
CHAPTER 4

Economic Development



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council

CHAPTER 4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Strategic Aim

The strategic aim of this chapter is to promote and enhance Mayo’s economic development potential through increased resilience in the county’s enterprise, underpinned by talent and innovation, thereby ensuring that Mayo is best placed to excel in the long-term delivery of sustainable jobs and an enhanced standard of living for all..

Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



Related NPF National Strategic Outcomes



Related RSES Regional Growth Ambitions



4.2 Introduction

This chapter has been guided by the above strategic aim, sustainable development goals and national strategic objectives to ensure the sustainable growth of enterprise and employment in County Mayo. The chapter has also considered the key legislative and policy documents set out in Appendix III, including the NPF and RSES for the Northern and Western region.

4.3 National and Regional Planning Position

The NPF and RSES recognise that enterprise, innovation and skills are crucial for a strong economy. The availability of a highly educated workforce, digital connectivity, accessibility to national and international markets, research and development capacity are all key determinants informing business location and fostering a sustainable economy. The NPF highlights the potential of the AEC to create an economic corridor along the western seaboard to achieve balanced regional development, while the RSES seeks to make the AEC a reality. The NPF and the RSES also recognise the important economic role of urban settlements at a county and regional level and rural settlements at a local level, whilst identifying the need to strengthen rural economies and communities by broadening the employment base of rural areas, improving connectivity and addressing infrastructural deficits.

The economic vision of the RSES is to facilitate inclusive and sustainable growth. The strategy seeks to build on the identified strengths of the region and to sustain a strong economy that supports sustainable job creation. It promotes the diversification of indigenous, economic activity and seeks to increase the proportion of activity in knowledge-intensive, high-value businesses to ensure the region is more resilient to global economy shocks and has greater longevity. The RSES acknowledges that the adopted Planning Scheme for the Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK) Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) represents a significant gamechanger for the future economic development of the region and for the consolidation of the AEC. The RSES also identifies key priorities for Castlebar and Ballina that will unlock their latent potential and enable their sustainable growth as attractive key economic drivers.

4.4 Mayo Context

County Mayo has long been recognised as an attractive place to live, work and do business, owing to the quality of its surroundings, good transport links, a well-educated workforce, together with its location along the Wild Atlantic Way and Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC). Quality of life in Mayo is also regarded an important element in attracting inward investment. The county has a strong network of towns, villages and settlements that provide a diverse range of services, including civic uses, retailing, professional services, hospitality and tourism related services. Mayo also has a strong rural economy with equine, agriculture, energy production and tourism also featuring strongly. The strategic aim of this chapter aligns with the recognised need for longer-term sustainable growth in enterprise and employment, as advocated in *Enterprise 2025 Renewed* and *Future Jobs Ireland*. Mayo County Council recognises that economic development and employment in the county is best achieved through a collaborative approach between the business communities, educational institutes and national agencies, with the Council facilitating, enabling and promoting economic growth within the county.

County Mayo is the second largest county in the region, with a population of over 130,000 people, 40% of which are aged under 25 years of age. Strong digital and physical infrastructures, a competitive young workforce and long tradition of entrepreneurship and innovation, renders Mayo as one of the best places in Ireland to locate a business. It has a broad range of industries and economic sectors with more than 4,000 businesses, ranging from start-ups to major multinational companies, including Baxter, Allergan, Hollister and Ballina Beverages. The county provides a favourable business climate, offering strong business supports and networks, a highly skilled workforce and a clean, green location with quality natural resources and ready access to international markets.

Third level education is an important determinant for business location and stimulating overall economic growth. The population of Mayo is well-educated, with over 34.8% attaining third level education according to Census 2016 figures. This reinforces the perception of Mayo as a county with a highly skilled and educated workforce, as higher educational attainment levels are linked with higher employment rates. The advancement of GMIT as a leading third level education provider, in addition to Mayo's proximity to other third level education providers within and outside of the region, is expected to further enhance these figures over the coming years.

4.4.1 Local Enterprise Office

Since the establishment of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), Mayo County Council has had a more direct role in supporting economic development and enterprise for new and established businesses at local level within the county. The LEO provides a range of business information, advice, training and supports to assist enterprises to consolidate and grow. The LEO also acts as a gateway to Enterprise Ireland, a support for manufacturing and internationally traded business companies that have the capacity to grow quickly. Mayo County Council recognises that the context for enterprise development has changed in recent years, with an increased need to focus on collaboration and additionality, by way of a 'bottom-up' approach to the creation and delivery of sustainable employment.

Mayo County Council and its Local Enterprise Office work in collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders to actively promote and encourage economic development and enterprise development in the County. The Council aims to facilitate economic development and employment opportunities by providing or supporting the delivery of infrastructure and implementing urban and rural economic initiatives. It also facilitates economic development by the zoning of appropriate lands in the higher order towns for employment and by ensuring that planning policy and objectives are supportive of business and enterprise.

4.4.2 Mayo County Council Economic Strategies

Mayo's economic development is guided at local level by three economic strategies – The economic element of the *Mayo Local Economic and Community Plan and Action Plan 2015-2021* (LECP), the *Mayo Economic Strategy – Mayo: Sustaining Jobs, Supporting Growth & Winning Investment* and this Economic Development chapter of the Mayo County Development Plan. The economic elements of the LECP consider opportunities for economic development in Mayo based on an identification of existing and emerging sectors, including food, agri-engineering, pharmaceuticals and the creative industry. The action plan sets out a range of integrated collective actions to secure sustainable economic development in the county.

Mayo: Sustaining Jobs, Supporting growth & Winning Investment focuses on a number of key economic pillars. These are business attraction, retention and expansion, investment readiness and PR, marketing and communications. The Mayo diaspora, its educated and skilled labour force, the development of telecommunication infrastructure, emerging sectors and branding are identified in the strategy as the drivers for economic success. This document will be superseded by a Mayo Economic Development Strategy which will incorporate a Food and Drink and a Digital Strategy. Six key pillars are identified for the new strategy, these are innovation, sustainable, entrepreneurial, skill focused, collaborative and place making. This Economic Development chapter of the plan is informed by the aforementioned strategies.

Economic Development Policy

EDP 1	To support and promote economic opportunities identified in Mayo County Council's economic strategy – <i>Mayo: Sustaining Jobs, Supporting Growth & Winning Investment</i> or any amended or replacement strategy.
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Economic Development Objectives

EDO 1	To facilitate and support the continued growth of the economy in the county in a sustainable manner and in accordance with the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.
EDO 2	To support and facilitate the economic development of the county in a manner which is consistent with the economic pillars identified in the Enterprise and Investment Units Economic Strategy.
EDO 3	To continue to promote the county to attract enterprise and investment into Mayo through the Enterprise & Investment Unit and/or Local Enterprise Office, with a focus on a number of established and emerging sectors including tourism, manufacturing, marine, renewable energy, ICT, food and agri-food.
EDO 4	To continue to support new and existing enterprises in the county through the provision of training, mentoring, financial supports, advice and networking events.
EDO 5	To encourage enterprise and employment development to locate in brownfield sites or unoccupied buildings in town centres or where appropriate in existing industrial/retail parks or other brownfield industrial sites in preference to undeveloped zoned or unzoned lands.
EDO 6	To facilitate the economic development of Mayo to create a viable and favourable economic environment for business and enterprise, whilst delivering sustainable jobs, employment opportunities and an enriched standard of living for all.

EDO 7	To identify and promote a range of locations within the County for different types of enterprise activity including international business and technology parks, small and medium enterprises (SME) and micro enterprise centre.
EDO 8	To co-operate with local and national development agencies and engage with existing and future employers in order to maximise job opportunities in the County.
EDO 9	To encourage and facilitate home-based start up enterprises of appropriate type, size and scale, subject to compliance with the criteria outlined in 5.10 of Volume 2 (Development Management Standards) of the Plan, and where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity.
EDO 10	To work in partnership with relevant stakeholders, to ensure that a sustainable approach is taken to enterprise development and employment creation across all sectors of the Mayo economy, in accordance with the Green Economy national frameworks relevant to each sector.
EDO 11	To engage with all relevant government stakeholders, enterprise agencies and sectoral representatives in pursuing 'green' approaches to economic development and actively collaborate with key industry and educational bodies to promote Mayo based initiatives across the economic sectors.
EDO 12	To promote quality employment and residential developments in proximity to each other in order to reduce the need to travel.
EDO 13	To encourage the provision of 'live work' communities, in which employment, residency and sustainable transport facilities are located in close proximity to each other, to reduce long distance commuter trends and congestion, as well as reducing outward migration from the county.
EDO 14	To ensure that people intensive developments are located close to the strategic public transport network.
EDO 15	To address the rate of out bound commuting, with the provision of 'live work' communities in strategic settlements served by sustainable transport, thereby improving quality of life, encouraging volunteerism and community engagement.
EDO 16	To encourage mixed use settlement forms and sustainable centres, in which employment, residency, education and local services / amenities are located in close proximity to each other.

EDO 17	To work with Irish Water and other infrastructure providers, to support the provision of services and facilities to accommodate the future economic growth of the County and to seek to reserve infrastructure capacity for employment generating uses.
EDO 18	To ensure that there is sufficient quantum of zoned lands to facilitate a range of enterprise across the county in line with the settlement hierarchy.
EDO 19	To support start-up businesses and small-scale industrial enterprise at appropriate locations throughout the County, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.
EDO 20	To further linkages and partnerships with GMIT including the branding of the area as a centre of excellence in the knowledge-based economy.
EDO 21	To encourage and facilitate small indigenous industries, at appropriate locations with good communication infrastructure, in recognition of their increasing importance in providing local employment and helping to stimulate economic activity within small communities.
EDO 22	To support the use of town centre core locations for new service focused enterprises.
EDO 23	To support the continued development of Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT), Castlebar Campus including the development of a shared approach to enterprise development with the Local Enterprise Office.
EDO 24	To acquire suitable land (subject to the availability of funding), including where appropriate, disused sites in State ownership, for creative and innovative entrepreneurial initiatives and the provision of clustered incubator units.
EDO 25	To promote the development of the key strategic employment sites identified in the Economic Development Strategy for County Mayo.
EDO 26	To support and promote the equine industry in the County as an economic and employment provider.
EDO 27	To work with Eirgrid, as far as practicable, to ensure power infrastructure is available for the development of zoned employment lands within the N5 corridor.
EDO 28	To review the Development Contribution Scheme.

4.4.3 Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK)

The presence of Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK) in Mayo is recognised as having a significant role in expanding the enterprise and tourism development of the county and wider region. The adopted Planning Scheme (2019) for IWAK Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) for the future development and expansion of the airport and surrounding lands is of regional and national significance. The SDZ will secure the long-term development of IWAK as a strategically important hub for transport, tourism, business and employment in Mayo and the wider region. The SDZ also has real potential to be a key driver of the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) in the region, helping to increase its potential to function as a cohesive model for balanced regional economic development, with potential for significant enterprise growth and access to international markets.

Ireland West Airport Knock Policies

EDP 2	To promote and support the strategic role of IWA Knock SDZ as a significant regional economic driver and promote the SDZ location as a regional economic business and enterprise hub.
EDP 3	To support the development of the IWA Knock SDZ in tandem with the required infrastructure for both the expansion of the airport and in its delivery as a regional business and enterprise hub.

Ireland West Airport Knock Objectives

EDO 29	To promote and facilitate the growth of IWAK as a creative and innovative area that is globally competitive, internationally linked, attractive and open.
EDO 30	To support, promote and facilitate the implementation of the approved Planning Scheme for the designated SDZ at IWA Knock (including the mitigation measures of the statutory environmental assessment carried out for the planning scheme), which provides the framework for the expansion of the Airport in terms of its transport and business operations and as a new business and enterprise destination.
EDO 31	To support and recognise the important national and Regional role of IWAK in the economic life of the county and region and to facilitate its activities and development, having regard to the IWAK SDZ.

4.4.4 Atlantic Economic Corridor

The Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) extends along the western seaboard of Ireland and includes ten local authority regions from Kerry to Donegal. The region is viewed as having significant potential for future economic growth and creating balanced regional development to complement the eastern seaboard economic corridor. The overarching objective of the AEC initiative is to maximise the infrastructure, talent and enterprise assets along the western seaboard, including the corridors

between Ballina and Castlebar/Westport to IWAK, and to combine the economic hubs, clusters, and catchments of the area to attract investment, improve competitiveness, support job creation and contribute to an improved quality of life for the people who live there. The consolidation of the AEC will be further realised through the development of the IWAK SDZ; the advancement of key infrastructural projects under Project 2040; the potential future reopening of the Western Rail Corridor; and the roll out of the national broadband plan.

Atlantic Economic Corridor Policies

EDP 4	To promote, support and facilitate the Atlantic Economic Corridor initiative in a sustainable manner to secure the long-term economic and employment growth for Mayo
EDP 5	To promote, support and facilitate the appropriate development of Mayo's towns, villages and rural areas that function as part of the Atlantic Economic Corridor.

Atlantic Economic Corridor Objectives

EDO 32	To advance and promote the AEC in order to maximise the advantages of Western Region links and the development of an All-Ireland economy.
EDO 33	To support the sustainable development of a Castlebar-Westport Growth Cluster as a driver of economic development for the county and region, building on the dual capacity, complementarity and combined strengths of both towns in terms of population, established commercial, social and cultural links and proximity, thereby strengthening the urban structure of the region and enabling the realisation the Atlantic Economic Corridor.
EDO 34	To facilitate the development of the Western Rail Corridor, in order to support and underpin the development of the Atlantic Economic Corridor, to encourage the economic growth of Mayo and the wider region and to support vibrant local communities.
EDO 35	To promote and facilitate in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, the provision of AEC enterprise hubs within the towns and villages in Mayo.
EDO 36	To Work with adjoining counties to secure the Atlantic Economic Corridor, as a model of balanced regional development.

4.4.5 Growth Clusters

Mayo County Council seeks to further progress the sustainable economic development of the county through the growth cluster development model for Castlebar-Westport and Ballina. This model is based on building on complementary strengths and synergies between the urban centres, to enable them to compete at a regional and national level. In the context of linked towns, there is greater potential to encourage business clustering to enable complementary businesses to start up and progress to making the move from non-traded to traded activities. This is through facilitating cooperation, specialisation, marketing, distribution and sales. Given the size of Mayo, its geographical characteristics and location in relation to Galway and Sligo, the combined strengths of the three towns of Castlebar, Ballina and Westport will be harnessed to drive development from within the county as highly connected complementary urban centres.

The *Castlebar-Westport Economic Growth (CWEG) Cluster 2040* was adopted by Mayo County Council in 2020. The CWEG Cluster has the potential to create larger interdependence and complementary urban centres of a regional strategic scale, through building critical mass of population and further employment, in tandem with enhanced accessibility and quality of life. These intrinsically linked urban areas have a variety of strong employment sectors such as Pharma and Engineering, Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), cultural institutions and health services, all of which provide latent capacity for the CWEG Cluster to enhance its regional role. Castlebar-Westport hosts some of the world's largest and most successful companies across a range of industry sector, such as Allergan and Baxter. The CWEG Cluster is also home to large indigenous businesses such as Carrig Donn, Portwest & KOG Logistics.

Ballina is identified as a key town to be prioritised for local and regional enterprise. It is Mayo's most northerly town with a population of over 10,000 and functions as the main economic driver for a large area of north Mayo. Complementary to the Castlebar-Westport Economic Growth (CWEG) Cluster, Mayo County Council are also developing an economic growth cluster study for Ballina, in the context of supporting towns within its catchment. The study seeks to support and grow the role of Ballina as the key economic driver in the north-west of the county, capitalising on its designation as a Key Town within the context of the Sligo Regional Growth Centre and its location in relation to the Atlantic Economic Corridor.

Growth Clusters Policies

EDP 6	To support and grow the role of Ballina as the key economic driver in the north-west of the county, capitalising on its designation as a Key Town within the context of the Sligo Regional Growth Centre and its location in relation to the Atlantic Economic Corridor, in order to facilitate long-term economic growth within the context of a high quality environment, supporting a wide range of services and amenities.
EDP 7	To support and grow the role of Castlebar as the main administrative, healthcare and education centre in the county, the main centre for commerce and enterprise, capitalising on its designation as a Key Town within the context of the Galway Metropolitan City and Sligo Regional Growth Centre and its location in relation to the Atlantic Economic Corridor, in order to facilitate long-term economic growth within

	the context of a high quality environment supporting a wide range of services and amenities.
EDP 8	To support and grow the role of Westport as a key economic driver in the county and as a national tourism hub, capitalising on its significant tourism related assets, including its designation as a Heritage Town and its status as a Key Town within the context of Galway Metropolitan City, Sligo Regional Growth Centre and its location in relation the Atlantic Economic Corridor, in order to facilitate long-term economic growth within the context of a high quality environment, supporting a wide range of services and amenities.
EDP 9	To support and promote the sustainable development of the Castlebar-Westport Economic Growth Cluster as a driver of economic development for the County and Region, building on the dual capacity, complementarity and combined strengths of both towns in terms of population, established commercial, social and cultural links and proximity, thereby strengthening the urban structure of the region and enable the realisation the Atlantic Economic Corridor.

Growth Cluster Objectives

EDO 37	To seek to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Castlebar-Westport Economic Growth (CWEG) Cluster 2040.
EDO 38	To prepare an economic growth strategy for Ballina and its supporting catchment to advance the economic development of North Mayo.
EDO 39	To investigate the potential for the Tier II urban settlements of Ballinrobe, Ballyhaunis and Claremorris to function as an economic growth cluster in South Mayo, capitalising on their proximity to the IWAK and AEC.
EDO 40	To explore the feasibility of seeking the designation of the former Asahi Plant and adjoining lands outside of Killala as a Strategic Development Zone.

4.4.6 Retail

The retail sector is also a significant employer in County Mayo. The achievement of a strong retail sector leads to the creation of vibrant town centres that offer a diverse range of services to residents and communities in the surrounding rural hinterlands. The potential of retail outlets to generate footfall means that their location is critical. They have a major bearing on the health of town centres and this, in turn, has a major impact on the vitality of the surrounding hinterland.

In recent years, the retail environment has been changing and continued leakage to higher order centres and migration to online sales rather than through traditional on street outlets, is posing a

significant challenge to town centres. Many of the town centres in the county have suffered from increases in levels of vacancy and dereliction and lower value retail users in their core retail streets. The need to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres is also supported in the NPF and RSES. It is important to develop quality town centre commercial environments, that will in turn improve the vibrancy and enhance traditional on street experiences in towns and villages throughout the county.

Mayo County Council supports compact growth, place-making, high quality urban design, urban and rural regeneration and active land management to release brownfield and infill sites for development in town/village centres. It also recognises that investment, robust planning policies and objectives and public engagement with key stakeholders are key solutions to reversing the trend of high vacancy rates and dereliction in town/village centres.

Retail Policies	
EDP 10	To support the vitality and viability of existing town and village centres and facilitate a competitive and healthy environment for the retailing sector into the future, by ensuring that future growth in retail floorspace responds to the identified settlement hierarchy, the sequential approach, the appropriate protection of the built environment and the needs of the projected population of the settlement area.
EDP 11	To encourage local partnership, town teams or community organisations to develop and implement local economic initiatives which will enhance town and village centres.
EDP 12	To promote the reuse of vacant floorspace. Alternative uses shall be assessed on their own merits against the requirements of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
EDP 13	To support and promote the retail sector in the county and ensure compliance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities DoECLG (April 2012) and Retail Design Manual DoECLG (April 2012) or any amended or superseding version of the guidelines and design manual.
EDP 14	To promote the reuse or reactivation of vacant underutilised properties/shop units in order to assist with the regeneration of streets and settlements in the county.

Retail Objectives	
EDO 41	To implement/review the Mayo County Retail Strategy.
EDO 42	To promote and reinforce all town centres in the county as primary shopping areas.

EDO 43	To adhere to the principle of ‘sequential approach’ in the consideration of retail applications located outside of core retail areas.
EDO 44	To ensure proposals for retail development in towns and villages make a positive contribution to the general townscape through the promotion of excellence in urban design, signage, consideration of the built heritage and designed to a scale appropriate to the settlement.
EDO 45	To continue to implement and facilitate environmental, amenity and recreational improvements to the public realm, in existing town and village core retail areas.
EDO 46	To maintain an appropriate mix of uses and to maintain the role of the town centre as a dominant commercial and retail centre, and prevent an excessive concentration of particular (single type) uses with the town centre areas of Mayo’s towns and villages, for example bookmakers/betting offices; licenced premises, discount retail units, hot food takeaways etc.
EDO 47	To promote and facilitate on-street activities including street markets and farmers / country markets in all existing retail centres or any event that adds to the vitality and viability of existing town and village centres, whilst not unduly impacting on the existing retail function.

4.4.7 Smart Economy

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play a crucial role in enabling social and economic activity and the enhancement the ICT infrastructure throughout the county is a priority. This must be managed to ensure a balance between the provision of such infrastructure in the interests of social and economic progress and sustaining residential amenity and environmental quality. Mayo County Council has prepared a Digital Strategy which seeks to facilitate and support the rollout of Digital Infrastructure and Skills to all citizens in County Mayo.

Smart Economy Policies

EDP 15	To support and facilitate the delivery of the National Broadband Plan and Mayo County Councils Digital Strategy as a means of developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education, innovation and skills development, for those who live and work in rural areas throughout Mayo, where appropriate.
EDP 16	To support the development of the ICT sector in Mayo, along with key stakeholders and relevant agencies to ensure that the economic, potential of the sector is secured for the benefit of the local, regional and national economy.

EDP 17	To support and promote the development of a Smart County to benefit the economic growth, quality of life and wellbeing of the people of Mayo and advance the NWRA 'Smart Region' Growth Ambition in the RSES.
EDP 18	To support the development of a Smart County to develop and diversify the rural economy, to build on local enterprise and infrastructure assets, to drive innovations around energy, transport, agri-food, tourism, e-services and remote working.

Smart Economy Objectives

EDO 48	To support the role out of actions listed in the Mayo County Council Digital Strategy.
EDO 49	To support the development of sites where data centres, ICT related development and high potential start-ups can thrive.
EDO 50	To identify suitable locations and support the provision of co-working facilities, digital hubs/eHubs and eWorking centres throughout the county that function as outreach hubs for out of county employers and that promote flexible working arrangements and strengthen the AEC hub network.

4.4.8 Rural Economy

Mayo is a rural county, with much of its population rural-based and the majority of the land in the county is in agricultural / forestry use. Construction, engineering, manufacturing, quarrying, tourism-related services, transport, energy production, forestry, agriculture, food, education, waste disposal and health are all significant areas of employment in the rural areas of County Mayo. The Council recognises, however, that rural-based employment extends beyond these traditional rural sectors to include all aspects of the economy. A national strategic outcome of the NPF is 'Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities'. Rural areas play a key role in defining our identity, in driving our economy and our high-quality environment and are part of the county's strategic development during the plan period. In addition to the natural resources and food sector as traditional pillars of the rural economy, improved connectivity facilitating home working and digital hubs, broadband and rural economic development opportunities offer the potential to ensure our rural area remains and strengthens as a living and working community.

Rural Economy Policies

EDP 19	To support, in conjunction with Mayo LEO and other agencies, the development of indigenous industry and business start-ups in rural employment centres (villages and settlements) in the county, subject to compliance with siting, design and environmental considerations.
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EDP 20	To support the implementation of the new LEADER Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and any subsequent amended/updated programme for the county.
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Rural Economy Objectives

EDO 51	To facilitate rural enterprises, and resource development (such as agriculture, agri-food sector, agri-tourism, commercial fishing, aquaculture, rural tourism, forestry, bio-energy, the extractive industry, recreation, cultural heritage, marine enterprise sector, research and analysis) and renewable energy resources (such as wind/solar/ocean energy) that are dependent on their locality in rural locations, where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity. Where proposals demonstrate measures to promote environmental enhancement through improved ecological connectivity, such as measures in the Pollinator Plan, additional native species planting or blue and green infrastructure measures, these will be favourably considered.
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EDO 52	To support rural entrepreneurship and the development of micro businesses (generally less than 10 no. employees) in rural areas, where environmental and landscape impact is minimal and such developments do not generate significant or undue traffic. This objective shall not apply to sites accessed from the National Road Network.
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EDO 53	To support remote working in the rural area, at an appropriate scale, for enterprise/businesses that do not require visiting members of the public, subject to normal planning considerations.
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4.4.9 Agriculture, Agri-Food, Agri-Tech

The agriculture sector is a significant source of economic activity throughout the county. It contributes to exports, provides the raw materials for the food processing industry and has potential for providing more added value in the artisan food sector. The Council will take a positive approach to applications for sustainable agricultural developments generally, subject to the protection of ground waters, residential amenities, designated habitats and the landscape.

The Council promotes the use of Agri-tech which is the use of technology for farming that is developed to improve efficiency and profitability. It aims to improve farming through information monitoring and analysis of weather, pests, soil and air temperature.

Mayo County Council has developed an agriculture strategy that will drive economic development, support employment and create sustainable jobs in the county. The purpose of the strategy is to set out a series of actions that will help Mayo capitalise on its opportunities and overcome the barriers to developing this critical component of the local economy. The strategy summarises the agriculture

sectors in the county and sets out how they will be developed. The objective is to do this in a balanced way whilst maximising their contribution.

Agriculture Policies

EDP 21	To support the implementation of the Mayo County Council Agricultural Strategy to promote the continued development and expansion of the Agri-Food Sector, subject to the measures and environmental objectives of the forthcoming Common Agricultural Policy Strategy for Ireland.
EDP 22	To support the implementation, at county level, of the provisions set out in Food Harvest 2025, subject to environmental carrying capacity constraints.
EDP 23	To maintain a vibrant and healthy agricultural sector based on the principles of sustainable development, whilst at the same time supporting alternative employment in or close to rural areas to sustain rural communities.
EDP 24	To work with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Teagasc and all other stakeholders to support the agricultural and agri-business sector, as appropriate.
EDP 25	To support and promote the equine industry in the county as an economic and employment provider.
EDP 26	To support the development of appropriately located allotments, in areas which have good access to and are proximate to built-up and residential areas.

Agriculture Objectives

EDO 54	To support, promote and consider, on their individual merits, the reuse of redundant agricultural buildings and the development of new buildings to accommodate farm diversification / enterprise within an overall farmyard complex.
EDO 55	To support, promote and facilitate the implementation of the actions of Mayo County Council's agricultural strategy - <i>A Sustainable Agricultural Strategy for Mayo</i> or any amended/replacement strategy to secure economic and employment growth in the county in a sustainable manner.
EDO 56	To encourage proposals for farm shops where it can be clearly demonstrated that: (a) the products to be sold are primarily produce grown on the farm holding;

	<p>(b) the scale and scope of the retailing proposed will not harm the viability or retail facilities in any nearby town or village;</p> <p>(c) and the proposed shop is operated by the owner of the farm and is ancillary to the main use of the property for agricultural activities.</p>
EDO 57	To ensure that equine based developments are located on suitable and viable landholdings and are subject to normal planning, siting and design considerations.
EDO 58	<p>To facilitate the development of allotments of an appropriate scale, subject to normal planning considerations and which meet the following criteria:</p> <p>(i) The lands are situated within or immediately adjacent to the edge of towns/villages or are easily accessible to the residents of a particular town or village; and</p> <p>(ii) Adequate water supply and adequate parking facilities can be provided.</p>

4.4.10 Extractive Industries

The Council recognises the importance of sand and gravel extractions in the economic life of the county and its importance as a valuable source of employment in parts of the county. It is also recognised, however, that exploitation of deposits can have a seriously damaging environmental impact on the county’s natural landscape. A satisfactory balance is required between the needs of the building industry and the need to protect the environment.

The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that those extractions which would result in a reduction of the visual amenity of areas of high amenity or damage to areas of scientific importance or of geological, botanical, zoological and other natural significance including all designated European Sites are not be permitted. The Council requires that all such workings should be subjected to landscaping requirements and that worked out quarries should be rehabilitated to a use agreed with the Planning Authority.

The use of these rehabilitated sites shall be limited to wastes such as soil, stone and subsoils and sites shall be authorised under the appropriate waste regulations. The Planning Authority will have regard to the Department of the Environment’s Guidelines for Planning Authorities for Quarries and Ancillary Activities 2004 (and any updated editions) when assessing applications relating to the extraction industry in the county.

Extractive Industry Policies

EDP 27	To support adequate supplies of aggregate resources to meet the future growth needs of the county and the wider region where there is a proven need for a certain mineral/aggregate and to exercise appropriate control, while addressing key environmental, traffic and social impacts.
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EDP 28	To support the development of aggregate resources (stone and sand/gravel deposits) in a manner which minimises effects on the environment and having regard to the principles of sustainability.
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Extractive Industry Objectives

EDO 59	To ensure that the development of aggregate resources (stone and sand/gravel deposits) is carried out in a manner which minimises effects on the environment, including the Natura 2000 network and its sustaining habitats (including water dependent habitats and species), amenities, infrastructure and the community, and can demonstrate environmental enhancement through habitat management plans/ecological restoration.
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EDO 60	Have regard to the Quarry and Ancillary Activities Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities DoEHLG (April 2004) or any new or subsequent quarry guidance.
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4.4.11 Marine Economy

The emergence of the blue economy as a key driver of sustainable living has refocused national and international attention on harnessing the resources off the coast. New world demands in terms of food supply, energy security, biotechnology and climate change identify the coast as the focus of sustainability. The role of the Marine Section of Mayo County Council is to bring a stronger strategic focus on all aspects the marine with a view to leveraging our extensive marine resources to build a vibrant competitive marine sector in Mayo. The section aims to develop possible pathways to transform what are obvious comparative advantages into competitive advantages and ensure that our local marine sector can contribute to the economic sustainability of the county as a whole. It is hoped to leverage the emerging blue economy sectors such as offshore energy, marine biotechnology and the area of research and development. It is also a priority to support the more traditional marine activities such as fishing, aquaculture and leisure in terms of investment and infrastructure to build vibrant and sustainable coastal communities.

Marine Economy Policies

EDP 29	To support the sustainable growth and development of the maritime economy, particularly in remote rural coastal communities and islands.
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EDP 30	To support the sustainable development of the marine sector, having regard to <i>Harvesting Our Ocean Wealth An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland</i> July 2012 and the publication of the National Marine Planning Framework and subsequent marine spatial plans.
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EDP 31	To support the sustainable development of marine aquaculture and fishing industries having regard to best environmental practices, so as to maximise their contribution to
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	jobs and growth in coastal communities where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity.
EDP 32	To protect the county’s valuable inland fishery resource and support its sustainable development through the protection of water and habitat quality and facilitation of ancillary infrastructure at appropriate locations.

Marine Economy Objectives

EDO 61	To review and where necessary vary the County Development Plan upon adoption of the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) to ensure alignment, and consistency between land-use and ocean-based planning and to ensure coordination supporting the protection of the marine environment and growth of our marine economy.
EDO 62	To support the upgrade and improvement of the county’s harbours and piers, where necessary, and ensure the sustainable development of this infrastructure to enable aquaculture and seafood industry expansion.

4.4.12 Green Economy

The ‘Green Economy’ refers to an increasingly sustainable approach in undertaking economic activity. The term ‘Green Economy’ covers a wide range of sectors that have in common the objective of providing goods and services in a sustainable way that reduces impact on the environment and contributes to the circular economy. In Ireland, this covers activities such as sustainable food production, tourism, green financial services, green products and services, waste and water management, renewable energy and energy efficiency. The NPF recognises and supports the development of the circular and bio economy.

The Government’s *Action Plan for Jobs 2017* outlines that there is a ‘strong economic dimension to the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy’. The Council recognises the significant role the ‘Green Economy’ has to play in the competitiveness of the county and the country as a whole. The growing international emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving resource efficiency, presents a major opportunity for indigenous enterprises to grow and export innovative products and services.

This Plan aims to recognise and develop the full potential of green energy including biomass for energy production / manufacturing and the export of green electricity to the national grid. The Plan seeks to support industries and business seeking to generate energy within the confines of their specific sites and the export of surplus energy to the national grid.

Green Economy Policies

EDP 33	To support the implementation of the Green Economy national frameworks through encouraging enterprise development and employment creation across all sectors of the Mayo economy.
EDP 34	To support rural diversification through sustainable rural development practices, investment in rural towns and villages, providing for access to technology and skills development network.

Green Economy Objectives

EDO 63	To support and facilitate the Green Economy in County Mayo
EDO 64	To facilitate the development of industries that create and employ green technologies and take measures to accelerate the transition towards low carbon and circular economies.
EDO 65	To facilitate homebased economic activity that allows employers, enterprises and entrepreneurs the option of working from home or a local hub to reduce commuting, and congestion and facilitate a low carbon county.
EDO 66	To support and facilitate renewable energy initiatives that facilitate a low carbon transition.

4.4.13 Major Accidents and Seveso II Sites

The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2006 transposes the SEVESO II Directive 96/82/EC (relating to the prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances) into Irish Law. The Directive aims to prevent accident hazards from dangerous substances and to limit the consequence of such accidents through the following measures:

- The siting of new establishments;
- Modification of existing establishments;
- Development in the vicinity of an establishment which by virtue of its type or siting is likely to increase the risk or consequence of a major accident;
- Site specific emergency planning by the local authority and site operator.

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) provides advice to Planning Authorities, where appropriate, in respect of planning applications for development within a certain distance of the perimeter of these

sites. There are five SEVESO sites in County Mayo, which are European Refreshments (t/a Ballina Beverages), Vermillion Exploration & Production Ireland Ltd., Barnatra, Ballina, Brookland Gas Company Ltd. (Ballina), Calor Teoranta, (Claremorris) and Flogas Ireland Ltd. (Ballyhaunis). The following objectives are applicable in respect of same and any future proposal involving dangerous substances.

Major Accidents and Seveso Objectives

EDO 67	To ensure that appropriate distances are maintained between any proposed development and any existing Seveso II establishment, in the interest of the health and safety of the occupiers of the proposed development.
EDO 68	To require that, the siting of new establishments, or modification of existing establishments classified under the Seveso II Directive, as listed in Volume 2 of this Plan, and new development in the vicinity of existing establishments shall take into account the need to prevent major accidents involving hazardous substances and safeguard both the public and the environment.