

MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL

Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 S.I. No. 436 of 2004

Decision on the need for an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Variation to the Westport Town & Environs Development Plan 2010-2016

Pursuant to the Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 the planning authority is required to consider whether or not a proposed variation to a development plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment taking into account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A and any submission or observation received from the Environmental Authorities.

Having complied with the requirements as set out in the Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 Mayo County Council has determined that the proposed variation to the Westport Town & Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 will not require an environmental report for the following reasons:

1. The amended and new policies and objectives outlined in the proposed variation to the Westport Town & Environs Development Plan 2010-2016, along with the existing policies and objectives in the plan, are compliant with national and regional policy and planning guidelines and ensure that all development is carried out in a sustainable manner.
2. The proposed variation significantly reduces the amount of land zoned for residential development and mixed use development in the plan area. Lands zoned for development in the proposed variation are located in close proximity to the town or existing built up areas such as the Quay, is serviced and is located close to existing infrastructure.
3. The proposed variation has the closest correlation to Alternative Scenario 1 in the SEA Environmental Report of the current plan which states that the implementation of this scenario 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.
4. Circular Letter SEA 1/108 & NPWS 1/08 indicates that where Appropriate Assessment of a plan is required Strategic Environmental Assessment must also be carried out in any case where it would not otherwise be required. Screening of the proposed variation to the Westport Town & Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 was carried out as part of the Habitats Directive Assessment procedure. It was concluded that it was not necessary to proceed to Stage 2 (Appropriate Assessment). Therefore an environmental report is not required for the proposed variation under the requirements set out in Circular Letter SEA 1/108 & NPWS 1/08.

Any amendments to the proposed variation to the Westport Town & Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 arising from the variation process will be screened for the need for an environmental assessment.