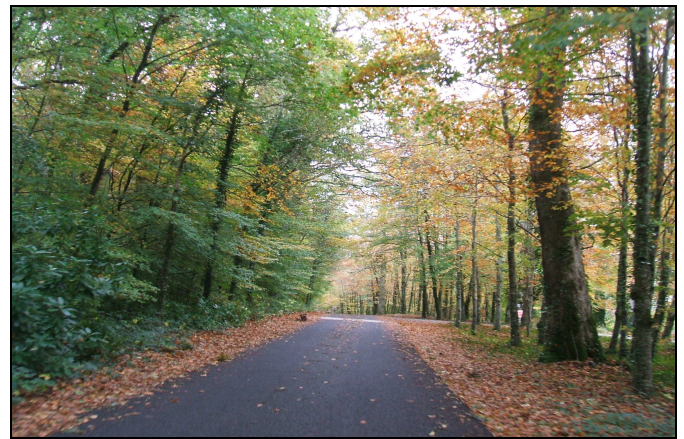


LOUGH KEY LOCAL AREA PLAN 2015 - 2021

Effective from 21st December, 2015



*Roscommon County Council
Comhairle Chontae Ros Comáin*



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1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this Local Area Plan is to set out a framework for the sustainable development of the Lough Key Area so that growth may take place in a coordinated, sensitive and orderly manner, while at the same time being sensitive to the natural environment of this area.

Policies and objectives outlined in this LAP are in addition to the policies and objectives contained in the Roscommon County Development Plan (RCDP) 2014-2020. It is acknowledged that not all strategic objectives will be achieved during the six year LAP timeframe; however it is important to identify these objectives to ensure commitment to achieving them in the longer term.

In the interests of clarity, any reference to a goal, aim, policy and objective in the text of this Local Area Plan, shall be construed as an 'objective' of this Plan for the purposes of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2015.

1.1 STATUTORY CONTEXT

This LAP has been prepared in accordance with Sections 18 to 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), and replaces the Lough Key Local Area Plan 2009-2015. It is required to be consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines for the area as well as the policies and objectives of the RCDP and its Core Strategy, which set out the overarching development strategy for the County. The LAP should be read in conjunction with the RCDP 2014-2020. Where any provisions of the LAP conflict with the provisions of the RCDP, the RCDP will take precedence.

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

1.2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the LAP and must be carried out prior to the adoption of any plan or programme. SEA is undertaken in accordance with the EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC. The findings of the SEA are outlined in the Environmental Report published alongside the LAP.

1.2.2 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

An appropriate assessment is an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge, by a person with ecological expertise, of the potential impacts of any plan or project on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). All land use plans proposed under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2013, including Local Area Plans, must be screened for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites. Appropriate Assessment is carried out under Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

1.2.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

A Strategic Flood Risk of the LAP was carried out in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management* (DEHLG, 2009). The guidance recommends a staged approach to flood risk assessment, which covers both the likelihood of flooding and the potential consequences. Stage 1 Flood Risk Identification has been undertaken to inform the emerging Draft Plan. All Stage 1 SFRA recommendations have been integrated into the plan and consequently the SFRA report concluded that a Stage 2 Initial Flood Risk Assessment was not necessary.

1.3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In accordance with Section 20(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), prior to preparing a draft local area plan, the local authority must take whatever steps it considers necessary to consult with the public, including public bodies, non-governmental agencies, residents' associations, community groups, and business interests in the area.

The following pre-draft consultation was undertaken:

- A **Public Meeting** at Cleen Hall in Knockvicar on the 12th November 2014.
- A **Youth Meeting** at Abbey Community College on the 19th November 2014.

Pre-draft consultations were advertised in a number of ways including on the Roscommon County Council website, in the local newspapers, the Roscommon Herald and the Roscommon People; and through public posters and flyers placed in the area.

The main issues raised during pre-draft consultation included the following:

- **Tourism:** This is regarded as the most important aspect to focus upon in the Lough Key area, as it is considered to be the key driver for the development of the area. The general consensus is for the promotion of tourism in this area to strengthen the local economy and create employment opportunities.
- **Infrastructure:** Many local roads in the area need to be resurfaced. A particular point of concern regarding road quality was along the approach road from the sewage treatment plant into Cootehall Village. Another major concern expressed was the lack of pedestrian provision for parents and children going from the village to the national school. Public transport is severely deficient in the Plan area. Dedicated walking and cycle routes need to be established and appropriately advertised.
- **Services** Water quality remains the main point of concern for residents within the Lough Key Plan area. Broadband provision needs to be improved, particularly in the rural environs.
- **Community Facilities:** There is a strong sense of community and there are a number of community initiatives in place such as the Organic Garden in Knockvicar. Greater support to increase the level of community facilities is required.
- **Open Space and Sporting Provision:** Additional amenity facilities for residents of Cootehall and Knockvicar would be welcomed.
- **Built and Natural Heritage:** The continued growth of this area as a tourism destination relies on the continued protection of its existing natural heritage.
- **Business, Commercial and Retail Development:** Tourism related commercial ventures are regarded as the most likely sources for further economic activity within the Plan area. The lack of retail/commercial provision in Boyle is a concern.
- **Residential Development:** Conservation zones and strict development criteria in place around Lough Key have ensured that an unwanted proliferation of one-off houses has not occurred. Cootehall should not be subjected to large scale housing developments for the foreseeable future.

2 POLICY CONTEXT

A wide variety of international, national, regional and local government policy documents have been reviewed in the preparation of this LAP.

2.1 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

The **National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020** (NSS) is a planning framework for Ireland that aims to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development across Ireland, supported by effective planning.

The **Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022** (RPGs) provide the strategic regional mechanism for the implementation of the NSS. They set out the vision for the West Region identifying strategic goals, policies and objectives which establish a framework for lower level plans including this LAP.

2.2 COUNTY CONTEXT

The **Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020** (RCDP) sets out the strategic planning framework for the county which is consistent with the NSS and the RPGs.

2.3 POPULATION CONTEXT

2.3.1 Core Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy and Population Calculations

The Lough Key Plan boundary includes six DED's: - Kilbryan, Boyle Rural, Rockingham, Oakport, Tumna South and Crossna.

The table below shows the population of the DED areas calculated under the 2006 and 2011 census. The table also details population and percentage changes and the area of each DED.

Table 1: Population Statistics for 2006 and 2011 in each DED area

Population DED Area	2006	2011	Population Change	% Change	Area Hectares	Area Hectares within LAP	% Area Within LAP
Boyle Rural	1,366	1,533	167	12.2	2,610	732	28.1
Crossna	187	207	20	10.7	1,802	57	3.2
Kilbryan	304	321	17	5.6	2,645	1,123	42.5
Oakport	246	319	73	29.7	1,534	448	29.2
Rockingham	339	345	6	1.8	3,104	1,485	47.8
Tumna South	192	204	12	6.2	1,678	103	6.1

Utilising the An Post Geo-Directory database, it is estimated that approximately 372 households are resident within the Lough Key LAP boundary. If the figure of 2.5 persons (Regional Planning Guidelines allocation) is applied as the average number of people per household, the current population for the Lough Key LAP area is c. 930.

2.4 SETTLEMENT POLICY

Settlement policy aims to broadly guide where new development will occur in the county and is a fundamental component of spatial planning. It considers population distribution, settlement size, settlement role, and settlement hierarchy, as follows:

- The RPGs provide population figures for the county up to 2022.
- The Council must consider these figures and distribute them amongst the county's towns in a manner consistent with the aims of the RPGs as well as the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.
- Population figures for each settlement are outlined in the Roscommon County Development Plan's Core Strategy which promotes the development of settlements in accordance with their location in a hierarchy as outlined in the NSS and RPGs.

In accordance with the RCDP 2014-2020 Core Strategy figures, the population allocation for rural settlements and the countryside identifies a population growth of 3,600 persons over the period of the plan. This figure represents all the rural settlements and rural environs of the County.

The lands within the Lough Key LAP boundary comprise the village settlements of Cootehall and Knockvicar, Lough Key Forest Park with the remaining lands comprising predominantly rural lands with dispersed individual residential developments.

The Core Strategy identifies Cootehall as the only Tier 4 Settlement within the Lough Key LAP area. Tier 4 of the settlement hierarchy also includes unserviced villages and village nuclei. Knockvicar is an example of one such village. Villages like Knockvicar, though not serviced by public sewerage infrastructure, have the ability to accommodate limited and small scale (typically individual) rural housing needs while ensuring that rural social and community infrastructure and services such as schools, shops, public houses, post offices and local sports organisations are maintained.

Cootehall is identified in the core strategy as a settlement with a significant level of vacancy of the residential units constructed within the village. Tier 4 villages throughout Co. Roscommon, including Cootehall were subject to a disproportionately large volume of new housing developments over the past decade. A large volume of these residential developments remain unfinished and/or unoccupied.

It is not sustainable to provide multi-unit residential development in rural centres such as Knockvicar without the provision of basic services. Accordingly residential development within Knockvicar will be limited to individual units and will be subject to normal planning considerations.

Having regard to the above and given the limited population growth predicted for the county over the coming years, it is unlikely that there will be a need for new residential schemes in villages such as Cootehall over the life of this plan. Accordingly the Council considers that residential development in villages experiencing high levels of vacancy, including Cootehall, should typically be limited to no more than three dwellings or the refurbishment or rebuilding of existing houses so as not to exacerbate the issue of vacancy levels.

Thus in line with Policy 5.27 of the RCDP 2014-2020, applications for three or more dwellings within Cootehall will not normally be permitted under the lifetime of this plan. This moratorium will be revisited as part of the review of the RCDP 2014-2020 and, if deemed appropriate and/or necessary, revisions to this policy will be considered.

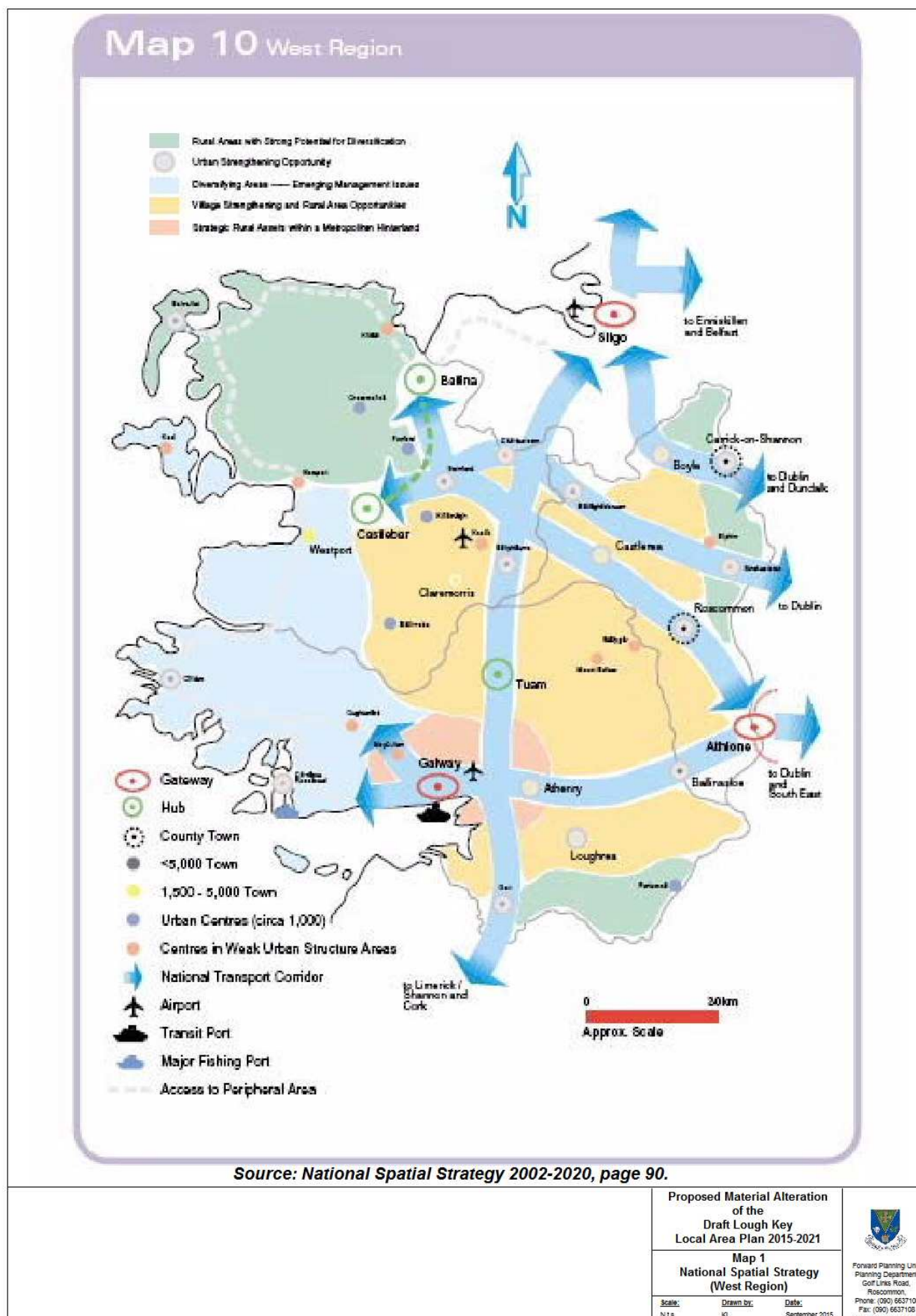
The majority of the lands outside the settlements of Cootehall, Knockvicar and Lough Key Forest Park that form part of the Lough Key LAP boundary, are rural lands with specific conservation policies in place as per the Lough Key Local Area Plan 2009 - 2015. These lands differ from the remaining rural lands in the northern part of the County which are identified in the RCDP 2014-2020 as Category C i.e. areas in need of regeneration.

Visual analysis of these unique rural environs of Lough Key identified lands where development would have significant negative impacts on views on, and from, the lake. Generally, lands closer to the lake are more

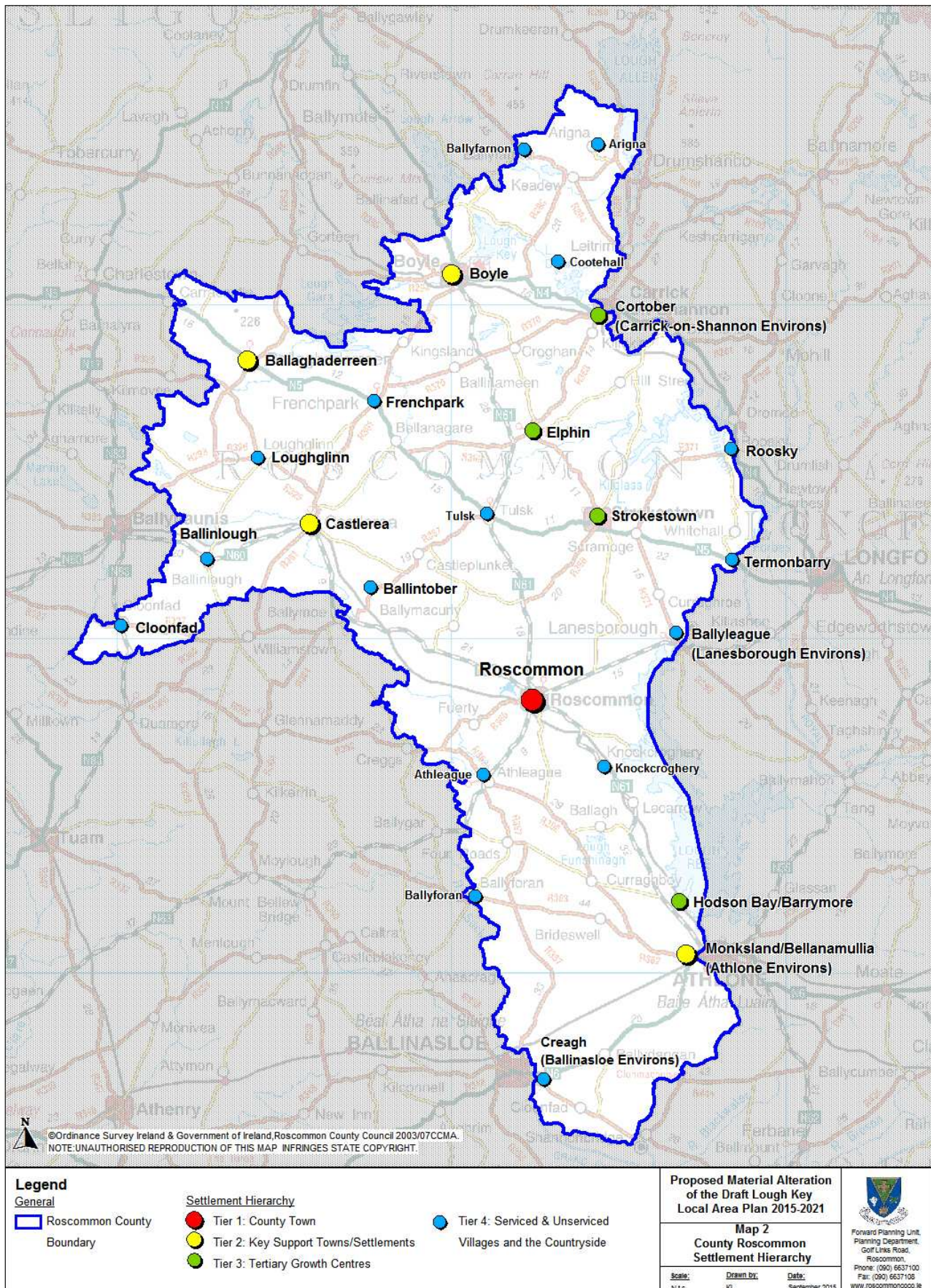
sensitive than those further away; open pasture is less capable of absorbing development than densely wooded lands; and steeply sloping sites are more exposed than flat land.

The analysis (which was initially undertaken in the course of the preparation of previous LAPs for the area) resulted in the identification of seven separate zones, with varying capacities to absorb development. The conservation zones have been reviewed, analysed and rationalised as part of this LAP preparation process. Details of the identified conservation zones and the associated development criteria are provided in Chapter Six of this LAP.

These zones which make up the rural lands within the Lough Key LAP boundary are essential to conserve and maintain the unique character of this environmentally and visually sensitive area of land surrounding Lough Key itself. It is vitally important that any development occurring on these lands is appropriate, sensitively undertaken and locationally justified in order to ensure that such development does not undermine the unspoilt amenity value of this area.



Roscommon County Council Lough Key Local Area Plan 2015-2021



3 PROFILE OF LOUGH KEY LAP AREA

The Plan area is made of six DED's; Boyle Rural, Crossna, Kilbryan, Oakport, Rockingham and Tumna South and also includes Cootehall and Knockvicar as well as Lough Key Forest Park.

Lough Key Forest Park is one of the key areas within the county for tourism and recreation, and is a key asset to support the promotion and marketing of the area both nationally and internationally. A key factor associated with Lough Key's popularity as a tourism destination is its highly scenic and natural environment.

This LAP aims to ensure that the protection and enhancement of the natural environment of this area remains the primary objective of the Council. Thus, the zoning and specific development objectives of the lands surrounding Lough Key is very important. It is vital that the natural beauty and environmental quality of this area is not compromised to facilitate developments which would impact negatively on this sensitive area.

3.1 EXISTING CONTEXT

3.1.1 General

The primary towns in the vicinity of the Lough Key Plan Area are Boyle (situated c. 6km to the south west) and Carrick-on-Shannon (situated c. 11km to the south east).

The Lough Key LAP area comprises approximately 350 hectares of mixed woodlands, open parkland, lakes and water bodies and a number of mature wooded islands. This area was formerly part of the Rockingham Estate, home of the Stafford King Harmon family. Situated along the Boyle River, Lough Key forms part of the Shannon waterway system.

The established settlements within the plan area i.e. Cootehall and Knockvicar provide residential uses with a minor element of commercial/retail land use.

Cootehall

Cootehall is situated in the south-eastern corner of the LAP area and the Boyle River runs through the village and up into Lough Key. The village lies equidistant between Boyle to the west and Carrick-on-Shannon to the south-east. The village is accessed via the L-101 off the main Boyle to Carrick-on-Shannon N4 road (Dublin to Sligo Road) (see Map No. 2A). Substantial levels of residential development occurred in the village from c.2000 to 2008 and this has significantly altered the character of the village. Residential vacancy is a concern within the village.

Cootehall is rich in natural beauty and is generally renowned as an ideal area for recreational activities, including boating, angling, walking and hiking.



Cootehall Village

Knockvicar

The small village of Knockvicar lies in the eastern section of the Lough Key LAP area. It is located c.10km from Boyle and c.12.5km from Carrick-on-Shannon. Knockvicar is renowned for its association with boating and water based leisure activities.



Knockvicar Village

3.1.2 Infrastructure and Services

3.1.2.1 Roads and Transportation

The N4 runs down the western fringe of the LAP boundary and along the southern LAP boundary towards Carrick-on-Shannon. The main entrance to Lough Key Forest Park is via the N4 route. The Plan area is primarily serviced by a local road network.

There are presently no public transport facilities in place to serve the villages within the Plan area. The closest public transport facilities, namely rail and bus services are available in Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon.

3.1.2.2 Water Services

Since the 1st January 2014 Irish Water is responsible for all public water services, involving the supply of drinking water and the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater. Roscommon County Council carries out the majority of its previous functions by way of a service level agreement with Irish Water (IW).

Rockingham Springs, augmented by production well boreholes in Hughestown, provides the water supply for the Lough Key area. These water sources supply the Boyle Public Water Supply Scheme. The Rockingham Water Treatment Plant for this scheme was recently upgraded (design capacity 5000m³/day), which has resulted in the lifting of the Boil Water Notice that was in place. Replacement of defective watermains on the scheme in the process of being undertaken as part of a countywide watermain replacement contract.

3.1.2.3 Flood Risk and Protection

Oakport Lough and Cootehall Lough are two primary sources of flooding close to a settlement (i.e. Cootehall) in the Lough Key LAP area. According to OPW data, lands either side of the Boyle River between Cootehall and Knockvicar are liable to fluvial flooding in an extreme (1 in 100 year) event. These lands largely comprise forestry lands south of the river and agricultural lands north of the river.

3.1.2.4 Wastewater Services

A wastewater treatment plant serves Cootehall and this has a capacity of approximately 940 Population Equivalent (PE), which is sufficient to meet the needs of the existing development in the settlement, as well as potential development over the period of this Plan.

In relation to surface water quality, the most recent data from the EPA identifies Q-values¹ of good status (Q4) for monitoring points within the Plan boundary. These monitoring points are located at Knockvicar and Cootehall.

3.1.2.5 Waste Management

Within the Plan boundary, there is a bottle bank, located in Knockvicar at Cleen Hall. There are presently no public recycling facilities in place in Cootehall or in Lough Key Forest Park. Domestic waste collection services operate within the LAP boundary.

3.1.2.6 Energy

The Lough Key LAP area has an adequate electricity supply, being currently served by the 110kV Station Bulk Supply Point at Carrick-on-Shannon. There is currently no piped gas available in the Plan area.

3.1.2.7 Telecommunications

Direct satellite broadband is available in most parts of County Roscommon including the Lough Key LAP area. A pre-draft community meeting highlighted mixed opinions on broadband service in the area, but with an overall consensus that the service could be and should be improved.

Mobile phone coverage, provided by a range of operators, is generally good within the Plan area.

3.1.3 Social and Community Facilities

3.1.3.1 Community Facilities

Given the predominantly rural nature of the Lough Key LAP area, community facilities are quite limited. However there are a number of social, recreational and sporting community groups within the area.

3.1.3.2 Schools and Educational Facilities

There is currently one school in the Lough Key LAP area - St Michael's and St. Patrick's National School, which is located a short distance north-west of the village of Cootehall. The school was officially opened in 1980. There are currently 111 pupils attending the school and six full-time teachers. An after-school facility is also provided in the school.

3.1.3.3 Health

Healthcare provision for residents of the Lough Key LAP area is primarily provided in the settlements of Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon.

¹ The Q Value system describes the relationship between water and the macro-invertebrate community. Q5 have good water quality, while Q1 have bad water quality. In addition, in accordance with the Water Framework Directive, surface waters in Ireland are classified as high, good, moderate, poor and bad quality.

3.1.3.4 Burial Grounds

Historic graveyards are located in a number of locations within the Plan area, namely, Oakport, Cootehall and Trinity Island.

Ardcarne Graveyard is located within the Lough Key LAP boundary, situated towards the southern base of the Plan boundary.

3.1.4 Recreation, Leisure and Tourism

3.1.4.1 Open Space, Sporting Provision and Activities

A recent and welcome development in Cootehall is the public open space and play ground adjacent to the former Barracks. Sporting facilities within the plan area include the local GAA club, as well as fishing and hunting activities. Such community facilities enhance the social fabric of settlements like Cootehall and Knockvicar.

3.1.4.2 Tourism Resources, Facilities and Infrastructure

Lough Key Forest Park is synonymous with tourism in Co. Roscommon and is the main tourist facility within the county. Water based recreational activities, camping and forest walks were initially the primary tourist attractions on offer, however more recent activities such as the Boda Borg and Adventure Kingdom have broadened the range of facilities and attracted a wider range of tourists to the Park.

The western environs of the Forest Park adjoins the town of Boyle, which itself boasts a wealth of historic features including King House and Boyle Abbey which are key tourist attractions in this region.



Lough Key Forest Park

3.1.5 Built and Natural Heritage

3.1.5.1 Architectural and Archaeological Heritage

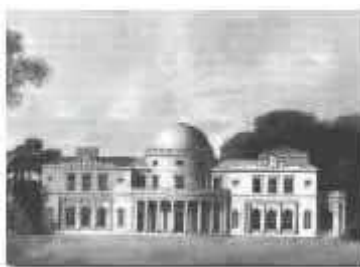
The Lough Key LAP area has 37 structures listed on the Record of Protected Structures. The majority of these are located within Rockingham Demesne i.e. in and around Lough Key Forest Park and the lough itself.

There are three National Monuments comprising two former Abbey's and a castle within the Plan area and these are located on three of the small islands on Lough Key.

There are 142 structures listed for protection on the Record of Monuments and Places within the Plan area. This substantial figure is a testimony to the scale of architectural and archaeological significance that this area of north Roscommon provides.



Castle Island



Rockingham House



Trinity Island

3.1.5.2 Protected Views

There are currently three scenic views and two scenic routes within the LAP boundary, located towards the west and north of Lough Key itself. These identified areas provide extensive views of Lough Key as well as the forested lands surrounding the lough, including the forest park itself.

3.1.5.3 Natural Heritage

There are no Natura 2000 (SPA/SAC) sites within or adjoining the Lough Key LAP boundary. There are seven proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) within the LAP boundary (listed in Table 2 below). Map No. 6 identifies all of the Natura 2000 Sites within a 15km radius of the Lough Key LAP Boundary. Map No. 6 also identifies all of the Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) both within and surrounding the Lough Key LAP boundary.

Table 2: Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) within the Lough Key Plan Area

Site	Status	Site Code
Corrigeenroe Marsh	pNHA	000596
Drum Bridge	pNHA	001631
Drumman's Island	pNHA	001633
Fin Lough	pNHA	001636
Hogs Island	pNHA	001638
Lough Drumharlow	pNHA	001643
Tawnytaskin Wood	pNHA	001651

Site synopses and maps may be accessed on the National Parks and Wildlife Service's website at: <http://www.npws.ie/ConservationSites/>

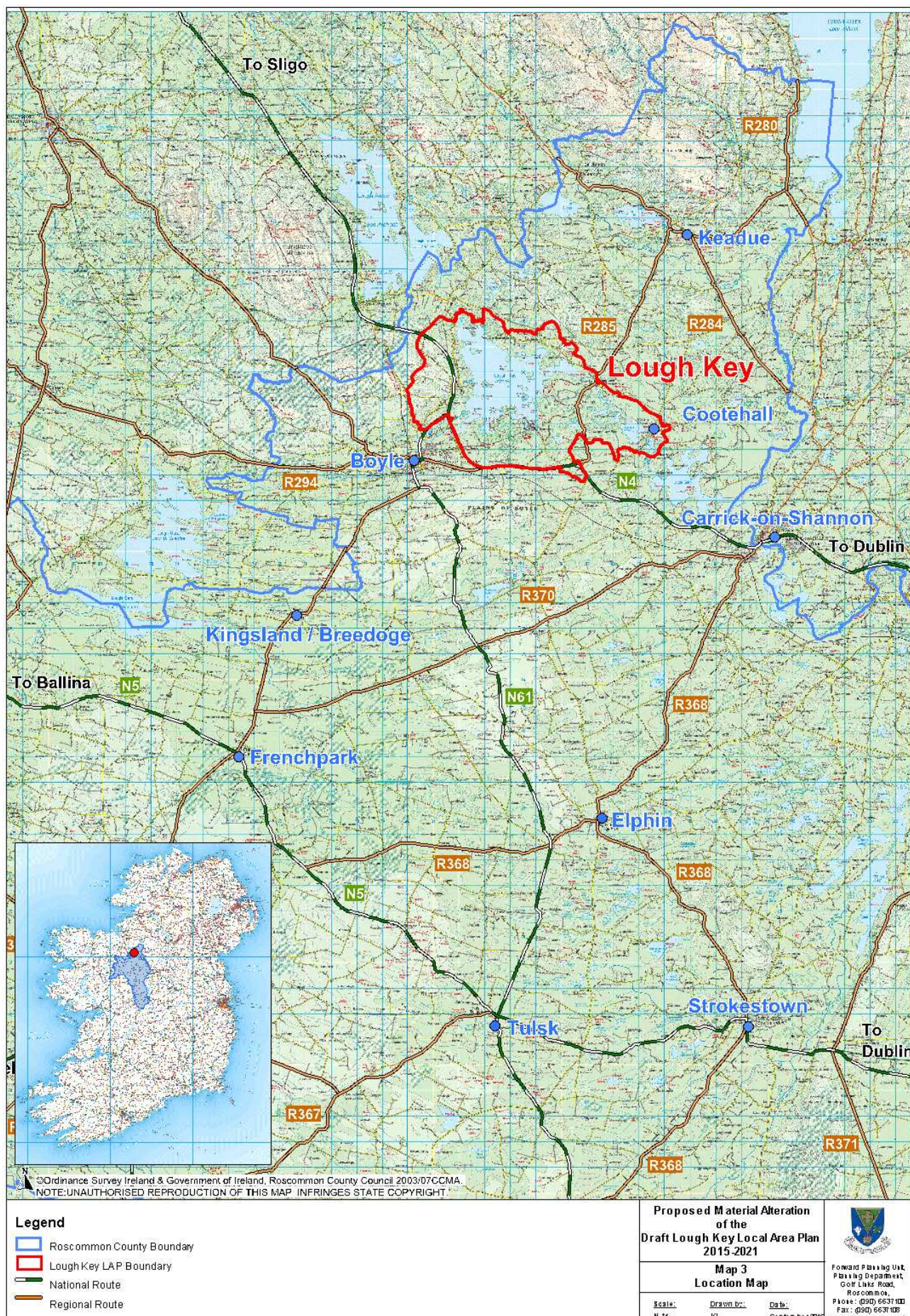
Lough Key and all lands within the Plan boundary fall within Landscape Character Area 16: Lough Key and Boyle River Network¹ which is of exceptional landscape value reflecting the value of the water amenities, habitats and surrounding scenic landscape.

¹ See the Roscommon Landscape Character Assessment which forms part of the RCDP 2014-2020.

3.1.6 Economic Development and Employment

3.1.6.1 Economic Profile

Aside from commercial activities associated with Lough Key Forest Park, economic activity within the Lough Key LAP area is linked primarily to some small scale individual businesses. There is currently very little commercial enterprise in Cootehall village and almost all of the existing commercial units are vacant and/or no longer in use.



SEE
MAPS 3 TO 8

4 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1

CHALLENGES

COMMUNITY VIEW

Many local roads in the area need to be resurfaced. The approach road from Boyle to Cootehall just outside the village is in very poor condition.

Parents and children urgently need the provision of a safe walking area from Cootehall village to the national school.

4.1.1 Infrastructure and Services

Road, Pedestrian and Cycle Networks

- Ensuring that the local road network is improved and upgraded as necessary to meet the needs of the local community and visitors to the area.
- Creation of a suitable footpath network in the village of Cootehall and providing a safe pedestrian/cycle link from the village to the national school.
- Establishing recognised cycle links between Lough Key Forest Park and Boyle.

COMMUNITY VIEW

Significant concerns regarding the ongoing boil water notices and the quality of water were expressed by community members.

Water and Wastewater Services

- Ensure that the potable water supply in the area is maintained to a high standard and that water conservation (leakage and demand management) measures are promoted among all water users.

Flood Risk and Protection

- Control development and ensure appropriate flood mitigation measures are in place.

COMMUNITY VIEW

Local committees in Cootehall and Knockvicar help to keep the villages very tidy. However the general consensus is that there is scope for more recycling facilities within the Plan area.

Waste Management

- Applying good waste management procedures to ensure litter does not detract from the visual quality of the area.

Energy

- A secure and reliable electricity transmission infrastructure is needed to support economic development and attract investment to the area.
- Current lack of a gas network in the county.

Telecommunications

- Supplying a consistent quality broadband service throughout the Plan area, primarily for those living in the area but also as an incentive for attracting new business investment into the area.
- Ensuring that the physical infrastructure and structures needed to provide an effective mobile phone service are developed in a strategic way that minimises the impact, where possible, on the environment.

COMMUNITY VIEW

Tourism development is the key to the success of the Lough Key Area

The area needs to provide a landmark tourist destination to attract visitors.

Further tourist related activities should be primarily focused at Lough Key Forest Park.

Both Lough Key and Boyle can mutually benefit from developing tourism related activities for visitors to both locations.

4.1.2 Community Facilities

- Ensuring adequate social, recreation and community facilities are available to meet the needs of the local population, including further youth facilities.

4.1.3 Tourism Resources, Facilities and Infrastructure

- Continuing to develop the tourism base in the area is essential to the local and wider economy.
- Deficiencies in joint tourism initiatives between with Lough Key Forest Park and Boyle to coordinate recreational activities for both locations.
- Insufficient promotion of the strengths of the Lough Key area as well the strengths of the nearby settlements to attract a diverse range of visitors to the region.
- The existing public marina is not considered adequate for boat users, particularly for larger cruisers.

4.1.4 Built and Natural Heritage

Preserving the built and natural heritage value of the lands in the Lough Key area, particularly around the lake is a fundamental requirement. The key challenge with regard to this requirement is achieving the balance between facilitating development within the Lough Key LAP area whilst avoiding adverse impacts upon this highly scenic and sensitive area.

4.1.5 Economic Development and Employment

- Ensuring there is no further loss of retail provision in Cootehall. Presently there is only one shop and pub operating in Cootehall.
- Securing occupancy of the existing vacant commercial premises in Cootehall is essential to provide some degree of business activity in the village.

COMMUNITY VIEW

Small scale retail provision in Cootehall and Knockvicar will suffice in terms of meeting local convenience needs.

Zoning lands for business enterprise and light industry is not realistic for Cootehall.

4.1.6 Residential Development

- Addressing residential vacancy in Cootehall village.
- Addressing public health and safety, as well as security on unfinished residential estates, and the satisfactory completion of essential services such as roads, public lighting, footpaths, piped services and amenity areas.
- Accommodating an appropriate supply of suitably designed residential developments around Lough Key, whilst ensuring that the natural heritage value of the area is not undermined.

COMMUNITY VIEW

No more large scale housing estates in Cootehall Village should be developed.

4.2

OPPORTUNITIES

4.2.1 Infrastructure and Services

Road, Pedestrian and Cycle Networks

- Create a safe walk/cycle route from Cootehall village to the national school in order to increase pedestrian activity reduce car use for the school runs.
- Establishing designated walkways and cycle lanes within the Plan area will encourage locals to avail of recreational activities as well as attract tourists to the area.

COMMUNITY VIEW

Greater links between Lough Key Forest Park and Boyle can be achieved through greater pedestrian access and cycle lane provision.

4.2.2 Community Facilities

- Increase the provision of community facilities within the Plan Area particularly in the villages of Cootehall and Knockvicar.
- Explore the potential to utilise existing vacant premises in Cootehall for community and social events should be explored.
- Given the level of residential development in Cootehall, additional community facilities such as a crèche, gym, health care provision (for e.g. weekly clinics) etc. could be facilitated.
- Develop sporting facilities in Cootehall, such as an all weather facility which could accommodate a range of sports such as basketball, tennis, soccer etc.

The new playground in Cootehall is a great social facility for parents and children.

An outdoor exercise park similar to the facility in Boyle should be provided in Cootehall or Lough Key Forest Park.

Open Space

- Maintain open spaces, amenity areas and walkways in and around the villages of Cootehall and Knockvicar so that all members of the community and visitors can enjoy these public areas.

4.2.3 Tourism Resources, Facilities and Infrastructure

Lough Key Forest Park continues to expand its range of facilities for visitors, which now includes the tree top walk, zip-lining, segways and electric bike trails. Lough Key Forest Park is regarded as one of the main areas of the county which offers significant potential for establishing itself as a location for integrated tourism and recreation. The continued expansion of tourist related activities and facilities such as pony trekking, orienteering, mountain biking, canoeing, boating, fishing, walking etc has the potential to attract increased visitor numbers and are the type of activities which can be established without negatively impacting upon the setting of the Forest Park.

- Strengthen links between Lough Key Forest Park and the surrounding primary settlements of Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon so the wider region can benefit from visiting tourists.
- Place increased emphasis on cycling opportunities and equestrian initiatives, for example through the provision of increased cycle lanes within Lough Key Forest Park and the creation of a designated cycle lane from Lough Key Forest Park to Boyle, and the development of pony trekking opportunities.
- Develop associated initiatives between Lough Key Forest Park and King House/Boyle Abbey, with the opportunity for emphasis on historical connections.
- Explore tourist accommodation facilities at Lough Key Forest Park.

COMMUNITY VIEW

Appropriate enterprises of a similar nature to the existing outdoor recreational facilities would help to further develop Lough Key Forest Park.

- Make more effective use of advertising and tourism signage in place in the vicinity of Lough Key and also at the nearby towns of Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon would inform people visiting the area may entice people to stay and explore the area.
- The heritage potential of the Rockingham Estate should be considered further. There is scope for the restoration of many of the Rockingham Estate buildings which are currently lying derelict and unused.
- Utilise old buildings on the Rockingham Estate Buildings to accommodate new business ventures, such as a pony trekking business, pet farm or arts and crafts facility.
- Further expansion of water based activities could be explored.

COMMUNITY VIEW

The development of a proper public marina in Cootehall is needed to serve boat users who may wish to stop at the village.

4.2.4 Built and Natural HeritageArchitectural Heritage

- Embrace the heritage value within the Lough Key LAP boundary. The Rockingham Estate has significant potential, having many old buildings that could be restored and put to productive use.
- Preserve the archaeological features of buildings of archaeological heritage through the involvement of archaeological heritage professionals and the implementation of their advice.

4.2.5 Economic Development and Employment

- Increase commercial and economic activity in Cootehall and Knockvicar, with commercial ventures primarily being in the form of facilities which would serve both residents and tourists e.g. restaurant, shop, pub.
- Further development of water based activities such as boat hire, fishing trips etc. from either Lough Key Forest Park, Cootehall or Knockvicar.
- Development opportunities exist in Cootehall through the provision of a properly serviced marina facility.
- Restoration of derelict and unused properties for the purpose of providing tourist accommodation.
- Develop joint commercial ventures between existing recreational activity operators in Lough Key Forest Park, Boyle, Carrick-on-Shannon and Sligo. This would benefit these businesses through increased awareness of their business counterparts and increased numbers availing of the activities on offer.

Unused holiday homes close to Doon Shore could provide tourist accommodation, and short and long term employment.

4.2.6 Retail and Commercial Development

- Increase retail provision within the Lough Key LAP area, on a small scale convenience level. Opportunities are likely within Cootehall, given the lack of shops in the village.
- Encourage the uptake of existing vacant premises for anyone proposing a commercial enterprise.

COMMUNITY VIEW

Commercial development in this area is highly unlikely as businesses will generally be drawn to the larger settlements where the critical mass exists and more services are in place. Keeping the existing businesses open is the main issue.

4.2.7 Home-based/Farm-based Economic Activity

- The opportunity for appropriate small scale home-based businesses should be explored. Rural based initiatives such as an arts and crafts facility or pet farm are examples of home/farm based activities that may assist in developing the local economy.

5 VISION AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Roscommon County Council has an ambitious but achievable **Vision** for the Lough Key LAP area for the period 2015 – 2021 and beyond.

VISION: Ensure that the Lough Key area continues to be regarded as a key strategic tourism resource in Count Roscommon. The lake, park surrounding woodlands, combined with its proximity to key urban centres provide the opportunity to promote this area as a significant tourism asset in the west of Ireland. Lough Key Forest Park continues to grow and expand its range of tourist activities and the Council will continue to support this growth.

The vision for the Plan Area is to promote further development of recreation and tourism based enterprises to serve both as an economic and social resource for the local community and visitors alike.

This highly scenic area is much sought after for residential development. The Council recognises this and aims to ensure that residential development within the Plan area is facilitated in a manner which ensures that the natural, scenic and environmental sensitivities of this area are not compromised.

The following are the **Strategic Aims** for the Lough Key Plan area:

1. Promote economic development and employment through the further enhancement of a strong tourism base within the Plan area. Encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism industry through sustainable means, including the conservation, protection and enhancement of the built and natural heritage, the protection of sensitive landscapes, and the enhancement of cultural and community facilities in order to maximise the economic benefits arising from the tourism industry.
2. Enhance the quality of the natural and built environment and conserve the visual amenity of the LAP area.
3. Utilise the surrounding natural environment and natural resources, to the benefit of the area in a positive way.
4. Promote sustainable community development within the established settlements of Cootehall and Knockvicar by supporting the appropriate levels of services to support existing and future populations.
5. Promote the development of social and recreational facilities within the settlements of Cootehall and Knockvicar.
6. Encourage the redevelopment and reuse of vacant and derelict residential and commercial buildings, both within the settlements and the rural environs of the plan area, as a viable alternative to new build developments on Greenfield sites.
7. Protect and safeguard groundwater supplies and ensure that they are not compromised by commercial, agricultural, domestic or other activities, particularly in non-serviced areas outside the town boundary.
8. Ensure that the appropriate level of services and infrastructure is available to support the existing and future population in terms of wastewater disposal, water supply and surface water disposal.
9. Promote an enhanced quality of life for all, based on high quality sustainable residential, working and recreational environments, infrastructural and transportation networks, with the use of alternative energy in a sustainable and harmonious way.

The Council is committed to delivering this vision for the Lough Key area through working in partnership with the local community and local organisations, and through promoting the policies and objectives contained in this, and future, LAPs.

5.1 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OPTIONS

The purpose of the development strategy is to provide a clear strategic direction on how the Lough Key LAP area should develop over the Plan period and beyond.

Whilst the population of the Lough Key area and the associated settlements, particularly Cootehall, will continue to grow, it is essential that the unique characteristics of this LAP and its associated settlements area are maintained.

The key elements of the development strategy for the Lough Key Plan area are as follows:

- To ensure there are appropriate regulations in place for residential development in the rural environs surrounding Lough Key in order to preserve the unique rural character of this area.
- Having regard to the existing level of houses (including vacant units) and the associated housing moratorium in Cootehall,¹ focus on promoting the completion of existing unfinished developments and uptake of the vacant residential units in the village before considering the development of any further multi unit developments.

Development Strategy Options

Three Development Strategy Options were considered for the Lough Key area:

- **Development Strategy 1** considers the implications of continuing in accordance with the development objectives of the 2009-2015 Lough Key Local Area Plan;
- **Development Strategy 2** considers the implications of retaining zoning in Cootehall, in conjunction with an absence of conservation zone development controls within the Lough Key Plan area, thereby allowing various forms of development to take place in an unregulated manner; and,
- **Development Strategy 3** considers the implications of applying a zoned approach to one off houses in the rural environs of the Plan area and adhering to the residential policies in place (principally Policy 5.27) for Tier 4 Rural Villages (Cootehall) and Village Nuclei (Knockvicar) of the RCDP 2014-2020.

The following sections outline the three options, including key features and implications.

¹ Refer to Section 5.10.1 'Moratorium on Multi-Unit Housing Schemes' and associated policies of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 for further details.

Main Features of Development Strategy 1 (Figure 1 below)

- This development strategy facilitates the continuation of detailed land use zoning in Cootehall, in which there would be opportunity for further multi-unit residential development in Cootehall (which is contrary to the policies set out in the RCDP 2014-2020 in respect of Tier 4 villages in which a Moratorium on Multi-Unit Housing Schemes applies).
- Continuation of the previously identified conservation zones of the lands surrounding Lough Key (Zones 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3, 4, and 4A).
- Facilitate refurbishment of existing structures only as identified in Zones 1, 1A and 2A and 2B.
- The promotion of tourism development within the plan area, particularly tourism development within Lough Key Forest Park.

Positive Implications of Development Strategy 1

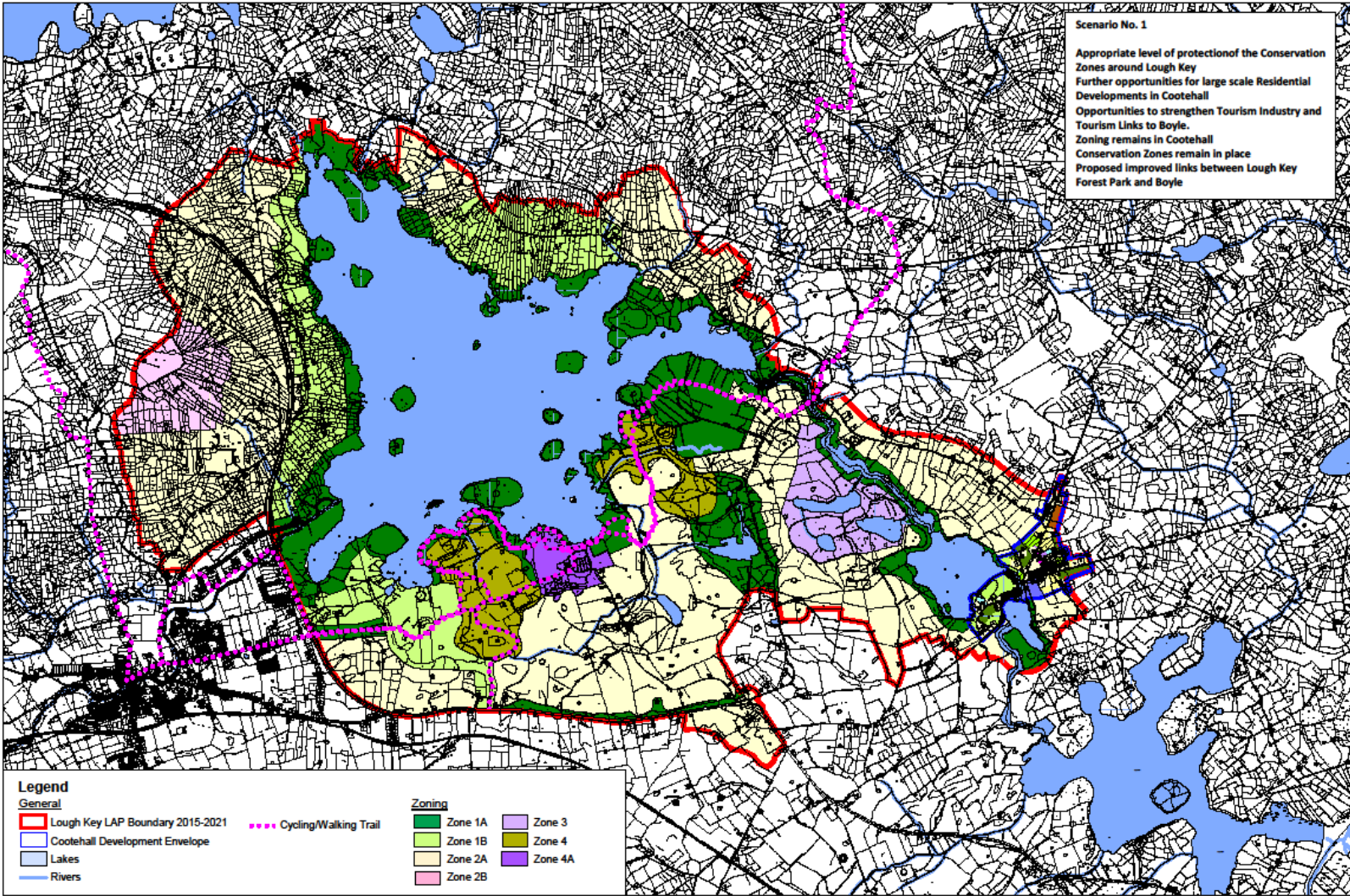
- Developments within the five conservation zones will be regulated and only applications deemed to meet the land use zoning objectives and specific requirements as set out in Chapter 9 (pg.161) of the Lough Key LAP 2009-2015 will be permitted.
- Appropriate emphasis remains on enhancing the tourism infrastructure within the Plan area.

Negative Implications of Development Strategy 1

- Unsustainable residential expansion of Cootehall may result in a further loss of the rural character of this village.
- Facilitation of multi unit housing developments would contravene housing policies set out in the RCDP 2014-2020.
- Development of all new residential lands would lead to a proliferation of dwellings, many of which may be likely to struggle to secure permanent occupancy.
- Lack of clarity in relation to residential development within various conservation zones (for example zones 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B). In the absence of clarity on acceptable forms of development within each zone, the development management process may be undermined.

Development Strategy 1: Continue as per 2009-2015 Area Plan

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: OPTION 1



Main Features of Development Strategy 2 (Figure 2 below)

- This development strategy places the rural lands within the Lough Key Plan boundary into Category C i.e. Areas in Need of Regeneration –as set out in Chapter 5 (Housing) of the RCDP 2014-2020. This permits individual housing development in principal.
- Continuation of zoning of Cootehall Village.
- This strategy fails to address the issue of unsustainable levels of residential expansion of Cootehall, resulting in a negative impact on the character of this village and increased demand on infrastructure provision.
- No moratorium on multi-unit residential schemes (3 or more units) applied to Cootehall.
- The promotion of tourism development specifically within the plan area, particularly tourism development within Lough Key Forest Park.

Positive Implications of Development Strategy 2

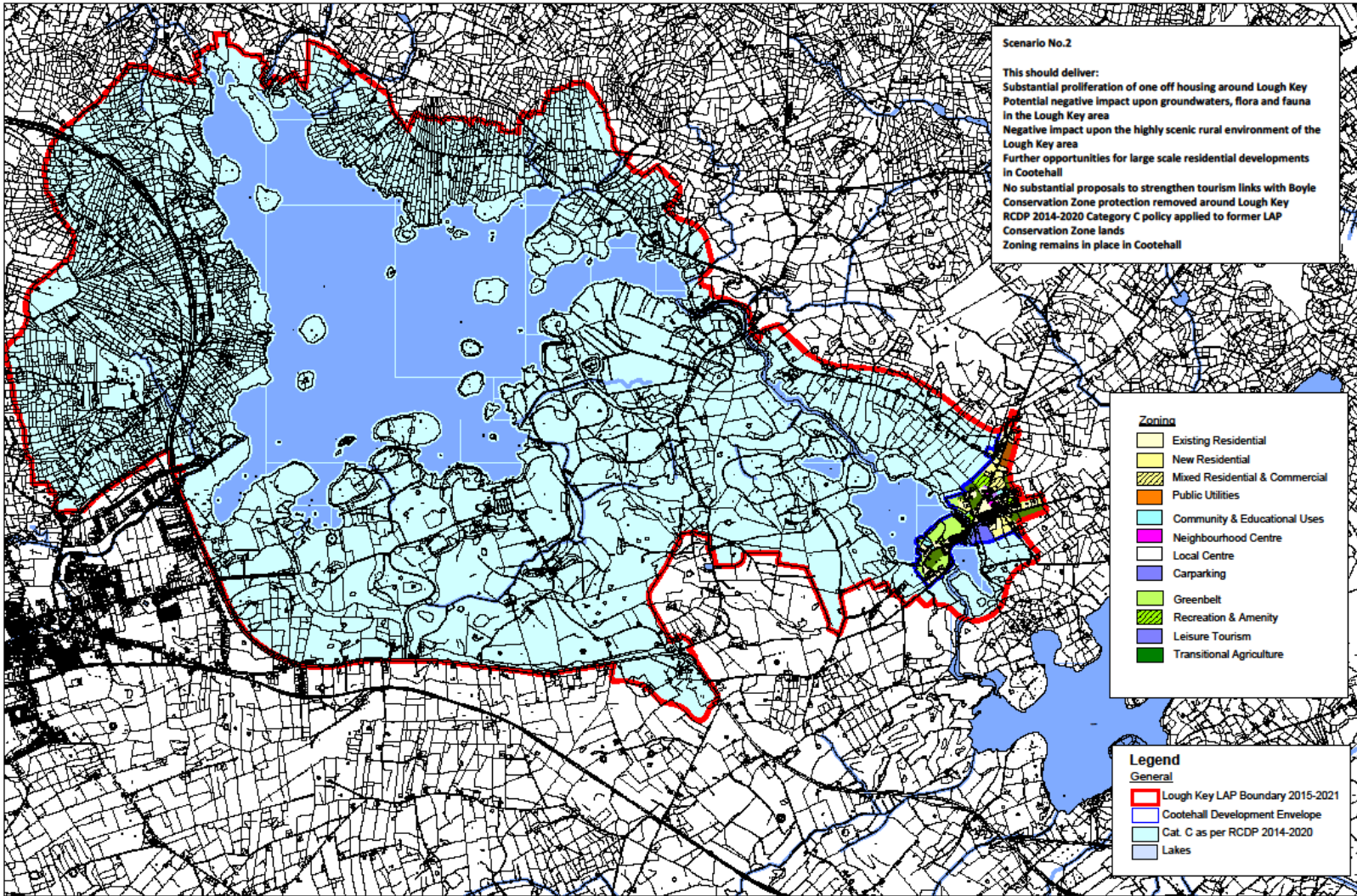
- Emphasis would be placed on enhancing the tourism infrastructure within the plan area.

Negative Implications of Development Strategy 2

- Removing the conservation zones in place within the Lough Key Plan boundary could lead to a proliferation of one-off houses on the lands surrounding Lough Key. This in turn would lead to a loss of the unspoilt character of these unique lands of high scenic and tourist value.
- Continuation of zoning in Cootehall provides opportunity for further large scale residential development and removes flexibility for development within the village.
- Facilitation of multi unit housing developments would contravene the housing policies set out in the RCDP 2014-2020.

Development Strategy 2: Removal of Conservation Zones around Lough Key

Development Strategy: Option No. 2



Main Features of Development Strategy 3 (Figure 3 below)

- Continuation of the approach of identifying conservation zones on the lands surrounding Lough Key, with a rationalisation of zones based on up to date analysis.
- Provision of a greater level of clarity regarding development potential within the conservation zones surrounding Lough Key.
- Application of the moratorium on multi-unit housing developments in Cootehall in accordance with the policies of the RCDP 2014-2020, and in conjunction with a focus on promoting the completion of existing unfinished developments and uptake of the vacant residential unit in Cootehall before the development of any further multi-development units is considered.
- Removal of specific land use zoning in Cootehall and the identification of a settlement boundary, thereby achieving consistency with the approach taken to all other Tier 4 villages in Co. Roscommon. In addition, the identification of a settlement boundary pertaining to the village nuclei of Knockvicar.
- Continue to promote and expand on the tourism infrastructure in place and encourage new tourism initiatives.

Positive Implications of Development Strategy 3

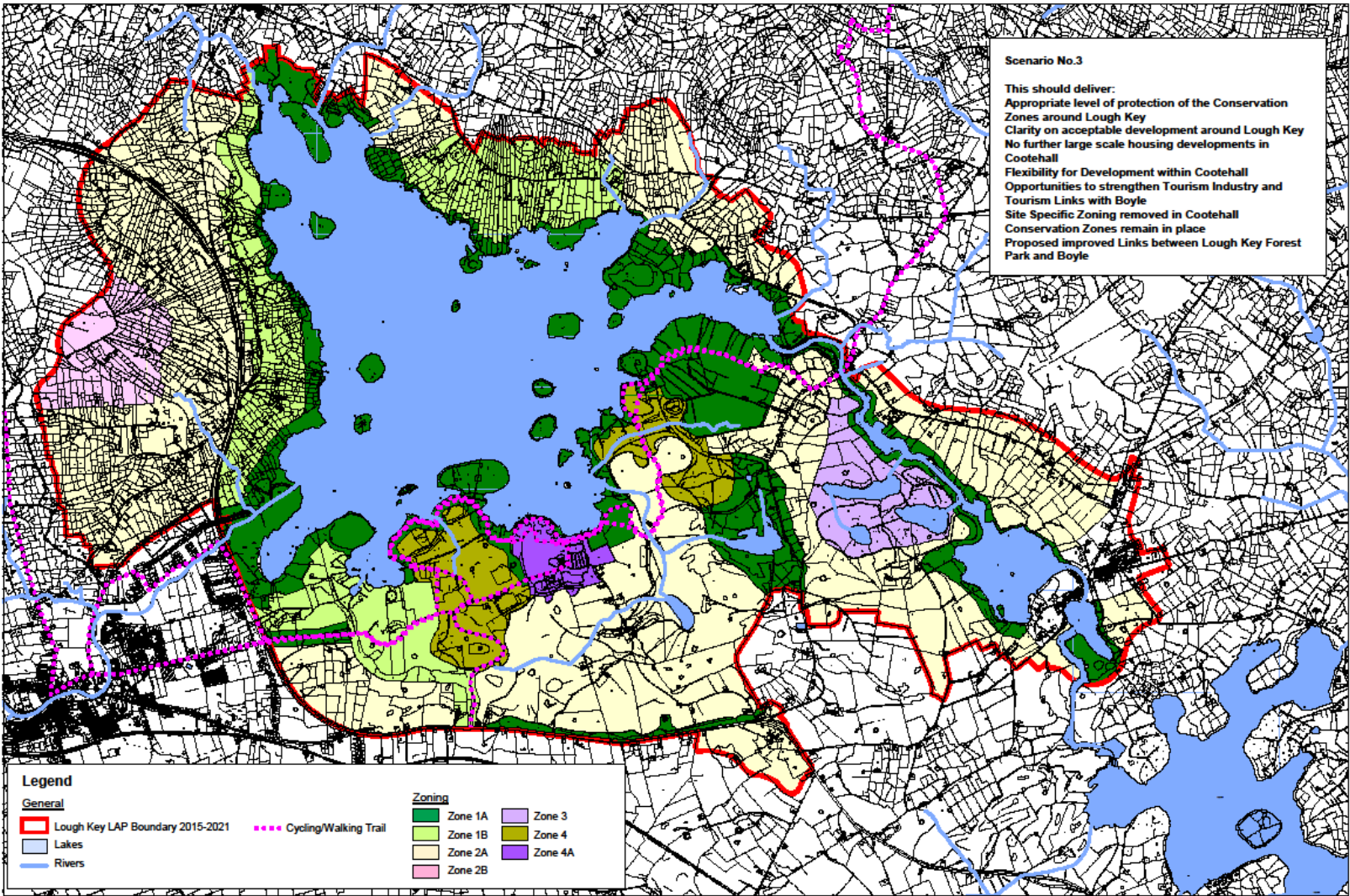
- The continuation of the conservation zone approach, with a reduced number of zones (Zones 1, 1A, 2, 3 and 3A), with appropriate policy controls in place for residential development within these zones.
- Increased opportunities to facilitate locally generated rural housing need.
- Removal of site specific zoning restrictions in Cootehall, as well as the identification of a settlement boundary for it and the village nuclei of Knockvicar, will offer flexibility for landowners and developers for various forms of development, with proposals now being primarily assessed on planning merits and site specific circumstances.
- Greater clarity regarding acceptable development within the conservation zones will aid the development management process.
- Ensuring that tourism development remains a primary objective of the Lough Key Area will encourage new tourism initiatives in the area to grow and develop.

Negative Implications of Development Strategy 3

- No negative implications identified.

Development Strategy 3: Retention of Conservation Zones and Removal of Zoning in Cootehall

Development Strategy: Option No. 3



The Preferred Development Strategy for Lough Key

Development Strategy 3 (DS3) will benefit the Lough Key area the most, as it combines all the positive aspects of the other two strategies. DS3 focuses on protecting the lands surrounding Lough Key from inappropriate and excessive levels of development, whilst facilitating high quality, sensitively located developments which foster economic growth and meet the residential needs of the local population, whilst also ensuring that the amenity value of this area is maintained. DS3 also adheres to the policy requirements of the RCDP 2014-2020 regarding housing developments in Tier 4 settlements including Cootehall. DS3 places significant emphasis on promoting tourism in this area of north Roscommon, where it is considered that significant economic and social benefits could be derived from the expansion of tourism related developments in this region.

Creating a Workable Strategy

The identification of Development Objectives is important in the delivery of the preferred Strategy and the main development aims of the Lough Key Area Plan. The preferred Development Strategy promotes the following:

- Protect, maintain and enhance the quality of the natural environment surrounding Lough Key and preserve the unique character of the landscape and conserve the visual amenity of the LAP area. This will be achieved through maintaining the conservation zone approach around Lough Key as a means to regulate development and facilitate appropriate development within the relevant zones.
- Promote and facilitate sustainable tourism initiatives within the Plan area to improve the economic and social fabric of the area and to help generate tourism related employment opportunities. Whilst Lough Key Forest Park is recognised as the key area suitable for further tourism initiatives, there is also scope for tourism related developments in other areas within the Plan boundary. Such proposals will be assessed having regard to the conservation zones in place and site specific planning considerations.
- Develop improved cycle and pedestrian links between Lough Key and Boyle in order to strengthen connections between the Forest Park and Boyle. This will be mutually beneficial to both areas and will encourage visitors and locals alike to enjoy scenic routes between the Forest Park and Boyle. The aim is to strengthen not only physical links but also to develop joint tourism initiatives.
- The identification of a settlement boundary in Cootehall, within which development proposals may be considered on a site specific basis, will provide flexibility within the village for the potential establishment of new developments within the village core. The development management process is the appropriate procedure to assess future proposals in Cootehall.

The main aim of the Strategy is to achieve the overall vision for Lough Key, identify the strengths of the area and focus on promoting these strengths in a regulated and sustainable way for the long term benefit of the area.

The following are the Development Objectives for Lough Key LAP:

Objective 1	Promote and facilitate a sustainable tourism industry in the Lough Key Plan area.
Objective 2	Protect the natural environment and scenic quality of the lands surrounding Lough Key by facilitating only those developments which satisfy specific development criteria.
Objective 2	Generate increased linkages between Lough Key Forest Park and Boyle for the mutual benefit of both areas.
Objective 3	Increase the range of community and commercial facilities in Cootehall to serve the local community and visitors to the area.

5.2 HOUSING STRATEGY AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

5.2.1 Development Strategy for Residential Development in the Lough Key Plan Area

As outlined in the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020, residential development in Tier 4 villages which have experienced high levels of vacancy shall be limited to developments of no more than three residential units or the refurbishment or rebuilding of existing houses so as not to exacerbate vacancy levels within this settlement.² Cootehall is one of the villages identified in the RCDP in which the moratorium on multi-unit housing developments applies.

The uptake of the existing vacant units for residential use or, if possible and appropriate, change of use, will be encouraged by the Council, in preference to new build development in Cootehall. Vacant buildings which are not properly maintained can fall into a state of disrepair and detract from the area. Given the scenic quality of the village of Cootehall, it is hoped that this can be avoided as much as is reasonably possible.

The assessment of one-off housing applications throughout the rural environs of the Lough Key Plan area shall remain subject to their location within the conservation zones surrounding Lough Key.

Applicants seeking to build a new dwelling house on lands surrounding Lough Key will be required to demonstrate adherence to the specific planning requirements which apply to the particular zone in which the subject site is located. The policy of applying specific requirements is essential in the Lough Key LAP area in order to maintain and protect the inherent natural beauty, which is a fundamental element of the attractiveness of this area from a tourism perspective. It is recognised that much of the lands may be highly sought after due to the attractive and scenic qualities of the area and it is therefore essential to manage residential development pressure lands to ensure that the natural beauty of this area is not compromised as a result of excessive one-off house developments. Chapter Six addresses development within the Lough Key Plan boundary.

² Section 5.10.1 'Moratorium on Multi-Unit Housing Schemes' and associated policies of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020.

6 LAND USE OBJECTIVES

6.1 OVERVIEW OF STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

All lands within the Lough Key LAP area have been characterised, visually assessed, and zoned accordingly. Specific areas within the LAP boundary, namely Lough Key Forest Park and Cootehall are identified as the main locations where particular developments will be concentrated. It is envisaged that further tourism related developments will be steered towards Lough Key Forest Park. It is anticipated that Cootehall may be an attractive location for suitably scaled commercial and community facilities within the village core, which would have the potential to serve both the local community and visitors alike. Much of the remaining lands within the LAP area may accommodate development provided all criteria set out within Table 3 are satisfied and all other site specific planning issues are satisfied.

6.2 COOTEHALL VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

The primary settlement within the Lough Key Plan area is Cootehall village. Cootehall developed rapidly during the economic boom, mainly as a result of the level of residential development which took place in and around the village. The location was logistically attractive for residential development due to its proximity to Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon (c. 7 miles from both of these towns). In addition, its natural beauty and waterways provide for a very attractive location in which to reside. However, the level of residential development was not supplemented by community and commercial developments with the result that facilities and services are lacking in the village. The level of housing present in Cootehall justifies the necessity for ancillary developments which would serve the community.

The challenge now facing Cootehall is attracting viable commercial enterprises to the village and creating a measure of self-sustainability. Thus the emphasis for Cootehall within the context of this LAP relates primarily to community development, through the provision of community facilities and services.

The strategic aims for Cootehall are as follows: -

- Enhance the economic and social development of the area, by encouraging people to reside, visit and set up local businesses in Cootehall.
- Ensure the provision of necessary community services and facilities.
- Facilitate commercial and business based development initiatives.
- Maintain and strengthen the village character by ensuring developments meet design guidelines and that materials and finishes add to the aesthetics of the streetscapes within Cootehall.
- Consolidate and develop in the core of the village and steer development away from the periphery and hinterland of Cootehall.

6.3 CONSERVATION ZONES WITHIN THE LAP BOUNDARY

An essential part of the attractiveness of the LAP Area is its unspoilt rural, agricultural character. Unlike many other beauty spots in the country, it has largely been uncompromised inappropriate and poorly conceived development.

The following policies have been developed in order to continue to protect this character whilst also facilitating necessary social and economic development in a manner that enables the area to retain its inherent natural beauty, continuing to function as working farmland and at the same time developing a sustainable, environmentally friendly tourism industry.

The visual analysis of the environs of Lough Key identified lands where development would have significant negative impacts on views on and from the lake. Generally land closer to the lake is more sensitive than

that further away; open pasture is less capable of absorbing development than densely wooded lands; and steeply sloping sites are more exposed than flat land.

The visual analysis carried out identified distinct zones, each of which has a different capacity to absorb development. The recommended development policies for these zones are outlined below. The General Conservation Policy applies to all lands within the study area.

6.3.1 Residential Development within the Conservation Zones

This Plan is underpinned by the key objective of ensuring the unique attributes Lough Key and the surrounding lands are maintained in order to protect its natural and facilitate a sustainable tourism industry in the area. Accordingly residential development within the identified conservation zones must be carefully considered.

- Other than residential development proposals on lands within the identified settlement boundaries of Cootehall or Knockvicar, applicants submitting new build dwelling applications within the conservation zones will be required to identify all lands within the study area in their family ownership;
- Developments will not be allowed in a higher order conservation zone where it is possible in a lower order zone, or outside the study area.
- Where it is identified that the applicant has an alternative feasible opportunity to either refurbish or replace an existing dwelling on their family landholding, the applicant will be required to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority why this option is not being availed of.
- The applicant may be required to enter a 'Section 47' agreement¹ with the Planning Authority regulating the future residential use of adjacent lands in his/her ownership, as a condition of granting of planning permission.
- Applicants submitting new build dwelling applications to build their first home within the rural community in which they have spent large and continuous parts of their lives, but who have no family lands, will be required to provide documentary evidence to substantiate claims of rural generated location housing need.

6.3.2 Agricultural Development within the Conservation Zones

It is important to recognise the role of agriculture within the Lough Key Plan boundary. A large proportion of the lands within Lough Key area are associated with agricultural activities and accordingly it is necessary to provide clear policies related to agricultural development within the Plan boundary.

- Farm diversification has the potential to have a positive impact upon the rural economy and for the further development of rural related tourism. There is an existing range of attractions which can be further developed for tourists while also preserving the rural character and amenity of the open countryside. Farm holdings within the Plan area have the potential to develop farm tourist accommodation, pet farms, equestrian pursuits and other activities such as health spas, cooking schools, adventure centres etc..
- Farm diversification proposals must be properly located and must not interfere with or detract from areas of special amenity value or nature conservation. The re-use of existing and/or redundant farm buildings for appropriate owner operated agri-tourism enterprises should be considered in preference to new build proposals.
- Agricultural buildings and their associated uses will be subject to strict assessment given the sensitive environment and scenic quality of the lands within the conservation zones. Agricultural proposals which will generate significant levels of effluent disposal e.g. slatted sheds must demonstrate that land spreading activities will not adversely impact upon the receiving environment and particularly upon receiving water courses.

¹ Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

- Intensive agricultural operations will not be permitted within the conservation zone areas. (Agricultural operations such as intensive pig and poultry farming for example, can generate noxious odours and contamination of ground waters and are, therefore, not generally compatible with the promotion of tourism).

6.4 CONSERVATION ZONE OBJECTIVES

As outlined above this LAP identifies specific areas for specific types of land use in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Objectives for each of these conservation zones are outlined below. It should be noted that there are several which are common and repeated but which are relevant to more than one zone. It should also be noted that the objectives as listed are not exhaustive.

Zone 1

These areas largely consist of woodlands fringing the lake and are particularly vulnerable to change. Not only are they a vital component of the visual character of the lake itself, they also serve to screen other, less sensitive, lands. Permissible development will be limited to the categories of development listed in Table 3 below and subject to strict design controls. Generally no development, other than the refurbishment/extension and/or replacement of existing residential structures, the development of jetties or moorings associated with an existing tourism establishment, will be acceptable in this zone. Development associated with existing agricultural activities on that land will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and where it has been demonstrated that there are no alternative sites in lower level zones in the conservation zone hierarchy.

Any proposal for development within this zone must be accompanied by a **Visual Impact Assessment**. This Visual Impact Assessment should pay particular regard to the visual impact of any proposed development from the lake, surrounding lakeshore and Rockingham Demesne. A detailed survey of the site indicating existing and proposed contours at 1m intervals, existing planting and the proposed landscaping scheme, indicating proposed planting and management regime will also be required. Landscaping should be designed to screen the proposed development and provide continuity with established woodlands and other planting.

Only the felling of over-mature trees and the planting of indigenous deciduous trees is acceptable in this zone, in accordance with sustainable forestry management. Where appropriate, consideration may be given during the Plan period to the making of Tree Preservation Orders² in relation to a key individual tree, trees, groups of trees or woodland which contribute to the overall character, amenity or environmental quality of the area.

Zone 1A

These areas are less sensitive than Zone 1 but are nevertheless highly vulnerable lands. They are also the lands which have historically been the most under pressure for holiday homes and other leisure developments. The lands within this zone are generally transitional between established woodlands in Zone 1 and open farmland occurring within Zone 2.

Any development proposals within Zone 1A should take cognizance of neighbouring zonings, with development sited as far as possible from more sensitive lands (particularly Zones 1).

As with Zone 1 only the categories of development listed in Table 3 will generally be acceptable. In addition to the development types open to consideration in Zone 1, proposals for owner occupier residential development for *bona fide* farmers and their immediate families may also be considered in Zone 1A, only in

² In accordance with Section 205 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

circumstances where there are no alternative sites in zones 2 and 3 or outside the study area available to the applicant.

In a limited number of locations planning permission already exists for developments within this zone. Where live planning permissions exist and the principle of development is established, applications for alternative design proposals of the same development type on the subject site may be considered, subject to the requirements for **Visual Impact Assessments** outlined above. In all cases high standards of design and careful siting of development are essential in order to minimise impacts on the lake.

Zone 2

Zone 2 lands are primarily open farmland with the capacity to absorb a degree of development. However because of the open nature of these pasturelands and their visibility from the lake, large amounts of development would be highly visible.

In order to provide for and protect the continued use of these lands as predominantly agricultural holdings which assist in sustaining the local community, only owner-occupier residential development will be considered, subject to :

- (a) Evidence being provided of freehold ownership of a landholding of not less than 10 hectares (24.7 acres) within which the proposed site is located (**but not necessarily all falling within the zone**). In the event of the granting of planning permission, the occupancy of the dwelling house will be controlled through planning regulation in order to ensure that it remains owner occupied. Speculative development will not be facilitated.

Or

- (b) In instances where the landholding requirement in (a) cannot be satisfied, evidence to demonstrate a rural generated housing need specific to the particular locality in which the development is proposed i.e. that the applicant(s) are proposing to build their first home for their own long term occupation, within close proximity to their established family home and within the rural community in which they have spent large and continuous parts of their lives, and that there are no alternative lands available to the applicant within the locality, or in close proximity outside the LAP area.

In all instances, new development should be carefully designed to minimise negative impacts. Development integration with the surrounding environment must be demonstrated in design solutions. Where possible, access on to the public road should be shared with an existing 'parent' residence and the proposed new development should be contiguous with the existing building complex.

Zones 3 and 3A

A substantial area of Zones 3 and 3A consist of lands within Lough Key Forest Park.

The further development of these lands for appropriate recreational, leisure and tourism purposes, including for example an appropriately scaled hotel, restaurant(s) / coffee shop(s), recreation and leisure related ancillary retail units and leisure based (water and land) activities is encouraged. The provision of new facilities through the refurbishment and restoration of existing structures, in accordance with DoE conservation guidelines, is particularly encouraged. Where necessary, there is potential to facilitate new buildings, subject to high standards of siting and design. All development proposals within zones 3 and 3A are required to positively contribute towards the preservation of the park like character of this zone and avoid interference with views from the lake.

Specific Objective 1 (SO1): Leisure and Tourism Site at Lough Key Forest Park

SO1 Site Description

Lands identified as 'SO1' form part of Lough Key Forest Park and encompass the existing Lough Key Forest Park, including surrounding walkways, car-parking areas, the existing caravan and campsite, and amenity areas. The SO1 lands include a number of built elements, both old and new, including the former chapel and the stable complex, as well as the more recently developed visitor centre. The lands to the south of the visitor centre include a picnic and amenity area, whilst the more afforested area to the east and south east of the centre also includes car parking facilities and a number of walking areas.

Lands to the west of SO1 are essentially Greenfield open lands, with a number of trees randomly located in this portion of the site. This area represents an ideal amenity area, which could be associated and developed further along with the existing and potential future development here.

Purpose of SO1 identification

The SO1 lands are recognised as having potential to facilitate the development of a significantly enhanced leisure and tourism product. SO1 lands represent the most suitable location within the LAP boundary for more intensive tourism development. Roscommon County Council recognises the contribution that Lough Key Forest Park makes to the tourist and recreation product on offer in the county and supports the promotion and marketing of this area, at national and international level. The identification of the SO1 lands are intended to encourage the development of this area for strategic tourism related purposes, which will contribute to the economic and social development of Lough Key and the wider region and reinforce the growing consensus that this is a significant tourist attraction on a national level.

Why Development in SO1

1. Location – SO1 occupies a highly accessible location, with opportunities existing to access the area by by private vehicle, public transport, by boat, by bicycle or on foot.
 - ❖ **Road** - Lough Key is conveniently located on the N4 Dublin to Sligo Road. The towns of Boyle and Carrick on Shannon are approximately 7km to the west and east respectively.
 - ❖ **Rail** - Train stations at Boyle and Carrick on Shannon are on the Sligo - Dublin Route.
 - ❖ **Bus** - The town of Boyle is serviced by a number of bus routes.
 - ❖ **Boat** - Lough Key is part of the Shannon-Erne Waterway.
 - ❖ **Cycle / walk** - Boyle is already linked to Lough Key Forest Park via Abbeytown. The potential exists for the further promotion of linkages between Forest Park and Boyle, through the provision of designated walking and cycling lanes.
2. Infrastructure – SO1 has sufficient infrastructure in place to facilitate further development. In addition to road access identified above, sewerage disposal is via a pumping station to the existing public sewerage treatment plant in Boyle exists. Water and electricity provision is in place.
3. Minimal visual impact - Due to the existing vegetation SO1 lands are screened from the N4. Although visible from the shores of Lough Key, the lands nonetheless have the capacity to absorb further development (for example having the potential to accommodate a large scale well designed facility at this site), without giving rise to unacceptable visual impacts in this area. Due consideration must be afforded to the visual impact any development will have from Lough Key itself.
4. Negligible impact upon the existing vegetation in SO1, subject to appropriate siting and design. For example, lands to the western portion of SO1 could facilitate a large scale development, with limited loss of existing vegetation along the lake shores.

5. Opportunity to provide additional tourism related facilities to complement and supplement the existing visitor centre and other facilities within Forest Park. There is scope to further expand the range of leisure / tourism related activities within Forest Park.
6. Opportunity to regenerate the protected structures on SO1 lands. These buildings, many of which are of notable architectural merit, have significant potential for re-use if sympathetically converted.

Core Aims and Objectives for SO1

1.	To identify and facilitate suitable development which utilises Lough Key as one of the main tourism/recreational attractions in County Roscommon and regionally.
2.	To promote consolidation and enhancement of the existing recreational, tourism, sporting and leisure uses within SO1 and facilitate the provision for future expansion of such uses while ensuring that access to these facilities is provided for the general public so that Lough Key continues to function as a valuable amenity resource for Roscommon.
3.	To identify opportunities for economic and social development of this area through the identification of lands capable of accommodating development for employment and enterprise opportunities.
4.	To encourage developments which are quality driven and of high architectural merit, which will enhance their surroundings and respect this visually and environmentally sensitive area.
5.	Provide for a mix of uses within the SO1 area which will increase the viability, sustainability and attractiveness of the area as a location to visit.
6.	Provide guidance for new development in the SO1 area and in particular to provide guidance on appropriate site planning, overall building form, building typologies and scale of proposed development.
7.	Upgrade the links to Boyle and to the waterway.

Achieving the Aims and Objectives

Roscommon County Council will support and facilitate appropriate development within SO1. It is essential, in conjunction with this, that networks between the relevant agencies and organisations are established in order to market Lough Key as a tourism destination to potential investors/developers. The Council encourages a collaborative approach between the relevant bodies such as Lough Key Forest Park Management, Failte Ireland, Boyle Chamber of Commerce, Carrick-on-Shannon Chamber of Commerce etc. to ensure that the relevant bodies liaise and develop ideas for tourism development which benefits Lough Key Forest Park and the surrounding settlements including Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon.

The Council also will endeavour to facilitate initiatives which strengthen existing links between Lough Key Forest Park and Boyle town whereby both areas can mutually benefit from integrated tourism initiatives e.g. journeys along the canal between the Forest Park and Boyle and the provision of a cycle lane from Boyle to the Forest Park.

Potential Development Opportunities within SO1

Lands which form part of the SO1 site within Lough Key Forest Park has the potential to accommodate a range of recreation, leisure and tourism oriented development opportunities including (but not limited to) the following:

- Hotel accommodation;
- Conference Centre facilities;
- Restaurant/Dining facilities;
- Leisure/Spa/Wellbeing Facilities;
- Fitness Centre / Outdoor Activities.

Development on open lands

In general, open lands should be used primarily for open space/recreational activity, with built development focused on the lands to the south of the roundabout. The open lands towards the west and south-west of the existing Visitor Centre could most appropriately accommodate a range of less intensive development, primarily related to public amenity provision. Examples of potentially acceptable developments include a children's play area, exercise area with outdoor gym stations, picnic benches and BBQ facilities, and further cycle and walking paths.

Development within afforested areas

The afforested lands which form part of the wider Lough Key Forest Park provide for the potential outdoor activity related development, including:

- Designated pony trekking paths;
- Orienteering courses;
- Designated mountain bike trails;
- Walking trails and play areas for children; and
- Nature/Ecology Trails.

Re-development of existing buildings

The stable complex is a key existing structure within the SO1 lands and has the potential, subject to sensitive re-development, to accommodate a diverse range of facilities, the following of which are some potential examples:

- Equestrian facilities – refurbishing the stables to accommodate their original use and in conjunction with the provision of designated forest paths for pony trekking in the area.
- Alternatively, small scale retail units could be accommodated, with retailing tenants specializing in for example traditional Irish made goods or leisure and recreation goods.
- A unique tourist accommodation offering could be provided through the sympathetic refurbishment and conversion of the buildings.

All development proposals within SO1 lands are required to demonstrate sensitivity to, and ensure the protection of, the natural beauty and environmental quality of this sensitive area. Only appropriately designed developments that are of high architectural merit and well laid out, taking due cognizance of the necessity to preserve as much as reasonably possible of the existing vegetation, will be considered.

Having regard to the strategic role of the N4, National Primary Route, in facilitating inter-urban and inter-regional transport requirements, it is essential that all development proposals within SO1 lands are assessed, having regard to the potential for intensification of the access onto the N4. Accordingly proposals deemed to potentially give rise to an intensification of traffic accessing SO1 lands from the N4 must be accompanied by a Traffic and Transportation Audit, and where required a Road Safety Audit. The Planning Authority advise that prospective developers of these lands engage with Roscommon County Council (Planning and Roads sections) as part of the proposed application preparation process.

In exceptional circumstances, where development proposed on the identified SO1 lands, is considered by the Planning Authority (in consultation with Transportation Infrastructure Ireland (TII)) to be of national or regional strategic importance, the Planning Authority, in consultation with TII may consider the initiation of a process, as set out in Section 2.6 of *the Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DECLG 2012), for consideration of a less restrictive approach to the intensification of use of the existing primary access onto the N4 National Primary Route. The outcome of this process will be dependent on demonstration that the project is of National/Regional Strategic importance and supported by a robust evidence base provided by the prospective developer, in the context of Section 2.6 of *Spatial Planning and National Roads 2012*.³

³ The process advocated in Section 2.6 of the DECLG Guidelines on 'Spatial Planning and National Roads' whereby a less restrictive approach (in the case of developments of national or regional strategic importance which by their nature are most appropriately

Non Conforming Uses

Throughout the Plan area there are uses that do not conform to the zoning objectives. These may include uses that were in existence on 1 October 1964 that subsequently received planning permission or have no permission and where enforcement action was not pursued within the statutory time limits.

The improvement and / or extension of premises accommodating non-conforming uses, including residential properties, will generally be permitted, where the development does not seriously injure the amenities of the area or result in a concentration of development and is otherwise in accordance with the proper planning and development of the area.

located outside urban areas, or are otherwise location specific) may be applied by way of review or variation of the County Development Plan in consultation with TII, substantiated by a robust evidence base.

Table 3: Development Criteria within Land Use Zones (to be read in conjunction with Map No. 9)

	Development Type	Minimum land holding requirements	Minimum size of site	Visual Impact Assessment	Conformity with design guidelines required	Sewage treatment requirements
Zone 1	Refurbishment/extension and/or replacement of existing dwellings only. Agricultural development (in exceptional circumstances – refer to Section 8.6, pg. 64 for further detail)	N/A Site specific	N/A Site specific	Required for all	DoE conservation guidelines	Treatment systems for single houses (EPA)
Zone 1A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refurbishment/extension and/or replacement of existing dwellings; - Design amendments on a site with live planning permission; - New dwelling house for bona fide farmers. 	N/A Original site area. 10 hectares	N/A Original site area. 0.2 hectares (1/2 Acre)	Required for all	DoE conservation guidelines	Treatment systems for single houses (EPA)
Zone 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refurbishment/extension and/or replacement of existing dwellings; - Design amendments on a site with live planning permission; - New residential development 	N/A Original site area. 10 hectares ⁴	N/A Original site area. 0.2 hectares (1/2 acre)	Required for all	Chapter 8 of Lough Key LAP	Treatment systems for single houses (EPA)
Zone 3	Leisure and amenity related development in accordance with the Land Use Zoning Objectives for “Recreation, Amenity and Open Space”	N/A	N/A	Required for all	In accordance with specific land use zoning objectives	To existing public sewer in Boyle
Zone 3A	Leisure Tourism as defined in Land Use Zoning Objectives	N/A	N/A	Required for all	In accordance with specific land use zoning objectives	To existing public sewer in Boyle

⁴ 10 hectare landholding requirement applies except in instances where evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the applicant(s) are proposing to build their first home for their own long term occupation, within close proximity to their established family home and within the rural community in which they have spent large and continuous parts of their lives, and that there are no family lands to avail of.

Notwithstanding satisfying the criteria set out above applications will be assessed having regard to site specific circumstances, principally effluent treatment, access, sight lines, integration, visual impact and design. Historical, generational links are defined as ownership of landholding prior to 1981 (The Adoption of the 1st Lough Key Report).

**SEE
MAP 9**

7 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

Chapters 1 to 4 of this Plan identify the current profile of the Lough Key area, the challenges facing it and the opportunities that exist. Chapters 5 and 6 provide a Vision and Development Strategy and framework for the sustainable development of the Lough Key area. This Chapter outlines the necessary policies and objectives to give effect to the vision and development strategy of the Lough Key LAP.

7.1 STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE LOUGH KEY AREA

Lough Key is generally regarded as the primary area within the county in which to establish a significant tourism base which will enhance the overall social and economic development of this region, alongside the key requirement to maintain the special character and scenic quality of the area. The following policies and objectives will assist in the appropriate development of the Lough Key area and indeed the wider region over the lifetime of the Plan and beyond.

7.2 INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

7.2.1 Roads and Transportation Strategy

The public consultation phase highlighted a number of issues associated with traffic and pedestrian movement within the Plan boundary. Concerns were raised regarding the condition of approach roads into Cootehall and lack of good linkages between Lough Key Forest Park and Boyle.

Improvement in the road network and ease of access to the Lough Key area will be of significant benefit for both local road users and tourism growth. Despite the close proximity of Boyle to the Lough Key area, the two areas lack effective interaction to benefit one another.

The **Roads and Transportation Strategy** aims to:

- Provide safe and adequate access to and from the Lough Key area without compromising the existing network and provide good quality roads, pedestrian and cycle lanes to serve both local residents and visitors.
- Improve public transportation to and from the Lough Key Plan area, particularly short run transportation facilities to and from Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon.
- Provide a safe pedestrian/cycle link from Cootehall village to St. Michael's and St. Patrick's National School.

Policies in relation to Roads and Transportation

Policy 1

Ensure adequate provision of pedestrian paths and cycle tracks, as required, to serve the main routes in the area to facilitate safe and convenient access.

Policy 2

Require all development proposals in the area to fulfil traffic safety and car parking requirements.

Policy 3

Facilitate efforts to restore the original links/routes between Boyle and Lough Key Forest Park.

Policy 4

Continue to support and encourage the expansion of Rural Transport Initiatives to expand their services within the Plan area.

Policy 5

Assess all development proposals that access onto National routes in accordance with the policies set down in the *Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020* and the provisions of the DECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012).

Policy 6

Ensure adequate circulation and parking facilities to serve developments in accordance with the minimum car parking standards set out under the development management guidelines and standards in Chapter 8 of the LAP and Chapter 9 of the RCDP 2014-2020.

Policy 7

To encourage the use of electrically operated cars and bicycles and in line with Council and National Policy, non-residential developments shall provide facilities for battery operated cars to be recharged at a rate of 10% of the total car parking spaces (metered-fast charging 220-240V, 32A three phase).

Objectives in relation to Roads and Transportation

Objective 1

Investigate opportunities for the widening of access along the public road to the Doon Shore amenity area.

Objective 2

Facilitate a cycle lane between Boyle and Lough Key Forest Park, via Abbeytown.

Objective 3

Facilitate a pedestrian/cycle lane between Cootehall village and St. Michael's and St. Patrick's National School.

Objective 4

Facilitate quality pavement and lay-by provision along road access linking Boyle to Lough Key Forest Park, and along the Knockvicar Road towards the Forest Park.

7.2.2 Water Services

The **Water Services Strategy** aims to:

- Ensure that the potable water supply in the area is maintained to a high standard.
- Ensure that there are adequate services and infrastructure associated with the water supply network for the current and future development envelope in co-operation with Irish Water.
- Wherever practicable and in co-operation with Irish Water, services and infrastructure should be delivered in an integrated manner prior to the development of areas.

Policies in relation to Water Services

Policy 8

Development will only be permitted in instances where there is sufficient capacity in the public water and wastewater infrastructure.

Policy 9

In conjunction with Irish Water, continue the development and upgrading of the water supply so as to ensure an adequate, sustainable supply of piped water for the Lough Key Area.

Policy 10

Encourage and promote compliance with the *Water Framework Directive 2000*; Groundwater Source Protection Zones document for the *Roscommon Central Regional Water Supply Scheme* (GSI, April 2003); the *European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009* (SI No. 272 of 2009); as well as any National and EU Regulations concerning water quality for the County.

Policy 11

Encourage the use of rainwater harvesting systems on suitable sites within the LAP area.

Policy 12

Protect surface water and groundwater resources and their associated habitats and species including fisheries and in particular Annex II listed species.

Objectives in relation to Water Services

Objective 5

Implement the *European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007* and ensure, in conjunction with Irish Water, that water supplies comply with the 48 parameters identified in these Regulations, in co-operation with Irish Water.

Objective 6

Implement the relevant recommendations contained within the River Basin Management Plans for the Shannon International River Basin District and the Western River Basin District, and associated Programmes of Measures, in order to facilitate the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, in co-operation with Irish Water. Proposals for development shall not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface waters, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated woodlands. Cognisance shall also be had to, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 which provides guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.

Objective 7

Facilitate the implementation of water conservation projects, which reduce consumption and leakage in existing water distribution systems, in co-operation with Irish Water.

Objective 8

The Council, in conjunction with Irish Water, shall have regard to the EPA (2015) publication *The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland - A Report for the Year 2014* (and any subsequent update) in the establishment and maintenance of water sources in the county.

Objective 9

The Council, in conjunction with Irish Water, shall undertake recommendations made by the EPA arising from any failure to meet drinking water standards and any enlistment on the EPA's Remedial Action List.

Objective 10

All proposals for the development of an upgrade to the water supply system will be screened for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and where significant impacts are identified, a Natura Impact Statement will be prepared.

7.3 WASTEWATER SERVICES

7.3.1 Wastewater Services Strategy

The **Wastewater Services Strategy** aims to:

- Ensure that there are adequate services and infrastructure associated with wastewater collection, treatment and disposal in order to cater for development within current and future development envelopes.
- Ensure that the network and its provision is efficient, cost effective, environmentally appropriate and that it protects public health. Wherever practicable, services and infrastructure should be delivered in an integrated manner prior to the development of areas.

Policies in relation to Wastewater Collection and Treatment

Policy 13

Ensure, in conjunction with Irish Water, the continued provision of an adequate wastewater collection, treatment and disposal system for Cootehall Village to serve existing and future populations in accordance with the *Water Framework Directive 2000*, and *EU Urban Wastewater Directive* and in accordance with the EPA Discharge Licence.

Policy 14

Support the protection of groundwater resources and dependent wildlife/habitats in accordance with the *Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC* and the *European Communities Environmental Objectives (groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010)* or any updated legislation.

Policy 15

Ensure that all new developments have and are provided with satisfactory drainage systems in the interests of public health and to avoid the pollution of the ground and surface waters.

Objectives in relation to Wastewater Collection and Treatment

Objective 11

RCC shall adopt the following approach when considering development applications:

- Reduce the use of multiple private pumping stations.
- Where technically feasible and economically viable, existing and future pumping stations should come under the control of RCC and IW.
- Pumping arrangements shall be designed in a sustainable manner.
- Development shall be phased in such a way as to only allow areas that can connect into the sewerage network directly by gravity to be developed.

Objective 12

In conjunction with Irish Water, implement relevant recommendations set out in the EPA (2014) publication *Focus on Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland 2013* (and any subsequent update).

Objective 13

Comply with the relevant provisions of the *Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001* and *2004* and the *Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007*.

Objective 14

Any proposals for the development of an upgrade of the waste water treatment plant and waste water network will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with *Article 6(3) and 6 (4) of the EU Habitats Directive*.

7.4 FLOOD RISK AND PROTECTION

7.4.1 Flood Risk and Protection Strategy

The **Flood Risk and Protection Strategy** aims to:

- Avoid flooding in areas at risk of flooding, by not permitting development in these areas, particularly floodplains, unless there are wider sustainability grounds for the development and the flood risk can be managed at an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing the overall flood risk;
- Adopt 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 process; and
- Incorporate flood risk assessment into the process of making decisions on planning applications and planning appeals.

Policies in relation to Flood Risk & Protection

Policy 16

Support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the *EU Flood Risk Directive* (2007/60/EC), the *Flood Risk Regulations* (SI No. 122 of 2010), the DEHLG (now the DECLG) and OPW *Guidelines for Planning Authorities, The Planning System and Flood Risk Management* (Nov 2009), Departmental Circular PL2/2014, updated/superseding legislation or Departmental Guidelines and any future outputs from the Shannon International Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme, once finalised.

Policy 17

Protect water bodies and watercourses from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine and wetland areas as appropriate. Promote the sustainable management and uses of water bodies and avoid, where possible, culverting or realignment of these features.

Policy 18

Ensure that site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) accompanies all planning applications in areas at risk of flooding.¹

Policy 19

Require all new large scale developments to provide 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems' (SUDS) as part of their development proposals.

Policy 20

Ensure that existing wetland habitats are adequately protected, managed and where appropriate enhanced where flood protection/management measures are necessary.

Policy 21

Ensure that all proposals associated with the alleviation of flooding are subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) and 6 (4) of the EU Habitats Directive.

¹ Refer to Chapter 8 - Development Management Guidelines and Standards for further detail in relation to FRA requirements).

Objective in relation to Flood Risk & Protection

Objective 15

Within the Lough Key LAP area, Roscommon County Council shall:

- avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding;
- avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface run-off;
- ensure effective management of residual risks for development permitted in floodplains;
- improve the understanding of flood risk amongst relevant stakeholders;
- ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management.

7.5 WASTE MANAGEMENT

7.5.1 Waste Management Strategy

The **Waste Management Strategy** aims to:

- Protect the local environment and quality of life of its citizens by facilitating adequate collection and disposal of domestic, commercial, industrial and other waste;
- Encourage the reuse and recycling of materials within the LAP boundary; and,
- Establish a good working relationship with Tidy Towns Committees, Community Groups and Schools around the issues of waste, recycling, and litter.

Policies in relation to Waste Management

Policy 22

Encourage waste reduction and recycling in accordance with the National Environmental Awareness Campaign.

Policy 23

Promote the increased re-use and recycling of materials from waste sources and co-operate with local retailers and residents' associations in managing collection points for recycling goods.

Policy 24

Ensure that all new developments, particularly those including apartments, have adequate provision for management of waste, which includes sufficient receptacles for occupiers.

Policy 25

Ensure that all new developments, including recreation, leisure and tourism facilities, have adequate provision for management of waste, which includes sufficient receptacles for facility users and adequate provision of recycling facilities at designated areas, designed to a high standard.

Objectives in relation to Waste Management

Objective 16

Work with and assist local community groups and schools in litter prevention and control, and support related community based initiatives.

Objective 17

Facilitate the increase, upgrade and maintenance of waste management facilities in the area, including bring banks and litter bins, particularly in Cootehall and Knockvicar.

Objective 18

Developments shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken where appropriate. Require the undertaking of appropriate investigations to determine the nature and extent of any soil and/or groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where Brownfield development is to occur within the Plan area.

7.6 ENERGY

7.6.1 New Proposals

The Electricity Network

The *Eirgrid Transmission Development Plan 2012-2022* identifies two projects in County Roscommon. The first is the extension of the 220kv network from Flagford to a substation at Srananagh in Sligo. The second is the potential development of a 400kv overhead line between Bellacorick in County Mayo and Flagford Station in County Roscommon as part of the Grid West Project. The Grid West Project aims to capitalise on the renewable energy potential of the West Region i.e. wind, wave and tidal energy in order to meet Ireland's national goal of 40% of electricity demand from renewable energy by 2020. The Council recognises that the development of secure and reliable electricity transmission infrastructure is a key factor for supporting economic development and attracting investment to the area.

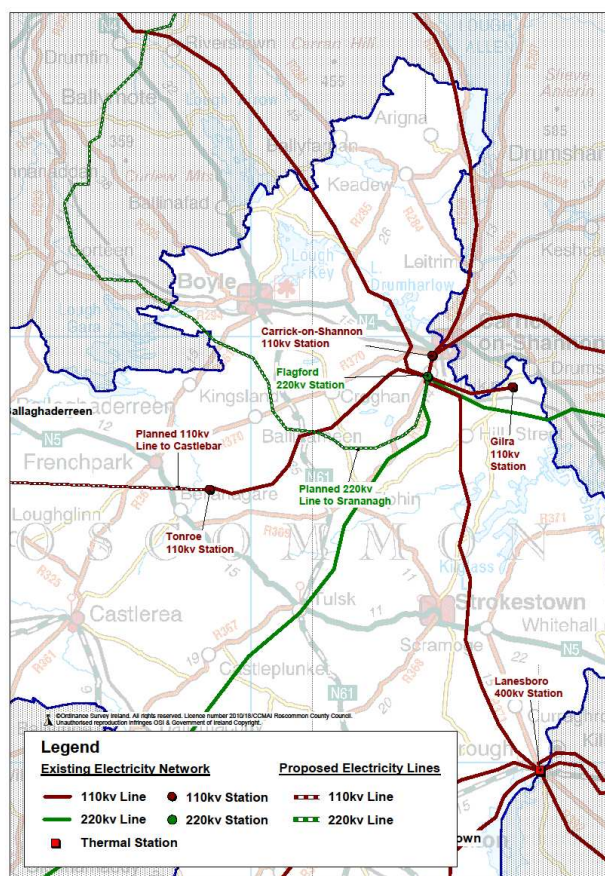


Figure 4 Existing and Proposed Electricity Networks serving the Lough Key Area

Renewable Energy

It is an objective of the *Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020* to implement Government Policy on limiting emissions of greenhouse gases and encourage the development of renewable energy sources in an appropriate and sustainable manner. Wind energy is the main renewable energy source with potential for development at the moment.

RCC supports the reduction of energy consumption and the Environment Section of RCC is currently engaged in the process of energy mapping with a view to reducing energy consumption within the organisation itself. In addition, the preparation of a Climate Change Strategy is ongoing. The policies and objectives identified below will ensure that the production of greenhouse gases will be significantly reduced by either the construction of energy efficient homes or the increased use of renewable energy.

7.6.2 Energy Strategy

The **Energy Strategy** aims to:

- Encourage the development and upgrading of energy infrastructure and services within the LAP area to support the proposed growth in economic activity and population within the development envelope.
- Ensure that the network and its provision is efficient, cost effective, environmentally appropriate and that it protects public health.
- Encourage the development and use of renewable energy sources within the LAP area.
- Support the aims of sustainable energy use and conservation in building design and construction.

Policy in relation to Energy Supply

Policy 26

Safeguard any strategic energy infrastructure corridors which become evident, from encroachment by other developments which may compromise their provision in the future.

Policy 27

Support the development of appropriate energy conservation initiatives.

Objectives in relation to Energy Supply

Objective 19

Co-operate and liaise with statutory and non-statutory providers in order to facilitate energy infrastructure provision, including the development of renewable energy sources at suitable locations.

Objective 20

Work in collaboration with Gas Networks Ireland, the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) and other statutory bodies in the event that a gas distribution grid is proposed within the LAP area.

7.7 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

7.7.1 Telecommunications Strategy

The **Telecommunications Strategy** aims to:

- Achieve a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications services in the interests of social and economic progress, and sustaining the amenity and environmental value of areas such as Lough Key.
- Recognise that the provision of broadband to all is essential to furthering the social and economic development of County Roscommon as a whole and promote the upgrading of existing broadband infrastructure and the provision of new fibre optic broadband infrastructure throughout the County.

Policies in relation to Telecommunications Infrastructure

Policy 28

Support enhanced coverage, further co-ordinated and focused development, and the extension of telecommunications infrastructure including broadband connectivity within the LAP area.

Policy 29

Have regard to Government guidelines on telecommunications infrastructure, including *Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures—Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DEHLG², 1996) and any subsequent revisions, as well as the *Landscape Character Assessment* contained within the RCDP 2014-2020.

Policy 30

Promote an integrated approach within the LAP area with service providers and appropriate bodies in the creation of a modern telecommunications infrastructure.

Policy 31

Support new schemes for the provision of high speed, high quality broadband including the Government's Next Generation Broadband, the National Broadband Scheme, and Broadband for Schools.

Objectives in relation to Telecommunications Infrastructure

Objective 21

Encourage the provision of broadband, including the provision of electronic courtyards, within developments.

Objective 22

Facilitate and encourage shared access for service providers to erect antennae for line of sight broadband access.

7.8 SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

7.8.1 Social and Community Facilities Strategy

The **Social and Community Facilities Strategy** aims to:

- Ensure the provision of necessary community services and facilities.
- Ensure the provision of affordable childcare within the Plan area in consultation with the Roscommon County Childcare Committee and the Health Service Executive.
- Promote the re-use of existing buildings and lands for community based developments, subject to normal planning considerations and available resources.
- Ensure that all groups are enabled to participate fully in the life of the community and that language or other barriers are addressed so that everyone has the opportunity to live a full and active life, and to integrate and contribute to community life.

Policies relating to Social and Community Services and Facilities

Policy 32

Facilitate the provision of a range of social, recreational and community facilities to meet the needs of all of the residents within the Plan area.

² Now the DECLG

Policy 33

Ensure that social inclusion is an integral part of the design and delivery of all the Council's programmes and services, and ensure effectiveness and efficiency in its delivery.

Policy 34

Support the multi-functional use of social and community facilities, and provision of buildings and opportunities to maximise the use of existing physical resources/infrastructure within the LAP area.

Objectives relating to Social and Community Services and Facilities
Objective 23

Support the delivery of a full range of social and community facilities to meet the needs of residents in the Plan area.

Objective 24

Encourage the development of community and educational facilities on appropriate sites.

Objective 25

Support the development of outdoor play areas and recreational areas, subject to funding.

Objective 26

Liase with the appropriate health authorities in order to facilitate the accommodation of healthcare functions at suitable locations within the LAP area.

7.9 RECREATION, LEISURE AND TOURISM

7.9.1 Recreation, Leisure and Tourism Strategy

The **Recreation, Leisure and Tourism Strategy** aims to:

- Promote the development of tourism in the Lough Key Area and encourage the provision of a range of appropriate tourism related developments to establish the Lough Key region as a significant tourist base on a national level.
- Support the expansion of existing local recreation, leisure and tourism services and amenities in the area. This would include water based activities, walking/trekking and cycle routes, festivals, events and tourist attractions.
- Promote the development of a range of tourist accommodation facilities and where appropriate, the re-use and redevelopment of existing vacant/derelict buildings for tourism-related purposes.
- Strengthen links with neighbouring settlements particularly Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon in order to create a joined up approach towards promoting the existing tourist and leisure related facilities in the region.

Policies relating to Recreation, Leisure and Tourism
Policy 35

Improve existing local authority recreation and amenity facilities in addition to providing new facilities, where appropriate, as funding and resources permit.

Policy 36

Facilitate the development of appropriate new private and public recreation, leisure and tourism infrastructure and facilities and ensure access for all groups of the community.

Policy 37

Facilitate the development and expansion of existing and new walkways and cycleways in and around the Lough Key Plan area and in particular walking and cycle links between Boyle and Lough Key Forest Park.

Policy 38

Remove illegal signage and repair and replace existing signage on tourist routes and paths, where necessary and as resources permit.

Policy 39

Encourage and support the improvement of access, signage and tourist information services including integrated welcome, directional and interpretative signage.

Policy 40

Preserve and enhance the existing public rights of way to recreational areas and heritage sites.

Policy 41

Ensure that the facilitation of tourism related development does not impact negatively on the landscape, environmental quality, built and natural heritage of the Lough Key area.

Objectives relating to Recreation, Leisure and Tourism**Objective 27**

Actively support the implementation of the *Roscommon Tourism Strategy 2010-2014* and the recommendations contained within the *Lough Ree and Mid Shannon Tourism Study, 2010*.

Objective 28

Promote Lough Key as a key tourism resource of the county and engage with development and tourism bodies, including Fáilte Ireland to encourage the provision of further appropriate recreation and tourism infrastructure and tourist-oriented facilities in Lough Key Forest Park, Cootehall and Knockvicar.

Objective 29

Support the development of an Integrated Sustainable Regional Tourism Strategy in consultation with relevant statutory/non-statutory bodies and local authorities.

Objective 30

Implement, where finances permit, proposals to improve, maintain and establish new areas of amenity, tourism and recreation facilities.

Objective 31

Support the formalisation of dedicated walking and cycling trails within the Plan area and support the development of established linkages between existing trails and between Boyle and Lough Key Forest Park.

Objective 32

Endeavour to provide adequate access and signage facilities to all publicly owned heritage sites, where appropriate and as resources permit.

Objective 33

Work with Fáilte Ireland, the National Roads Authority (NRA) and other bodies in developing standardised and branded signage for tourism facilities and tourist attractions in the County and in the Lough Key area.

Objective 34

Engage with Fáilte Ireland, the Arts Council and other relevant bodies to promote and develop the arts and tourism sectors within the Plan area.

Objective 35

Support other organisations, bodies and local groups that promote tourism and community development in the area, nationally and internationally.

Objective 36

Identify and support a series of festivals and events that will attract visitors to the Lough Key area, generate tourism revenue and enhance the overall visitor experience.

Objective 37

Support the development of artistic tourism throughout the County and within the LAP area including new festivals and other tourism and local community related events.

Policies relating to Open Space and Sporting Provision

Policy 42

Facilitate the further development of multi-functional recreational spaces and facilities to serve all ages, particularly in Cootehall and Lough Key Forest Park.

Policy 43

Support the social, sporting and recreational needs of the local community by upgrading and maintaining existing facilities and facilitating the provision of new facilities as required.

Policy 44

Ensure that the various conservation zones identified in the area are adequately protected and that any development in such areas responds appropriately to the sensitivities and significance of the zone.

Objectives relating to Open Space and Sporting Provision

Objective 38

Support the implementation of the County Play Policy in providing for and facilitating play throughout the County.

Objective 39

Engage with community sporting bodies, private developers and relevant government agencies in facilitating and supporting the development and delivery of sporting facilities in the community, within the lifetime of this Plan, via public private partnership.

7.10 BUILT AND NATURAL HERITAGE

7.10.1 Built Heritage Strategy

The **Built Heritage Strategy** aims to:

- Preserve and safeguard the significant architectural and archaeological heritage within the Lough Key area.
- Promote best practice in the conservation and management of buildings and sites of heritage value.
- Raise awareness and appreciation of the heritage value of the Lough Key area in order to protect it for future generations.

Policies relating to Built Heritage

Policy 45

Identify, protect and conserve structures (i.e. includes conservation, preservation, and improvement compatible with maintaining the character and interest of the structure), or parts of structures, which are

of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or which are listed on the Record of Protected Structures.

Policy 46

Protect and preserve the archaeological sites identified on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and those discovered since the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places (1998).

Policy 47

Seek archaeological assessment and, where appropriate, excavation and testing, preservation by record or preservation in situ, in relation to all development proposals on which the archaeological heritage may be affected.

Policy 48

Protect the integrity, quality and context of significant sites and recorded monuments.

Policy 49

Ensure that development proposals do not adversely affect the character of a protected structure or the setting of a protected structure, where the setting is considered to be of importance.

Policy 50

Require that any alterations or interventions to protected structures are executed to the highest conservation standards in order to protect their significance or value. Applications for development affecting a protected structure shall be accompanied by an assessment carried out in accordance with the Council's requirements, by an accredited conservation consultant and shall also address material specification and application.

Policy 51

Require that development proposals appropriately conserve and protect features of the built environment such as stone walls, pillars, piers, stiles, bridges, kerbing, cobbles, gates, railings, wells, mass rocks, post-boxes, historic telephone boxes, memorials, milestones, benchmarks, streetlights, manhole covers, ventilation pipes etc.

Objectives relating to Built Heritage**Objective 40**

Contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of archaeological sites and monuments and their settings, archaeological objects and underwater archaeological sites that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, in the ownership/guardianship of the State, or that are subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments. Contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection and preservation of archaeological sites, which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.

Objective 41

Promote awareness of the importance and value of the architectural and archaeological heritage within the Lough Key area.

Objective 42

Promote best conservation practice and the importance of informed decision making with regard to historic buildings through advice to owners/occupiers and by encouraging the engagement of a suitably qualified conservation specialist with regard to material specification and application for protected structures.

Objective 43

Promote appropriate use/re-use and repair of protected structures, including the use of available conservation grants and any other funding opportunities that may become available.

Objective 44

Positively and actively encourage redevelopment of derelict and obsolete sites in a manner that is sympathetic with and complimentary to the inherent character of neighbouring structures and the historic character of the area.

Objective 45

Implement a high standard of street frontage design relating to shops and other commercial proposals in Cootehall, including the appropriate use of render, solid timber, tiles lighting, fenestration etc.

Objective 46

Apply best conservation practice to protect features and buildings of interest within the LAP area:

- Prioritise reuse and renovation over demolition of buildings of interest and other historic buildings.
- Retain traditional features such as historic windows, doors, overlights/fanlights, renders, roof coverings, street frontage facades and rainwater goods, in preference to their removal and replacement.

Objective 47

Facilitate and co-operate with voluntary groups and tidy towns committees in maintaining and improving the character of Cootehall and Knockvicar.

Objective 48

Provide guidance to developers and property owners regarding the protection of the archaeological heritage and the archaeological implications of proposed development.

7.10.2 Natural Heritage Strategy

The **Natural Heritage Strategy** aims to:

- Protect and conserve existing environmental designations and environmentally sensitive areas within the Lough Key LAP boundary.
- Protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the LAP area.
- Identify, protect and conserve sites of natural heritage importance, in co-operation with the relevant statutory authorities.

Policies relating to Designated Sites
Policy 52

Contribute towards the protection of (c)SACs, SPAs, Wildlife Sites (including NHAs and pNHAs) and entries to the Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas which are designated or become designated and notified to Roscommon County Council during the lifetime of this LAP.

Policy 53

Contribute towards the protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, in accordance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines.

Policy 54

Prohibit projects which would give rise to significant cumulative, 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).

Policy 55

Contribute towards the protection of the water resources, including rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, turloughs, groundwater, as well as aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015, Shannon International River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same).

Objective relating to Designated Sites**Objective 49**

Ensure Appropriate Assessment Screening, and, where required, Appropriate Assessment, is carried out for any plan or project which, individually, or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant direct or indirect impact on any Natura 2000 site or sites; in accordance with best practice guidance as issued by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and/or the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.³

Policies relating to Nature Conservation and Biodiversity**Policy 56**

Promote the retention and enhancement of existing habitats, biodiversity and geological heritage within the Plan area.

Policy 57

Promote the implementation of key actions and objectives set out in Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland's 2nd National Biodiversity Plan (including any superseding version of same), the County Roscommon Heritage Plan and the County Roscommon Biodiversity Plan as appropriate.

Policy 58

Support, as appropriate, the National Parks and Wildlife Service's efforts to seek to control the spread of non-native invasive species on land and water.

Objectives relating to Nature Conservation and Biodiversity**Objective 50**

Promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas, while allowing for appropriate development, access and recreational activity.

³ All relevant projects and plans arising from this plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:

1. The Plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or
2. The Plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or
3. The Plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

Objective 51

Identify, contribute towards the protection of and conserve, in co-operation with the relevant statutory authorities and other groups, vulnerable, rare and threatened species or wild flora and fauna and their habitats. These include plant and animal species afforded protection under the Wildlife Acts and the EU Habitats & Birds Directives for example The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland, NPWS & DEHLG, 2008.

Objective 52

Ensure that the conservation and management of biodiversity is a key priority in water resource management and other infrastructural projects in the LAP area.

Objective 53

Contribute towards the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, wetlands, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

Objective 54

Contribute towards the protection of habitats and species listed in the annexes to and/or covered by the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended), Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) and European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008, and regularly occurring-migratory birds and their habitats, and species protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2000 and the Flora Protection Order.

Objective 55

Contribute towards the protection and maintenance of the character, integrity and conservation value of features or areas of geological interest.

Objective 56

Have regard to impacts of floodlighting and public lighting in open spaces and to minimize light intrusion in areas of habitat value.

Policy for Landscape Character

Policy 59

Require planning applications which have the potential to impact adversely on the unique landscape character and landscape designations of the Plan area, to include an appropriate visual impact assessment of the proposed development.

Objectives for Landscape Character

Objective 57

Encourage and facilitate, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the development of green infrastructure that recognises the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the following:

- Provision of open space amenities;
- Sustainable management of water;
- Protection and management of biodiversity;
- Protection of cultural heritage; and
- Protection of protected landscape sensitivities.

Objective 58

Recognise European and national objectives for climate adaptation and work with the EPA, the Western Regional Authority and neighbouring planning authorities in implementing future Guidance for climate

change proofing of land use plan provisions as is flagged in the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (DECLG, 2012).

7.11 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

7.11.1 Economic Development and Employment Strategy

The **Economic Development and Employment Strategy** aims to:

- Encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism industry through sustainable means, including the conservation, protection and enhancement of the built and natural heritage, the protection of sensitive landscapes, cultural and community environments, in order to maximise the economic benefits arising from the tourism industry.
- Provide support for existing and new businesses located within the Plan area and encourage the growth of commercial development within Cootehall, to ensure that local residents have easy access to basic convenience goods.
- Work with all strategic partners and local stakeholders in the delivery of this goal and the enhancement of the local economy.

Policies in relation to Future Employment, Enterprise and Economic Strategy

Policy 60

Promote economic development and employment through the further enhancement of a strong tourism base within the Plan area.

Policy 61

Promote and support new job creating opportunities, support the local economic base, and encourage appropriate rural diversification enterprises.

Objectives in relation to Future Employment, Enterprise and Economic Strategy

Objective 59

Ensure that the continued provision of infrastructure and services within the Plan area to support increased economic activity.

Objective 60

Provide support for potential new business start-ups and facilitate the establishment of appropriate commercial enterprises throughout the Plan area.

7.12 DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

7.12.1 Residential Development

The **Residential Development Strategy** aims to:

- Protect and maintain the quality of the natural environment around Lough Key by ensuring appropriate residential requirements are in place for prospective applicants.
- Regulate residential development within the conservation zones around Lough Key to ensure sporadic residential development.
- Encourage the redevelopment and reuse of vacant and derelict residential and commercial buildings, both within the settlements of Cootehall and Knockvicar and the rural environs of the Plan area, over new build residential developments on Greenfield sites.

- Be consistent with the policies outlined in the RCDP relating to residential development in Tier 4 villages, such as Cootehall which have experienced high levels of vacancy by applying the moratorium on multi-residential housing schemes (more than three units).

Policy relating to Residential Development and Design
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Policy 62

Where proposals satisfy the principal for development within the rural environs of the Plan boundary, ensure that new residential developments principally meet the following Development Management requirements:

- High standard of dwelling design to ensure its appropriate integration into the receiving environment
- Suitable design solutions to address on site effluent disposal to ensure that receiving watercourses are not adversely affected
- Appropriate access arrangements to and from the site to ensure proposals to not give rise to traffic safety concerns.

8 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

8.1 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

It is an obligation of the Council to ensure that planning permissions granted under the Planning Acts are consistent with the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan and Local Area Plan, and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The standards set out in this chapter are intended to give information and a guideline as to the Planning Authority's general requirements regarding particular aspects of proposed developments. The standards are intended to give an indication of the criteria the Council will take into account when assessing applications for new residential and agricultural related developments.

Development Management Guidelines and Standards are set out in Chapter 9 of the RCDP 2014-2020 and it will be a requirement of all new developments to comply with these whilst they are in force. Given the unique conservation status applied to the primarily rural lands within the Lough Key Plan boundary, it is necessary to apply clear standards and guidelines for residential and agricultural proposals. The following standards and guidelines are complimentary to the overall development strategy and the individual objectives and policies of the RCDP 2014-2020 and the Lough Key LAP.

Development proposals within the village boundaries of Knockvicar and Cootehall will be required to comply with the Development Management guidelines and standards set out in Chapter 9 of the RCDP 2014-2020.

Prospective applicants are advised to contact the Planning Authority prior to lodging a planning application particularly in the case of large developments and those requiring an Environmental Impact Statement. Prior consultation with the Planning Authority can reduce delays in the planning process and provide guidance on the merits of a proposed development.

8.2 FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

The detail of the site specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs) will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site specific FRA should address the relevant requirements of the *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DECLG, November 2009) and quantify the risks and effects of selected mitigation and management of residual risks as appropriate. Roscommon County Council shall have regard to the results of the CFRAMS in the assessment of planning applications.

With regard to climate change, the 2009 OPW Draft Guidance on Assessment of Potential Future Scenarios for Flood Risk Management (or any superseding document) shall be consulted with to this effect.

8.3 ARCHAEOLOGY

Rockingham Estate which lies at the core of the Plan area is archaeologically significant. Within archaeologically significant areas, and in particular lands which have been identified as 'Strategic Objective 1' (SO1), it is essential that prior to the commencement of any development, a qualified archaeologist¹ is employed, to archaeologically test the area that will be disturbed by the development and to assess the impact of the development on archaeological material in the ground.

For all applications within archaeologically significant areas, an archaeological impact statement shall be prepared and submitted to the Planning Authority and National Monuments Service in support of a

¹ Recognised by the National Monuments Service.

planning application for a development proposal. The statement shall include, as a minimum, an assessment consisting of relevant documentary research and trial trench excavations, as well as a report addressing the degree to which the extent, location and levels of all foundations, service trenches and other sub-surface works effect existing archaeological remains, and the proposals for any remedial works required.

In the event of archaeological material being identified, this information shall immediately be provided to the National Monuments Service and the Planning Authority, and the recording and/or preserving of such items as so directed by the National Monuments Service shall be facilitated.

8.4 RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Within the rural environs of the Plan area, in addition to documentary evidence being provided to demonstrate that the principal of development has been satisfied, all development proposals shall be required to satisfactorily address the following matters.

8.4.1 Wastewater Treatment

Where individual wastewater treatment facilities are proposed it is essential the site suitability assessment has been undertaken in strict compliance with the requirements set out in the EPA Code of Practice - Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e. ≤ 10).

In the event of permission being granted it is important that the agreed on-site effluent system is installed and maintained to the highest possible standards and that they conform to the requirements set out in the aforementioned EPA publication, and more up-to-date standards if issued. Individual treatment systems will not be permitted in serviced areas, except in the most exceptional circumstances.

8.4.2 Site Access

Proposed site access arrangements must demonstrate the provision of adequate sight lines in the interests of traffic safety. Unimpeded sightlines, appropriate to the road classification, must be permanently provided and maintained. Where necessary a legally binding agreement between a site owner/developer and an adjoining landowner, whose boundary must be set back/removed to facilitate sight lines, must be entered into. Traffic safety requirements and sight line visibility from proposed access points shall be in accordance with the Development Standards as set out in Section 9.38 of the County Development Plan. The design and finish of the site access and roadside boundary treatment will be assessed as part of the planning application.

8.4.3 Siting and Integration

Much of the character and quality of the Lough Key area stems from the abundant natural environment that exists. Thus it is vital that appropriate designs are put forward by those seeking to build a dwelling within this highly scenic setting.

A new dwelling is an obvious visual feature within a landscape and site assimilation requires forethought. The capacity of the site and area to absorb a particular design and its integration into the landscape are of particular importance when assessing proposals within the various conservation zones around Lough Key.

Inappropriately sited dwellings lacking architectural merit and recognition of their surroundings will not be permitted.

The key matters for consideration to ensure appropriate siting and integration include;

Suitable location on site

Much of the lands surrounding Lough Key are open to view from various vantage points and particularly from the lake itself. The ability to place a building on such prominent and exposed sites without creating an injurious visual impact is very difficult. The siting of a building in a particular location dictates the level of visual impact created. Well designed buildings alone are unlikely to satisfactorily overcome adverse visual impacts where an inappropriate site is chosen.

Prominence

The capacity of the landscape surrounding Lough Key to absorb the building, and the extent to which the building will be visible from other areas of the countryside, will have to be demonstrated by potential applicants. Structures which are considered to have a significant visual prominence from public roads and other areas used by the general public will not normally be acceptable. In the interests of sustaining the unique scenic character of the Lough Key area, dwellings which create an injurious visual impact cannot be permitted.

Proposals for buildings in the rural environs of the plan area may be acceptable if, when viewed from surrounding vantage points, it meets the following criteria:

- It blends sympathetically with the natural landform
- Existing topography, vegetation or other natural features as well as existing buildings are used to provide a backdrop
- It uses established boundaries and vegetation which enclose the site naturally from surrounding lands, roads and watercourses

8.4.4 Building Form and Design

Form and proportion are the main elements of a building and it is these design characteristics that determine the visual impact of a structure. If the form and proportion of a building is wrong, the finish of the building or the setting of the building will not mitigate the impact of the poor design.

In general successful rural designs use simple shapes and forms of traditional buildings. The traditional house design consisted of a rectangular plan. Windows were vertically emphasised and door openings were to the front and rear. Where a return was provided as part of the original build or as an extension it was normally to the rear. A simple single storey porch may have been placed on the front elevation. Roofs were either gable or hipped depending usually on the locality and chimneys were constructed along the ridge line. Traditional type dwellings proposed on lands within the rural environs of the Plan boundary should incorporate the aforementioned features into design solutions.

Contemporary designs can also be facilitated in a rural setting, such as Lough Key, provided specific design considerations are adhered to. In order to successfully develop a contemporary design within a rural setting, proposals must respect and reflect design features and characteristics which are associated with the character of the area. As with all dwellings and particularly so with modern designs, proportion, form, scale and massing are fundamental. Proposals for contemporary type dwellings within the rural environs of Lough Key should be well proportioned with simple form. External finishing materials must be of high quality, with finishes to elevations, roofs, fascia and soffits, door and windows. The proper choice of finishing materials will enhance a dwelling with appropriate scale and building form.

8.4.5 Landscaping

Given the predominantly elevated nature of the lands surrounding Lough Key landscaping is a vital component in successfully integrating a building into such a setting. The use of landscaping does not however automatically constitute an acceptable solution for integrating a building into an open countryside. In general a prominent and open site devoid of existing vegetation cannot be successfully integrated into an elevated setting.

Where applicable, proposals for new buildings should, as much as reasonably possible, retain and incorporate the natural existing vegetation, which could provide enclosure and integration.

A landscaping plan accompanying development applications should include the following information:

1. An overall landscape design with details of both hard and soft landscaping.
2. A survey of all existing planting and drainage lines/percolation areas on site.
3. Details of the location, number and species names of all planting proposed to be retained, removed and/or planted on the site. All proposed planting should be suitable to the site and soil conditions.

8.5 RESIDENTIAL RENOVATION OR REPLACEMENT

Invariably new developments will create an impact upon an open and elevated landscape such as that surrounding Lough Key. There are examples of dilapidated and unoccupied houses within the rural environs of the Plan boundary. Buildings of this nature tend to be located on established and mature sites which would be a preferable option over a new build development on a new open site. Many of these are largely intact and could be renovated to provide accommodation to modern living standards.

Replacement dwelling proposals will normally be acceptable where it is demonstrated (to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority) that it is not feasible or practical to renovate a dwelling or, where the Planning Authority consider replacement rather than renovation, represents a planning gain.

Proposals for replacement dwellings will generally be considered acceptable subject to fulfilling specific criteria:

- The existing dwelling must exhibit all the essential characteristics of a dwelling house and/or capable of occupation with minor remedial works. The essential characteristics of a house will include the existence of reasonably sound and complete walls and roof as well as windows and doors being intact.
- The existing dwelling must be in use, or have last been used, as a dwelling house. This use must not have been abandoned or changed.
- A replacement dwelling must not create a significantly more intrusive visual impact than that of the replaced structure i.e. where the scale, design, massing and height are departed from to such a degree as to warrant the proposal as unacceptable.
- A replacement dwelling must not give rise to any significantly greater planning concerns such as traffic safety, effluent disposal and residential impact.

8.6 AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The majority of the lands within the Lough Key LAP boundary comprise rural lands associated with agricultural activities. Having regard to this it is essential that clarity exists in relation to agricultural practices and developments, given the sensitive nature of the Lough Key landscape and the intention to further promote tourism in the area.

Agricultural operations such as intensive pig and poultry farming can generate noxious odours and contamination of ground waters and, are therefore not generally compatible with the promotion of tourism. Accordingly proposals of this nature will not be encouraged within the Plan boundary.

In many instances agricultural structures can be of a substantial scale and consequently could become a significant visual feature in the landscape. As with residential developments, a proposed agricultural structure will be assessed having regard to its impact on a range of planning considerations including; environmental impact, visual impact as well as potential impact upon the residential amenity of adjoining dwellings.

Where possible new agricultural buildings should be sited adjacent to existing farm buildings to effectively cluster the structures and avoid creating an isolated structure detached from the existing farm yard and sheds. The design and finish of additional agricultural buildings should blend with the existing buildings.

All farmers within the study area are encouraged to comply with relevant Departmental requirements and guidelines in order to ensure best farming practices are maintained as well as ensuring the protection of the visual and environmental quality of the Plan area.

Planning applications should identify all lands within the study area in the ownership of the applicant. Developments may not be allowed in a higher order conservation zone where it is possible in a lower order zone, or outside the study area. However each planning application shall be assessed on its own merits.

Proposals for agricultural developments will be considered in the context of the following criteria:

- The proposed development is appropriate in terms of siting, use and scale
- It has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the development is required for the efficient use of the agricultural holding or enterprise
- Any structure proposed is not considered to give rise to a visually intrusive impact upon the landscape
- The proposal will not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to dwellings adjoining the farm holding
- The proposal will not give rise to road safety concerns in regard to traffic generation or traffic movement

Where applications are deemed acceptable, conditions may be applied which relate to the specific use of the development and the application of specific materials and finishes to buildings.

