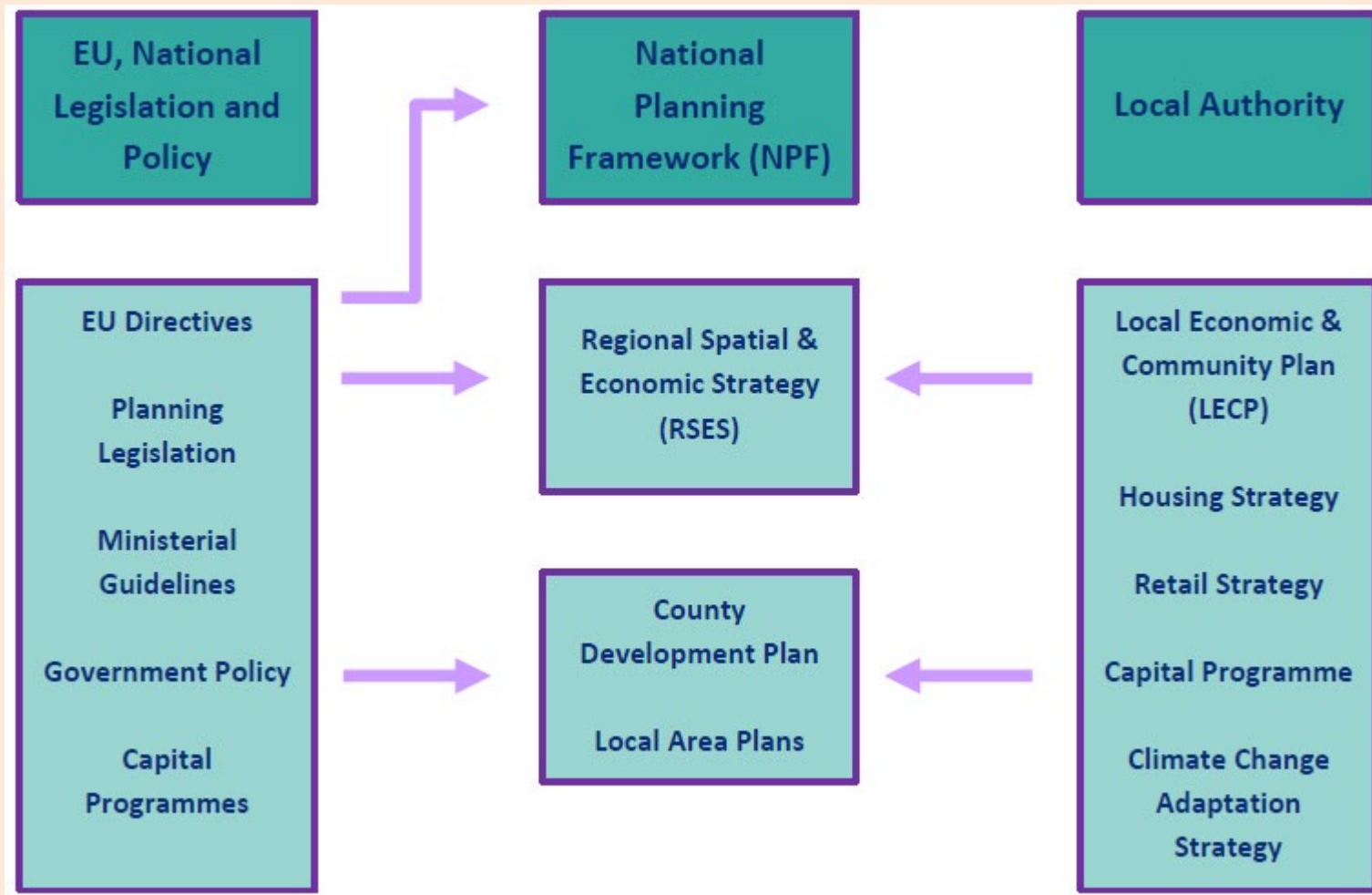


Westport Town & Environs Local Area Plan Pre-Draft Issues Paper



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council

Context of Local Area Plan



Pre-Draft Issues Paper Westport LAP 2021-2027

Introduction

Mayo County Council is commencing the preparation of a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Westport Town and 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 Westport 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 Westport 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 Westport 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 Westport, 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 for the Region and the National Planning Framework.

The RSES identifies [Westport](#) as a location with strategic development potential of a regional scale, a potential which is best achieved by building on the existing economic, commercial and social links with the nearby Key Town of Castlebar.

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

Why replace the Existing Town & Environ Development Plan?

Following the abolition of Town Councils under the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the current [Westport 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 in the Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027 provides for an increase in population of 1,027 individuals over the plan period, to be accommodated in an additional 470 dwelling units. Mayo County Council are required to identify and reserve an appropriate amount of land in the correct locations to meet housing and population targets.

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. What are the priorities for housing in Westport, in terms of size & type of housing?

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

Q. Do you have any ideas as to making housing more affordable in the town?

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Compact Growth /Regeneration

The sustainable growth of compact urban settlements is a top priority of the National Planning Framework, with particular emphasis on the regeneration and repopulation of urban cores and built-up areas.

Questions to Consider:

- Q. How can the LAP maximise the use of any vacant or underutilised sites in the centre of Westport?
- Q. Are there many suitable sites in the centre of Westport?

Economic & Employment

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. What, in your opinion, are the economic strengths and competitive advantages of Westport?
- Q. What type of industry/employment opportunities do you think should be encouraged in Westport and where should it be located?
- Q. Is there currently sufficiently land zoned industrial/economic in Westport?

Tourism

Westport is a nationally recognized high performance tourist destination and tourism makes a vital contribution to the economy of the town. The LAP will strive to maintain and enhance the tourism product in a sustainable manner, whilst preserving the landscape and character of the town.

Questions to consider:

- Q. What can the Plan do to support/enhance tourism in Westport?
- Q. Are there areas in the town that have the potential to be developed for tourism and recreational purposes?
- Q. What are your views on the development of Marine related tourism in the town and future development of Westport House and Demesne?

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 work environments and supporting transport infrastructure including roads, footpaths, cycle ways, buses and rail infrastructure, is fundamental for sustainable communities, climate action and quality of life considerations.

Questions to Consider:

- Q. How can the Local Area Plan help to improve and promote sustainable forms of transport in Westport?
- Q. How can we make the town centre a safer place for

pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle users?

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

Infrastructure Services

Infrastructure includes a wide variety of services and functions, essential for the delivery of sustainable development in the Westport. These include, Water Supply and Drainage, Waste Management, Pollution Management (Air, Noise, Light, Water, Litter, Major Hazards), Electricity Supply, Broadband/ Telecommunications Services and Roads. 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. How do you see the N5 project impacting on the future development of the town?
- Q. What are your views on the redevelopment of the Harbour area?

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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.

Questions to consider

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

Q. What types of community and amenity facilities are most important to you?

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. The term Green Infrastructure is used to describe the interconnected networks of land and water all around us that sustain environmental quality and enrich our quality of life.

Questions to consider

Q. Are there sufficient play areas, open spaces, public parks, sports, amenity and recreation facilities in

Westport?

Q. How can the Plan utilise and enhance existing amenity areas such as the greenway and the Harbour to provide for both passive and active recreation?

Q. Are open spaces, play areas, public parks and recreational facilities accessible for younger and older residents of the town, and people with disabilities?

Biodiversity & Nature Conservation

Natural heritage in Westport and its immediate environs includes designated European sites a wide range of natural and environmentally significant features that make an essential contribution to the environmental quality, ecological biodiversity and investment potential of the town.

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. Do we need specific policies/objectives, standards to increase biodiversity in all forms of development?

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.

Questions to consider

Q. What do you see as the main issues impacting on the future development of the retail sector in Westport?

Q. In your opinion, what type of measures are required to maintain and enhance the retail core of Westport while protecting its unique character and charm.?

Urban Design and Placemaking

Urban Design involves examining all elements that contribute to a place such as buildings and their uses, streets, footpaths, open spaces and ensuring that those elements blend harmoniously to create an attractive and distinct end product. Public realm is defined as all external spaces that are publicly accessible, including streets, parking areas, footpaths, squares and parks.

Questions to consider

Q. What urban design standards should apply in Westport?

Q. What are the unique features of Westport's urban environment that should inform future policy?

Q. Where do you see potential to enhance the public realm in the town?

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Built Heritage

The existing character and attractiveness of the town of Westport is predominantly underpinned by its built heritage, most notably the 18th and 19th century town core and the grounds of Westport House and Demesne.

Questions to consider:

Q. How can the landscape, and built heritage of Westport 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?

Q. How can Westport House and Demesne be protected while simultaneously achieving its full economic potential in terms of tourism and other acceptable land uses?

Climate Action and Flooding

Central to environmental management is the issue of climate change, which is now emerging as one of the most significant global challenges for the planet in the 21st century. Management of areas prone to flooding and the coastal zone must be addressed in the new Local Area Plan 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. How can the Plan achieve a balance between the growth of Westport and the protection of the environment?

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. 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 Westport 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.

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 Westport 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 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 Westport 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

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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 **4.00pm on 29/04/2021**.

What happens next?

Following on from Pre-Draft 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 a public consultation/drop in event to view and discuss the Draft Plan.

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>1. Pre-Draft Stage</p> <p>Forming the issues to be addressed in the Plan and gathering information from consultation with relevant stakeholders and interested parties.</p>	<p>5. Consideration by Elected Members</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>2. Draft Plan Stage</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>6. Material Alterations</p> <p>In the event of material alterations or amendments we will publish notice of this & invite further submissions. A similar process to that outlined at stages 4 & 5 is then repeated.</p>
<p>3. Notice of Draft Plan</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>7. Final Plan</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>4. Chief Executive's Report</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>	