel, the old Military Barracks as well as significant tracts of land directly adjacent to the main streets have the potential to bring about transformative change in Castlebar. The provisions of the new LAP must consider the cumulative impacts of regeneration and redevelopment of major sites in tandem and ensure that commensurate social, community and cultural facilities are provided to both facilitate and address projected population growth.

### Questions to consider

- Q. Where in Castlebar should additional population and economic growth be focused?*
- Q. Where are the key opportunity sites suitable for (re)development in Castlebar?*
- Q. How can we encourage the reuse of vacant properties and address dereliction to revitalise the town centre so that they are vibrant, welcoming, attractive places to live and work in, visit and shop?*

## Economic & Employment

Economic development provides the backbone for progress and sustainability in any town and is best achieved through a collaborative approach between the business communities, educational institutes and national agencies, with Mayo County Council facilitating, enabling and promoting economic growth.

Castlebar is the main administrative, public health, education and commercial centre in the county.

The town provides over 9000 jobs and hosts a range of industrial/enterprise businesses and has a strong focus on commerce and the manufacturing industry. A key focus of the new LAP will be to ensure that the conditions for the creation of enterprise and innovation are embraced and developed and to encourage and facilitate a diversity of employment opportunities, promote inward investment and commerce.

### Questions to consider

- Q. Is there sufficiently zoned industrial/economic/business land in the current zoning plans and how can the Local Area Plan promote economic development within Castlebar?*
- Q. What, in your opinion, are the economic strengths and competitive advantages of Castlebar?*
- Q. How can the Local Area Plan support and facilitate new business and employment? e.g. identify opportunity sites and specific objectives for underutilised areas of the town.*

## Tourism & Recreation

Castlebar has significant tourism potential, it is home to Lannagh Holiday Village, a greenway link to Westport and near the nationally significant tourism attraction - National Museum of Ireland Country Life. Castlebar has a broad range of public amenity, sports and recreational facilities. The town has significant potential to build on ongoing investment in a national outdoor pursuit's facility and to position Castlebar as a location for sports tourism. Mayo County Council recently acquired lands adjacent to Lough Lannagh Holiday Village, which it is proposed to develop, as part of an overall Sports Tourism Development Plan.

The new Local Area Plan has a key role in the protection of tourism assets and landscape whilst enabling appropriate tourism development.

### Questions to consider

- Q. What can the Plan do to support tourism in Castlebar?*
- Q. Are there areas that have the potential to be developed for tourism and recreational purposes?*
- Q. Are there specific areas of tourism that should be targeted e.g. heritage, leisure, activity tourism, and how can the Local Area Plan facilitate these?*

## Movement & Transport

Co-ordination of transport and land use planning plays a pivotal role in the sustainable development of the local economy. Where and how we build our residential and

# Pre-Draft Issues Paper Castlebar Town & Environs LAP 2021-2027

work environments and supporting transport infrastructure including roads, footpaths, cycle ways, buses and rail infrastructure impacts, is fundamental for sustainable communities, climate action and quality of life considerations. It is essential that the new Local Area Plan will promote a more efficient strategic transport system integrated with appropriate use of land to support the sustainable economic, social and physical development of Castlebar as an attractive location for enterprise, investment and a place to live, work and visit.

## Questions to consider

*Q. How can the Local Area Plan help to improve and promote sustainable forms of transport in Castlebar?*

*Q. Are there areas where new or improved footpaths, cycle ways, parking, roadways and links to public transport services should be provided?*

*Q. What measures can be included in the LAP to make the town more accessible for older people and people with disabilities?*

*Q. How do you see the completion of the N5 project impacting on the future development of the town?*

## Infrastructure Services

Infrastructure includes a wide variety of services and functions, essential for the delivery of sustainable development in the Castlebar. These include, Water Supply and Drainage, Waste Management, Pollution Management (Air, Noise, Light, Water, Litter, Major Hazards), Electricity Supply and

Broadband/Telecommunications Services. There is a need to plan for all these elements so as to ensure that there is adequate availability to support future sustainable development of the town.

## Questions to consider

*Q. What do you see as the main infrastructural deficiencies, if any, impacting on the future sustainable development of the town?*

*Q. What measures can be introduced to protect and safeguard the water quality of our rivers and groundwater?*

*Q. Are there adequate recycling facilities Castlebar and if not, where should they be located?*

## Social & Community Facilities

Community infrastructure plays a vital role in contributing to the quality of life for all. The physical environment should develop in such a way that it facilitates the healthy functioning of sustainable community and cultural life. Services and amenities including crèches, schools, amenities, recreation and other community facilities should be provided in tandem with residential development. The provision of an adequate level and distribution of community facilities and amenities in Castlebar that meet the current and future needs of the local community will be a priority in the new Local Area Plan.

## Questions to consider

*Q. Does the level and range of community facilities and amenities adequately cater for the existing and future residents of Castlebar?*

*Q. What type of new community facilities should be provided and where should these be located?*

*Q. Are there enough facilities for younger and older residents of the town, and people with disabilities?*

## Open Space & Amenity - Green Infrastructure

High-quality open spaces and amenity areas are essential for a good quality of life and are key components of sustainable communities. Green infrastructure includes nature conservation areas, parks, open space, rivers, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, farmland and town greenways which support and improve environmental conditions in a way that facilitates environmental, economic and societal benefits.

## Questions to consider

*Q. Are there sufficient play areas, open spaces, public parks, sports, amenity & recreation facilities in Castlebar?*

*Q. How can the Plan utilise and enhance existing amenity areas such as the Lough Lannagh, Saleen Lough, the urban greenway to provide for both passive and active recreation?*

*Q. How best can we integrate a Green Infrastructure approach to the lands incorporating the themes of open space, biodiversity, landscape, water and archaeology?*

# Pre-Draft Issues Paper Castlebar Town & Environs LAP 2021-2027

## Biodiversity & Nature Conservation

The plan area contains several significant elements of the Natural Environment. Lough Lannagh and Saleen Lough are located in close proximity to the town centre as well as the Castlebar River, which winds through the centre of the town. Apart from their intrinsic ecological value as habitats for a variety of plant and animal species these elements of the environment provide direct and indirect benefits to the population of Castlebar and its surrounds.

### Questions to consider

- Q. How can the Local Area Plan best support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity?*
- Q. Are there local parks or green areas which you feel could benefit from enhancement or works to improve their biodiversity?*
- Q. How can the plan achieve a balance between the growth of Castlebar and the protection of the environment?*

## Town Centre, Retail

A successful town centre includes a retail sector which plays a crucial role in terms of economic growth and development, in stimulating regeneration and renewal of the town centres thereby contributing to their overall economic viability and delivery of high-quality public realms and built environment. Castlebar Town Centre

historically has been the focal point of commercial activity supporting not only the town but the wider county and beyond. The role of the town centre over past decades has changed substantially leading with the emergence of on-line retailing and the significant decline of residential function.

### Questions to consider

- Q. Would pedestrianisation of Main Street improve the retail experience within the town?*
- Q. How can we revitalise our town centres so that they are vibrant, welcoming, attractive places to live and work in, visit and shop?*
- Q. Are there deficiencies in the existing retail provision within the Town?.*

## Urban Design and Placemaking

Urban Design involves examining all elements that contribute to a place (buildings, uses, streets, footpaths, open spaces) and ensuring that those elements create an attractive and distinct environment. Public realm is defined as all external spaces that are publicly accessible, including streets, parking areas, footpaths, squares and parks. A high-quality public realm enhances the character of any place and encourages people to utilise and enjoy public spaces, thereby contributing to placemaking and the overall vitality of an area. Measures to improve the public realm can include harmonising signage and reducing overall visual clutter by adopting a consistent approach in terms of street furniture, lighting and paving.

### Questions to consider

- Q. What urban design standards should apply in Castlebar?*
- Q. Is there adequate provision of street furniture in the town? e.g. public seating, planters?*
- Q. What are the unique features of Castlebar's urban environment that should inform future policy?*

## Built Heritage

Castlebar benefits from a legacy of 18th, 19th and 20th century buildings including townhouses on Ellison Street, civic and institutional buildings such as the Military barracks, and ecclesiastical buildings such as the Church of Ireland on The Mall and the Catholic Church on Upper Chapel Street. Under the current Town and Environs Plan the town has 85 Protected Structures. The town also has a rich archaeological heritage which is evidenced through the numerous Recorded Sites and Monuments which confirm early settlement in the area.

### Questions to consider

- Q. How can the landscape, and built heritage of Castlebar be suitably protected while accommodating the development needs of the town?*
- Q. How can the LAP encourage the reuse and regeneration of protected structures and older vacant structures located in the town centre area?*

# Pre-Draft Issues Paper Castlebar Town & Environs LAP 2021-2027

## Climate Action and Flooding

Central to environmental management is the issue of climate change, which one of the most significant global challenges for the planet. Climate change can result from natural processes and factors and more recently due to human activities, through emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG). Climate change will have diverse and wide-ranging impacts on our environment, society, economic sectors and natural resources. Management of areas prone to flooding must be addressed in the new LAP, along with measures to adapt to climate change by transitioning to a low carbon and climate resilient town, with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions.

### Questions to consider

*Q. How can the plan support our transition to a low carbon climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy?*

*Q. What methods should be encouraged to maximise renewable energy provision for commercial/industrial and residential developments?*

*Q. How can the Plan address flood risk and build resilience to better cope with the increasing frequency of extreme weather events?*



## Submissions

Public participation is essential to help deliver an effective Local Area Plan. Your submissions on the Issues Paper will assist Mayo County Council in identifying the local issues that will inform the preparation of the proposed draft Castlebar LAP 2021-2027, the first stage in the plan making process. If you are interested in making a submission at the pre-draft stage, you are invited to make your submissions to the You can make an observation or submission via the following two options **only**;

1. Registering on <https://consult.Mayo.ie/> where you can then make a submission on the issues paper. You can

also submit drawings of any areas relating to your submission on an interactive development plan map.

2. Written observations or submissions can also be made. These should be marked '*Issues Paper Castlebar Town and Environs LAP 2021-2027*', and submitted to the Forward Planning Department, Mayo County Council, Áras an Chontae, The Mall, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, F23 WF90. Observations or submissions **must** include the full name and address of the person(s) making the submission and where relevant, the body or organisation represented. Please note that observations or submissions will be made public on the website and at the offices of the Planning Department.

Please note submissions that are emailed **cannot** be considered and will be returned.

Observations or submissions must be received by **4pm 7th April 2021**

### What happens next?

Following completion of the pre-draft stage of public consultation, Mayo County Council will commence the preparation of the Draft LAP informed by the submissions received as part of the pre-draft consultation/ stakeholder engagement. When the Draft LAP has been prepared, the statutory process will begin and the Draft Plan will go on public display for a period of 6 weeks, during which time you may make submissions and attend an online public consultation event to view and discuss the Draft Plan.

# Pre-Draft Issues Paper Castlebar Town & Environs LAP 2021-2027

The submissions received will be considered by the Elected Members of Mayo County Council, who can decide to adopt, amend or revoke the Draft LAP. Any proposed amendments or material alterations to the Draft Plan requires public consultation for a period of 4 weeks. All submissions received will be considered by the Elected Members, who can decide to adopt the Draft LAP, with or without the material alterations. The LAP comes into effect 4 weeks after adoption.

Key Stages in the Local Area Plan-Making Process	
<p><b>1. Pre-Draft Stage</b></p> <p>Forming the issues to be addressed in the Plan and gathering information from consultation with relevant stakeholders and interested parties.</p>	<p><b>5. Consideration by Elected Members</b></p> <p>The Elected Members will consider the Chief Executive's Report and then make, amend or revoke the Plan as appropriate in accordance with the recommendations of the Chief Executive.</p>
<p><b>2. Draft Plan Stage</b></p> <p>Following a review of collated information, a Draft Plan will be prepared by the Planning Authority. The Draft will afford the public the first opportunity to gauge the direction that the final Plan is heading.</p>	<p><b>6. Material Alterations</b></p> <p>In the event of material alterations or amendments we will publish notice of this &amp; invite further submissions. A similar process to that outlined at stages 4 &amp; 5 is then repeated.</p>
<p><b>3. Notice of Draft Plan</b></p> <p>The Draft Plan will be available for inspection for at least 6 weeks. We will publish a notice in local papers letting you know that the Draft is available for inspection and inviting your submissions.</p>	<p><b>7. Final Plan</b></p> <p>Following consultation on Material Alterations, a further Chief Executive's Report will be prepared, to be considered by the Elected Members. The Elected Members will consider the report and the adopt the Plan.</p>
<p><b>4. Chief Executive's Report</b></p> <p>A Chief Executive's Report will be prepared based on the submissions received and containing the opinion of the Chief Executive and his recommendations in relation to the Plan.</p>	