

SEA STATEMENT

OF THE

WESTPORT TOWN AND ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010-2016

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

For: Westport Town Council & Mayo County Council

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Terms of Reference

This is the SEA Statement of the Westport Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

1.2 SEA Definition

SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing a plan, or other strategic action, in order to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making on a par with economic and social considerations.

1.3 Legislative Context

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 27 June 2001, on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, referred to hereafter as the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors, including land use planning.

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 435 of 2004), and, the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004). Both sets of regulations became operational on 21 July 2004.

The SEA Directive and the instruments transposing it into Irish Law require that after the adoption of a plan or programme, the plan or programme making authority is required to make a Statement available to the public, the competent environmental authorities and, where relevant, neighbouring countries. This Statement is referred to as an SEA Statement (DEHLG, 2004)¹.

¹ Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2004) *Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities* Dublin: Government of Ireland.

1.4 Content of the SEA Statement

The SEA Statement is required to include information summarising:

- a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan,
- b) how
 - the environmental report,
 - submissions and observations made to the planning authority on the proposed Plan and Environmental Report, and
 - any transboundary consultations [this is not relevant to this SEA]

have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan,

- c) the reasons for choosing the Plan, as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and
- d) the measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan.

1.5 Implications of SEA for the Plan

As a result of the aforementioned legislation, the Westport Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 was required to undergo SEA.

The findings of the SEA were expressed in a Draft Environmental Report which was submitted to the Elected Members alongside the proposed Draft Plan. The purpose of the report was to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the future accommodation of growth in Westport.

Changes made to the proposed Draft Plan were evaluated for their environmental consequences and the Draft Environmental Report was updated to become the Environmental Report.

The Environmental Report and the Draft Plan were placed on public display in February 2009.

Proposed Amendments to the Draft Plan were evaluated for their environmental consequences and these were presented to the Elected Members and placed on public display alongside the Proposed Amendments in the form of Addendum II to the Environmental Report. On adoption of the Draft Plan, this Addendum and Addenda I and III² were used to update the original Environmental Report into a final Environmental Report which accompanies the adopted Plan.

At each stage of the process the Elected Members took into account the findings of the Environmental Report and/or the Addenda as appropriate.

² Addendum I details responses to the submissions on the Environmental Report which were made during the first period of public display of the Draft Plan and the Environmental Report. It proposes updates to the Environmental Report as a result of these submissions, as appropriate. Addendum III responds to relevant submissions which were made on Proposed Amendments to the Draft Westport and Environs Development Plan and accompanying Addendum II.

Section 2 How Environmental Considerations were integrated into the Development Plan

2.1 Consultations

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) and the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (DCMNR) were sent SEA scoping notices indicating that submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report could be made to the Councils. Submissions were received on the scope of the SEA from the EPA and the DEHLG. These submissions were taken into account during the formulation of the scope.

In addition, a number of other submissions were made on the Development Plan and Environmental Report and the Proposed Amendments and Addendum II to the Environmental Report while they were on public display.

Further information on the content of these submissions and how they were taken into account by the SEA is provided under Section 3.2.

2.2 Environmental Sensitivities

2.2.1 Mapping and Early Communication

Environmental considerations were integrated into the Draft Plan before it was placed on public display for the first time.

Environmental sensitivities were mapped in order to identify which areas of Westport would be most sensitive to development and would suffer the most adverse effects if growth was to be accommodated in those areas unmitigated.

The sensitivities were communicated to the Plan-making team on a regular basis from the outset of the Plan preparation process. Identifying areas with the most limited carrying

capacity within the Plan area helped future growth to be diverted away from these areas.

The sensitivities considered by the SEA included the following:

- Designated ecological sites;
- Habitat Mapping;
- Land cover;
- Soil Type;
- Water Framework Directive (WFD) Risk Assessments for Rivers, River Catchments, Transitional Waters, Coastal Waters and Ground Waters;
- WFD Register of Protected Areas;
- EPA River Water Quality Monitoring;
- GSI Aquifer Vulnerability and Productivity;
- Waste Water Treatment capacity and demand;
- Drinking water supply;
- Drinking water quality;
- Archaeological Heritage;
- Architectural Heritage; and,
- Landscape Policy Areas and Ridgelines.

A number of these sensitivities are mapped on Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2, Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4.

Overlay mapping

A Geographical Information System (GIS) was used in order to weight the above sensitivities and map them overlapping each other - this allowed the identification of where most sensitivities within and surrounding the Plan area occur. Figure 2.5 shows the overlay map of sensitivities that was used by the SEA.

Environmental sensitivities are indicated by colours which range from high vulnerability (red) to vulnerable areas (orange) to moderate vulnerability (orange/yellow) and low vulnerability (yellow/green). Where the mapping shows a concentration of environmental sensitivities there is an increased likelihood that development will conflict with these sensitivities and cause environmental deterioration. This is particularly the case where the cumulative development of small-scale projects gradually causes a slow deterioration of a resource.

2.3 Early Identification and Evaluation of Alternatives

A range of potential alternative scenarios for the types of planning strategies adopted for the Development Plan were identified at an early stage in the process and evaluated for their likely significant environmental effects (see Section 4).

The environmental sensitivities and overlay mapping shown on Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2, Figure 2.3, Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.5 were used in order to predict and evaluate the environmental effects of implementing the scenarios.

Communication of the findings of this evaluation enabled the Plan-making team to make an informed choice as to which alternative was to be put before the Elected Members as the proposed Plan.

Communication of this evaluation to the Elected Members through the Environmental Report enabled the Elected Members to make an informed choice with regard to the making of the Development Plan.

Mitigation measures which arose from the evaluation and which were integrated into the Plan are detailed under Section 2.4 of this report.

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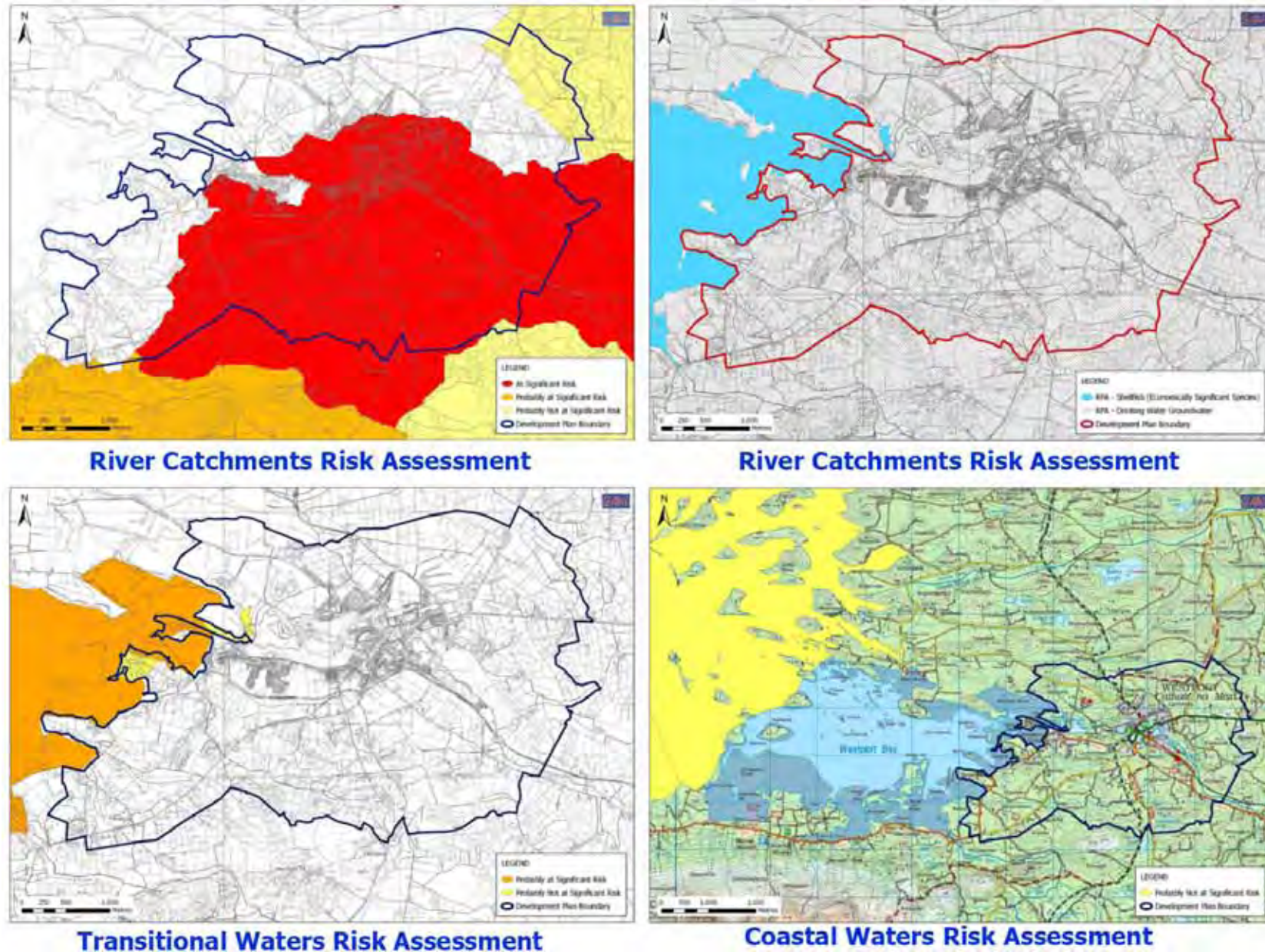


Figure 2.2 Environmental Sensitivities - Plate 2

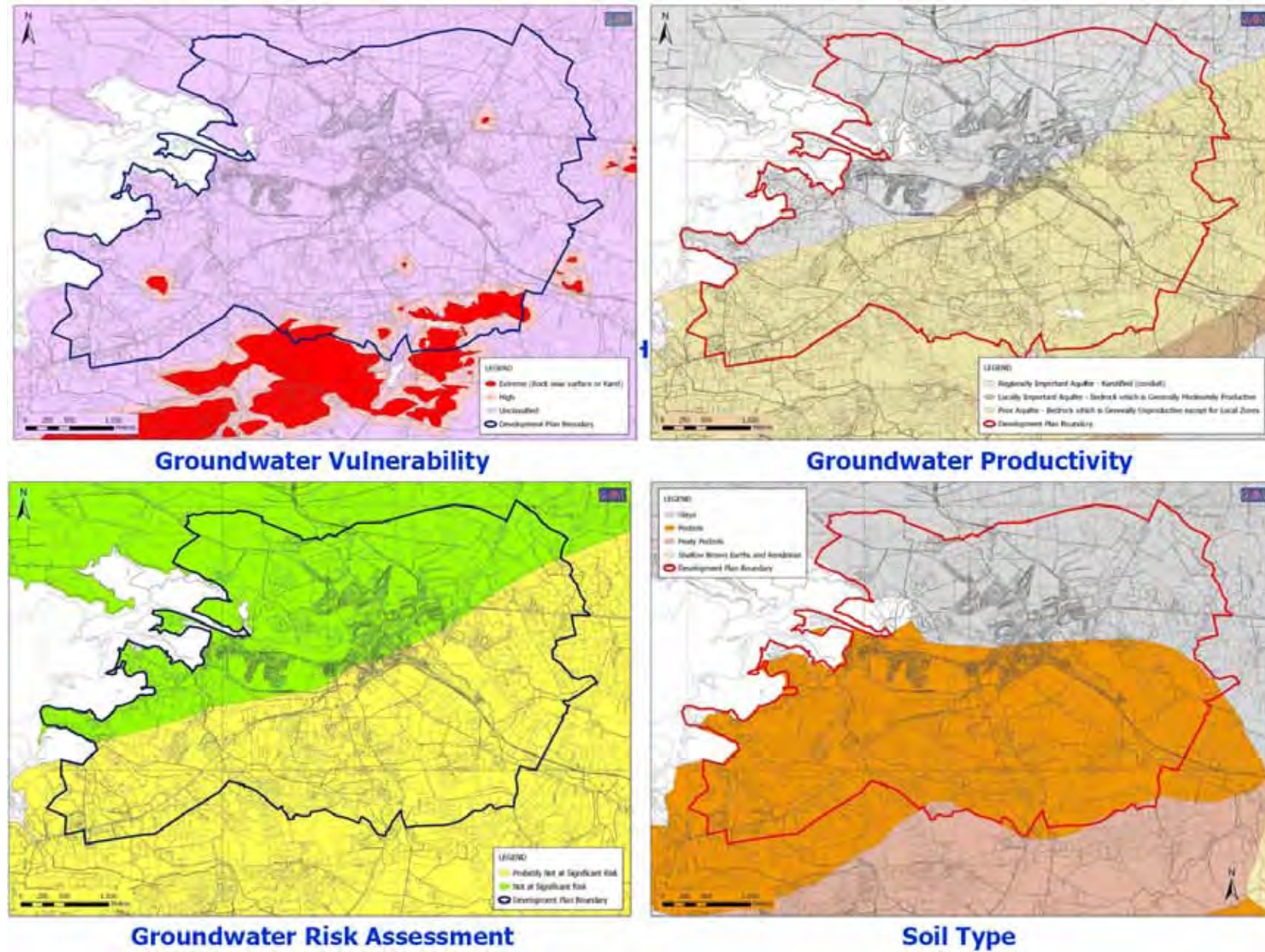


Figure 2.3 Environmental Sensitivities - Plate 3

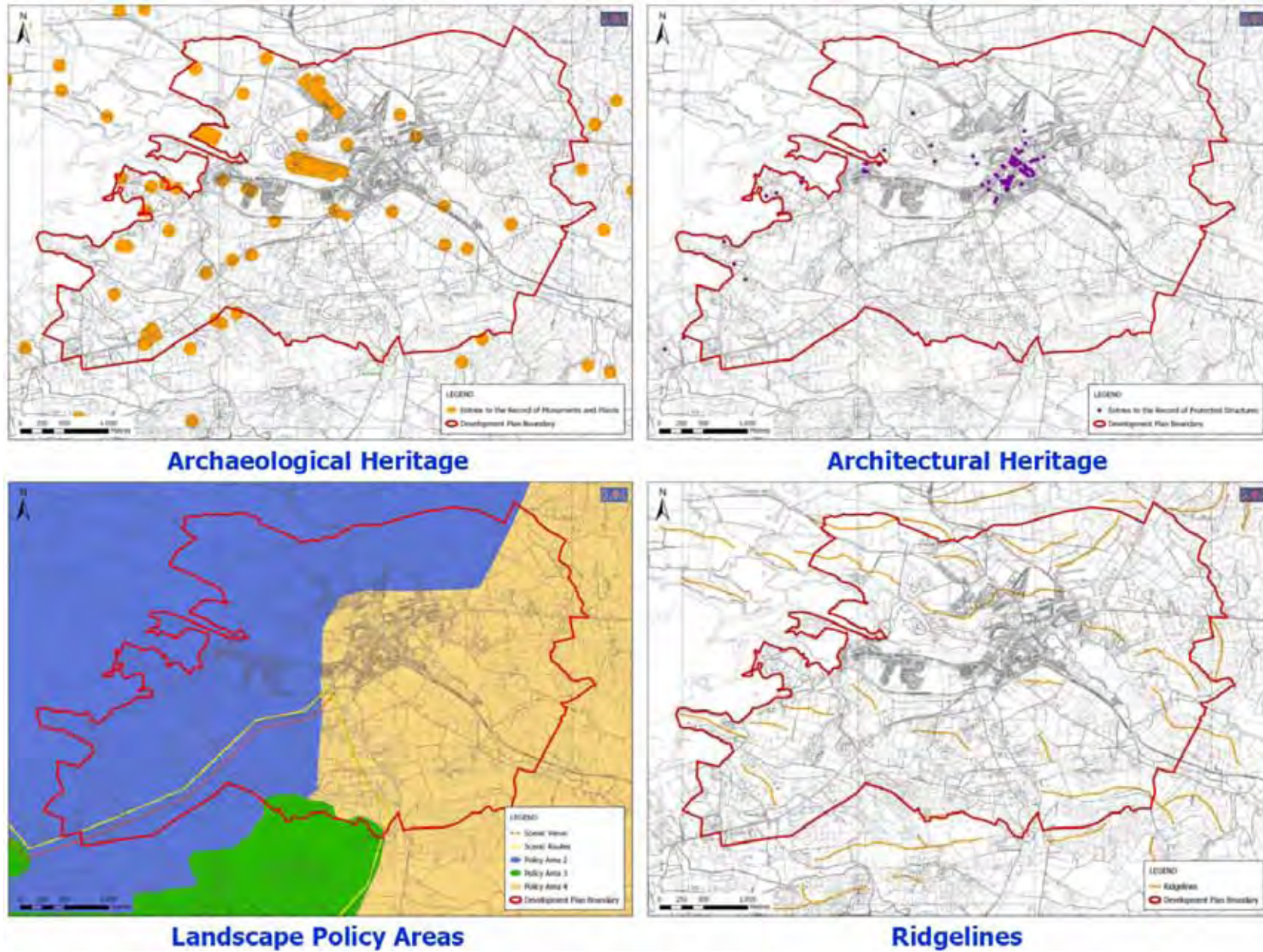


Figure 2.4 Environmental Sensitivities - Plate 4

Maps of sensitivities were weighted and mapped overlapping each other in order to identify where most sensitivities within and surrounding Westport occur.

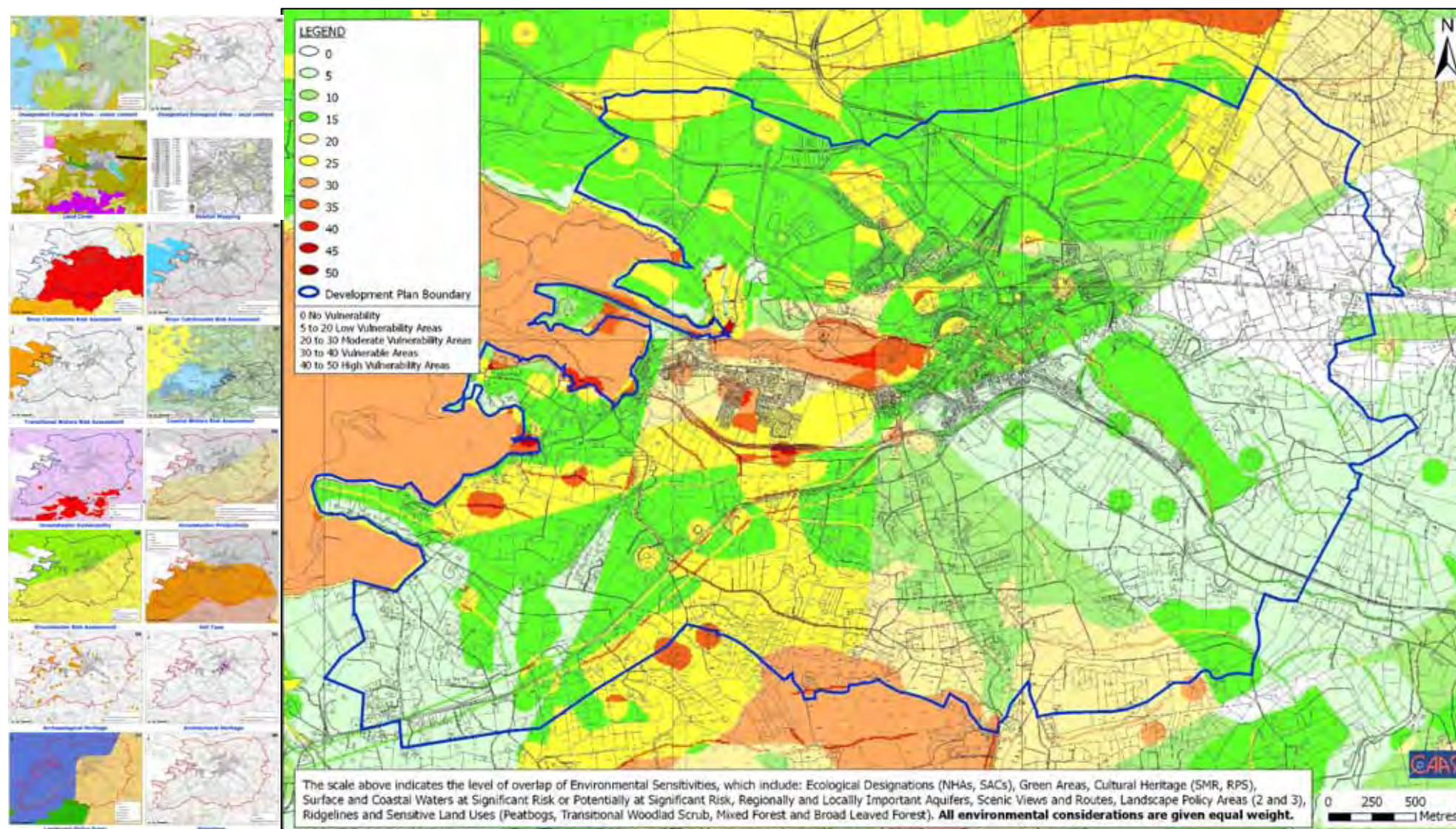


Figure 2.5 Overlay of Environmental Sensitivities

2.4 Mitigation

2.4.1 Introduction

In order to comply with various statutory requirements and in order to comply with the requirements of the statutory consultees, mitigation measures³ were recommended to be integrated into the Plan.

The topics which these mitigation measures cover are as follows:

- Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna
- Water Protection
- Waste Water
- Drinking Water
- Flooding
- Cultural Heritage
- Landscape
- Air and Climatic Factors
- Transportation
- Waste Management
- Energy/ Energy Conservation

The mitigation measures are detailed in Section 9 of the Environmental Report and reproduced on the following pages. The reference codes identified are those which accompany the relevant measures in both the Plan and Section 8 of the Environmental Report.

³ Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing a human action, be it a plan, programme or project. Mitigation measures can be roughly divided into those that: prevent effects; reduce the magnitude or extent, probability and/or severity of effect; repair effects after they have occurred, and; compensate for effects, balancing out negative impacts with other positive ones. Where there are likely to be significant negative effects, consideration should be given in the first instance to preventing these effects or, where this is not possible, to reducing the effects.

Mitigation measure	Integration into Plan
<p>Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna</p> <p>No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects)⁴.</p> <p>All projects arising from this Plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>The Council shall ensure the protection of existing ecological corridors including rivers, streams, hedgerows, trees, wooded areas, scrub and traditional stone walls. All proposals for development shall be required to identify all ecological corridors, assess the impact of the proposal on these and set out detailed mitigation measures to offset any negative impact.</p>	<p>Integrated through ENO-01 and ENO-02</p> <p>Integrated through ENO-01.</p> <p>Integrated through LO-03.</p>
<p>Water Protection</p> <p>When published, the relevant policies and objectives of the Western River Basin Management Plan and associated Programme of Measures shall be integrated into the Plan through amendment or otherwise.</p> <p>Developments provided for by the Plan shall be undertaken in such a way so as not to compromise the quality of surface water (and associated habitats and species) and groundwater within the zones of influence of the Plan area.</p> <p>Landuses shall not give rise to the pollution of ground or surface waters during the construction or operation of developments. This shall be achieved through the adherence to best practice in the design, installation and management of systems for the interception, collection and appropriate disposal or treatment of all surface waters and effluents.</p>	<p>Integrated through WO-05.</p> <p>Integrated through WO-06.</p> <p>Integrated through WO-07.</p>
<p>Waste Water</p> <p>Public wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure - which fully complies with requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment) (amended by Directive 98/15/EEC) including the need to provide secondary treatment - shall be operational and with adequate capacity to accommodate waste water arising from the development, prior to developments being occupied. Discharges arising from this collection and treatment shall also comply with the requirements of the Directive.</p> <p>The Councils will implement the relevant recommendations set out in Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland for Population Equivalents Greater than 500 Persons – A Report for the Years 2004 and 2005 (Office of Environment Enforcement - EPA, 2007).</p> <p>The feasibility of connecting of unsewered, areas including individual properties/ premises, serviced by septic tanks to existing and planned sewer networks shall be examined.</p>	<p>Integrated through IP-04, IO-16 and IO-17.</p> <p>Integrated through WO-08.</p> <p>Integrated through IO-19.</p>
<p>Drinking Water</p> <p>Conformity with the relevant recommendations set out in The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland – A Report for the Years 2006-2007 (Office of Environment Enforcement- EPA, 2007) shall be achieved.</p> <p>Existing and new populations under the Plan shall be served with clean and wholesome drinking water.</p> <p>Compliance shall be achieved with the 48 parameters set out under the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007.</p> <p>The Council will achieve compliance with the 48 parameters set out under the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007.</p> <p>The Council will resolve any outstanding issues in order to achieve the removal of the Westport public water supply from the EPA remedial action list of public water supplies.</p>	<p>Integrated through IO-21 and IP-05.</p> <p>Integrated through IO-21 and IP-05.</p> <p>Integrated through IO-21 and IP-05.</p> <p>Integrated through IO-21 and IP-05.</p> <p>Integrated through IO-21 and IP-05.</p>

⁴ Except as provided for in Section 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

- (a) no alternative solution available,
- (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and
- (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

Mitigation measure	Integration into Plan
<p>Flooding</p> <p>Development in areas at risk of flooding, particularly floodplains, shall be avoided by not permitting development in flood risk areas unless: it is fully justified that there are wider sustainability grounds for appropriate development; unless the flood risk can be managed to an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere; and, where possible, it reduces flood risk overall.</p> <p>A sequential approach to flood risk management based on avoidance, reduction and then mitigation of flood risk as the overall framework for assessing the location of new development in the development planning processes shall be adopted.</p> <p>Flood risk assessments shall accompany planning applications and these assessments shall be incorporated into the process of making decisions on planning applications and planning appeals.</p> <p>In areas where the probability of flooding is highest (greater than 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding or 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding) - referred to as Zone A in the DEHLG draft Planning Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management (referred to hereafter in this section as 'the Guidelines') - and where a wide range of receptors would be vulnerable, development in this zone should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances (through the Justification Test as outlined in the Guidelines) if adequate land or sites are not available in Zones B or C below. Most types of development would be considered inappropriate in this zone. Only water-compatible development, such as docks and marinas, dockside activities that require a waterside location, amenity open space, outdoor sports and recreation and essential transport infrastructure that cannot be located elsewhere, would be considered appropriate in this zone. In areas where the probability of flooding is moderate (between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 and 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding and between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 year and 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding) - referred to as Zone B in the Guidelines - development should only be considered in this zone if adequate land or sites are not available in Zone C or if development in this zone would pass the Justification Test (through the Justification Test as outlined in the Guidelines). Highly vulnerable development, such as hospitals, residential care homes, Garda, fire and ambulance stations, dwelling houses and primary strategic transport and utilities infrastructure, would be considered inappropriate in this zone. Less vulnerable development, such as retail, commercial and industrial uses, sites used for short-let for caravans and camping and secondary strategic transport and utilities infrastructure, and water-compatible development might be considered appropriate in this zone. In areas where the probability of flooding is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 for both river and coastal flooding) - referred to as Zone C in the Guidelines - development in this zone is appropriate from a flooding perspective (subject to assessment of flood hazard from sources other than rivers and the coast) but would need to meet the normal range of other proper planning and sustainable development considerations.</p>	<p>Integrated through IO-26, IP-07 and Development Management text contained in Section 7.8 Flood Prevention and Surface Water Management.</p> <p>Integrated through IO-26, IP-07 and Development Management text contained in Section 7.8 Flood Prevention and Surface Water Management.</p> <p>Integrated through IO-26.</p> <p>Integrated through IO-26, IP-07 and Development Management text contained in Section 7.8 Flood Prevention and Surface Water Management.</p>

Mitigation measure	Integration into Plan
<p>Cultural Heritage Landuses shall not give rise to significant losses of the integrity, quality or context of archaeological material - except as may be conditioned or directed by the appropriate heritage agencies. This shall be achieved by the application of appropriate design standards and criteria.</p> <p>New developments shall not result in any significant loss in the architectural integrity, quality or character of the area, where appropriate. Planning applications may be required to be accompanied by an assessment undertaken by an accredited conservation architect, where appropriate, detailing the impacts of the relevant development upon the special interest and character of the surrounding architectural heritage. The Council shall be consulted at an early stage in this regard in order to determine whether there is a need for such an assessment or for specific mitigation measures.</p> <p>In order to protect, strengthen and improve the presentation and the general character of Westport and its Environs, alterations and interventions to Protected Structures shall be executed to the highest conservation standards, and shall not detract from their significance or value.</p> <p>The Record of Protected Structures shall be extended on a phased basis, as appropriate, in order to incorporate any recommendations from the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.</p>	<p>Integrated partially through TO-07.</p> <p>Integrated through TP-01, TO-01, TO-02, TO-04 and TO-05.</p> <p>Integrated through TP-01, TO-01, TO-02, TO-04 and TO-05.</p> <p>Integrated through TO-03.</p>
<p>Landscape Development proposals shall be accompanied by a visual impact assessment demonstrating that landscape impacts have been anticipated and avoided to a level consistent with the sensitivity of the landscape.</p>	<p>Integrated through TO-18 and LO-02.</p>
<p>Air and Climatic Factors The Council shall protect air quality in the Westport Environs areas zoned for increased urban development and transport related development.</p>	<p>Integrated through AP-01.</p>
<p>Transportation Traffic management measures to reduce the potential for traffic congestion and associated vehicular emissions within and emanating from the Plan area where issues relating to traffic congestion and associated vehicular emissions arise will be implemented.</p>	<p>Integrated through IO-15.</p>
<p>Waste Management An integrated approach to waste management for proposed developments - to include wastes generated during the construction, operation and maintenance phases - shall be implemented, having particular regard to Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects (DEHLG, July 2006).</p>	<p>Integrated through IP-07 and IO-27.</p>
<p>Energy/ Energy Conservation Energy conservation measures shall be promoted and the use of renewable energy systems in new developments which are provided for by the Plan.</p>	<p>Integrated through ECO-01.</p>

Section 3 Environmental Report and Submissions & Observations

3.1 Introduction

This section details how both the Environmental Report and submissions and observations made to the Planning Authority on the Environmental Report and SEA process have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan.

3.2 SEA Scoping Submissions

The EPA, DEHLG and DCMNR were all sent SEA scoping notices indicating that submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report could be made to the Councils. SEA scoping submissions were made by the EPA and DEHLG. These submissions were taken into account during the formulation of the scope of the SEA and while undertaking the SEA.

The EPA's written submission provided information under the following headings:

- SEA Documentation;
- Use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS);
- GIS ENVision;
- Water Framework Directive;
- Protected Areas within the River Basin District;
- Habitats Directive and Appropriate Assessment; and,
- Requirements under the SEA Regulations.

The EPA's written submission was accompanied by an *SEA Pack* which comprised a combination of Guidance, Checklists and Abstracts from EPA Publications and a Circular Letter issued by the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government on Appropriate Assessment of Land Use Plans. Key topics covered include:

- Drinking Water;
- Urban Waste Water Discharges;
- Wetlands Conservation and Protection; and,
- Appropriate Assessment.

The DEHLG's submission dealt with topics including the following:

- Nature Conservation
 - SEA and Appropriate Assessment;
 - Sources of information for designated sites, habitats and flora and fauna;
 - Appropriate zoning of lands;
 - Suggested policies for inclusion in the Plan;
 - Compliance with the Habitats Directive;
 - Recognition of aims, objectives and policies of the National Biodiversity Plan and the County's Biodiversity and Heritage Plans;
 - NPWS Circular Letters; and,
 - Protection of Flood Plains.
- Archaeological Heritage
 - Archaeological heritage legislation and international strategic actions to which the SEA must have regard;
 - Relevant Plans and Policies at County level;
 - Consideration of entries on the Record of Monuments and Places;
 - Sources of information on archaeological heritage; and,
 - Development issues with regard to archaeological heritage.

3.3 Submissions and Observations

3.3.1 Draft Plan and Environmental Report

The EPA and the DEHLG made submissions on the Development Plan and Environmental Report while it was on public display. The information contained in these submissions was taken into account by the SEA as well as the Appropriate Assessment which was undertaken by Mayo

County Council for the Plan. The submission from the EPA resulted in the updating of Section 3 *Baseline Environment Description* of the Environmental Report to include Habitat Mapping. Section 10 Monitoring Measures was also updated arising from the comments contained in this submission in order to provide an indicator and accompanying target for the compliance of drinking water quality with the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007.

The EPA submission provided information and advice under the following headings:

- Integration of Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Water
- Biodiversity
- Landscape
- Human Health -Quality of Life
- Transportation
- Air and Climatic Factors
- Energy./Energy Conservation
- Waste Management
- Agriculture
- Soil Stability
- SEA and Infrastructure Planning
- Obligations with respect to national and EU Environmental Legislation
- EPA Ireland's Environment 2008 –"Main Environmental Challenges"
- Environmental Report - Consultation
- Environmental Report - Zone of influence of Plan
- Environmental Report - Relationship to other Plans
- Environmental Report - Assessment of Environmental Effects
- Environmental Report - Evaluation of Alternatives
- Environmental Report - Mitigation
- Environmental Report - Monitoring
- Environmental Report - Summary and Conclusions
- Appropriate Assessment

The DEHLG submission provided information and advice on Spatial Policy, Appropriate Assessment, SEA and Archaeological and Architectural Heritage.

3.3.2 Proposed Amendments and Addendum II

Proposed Amendments to the Draft Plan were evaluated for their environmental consequences

and these were presented to the Elected Members and placed on public display alongside the Proposed Amendments in the form of Addendum II to the Environmental Report.

Two submissions made on the Proposed Amendments and Addendum II were responded to in Addendum III to the Environmental Report. A submission from the DEHLG expressed the view that Draft Plan and Proposed Amendments are not in the interest of proper planning and sustainable development for the Plan area. Another submission was made related to the protection of the former Bank of Ireland Garden, the amenity potential of the Garden, the protection of the Carrowbeg River and the Railway Line Walk - including its biodiversity and flora and fauna - from development that would negatively impact upon it.

3.4 Environmental Report

The findings of the SEA were expressed in a Draft Environmental Report which was submitted to the Elected Members alongside the proposed Draft Plan. The purpose of the report was to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the future accommodation of growth in Westport.

Changes made to the proposed Draft Plan were evaluated for their environmental consequences and the Draft Environmental Report was updated to become the Environmental Report.

The Environmental Report and the Draft Plan were placed on public display in February 2009.

Proposed Amendments to the Draft Plan were evaluated for their environmental consequences and these were presented to the Elected Members and placed on public display alongside the Proposed Amendments in the form of Addendum II to the Environmental Report. On adoption of the Draft Plan, this Addendum and Addenda I and III⁵ were used to update the

⁵ Addendum I details responses to the submissions on the Environmental Report which were made during the first period of public display of the Draft Plan and the Environmental Report. It proposes updates to the Environmental Report as a result of these submissions, as appropriate. Addendum III responds to relevant submissions which were made on Proposed Amendments to the Draft Westport and

original Environmental Report into a final Environmental Report which accompanies the adopted Plan.

At each stage of the process the Elected Members took into account the findings of the Environmental Report and/or the Addenda as appropriate.

Section 4 Alternatives and the Plan

4.1 Introduction

This section describes the alternative scenarios for the Development Plan, summarises the evaluation for likely environmental effects which is provided in the Environmental Report and identifies the reasons for choosing the Plan, as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.

4.2 Description of the Alternative Scenarios

4.2.1 Alternative Scenario 1

Alternative Scenario 1 takes place against a background of significant slowing of economic activity as well as a steady or falling population coupled with increasingly restrictive interpretations of environmental designations and a very local assertive planning regime. Significant growth and investment is concentrated within the serviced lands of the contiguous urban areas of Westport. There is a particular emphasis on the encouragement of infill and “brownfield” development as well as continued strong emphasis on conservation and re-use of older building stock. New building is regarded as a last resort in core conservation areas. Elsewhere new developments are expected to achieve high levels of density, high urban design standards and low dependency on car use. Development in the environs is tightly confined to established nodes of development and their immediate environs. In these areas there is a policy to encourage consolidation and intensification – to form small serviced “nodes”. This Scenario has elevated levels of non-vehicular mobility - including walking and cycling. It foresees a high and effective level of utilisation of existing services and infrastructure - with little need for additional capital investment.

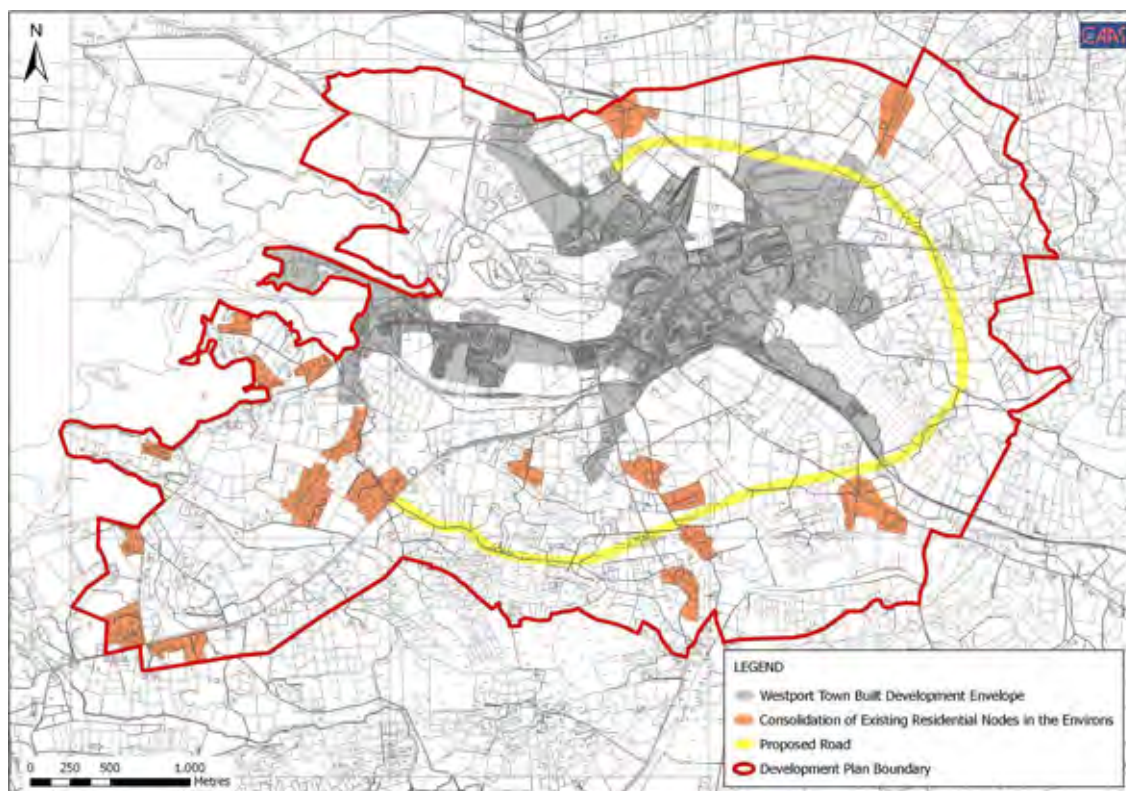


Figure 4.1 Alternative Scenario 1

4.2.2 Alternative Scenario 2

Alternative Scenario 2 takes place against a background of slowing of economic activity coupled with increased awareness of the need to comply with new environmental designations - for habitats and water quality in particular - all co-ordinated by a pragmatic yet careful planning approach. Most growth and investment is concentrated within the serviced lands of the contiguous urban areas of Westport. There is an aspiration to encourage infill and 'brownfield' development and to continue the conservation and re-use of older building stock where feasible. Transportation planning places an equal emphasis on car and pedestrian journeys - except in central areas where pedestrians have priority. Development in the Environs is directed towards established nodes of development. Consolidation and intensification along selected serviced roads aims to balance the demand for suburban and semi-rural housing with the need for orderly and clear transitions between rural and built-up areas. There are sufficient existing and planned services and infrastructure to accommodate the existing and near future needs of this scenario.

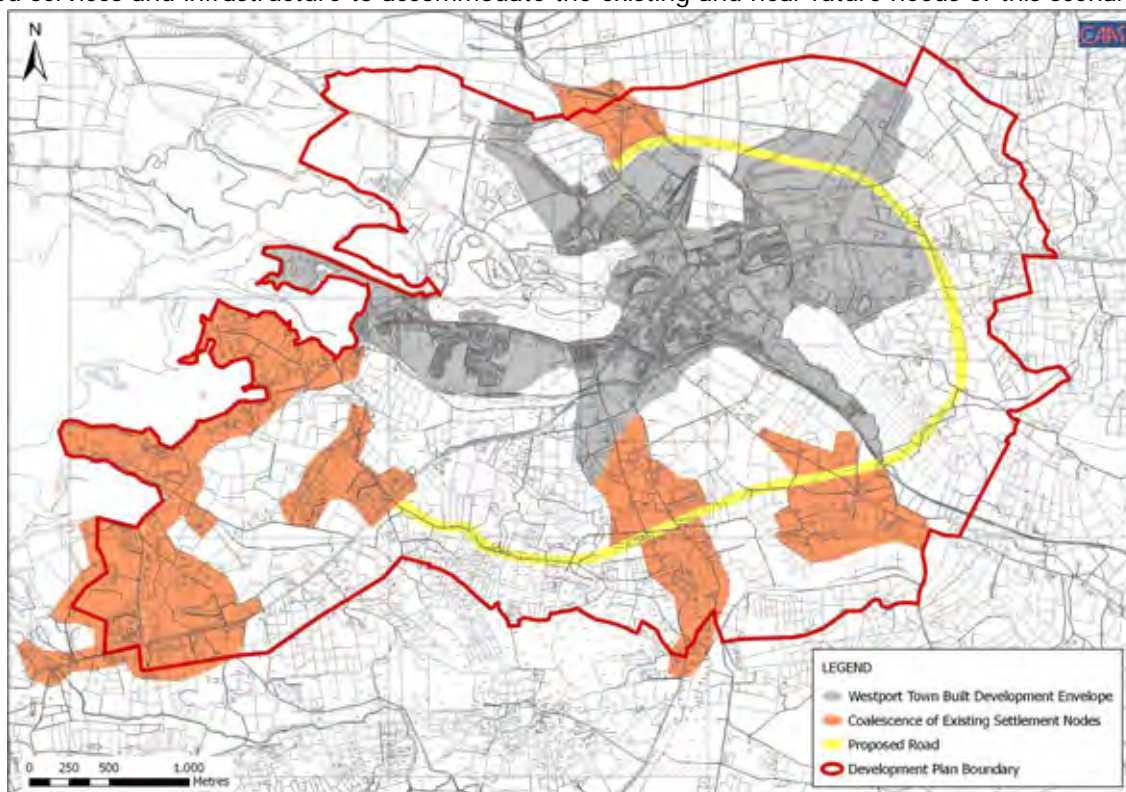


Figure 4.2 Alternative Scenario B

4.2.3 Alternative Scenario 3

Alternative Scenario 3 takes place in a period of economic and population growth and limited environmental or planning restrictions. Core urbanised areas expand and intensify especially around a number of planned 'nodes'. Large areas of poorly co-ordinated, low density development occur in parts of the environs – especially along the coast and along some major roads. There is overloading of some services and infrastructure. Traffic congestion is an increasing issue, especially in the centre. In summer, long delays are common in the centre and at junctions along the relief road. Water supply experiences occasional shortages and there is some overloading of the waste water treatment facility.

4.2.4 Alternative Scenario 4

Alternative Scenario 4 takes place rapidly in a period of strong economic growth, high population growth and few environmental or planning restrictions. Core Urbanised areas expand and intensify with larger-scale development occurring further from the centre. There is very extensive, though poorly co-ordinated low density development throughout the Environs – especially along the coast and along all existing

major and minor roads. There is significant overloading of all services and infrastructure. Traffic congestion is a serious issue in the Centre. Everywhere else long delays are common throughout the year at junctions along the relief road during peak hours. Water supply experiences seasonal shortages and there is significant overloading of the waste water treatment facility - though efforts to increase its size and capacity are resisted by new residential developments in the vicinity.

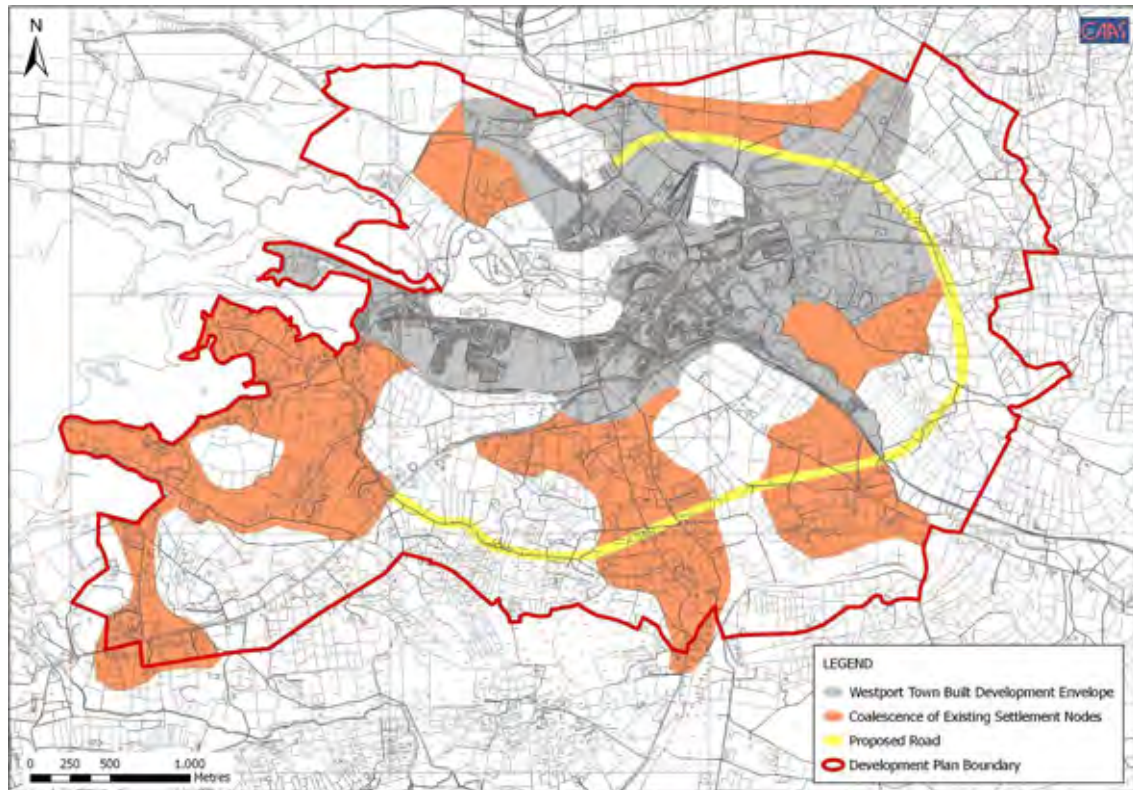


Figure 4.3 Alternative Scenario 3

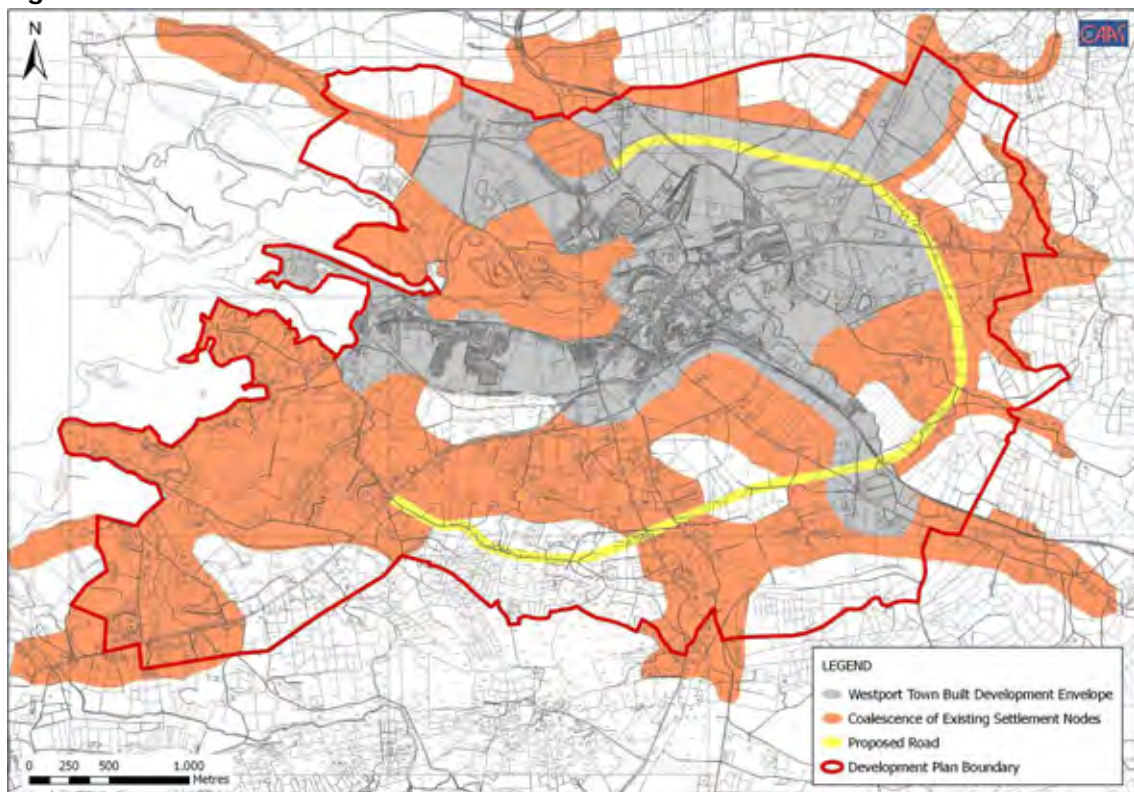


Figure 4.4 Alternative Scenario 4

4.3 Evaluation of the Alternative Scenarios

4.3.1 Evaluation of Alternative Scenario 1

- **Tourism - Socio-Economic Effects**

This scenario would stabilise or reduce existing effects on the environment - resulting in a significant strategic capacity to attract and sustain both a growing tourism sector as well as other new economic activities.

- **Water and Waste Water**

This scenario would provide the best opportunity for the river, estuarine, coastal and ground water bodies within and surrounding the Plan area to achieve the Water Framework Directive objective of good status by 2015. This scenario would help achieve compliance with the objectives of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) (amended by Directive 98/15/EEC). This, in turn, will have direct, indirect and cumulative positive effects on human health, economic development and on the resources necessary to sustain designated sites and species. Provided planned expansions to the water supply network are made operational before developments are occupied, there would be sufficient treated drinking water available to meet demand.

- **Traffic**

By placing emphasis on the encouragement of infill and 'brownfield' development within existing built up areas and by requiring new developments elsewhere to achieve high levels of density and low dependency on car use this scenario would contribute to elevated levels of non-vehicular mobility - including walking and cycling - and help to reduce car dependency and its associated greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Cultural Heritage and Landscape**

This scenario would be likely to significantly beneficially impact upon the protection of core architectural heritage areas by regarding new buildings as a last resort in these areas. In these and other areas, brownfield and infill development would be required to achieve high urban design standards. Mitigation measures and measures for the construction of projects arising out of development management and EIA processes would be required to be adhered to in order to mitigate adverse effects on RMP entries, unknown archaeology and Protected Structures. This scenario would not safeguard and beneficially impact upon the protection of the landscape of the Town and Environs; new development upon ridges would be avoided and greenfield development would be minimised.

- **Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna and Soil**

It is likely that this scenario would help to avoid increased direct, indirect and cumulative effects on designated sites, protected species and the resources necessary to sustain them. By minimising new greenfield development this scenario would help to avoid increases in the encroachment of greenfield development into habitats at the fringes of the Town and along the coast.

- **Sustainable Land Use**

By placing emphasis on the encouragement of infill and 'brownfield' development within existing built up areas and by requiring new developments elsewhere to achieve high levels of density this scenario would be sure to minimise greenfield development and its associated effects.

4.3.2 Evaluation of Alternative Scenario 2

- **Tourism - Socio-Economic Effects**

Subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental standards - and higher standards of compliance in coastal, elevated and historic sites - this Scenario is within the carrying capacity of the receiving environment; implementation of this scenario would be unlikely to significantly affect the Town's tourism industry.

- **Water and Waste Water**

As most growth is concentrated within the serviced lands of the contiguous urban areas of Westport, it is likely that - provided the provisions of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) (amended by Directive 98/15/EEC) are complied with - this scenario would help to reduce significant further declines in the status of surface and groundwaters. It is noted however that if development was to occur without appropriate waste water infrastructure then it is likely that the quality of water bodies both within and outside of the Town area to meet WFD commitments would be reduced and adverse effects with regard to biodiversity and flora and fauna and human health as a result of poor water quality could arise. Provided planned expansions to the water supply network are made operational before developments are occupied, there would be sufficient treated drinking water available to meet demand.

- **Traffic**

Although traffic management measures would remain a necessity, the direction of growth towards already serviced lands together with the medium long term development of relief roads would contribute towards a reduction in increases in traffic levels. Transportation planning would place an equal emphasis on car and pedestrian journeys helping to reduce increases in car dependency and greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Cultural Heritage and Landscape**

The brownfield development aspired to under this scenario would have the potential to impact upon architectural and archaeological heritage. Mitigation measures and measures for the construction of projects arising out of development management and EIA processes would be required to be adhered to in order to mitigate adverse effects on RMP entries, unknown archaeology and Protected Structures. New development would have to avoid the ridges of the Town's drumlins in order to prevent individual instances of impacts upon the Town's landscape.

- **Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna and Soil**

Developments under this scenario would need to be planned carefully in order to ensure that areas of national importance designated for protection along the coast, aquatic habitats and the ecological connectivity that remains within the Plan area and along the coast are all maintained and enhanced.

- **Sustainable Land Use**

Under this scenario, there would be an aspiration to encourage infill and 'brownfield' development and to continue the conservation and re-use of older building stock where feasible. This aspiration would be likely to reduce the extent of greenfield development which would arise as well as its associated effects. Consolidation and intensification along selected serviced roads would help to balance the demand for suburban and semi-rural housing with the need for orderly and clear transitions between rural and built-up areas.

4.3.3 Evaluation of Alternative Scenario 3

- **Tourism - Socio-Economic Effects**

The implementation of this Scenario 3 would be likely to arouse a number of concerns from Westport's tourism sector especially with regard to the potential the scenario has to significantly detract from the Town's distinctiveness and scenery and the potential it has to cause traffic congestion in the summer months.

- **Water and Waste Water**

The extent of development under this scenario would be likely to result in some overloading of the Town's waste water treatment facility while large areas of poorly co-ordinated, low density development would make serving developments with waste water collection infrastructure more costly. Deterioration of water quality would occur, reducing the ability of Westport's water bodies to meet WFD commitments. Water supply would experience occasional shortages.

- **Traffic**

Traffic congestion would become an increasingly large concern of the tourism sector under this Scenario - in summer, long delays would be common in the centre of the Town and at junctions along the relief road. In the Environs, large areas of poorly co-ordinated, low density development would be likely to undermine the economic viability of the provision of public transport services. Dependency upon private transport would be likely to increase resulting in adverse impacts upon traffic levels and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Cultural Heritage and Landscape**

A loss of distinctiveness in the Town and impacts upon scenery would become an increasingly large concern of the tourism sector under this scenario. Development under this scenario would be more likely than that under scenarios 1 or 2 to encroach upon areas which are sensitive from both a cultural and landscape perspective - most notably on the ridges surrounding the Town and along the coast. Low density development to the north of the Westport House and its Demesne would need to be carefully planned in order to avoid impacting upon the context of the Estate.

- **Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna and Soil**

Poor water quality- in the rivers, on the estuary and in the groundwater - coupled with disturbance arising from development along the coast would threaten to affect the integrity and diversity of the designated ecological sites in the estuary. Uncoordinated low density greenfield development across the Environs would be likely to significantly fragment ecological connectivity and would impact upon non-designated biodiversity and flora and fauna.

- **Sustainable Land Use**

As a result of the taking up of large areas of land - especially along the coast and along some major roads - by poorly co-ordinated, low density development land for new economic development would become increasingly expensive and scarce.

4.3.4 Evaluation of Alternative Scenario 4

- **Tourism - Socio-Economic Effects**

The economic and social implications of this scenario would be significantly negative in the medium and long term - especially with regard to Westport's tourism industry. Traffic congestion, poor drinking water quality, loss of distinctiveness and poor scenery would all contribute to a

decline in local tourism revenues. Increasing development levies, a shortage of land and unreliable or overloaded services would make it increasingly difficult to attract and sustain new economic activities that might replace tourism.

- **Water and Waste Water**

The extent of development under this scenario would be likely to result in significant overloading of the Town's waste water treatment facility. Efforts to increase the size and capacity of the facility would be resisted by new residential developments in the vicinity. The extensive, uncoordinated nature of development in the Environs would make serving developments with waste water collection infrastructure economically unviable. The overloading of the waste water treatment facility together with discharges of waste water from individual treatment systems would result in a deterioration of water quality and would contribute to poor drinking/bathing water quality. The deterioration in water quality would reduce the ability of Westport's water bodies to meet WFD commitments. Water supply would experience seasonal shortages.

- **Traffic**

Development under this scenario would occur in a piecemeal fashion and would undermine the economic viability of the provision of public transport services, dependency upon private transport would be likely to increase resulting in adverse impacts upon traffic levels and greenhouse gas emissions. Traffic congestion would be a serious issue in the centre of the Town. Everywhere else, long delays would be common throughout the year at junctions along the relief road during peak hours.

- **Cultural Heritage and Landscape**

By adopting limited planning controls, development under this scenario would encroach upon areas which are sensitive from both a cultural and landscape perspective. Developments upon ridgelines around the Town and development along the coast would destroy the distinctiveness of the Town and would result in reductions in tourism revenues. Visual effects due to developments on these high grounds would be experienced across the Town Centre and beyond. Areas of the Town centre would lose coherency of form and character thereby undermining the sense of place and belonging. There would be significant incursions into Westport House and its Demesne with new low density development significantly adversely impacting upon the Estate.

- **Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna and Soil**

As a result of the adoption of limited planning controls along the coast development would be more likely to encroach upon the ecologically designated Clew Bay Complex sites. Significant adverse effects as a result of poor water quality (see below) would occur at these sites. Extensive, uncoordinated low density greenfield development across the Environs would be likely to significantly fragment ecological connectivity and would impact upon non-designated biodiversity and flora and fauna.

- **Sustainable Land Use**

Although Scenario 4 would allow for densities to be maximised and efficient use made of certain land banks in areas away from the centre of the Town, the development capacity of the Environs - at coastal areas and at other areas along existing major and minor roads - would be significantly reduced as a result of uncoordinated low density residential development. The range of locations available to future locally important projects would be likely to be significantly restricted.

4.3.5 Summary

Implementation of Alternative Scenario 1 would be likely to result in beneficial impacts upon the protection of various environmental components. This scenario would stabilise or reduce existing effects on the environment - resulting in a significant strategic capacity to attract and sustain both a growing tourism sector as well as other new economic activities.

Implementation of Alternative Scenario 2 would be likely to result in beneficial impacts upon the protection of a number of environmental components. Subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental standards - and higher standards of compliance in coastal, elevated and historic sites - implementation of Alternative Scenario 2 would be within the carrying capacity of the receiving environment.

The implementation of Scenario 3 would be likely to conflict with various environmental components with mitigation of the adverse effects arising from these conflicts difficult to achieve. The implementation of Scenario 3 would be likely to arouse a number of concerns from Westport's tourism sector especially with regard to the potential the scenario has to significantly detract from the Town's distinctiveness and scenery and the potential it has to cause traffic congestion in the summer months.

Alternative Scenario 4 would be likely to have the most adverse environmental effects out of all of the scenarios. Traffic congestion, poor drinking water quality, loss of distinctiveness and poor scenery would all contribute to a decline in local tourism revenues under this Scenario. Increasing development levies, a shortage of land and unreliable or overloaded services would make it increasingly difficult to attract and sustain new economic activities that might replace tourism.

4.3.6 The Adopted Development Plan

Alternative Scenario 2 (which "would be within the carrying capacity of the receiving environment") was chosen to be developed for the Draft Development Plan by the plan-making team. The Land Use Zoning Map contained in the Draft Plan which was placed on public display corresponded closely to this Scenario.

A number of Amendments were made by the Elected Members to the Land Use Zoning Map contained in the Draft Plan. Consequently, the Land Use Zoning Map that is contained in the adopted Plan corresponds more closely to Alternative Scenario 3 (which "would be likely to conflict with various environmental components with mitigation of the adverse effects arising from these conflicts difficult to achieve").

As identified in Addendum II to the Environmental Report⁶, certain Proposed Amendments⁷ - all of which have been adopted as part of the Plan - would be likely to result in significant cumulative adverse impacts upon:

- the sustainable consolidation of existing development within the Plan area;
- efforts to reduce car dependency and travel related greenhouse gas emissions; and,
- non-designated habitats and ecological connectivity.

If unmitigated, adverse impacts upon the following would be likely to occur:

- the Clew Bay Complex candidate Special Area of Conservation and proposed Natural Heritage Area;
- groundwater quality and the ability of the groundwater beneath the Plan area to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive by 2015; and,

⁶ Addendum II details the environmental consequences of Proposed Amendments to the Draft Plan. This Addendum was placed on public display with the Proposed Amendments and was considered by the Elected Members during their deliberations on the same. On adoption of the Plan, the findings of Addendum II were used in order to update this Environmental Report.

⁷ Zoning Amendments 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25 and 29

- archaeological heritage.

Adverse impacts upon the following would be likely to occur:

- the landscape; and,
- views of the area around the hill in the north of the Plan area to the east of the N59.

The land use zoning map which is included in the adopted Development Plan is shown on Figure 4.5.

4.4 Mitigation

Mitigation measures which have been integrated into the Draft Plan are identified in Section 9 of the Environmental Report. Due to the extent of the area which is zoned for development in the Adopted Plan, the achievement of these measures will be made more difficult in comparison to what would have been the case if the Land Use Zoning Map contained in the Draft Plan had of been adopted without the aforementioned amendments.

4.5 Reasons for choosing the plan, as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with

The Development Plan that has emerged from the Plan preparation process - including the land use zoning which is included in the Plan (see Figure 4.5) - has the closest correlation to Alternative Scenario 3.

The evaluation of the Development Plan contained in the Environmental Report is summarised above is accompanied in the Environmental Report by an evaluation of the policies and objectives of the Plan.

The Plan was chosen to be adopted for the Development Plan by the Elected Members having regard to:

1. The environmental effects which were identified by the Strategic Environmental Assessment; and,
2. Planning - including social and economic - effects.

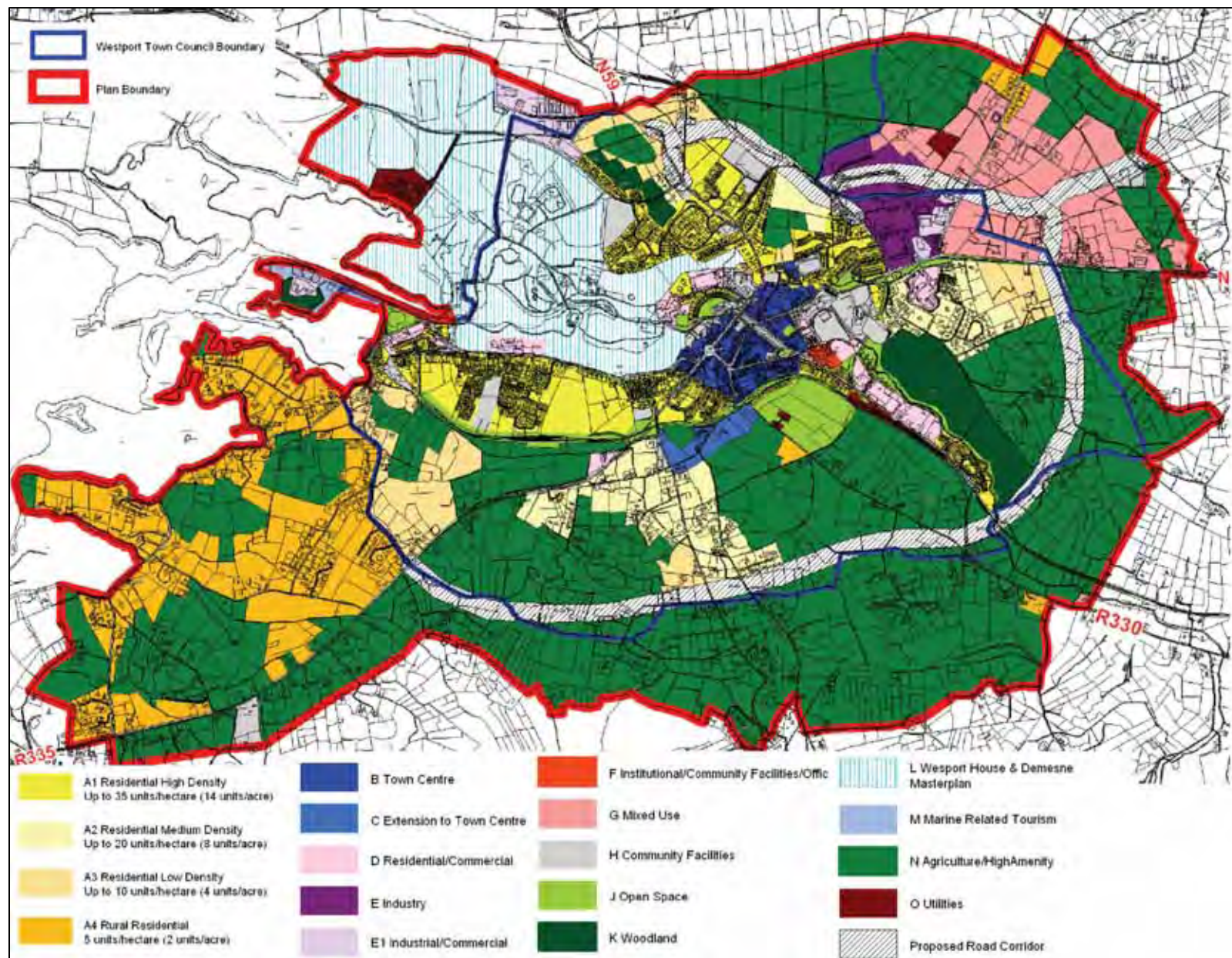


Figure 4.5 Land Use Zoning Map from the Adopted Plan

Section 5 Monitoring Measures

5.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the likely significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. This section and Section 10 of the Environmental Report contain the measures for monitoring the likely significant effects of implementing the Development Plan.

Monitoring enables, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action. In addition to this, monitoring can also play an important role in assessing whether the Plan is achieving its environmental objectives and targets - measures which the Plan can help work towards - whether these need to be reexamined and whether the proposed mitigation measures are being implemented.

5.2 Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is based around the indicators which were chosen earlier in the process. These indicators allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives used in the evaluation. Focus is given to indicators which are relevant to the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Development Plan and existing monitoring arrangements are to be largely used in order to monitor the selected indicators. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the relevant target(s) which were identified with regard to the relevant legislation. Table 5.1 shows the indicators and targets which have been selected with regard to the monitoring of the plan.

5.3 Sources

Measurements for indicators generally come from existing monitoring sources. Existing monitoring sources exist for each of the indicators and include those maintained by Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council and the relevant authorities e.g. the Environmental Protection Agency, the National

Parks and Wildlife Service and the Central Statistics Office.

The *Development Management Process* in both Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council will provide passive monitoring of various indicators and targets on an application by application basis. Where significant adverse effects - including positive, negative, cumulative and indirect - are likely to occur upon, for example, entries to the RMP, entries to the RPS or ecological networks as a result of the undertaking of individual projects or multiple individual projects such instances should be identified and recorded and should feed into the monitoring evaluation.

5.4 Excluded Indicators and Targets

As noted in Table 5.1, monitoring data for Indicator W2 (Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC) may not be available for the preliminary monitoring evaluation as the groundwater threshold values to which this indicator relates have not yet been identified by the EPA.

5.5 Reporting

A preliminary monitoring evaluation report on the effects of implementing the Plan will be prepared to coincide with the Manager's report to the elected members on the progress achieved in securing Plan objectives within two years of the making of the Plan (this Manager's report is required under section 15 of the 2000 Planning Act).

5.6 Responsibility

Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council are responsible for collating existing relevant monitored data, the preparation of a monitoring report, the publication of this report and, if necessary, the carrying out of corrective action.

It is recommended that a Steering Committee be established to oversee the monitoring process.

5.7 Thresholds

Thresholds at which corrective action will be considered include the following:

- boil notices on drinking water;
- fish kills;
- complaints received from statutory consultees regarding avoidable impacts resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan; and,
- court cases taken by the DEHLG regarding impacts upon archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places.

Environmental Component	Selected Indicator(s)	Selected Target(s)	Source
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<p>B1: Percentage of relevant habitats and designated ecological sites lost as a result of implementation of the Plan</p> <p>B2: Number of significant adverse impacts, including direct, cumulative and indirect impacts, to relevant habitats, geological features, species or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites by development within or adjacent to these sites as a result of implementation of the Plan</p> <p>B3: Percentage loss of connectivity between areas of local biodiversity as a result of implementation of the Plan - as evidenced from a resurvey of CORINE mapping</p>	<p>B1: No losses of relevant habitats, species or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites as a result of implementation of the Plan</p> <p>B2: No significant adverse impacts, including direct, cumulative and indirect impacts, to relevant habitats, geological features, species or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites by development within or adjacent to these sites as a result of implementation of the Plan</p> <p>B3: No ecological networks or parts thereof which provide significant connectivity between areas of local biodiversity to be lost without remediation as a result of implementation of the Plan</p>	<p>CORINE Mapping, NPWS Records & Development Management Processes in Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council</p> <p>Development Management Processes in Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council & Consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service</p> <p>CORINE mapping</p>
Population and Human Health	HH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health	HH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors	Westport Town Council, Mayo County Council, EPA, Health and Safety Authority
Soil	S1: Area of brownfield land developed over the Plan period.	S1: Reduced availability of brownfield land (subject to availability on the open market, the demand for such land and the ability for such lands to be sustainably re-used within the provisions of the Plan) at the end of the Plan lifespan	Development Management Processes in Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council

Environmental Component	Selected Indicator(s)	Selected Target(s)	Sources
Water	Indicator W1i: Biotic Quality Rating (Q Value)	W1ia: To maintain a biotic quality rating of Q4, in line with the requirement to achieve good water status under the Water Framework Directive, by 2015 W1ib: To improve biotic quality ratings, where possible, to Q5	Environmental Protection Agency
	W1ii: Trophic Status (ATSEBI)	W1ii: To maintain or to improve trophic status, where relevant, to unpolluted in line with the requirement to achieve good water status under the Water Framework Directive, by 2015	Environmental Protection Agency
	W2: Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC	W2: Compliance with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC	Environmental Protection Agency; as noted under Section 0, monitoring data may not be available for this indicator when the monitoring evaluation is being prepared.
	W3: Number of developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk	W3: Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk	Development Management Processes in Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council
	W4: Number of non-compliances with the 48 parameters identified in the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007 which present a potential danger to human health	W4: No non-compliances with the 48 parameters identified in the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007 which present a potential danger to human health	Environmental Protection Agency

Environmental Component	Selected Indicator(s)	Selected Target(s)	Sources
Air and Climatic Factors	<p>C1i: Percentage of population within the Plan area travelling to work or school by public transport or non-mechanical means</p> <p>C1ii: Average distance travelled to work or school by the population of the Plan area</p>	<p>C1i: An increase in the percentage of the population travelling to work or school by public transport or non-mechanical means</p> <p>C1ii: A decrease in the average distance travelled to work or school by the population of the Plan area</p>	Central Statistics Office
Material Assets	M1: Number of new developments granted permission which cannot be adequately served by a public waste water treatment plant over the lifetime of the Plan	M1: No new developments granted permission which cannot be adequately served by a public waste water treatment plant over the lifetime of the Plan	Development Management Processes in Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council
Cultural Heritage	<p>CH1: Number of unauthorised developments occurring which result in full or partial loss to archaeological heritage - including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and unknown archaeology - and the context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant</p> <p>CH2i: Number of unauthorised developments occurring which result in physical loss or loss entries to the Record of Protected Structures and/or their context within the surrounding landscape where relevant</p> <p>CH2ii: Number of additions to the Record of Protected Structures and the number of additional ACAs and comparison with the NIAH</p>	<p>CH1: No unauthorised developments occurring which result in full or partial loss to archaeological heritage - including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and unknown archaeology - and the context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant</p> <p>CH2i: No unauthorised developments occurring which result in physical loss or loss entries to the Record of Protected Structures and/or their context within the surrounding landscape where relevant</p> <p>CH2ii: Make Additions to the Record of Protected Structures and make additional ACAs, where appropriate</p>	<p>Development Management Processes in Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council</p> <p>Development Management Processes in Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council</p> <p>Development Management Processes in Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council</p>

Environmental Component	Selected Indicator(s)	Selected Target(s)	Sources
Landscape	L1: Number of complaints received from statutory consultees regarding avoidable impacts resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	L1: No developments permitted which result in avoidable impacts on Westport's most sensitive landscapes	Development Management Processes in Westport Town Council and Mayo County Council

Table 5.1 Selected Indicators, Targets and Monitoring Sources