

**DRAFT DIRECTION IN THE MATTER OF SECTION 31
OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (as amended)**

Castlebar Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2023-2029

“Local Area Plan” means the Castlebar Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2023-2029.

“Planning Authority” means Mayo County Council.

“RSES” means the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region

The Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in exercise of the powers conferred on him by section 31 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (No.30 of 2000) and the Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Delegation of Ministerial Functions) Order 2023 (S.I. No. 116 of 2023), and consequent to a recommendation made to him by the Office of the Planning Regulator, hereby directs as follows:

(1.) This Direction may be cited as the Planning and Development (Castlebar Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2023-2029) Direction 2024.

(2.) The Planning Authority is hereby directed to take the following steps with regard to the Local Area Plan:

(a) Provide a clear core strategy table which sets out the area and quantum of housing to be delivered on lands zoned Town Centre, Existing Residential and New Residential. Appropriate densities shall be applied to demonstrate anticipated yield.

(b) Reinstate the following zoning objectives and associated text to that of the draft Local Area Plan:

(i) Material Alterations 10, 12, 14 and 21 – i.e. the subject lands revert to Agriculture from New Residential

(ii) Material Alterations 13 and 17 – i.e. the subject lands revert to Enterprise and Employment, and Agriculture from New Residential

(iii) Material Alterations 15 and 18 – i.e. the subject lands revert to Enterprise and Employment from New Residential

(c) Delete the following zoning objective from the adopted Local Area Plan, i.e. the subject lands are unzoned:

(i) Land zoned Enterprise and Employment at Cloonagh (Site EE 1) located to the southwest of Saleen Lough and to the immediate east of the rail line

and apply all necessary consequential updates to the text of the plan consistent with the foregoing.

STATEMENT OF REASONS

- I. The Local Area Plan as adopted fails to include an accurate core strategy table and in particular, does not set out a table which estimates the quantum of housing that will be delivered on lands zoned Existing Residential, the quantum to be delivered on mixed use town centre and opportunity sites and the quantum to be delivered on lands zoned New Residential. This is inconsistent with RPO 3.1 and 3.2 of the RSES for compact growth and Objective SSO 3 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 to promote town centre regeneration, which aligns with the Government's *Town Centre First: A Policy Approach for Irish Towns* (2022).
- II. The Local Area Plan as adopted includes material alterations to the draft Local Area Plan, which zone additional residential land in excess of what is required for the town having regard to the growth targets for Castlebar under the core strategy of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028. These material alterations are inconsistent with Objective CSO 1 of the County Development Plan to secure the implementation of the population and housing growth set out in the core strategy and settlement strategy, and Objective CSO 3 to adopt a

Local Area Plan for Castlebar that aligns with the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and the core strategy of the County Development Plan.

These material alterations are located in peripheral and non-sequential locations, some of which are outside the CSO boundary, and would encourage a pattern of development in particular locations which is inconsistent with the objectives of the County Development Plan to implement a sequential approach to development and promote compact growth (Objective SSO 3 and Objective SSO 6), and is inconsistent with RPO 3.1 and RPO 3.2 of the RSES, and demonstrates that the Planning Authority has failed to have regard to the *Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)* issued under section 28 of the Act.

- III. The absence of a detailed core strategy table, and the extensive zoning of land in peripheral and non-sequential locations represents a piecemeal and ad hoc approach that individually and cumulatively fails to set out an overall strategy for growth that is consistent with the objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 to deliver compact and sequential growth and the regeneration of the town centre under Objective SSO 3 and Objective SSO 6.
- IV. The Local Area Plan as adopted includes a material alteration (MA 21) to the draft Local Area Plan which zones lands at Ballymacraha (referred to as Ballynaboll in MA 21) for vulnerable uses within flood zone A and B which have not passed the plan making Justification Test. This material alteration is inconsistent with NPO 57 of the National Planning Framework, RPO 3.10 and RPO 3.11 of the RSES, and Objectives NEO 7 and NEO 24 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, and fails to have regard to *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)* issued under section 28 of the Act.
- V. The Local Area Plan as adopted includes an extensive area of land zoned for Enterprise and Employment at Cloonagh which could accommodate a range of high intensity employment uses. This zoning lacks a clear evidence basis, and the peripheral location of these lands would encourage primarily car based

development that will not support the modal shift to active and sustainable travel modes, inconsistent with RPO 6.30 and 6.31 of the RSES. The zoning objective would, therefore, be inconsistent with Objective SO 12 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 to integrate land use planning and sustainable transportation planning, promote the consolidation of development, encourage sustainable travel patterns by reducing the need to travel particularly by private transport, while prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.

This zoning objective, by reason of its location, extent and the nature of uses that are permissible on such lands under the zoning matrix, also has the potential to generate significant additional traffic movements with consequent adverse impacts on the national road network, inconsistent with RPO 6.5 of the RSES to maintain the strategic capacity of the national road network, and section 2.7 (Development at National Road Interchanges or Junctions) of the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines* (2012) issued under section 28 of the Act.

Furthermore, this zoning objective is inconsistent with NPO 57 of the National Planning Framework, RPO 3.10 and RPO 3.11 of the RSES, and Objectives NEO 7 and NEO 24 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028. Part of the lands are located within flood zones A and B and the criteria of the Justification Test have not been adequately addressed in accordance with the *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009) issued under section 28 of the Act.

- VI. The Local Area Plan has not been made in a manner consistent with, and has failed to implement, the recommendations of the Office of the Planning Regulator under section 31AO of the Act.
- VII. In light of the matters set out at I-V above, the Minister is of the opinion that the Local Area Plan as made is inconsistent with the objectives of the Development Plan of the area.
- VIII. The Local Area Plan as made is not consistent with the objectives of the RSES contrary to section 19(2) and section 27(1) of the Act.

- IX. The Minister is of the opinion that the Local Area Plan as made is not consistent with objectives of the National Planning Framework, including National Policy Objective 33 and National Policy Objective 57.
- X. The Minister is of the opinion that the Local Area Plan as made fails to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- XI. The Local Area Plan is not in compliance with the requirements of the Act.

GIVEN under my hand,

Minister of State for Local Government and Planning

Day of Month, Year.