

2.1 CONTEXT FOR SETTLEMENT POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Settlement policy broadly guides where new development will occur in the county and is a fundamental component of spatial planning.

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) sets a national framework for spatial planning into which all other spatial plans must fit. Regional Planning Guidelines were prepared in order to implement the NSS at regional level. The ministerial guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing are concerned with the issue of rural housing which comes within the ambit of settlement policy. The need to carry out Strategic Environmental Assessment and the implications of the Water Framework Directive, provides for an environmental critique of the process as well as the settlement strategy. All of these form part of the new framework for the County Development Plan. The plan must ‘in so far as is practicable’ be consistent with the following policy documents: the NSS; the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West; and, the statutory guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing, to name but a few.

2.2 VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

The **Vision for County Roscommon** as defined in the Roscommon County Development Board Strategy: Roscommon Common Vision, is as follows:

“Roscommon will be a vibrant county with an increased population, an enhanced quality of life, employment growth, high quality infrastructure and a strong entrepreneurial spirit. The county will also have a safe, clean environment, a variety of recreational activities and excellent health and educational facilities, providing equal opportunities for all.”

(Roscommon County Development Board, 2002: 1)

The **Main Strategic Aims** of the County Development Plan are to:

- Plan for and support the sustainable development of Roscommon as an integrated network of vibrant socially and economically successful settlements, supporting and contributing to the economic development of the County, of its neighbouring authorities and of the Region.
- Provide for the future wellbeing of the residents of the County by:
 - promoting the growth of economic activity and increasing employment opportunities
 - protecting and improving the quality of the built and natural environments
 - ensuring the provision of necessary infrastructural and community services.
- Recognise the largely rural character of the County whilst sustaining traditional rural communities and rural activities.
- Ensure that everyone has the opportunity of obtaining affordable housing, can enjoy safe and accessible environments, have access to jobs, education and training, community services and recreational facilities, arts and culture.
- Build on the opportunities which Roscommon provides in terms of trade, business and tourism; promote employment growth and economic activity; widen and diversify the economic base; and encourage growth in less developed areas of the County.
- Promote a balance of development across the county, by developing a hierarchy of high quality, vibrant urban centres and clearly delineated areas of growth.
- Ensure an adequate supply of zoned lands to meet forecast and anticipated economic and social needs.
- Ensure that the vitality and character of established town and village centres are maintained. Ensure also the cohesive and coherent development of existing and proposed settlements.

- Protect, maintain and enhance the quality of the natural environment, protect the unique character of Roscommon's landscapes and conserve its open spaces and visual amenity.
- Utilise the surrounding natural environment and natural resources, to the benefit of the County, in a managed way that does not compromise these resources.
- Acknowledge that the archaeological, natural and built heritages are important elements in the long-term economic development of the county and that it is important to promote their conservation and enhancement, public access and enjoyment.
- To promote, 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 upon the economic benefits arising from the industry
- Contribute to a sustainable environment by encouraging the development of buildings of all types that are environmentally efficient to build and run, and which contribute to the "greening" of the County according to the principles of Local Agenda 21.
- Support the County Development Board in the achievement of relevant objectives contained in the Roscommon County Development Board document Roscommon Vision: A Ten Year Strategy for Economic, Social & Cultural Development.
- Foster the development of socially, economically balanced sustainable communities, through amongst others, promoting social inclusion and the implementation of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- Continue to influence regional and national Planning and Development policies in the interest of the County. To co-operate with the Regional Authority and other agencies in meeting the needs and development requirements of the Western Region in accordance with the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West (RPG's)

2.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND POPULATION GROWTH IN COUNTY ROSCOMMON

2.3.1 Preliminary 2006 Census Information

The 2006 Census of Population (Preliminary Report) records a population of 58700 persons in Roscommon. This is a growth of 4926 or 9.2% over the 2002 figure of 53774.

Table 1: Gender Breakdown in Preliminary 2006 CSO census

Males	30132 = 51.33%	Females	28568 = 48.67%
--------------	----------------	----------------	----------------

Table 2: County Population Change 1981 - 2006

Years	2006	2002	1996	1991	1986	1981
County Roscommon	58700	53774	51975	51897	54592	54543

Roscommon had a larger increase (9.2%) than the overall growth for the state (8.1%). Such an occurrence is unknown in the last half century. The population had fallen by 30,000 between 1926 and 1991 including a fall of 2695 between 1986 and 1991.

In the period 2002 – 2006, all counties in Ireland experienced positive natural increase with the highest rates in counties with the youngest profile (Fingal, Dublin South, Kildare, Meath) and lowest in counties with the oldest age profile (Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo).

By deducting the natural increase in population at county level from the corresponding population change data, it is possible to derive net migration figures i.e. the net movement of all persons into the county from elsewhere and out of the county to elsewhere.

Table 3: Population Increases in County Roscommon 2002 – 2006

	Roscommon	Connaught	State
Numerical Increase	4926	39787	317,722
% Increase	9.2	8.4	8.1
Natural	642	10764	131,314
Estimated Net Migration	4284	28,023	186,408
Average Annual Births per 1,000 of average population	11.3	14.9	15
Average Annual Deaths per 1,000 of average population	8.5	7	7
Natural Increase Rate per 1,000 of average population	2.9	7.9	8.1
Estimated Net Migration Rate per 1,000 of average population	19	14.5	11.4

The major component of the population increase has therefore been net migration – 19 per thousand of population compared to a state average of 11.4. The rate of natural increase has been low - 2.9 per thousand compared to a state average of 8.1. However, the birth rate has been increasing during 2004 – 2006 (expected to be 5.5 to 6 per 1000 in 2006) and can be expected to rise further after a period of high migration when unaccompanied workers begin to settle and form family units.

To give perspective and to emphasise the scale of the changes in migration, it is worth comparing this figure with previous periods.

Table 4: Average Estimated Net Migration Rate Per 1,000 of Average Population in Roscommon

Years	1981 - 1986	1986 – 1991	1991 – 1996	1996 - 2002	2002 - 2006
Migration Per 1000	-2.8	-11.4	0.7	6.7	19

As will be seen in the future sections, the natural increase rate has picked up in 2006 and allied to a high net migration rate, the prevailing trends suggest significant population growth.

2.3.2 Population projections

Based on CSO population projections and recent local trends, a population of approximately 67,000, a rise of 14%, is expected by the end of the CDP in 2014. The increase is accounted for by high inward migration and relatively low natural increase. Roscommon had a higher death rate and lower birth rate than Connaught or the state as a whole but yet had a greater population increase. The net migration rate of 19 per 1,000 of average population per annum is almost twice the national average. Within Connaught, rates of net migration vary from 25.9 in Leitrim to 6.4 in Sligo.

The projected population for the CDP was calculated as follows (see **Demographic, Economic and Employment Profile for County Roscommon** for further detail);

Four growth scenarios were utilised:

- 1.2% is equivalent to CSO M2F3 scenario for the state as a whole
- 1.36% is equivalent to CSO M2F3 scenario taking into account Roscommon's growth relative to the state's in the period 2002 – 2006
- 1.6% is equivalent to CSO M1F1 scenario for the state as a whole
- 1.82% is equivalent to CSO M1F1 scenario taking into account Roscommon's growth relative to the state's in the period 2002 – 2006

Table 5: Population growth scenarios for 2006 – 2016

	1.2%	1.36%	1.6%	1.82%
2006	58700	58700	58700	58700
2007	59408	59503	59646	59777
2008	60125	60318	60607	60874
2009	60850	61143	61584	61991
2010	61585	61980	62576	63129
2011	62328	62828	63586	64287
2012	63080	63688	64610	65468
2013	63841	64559	65652	66669
2014	64611	65443	66709	67892
2015	65391	66338	67785	69139
2016	66180	67246	68878	70407

In terms of population growth, 1.6% increase per annum is viewed as safe to use for the period 2006 – 2014 with the following riders attached;

- future downturns will impact on migration levels where least opportunities exist
- we don't have labour force breakdowns from 2006 Census yet
- the high level of recent growth rates is unlikely to be sustained

NOTE: The projections were estimated in January 2007 from the figures then available from the CSO. These figures have been utilised for the Housing Strategy and Retail Strategy and have informed all the projections contained within the County Development Plan. The Council will continue to monitor the population trends and once the final population information is available from the CSO for the 2006 census will assess the figures and amend information within the CDP where appropriate.

2.3.3 Age Dependency

The 2002 Census shows that, the age dependent population is significantly higher than the national or West region average and is concentrated in the over 65 rather than the 0 – 14 years category. Age dependency has decreased from 43.3% in 1991 to 35.3% in 2006.

Table 6: Age Dependent Population 2006 (those under 15 or over 65 years)

Area	Roscommon	Ireland
Percentage	35.25	31.43

2.3.4 Spatial distribution

In terms of spatial profile, the areas of significant growth in the county are Athlone West, Kiltoom and Carnagh (neighbouring EDs in the south east of the county adjacent to Athlone); Ballaghaderreen; Boyle; Roscommon town and surrounding EDs; Castlerea; Termonbarry and Danesfort, the latter two being close to urban centres outside the county boundary. Where falling populations are recorded, the absolute numbers are statistically small but are important in terms of trend and age dependency. This is consistent with more in-depth data from the 2002 Census that identify declining areas in the west and extreme north of the county.

Population density in County Roscommon is 22.9 persons per sq. km compared to a state average of 60.

It is not possible to make further analysis of changes to urban populations as the Preliminary figures for 2006 relate only to Electoral Districts and not urban boundaries. We, therefore, do not know the changes in population figures according to town boundaries to compare with 2002 figures, presented here.

From the Electoral District figures, we can expect the 2006 Town figures to show growth in Roscommon, Athlone Environs, Boyle, Ballaghaderreen, and Tulsk. The urban areas of Elphin,

Castlerea and Strokestown are likely to show marginal growth or stagnancy with probable bigger growth in their outlying areas. In order to give some level of comparability, the ED population figures for 2002 and 2006 are presented.

Table 7: Population change by Electoral District 2002 - 2006

Electoral Districts	2002	2006	% Change
Athlone West	2262	3114	+37.7%
Ballaghaderreen	2319	2741	+18.2%
Boyle Rural and Urban combined	2613	2966	+13.5%
Castlerea	2689	2842	+5.7%
Roscommon Rural and Urban combined	5317	5840	+9.8%
Total of these EDs	15200	17503	+15.2%

These show much more positive indications of sustainability of the county towns than the 2002 Census. Whereas the 2002 Census only showed positive demographic outlook for Roscommon and the Monksland area, these are likely to be joined by Ballaghaderreen, Boyle and Castlerea when further Census data on urban boundaries are available.

It is not possible yet to assess any change in the overall levels of urbanisation and rural population. In 2002, the number of persons living in *towns* with a population over 1500 was 10108 or 18.8%. Therefore, 81% of people lived in aggregate rural areas compared to 40% nationally and 69% in the western region. With current data, we can only compare EDs where towns are located rather than urban boundaries. Such EDs contain a greater number of persons than the urban boundaries but a comparison is useful. As the figure for the EDs increased by 15.2% from 2002 to 2006 i.e. in excess of the total population increase of 9.2%, an increase in urbanisation can be predicted, dependent on outcomes from the urban boundary breakdowns.

Within the county, the majority of Electoral Districts are ranked as either marginally below or marginally above the national average for relative affluence/deprivation. Deviation from this is evidenced in the west and extreme north of the county where many EDs are classified disadvantaged and the south where six affluent EDs are located (2002). Based on more recent CSO County Incomes and Census of Industrial Production data on incomes and salaries, minor improvements to disadvantaged areas and more significant improvements to more affluent EDs can be expected when Census 2006 outputs are fully analysed.

2.4 ROSCOMMON'S BROAD SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE

2.4.1 Policy Context

In its discussion on the West Region, the NSS defines the hierarchy for the Region accordingly:

Table 8: NSS Settlement Hierarchy

TIER OF DEVELOPMENT	SETTLEMENT
Gateway	Galway
Hubs	Tuam and Ballina/Castlebar
County Towns and towns over 5000 population	Roscommon Town in the County
Towns 1500 – 5000 population	Ballaghaderreen, Boyle, Castlerea in the County
Centres in weak urban structure areas	Strokestown and Elphin
Villages and Rural Areas	

NSS, 2002

The **Regional Planning Guidelines for the West**, on the other hand identify the towns of Boyle, Castlerea, Strokestown, Ballaghaderreen, Roscommon, and Monksland (Athlone) as key towns for enterprise development in the region. In addition, the development framework for the region divides the County accordingly:

- South west of Roscommon, Castlerea and Athlone is defined as Zone F: Roscommon East Galway and also includes Monksland (Athlone).
- North east of Ballaghaderreen, Castlerea and Lanesborough is defined as Zone C: North Roscommon and also includes Strokestown as a key town.

2.4.2 Existing Settlement Structure

The **current settlement pattern** in County Roscommon can be defined as follows:

Roscommon Town, Monksland (Athlone Environs), Boyle, Castlerea and Ballaghaderreen are the principle settlements within the county that serve as the primary residential, employment, service and retail centres. Area Plans are produced for all these areas within this Plan, which provide descriptions and indicate how they should develop until such time are more comprehensive Local Area Plans as compiled.

Strokestown, Elphin and Roosky have Local Areas Plans and can be defined as satellite villages which also act as residential, employment, service and retail centres. These have by and large, experienced significant levels of development and should continue to be supported as areas which are “Centres of Weak Urban Structure” as defined in the NSS.

There are a number of **key villages** in the county which most often have a Church and school within their confines and provide basic services to their communities, such as convenience goods and petrol. There are also a number of **smaller settlements**, many of which are located around local community facilities and they act as important focal points for the wider rural community. Both of these have tended to be developed in an ad hoc manner however, in order to ensure they develop in a structured and orderly fashion, it is considered necessary that a limit of development be drawn around each settlement area, within which there will be presumption in favour of development. Chapters 5 and 6 of this Plan contain guidance on how these areas are defined and how plans and statements, such as Village Design Statements, can be prepared which will guide their development. It was not possible to pursue the preparation of these during the course of the review of the existing Development Plan due to time and resource constraints. It is worthwhile noting at this stage that Roscommon County Council will aim, as part of this settlement strategy, to develop communities and not just areas and that these areas are supported by the appropriate level of infrastructure, including social infrastructure. These services and facilities may be provided in partnership with the private sector and/or the community.

2.4.3 Proposed Settlement Structure

It is necessary to undertake some analysis to assess the capacity of towns and villages to accommodate future growth. The capacity of the settlements has been examined on the basis of the following;

1. Existing settlement size in terms of population and households
2. Recent trends in population and household growth and projected population growth
3. Presence and capacity of water services i.e. water supply and sewerage
4. Inclusion in programmes such as the Serviced Land Initiative
5. Range of services including health, community, industrial and retail
6. Connections and accessibility from these settlements to towns and counties adjacent
7. Character of the settlements in terms of, for example, natural and built heritage, archaeology and landscape character

The preliminary CSO population figures from the 2006 census have been used, where available, in the compilation of the figures below.

Table 9: Current population figures and Settlement Hierarchy categories

TIER	SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY	TOWN / VILLAGE / SETTLEMENT	CURRENT POPULATION CSO 2006
1	County Town/Primary growth centre	Roscommon Town	5840 U&R
2	Key support towns/settlements	Boyle, Castlereagh, Ballaghaderreen, Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone Environs)	2500-5000
3	Key satellite villages	Ballinasloe Environs (Creagh), Ballinlough, Ballintober, Ballyleague, Carrick-on-Shannon Environs (Cortober), Cloonfad, Elphin, Frenchpark, Loughglinn, Roosky, Strokestown, Termonbarry, Hodson Bay/Barrymore	500-1500
4	Key villages	Knockcroghery, Athleague, Ballinameen, Bellanagare(DED), Castleplunket (DED), Keadue.	300-500
5	Smaller Settlements	Arigna, Ballyfarnon, Ballyforan, Brideswell, Castlecoote, Cloontuskert, Cootehall, Croghan, Curraghboy, Dysart, Four Roads, Hillstreet, Kiltewan, Knockvicar, Lecarrow, Moore, Mount Talbot, Rahara, Scramoge, Taughmacconnell, Trien, Tulsk, Whitehall	50-300
6	Dispersed rural areas		<50

As a matter of clarity, the following methodology was used to calculate the population figures for the settlements.

Firstly, in order to define the boundaries of each of the settlements, the existing settlement boundaries for those towns with development plans or local area plans were used e.g. Castlereagh. For other towns and villages Townland boundaries were used in an attempt to define settlements as closely as possible. It should be noted that DED areas tend to be significantly larger than defined settlements and until such time as full 2006 CSO information is available, it is not possible to provide more accurate population figures. The CSO figures are generated by DED and we have attempted to compensate for this by employing this 3-step methodology.

Secondly, in order to calculate the number of households, the An Post Geo-directory was used. This is a database which provides the number of residential units with postal addresses in an area and is updated on a 3 monthly basis which ensures that the information provided is current.

Thirdly, in order to establish the total population, the average number of persons per household was multiplied by the number of households in an area. The 2002 census information was used to establish the average number of persons per household, i.e. 2.9 persons.

Thirteen villages have been included in the Serviced Land Initiative which allows for Design Population Equivalents of between 487 and 3182 people. This allows for a significant amount of development in places which can be characterised as quite rural.

It is noted therefore, that all these areas face very different development challenges and the following Settlement Strategy aims in some way to address these. From the analysis above and building on the existing County Development Plan, the NSS and the RPG's for the West, the following is proposed as the County Roscommon Settlement Structure in this County Development Plan. (See also Map 6)

Tier 1: County Town / Primary Growth Centre (population range 5000 – 10 000)

Roscommon Town has a strong historical identity as the County Town and associated market town. It has an extensive range of services including health, community, industry and retail.

As part of the settlement strategy it will be promoted as the primary growth centre for employment generating investment with a strong and attractive residential centre. Its role will be enhanced as the primary retail and service centre as well as a growth centre for industrial development. It will have increased connectivity with other centres in the region through upgraded transportation linkages, both road and rail.

Tier 2: Key support towns/ settlements (population range 2500 – 5000)

These centres have an interacting and supporting role to the County town and also act as service centres for their adjacent rural areas which should be further enhanced. They have an extensive range of services including health, community, financial, and retail. They also have a growing residential and commercial sector. Strong connections also exist from these settlements to towns and counties adjacent to County Roscommon, for example, Boyle to Sligo, Monksland and Athlone environs to Westmeath, Ballaghaderreen to Mayo and Castlerea to Galway and Mayo.

Transportation linkages should be strengthened between these areas, and to the County Town.

Tier 3: Key satellite villages (population range 500 – 1500)

These centres have a more limited range of services than tier 1 and 2 and service provision often includes a range of retail and educational services, but limited financial, health and community services. These areas have been traditionally referred to as towns within County Roscommon however in the national setting would be deemed villages. They should be further developed as residential and employment centres as well as service and local retail centres for their surrounding hinterland. Retail development is likely to be mainly convenience goods, with supermarkets and local shops serving the local town and the hinterland.

Tier 4: Key villages (population range 300 - 500)

Key villages and smaller settlements provide basic services to their community, such as convenience goods and petrol. Education services are provided in some of the settlements, but extend to primary education only. Some of these settlements require major improvements in infrastructure to ensure that they will become attractive settlement centres and assist in the long-term vitality and viability of the County.

The future development strategy of these villages is to concentrate population, services and jobs in strategic village locations which have relatively good access from nearby towns. The clustering of the population in this way will have the effect of strengthening the viability of services such as retail, schooling and public transport as well as the expansion of small rural enterprise.

Tier 5: Smaller settlements (population range 100 – 300)

These villages act as nodes for distinctive quality driven residential development and essential local commercial and community services. It is envisaged that the future growth of these villages should be safeguarded so that they do not act as catalysts to facilitate continuing expansion of larger urban centres. It is important that the existing character of the villages be maintained; that the local community's needs in relation to future development be taken into consideration; and that new development should harmonise with the 'old' existing settlement form.

Tier 6: Dispersed rural areas (population range <100)

This is the smallest type of settlement and the character of these areas mirror the rural countryside but have scattered individual houses with some clustering around one or more focal points. Focal points may include existing development around a cross roads, a shop, church, post office etc. There may be scope for some additional dwellings to consolidate existing focal points and utilise existing services in the area subject to normal planning environmental standards. House numbers should however be restricted to a maximum of eight to ten houses in total, centred on the focal point and should be subject to the satisfactory provision of infrastructure and services. Chapter 6 of this Plan provides further detail concerning the Rural Settlement and Housing Strategy for County Roscommon.

It is important to note that it is not the intention of the Planning Authority to support proposals which amount to a line of ribbon development or that has not developed around a nucleus / crossroad with sufficient lower level social and community services present. The provision for non-integrated residential communities is not sustainable and does not accord with the settlement strategy proposed for the County. Such an approach would establish a poor precedent having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of rural areas and will lead to inevitable servicing issues. In addition, in designating these areas, it is not envisaged that these areas would become major urban centres. The Planning Authority is committed to ensuring that the variety of these settlements located across the County will offer attractive and affordable housing options as well as employment and community facilities and services to meet the needs of the established rural communities, and those wishing to settle in rural areas e.g. Ballymoe Environs, Lisacul, Curraghroe, Portrunny, Shannonbridge Environs and Creggs Environs to name but a few. In addition, it should be noted that the strengthening of the villages which form part of Tiers 3, 4 and 5 provide an opportunity to divert pressure for the provision of single dwellings in the countryside.

This proposed settlement hierarchy is illustrated below:

Table 10: County Roscommon Proposed Settlement Hierarchy

TIER	SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY	TOWN / VILLAGE / SETTLEMENT
1	County Town/Primary growth centre	Roscommon Town
2	Key support towns/settlements	Boyle, Castlereagh, Ballaghaderreen, Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone Environs)
3	Key satellite villages	Ballinasloe Environs (Creagh), Ballinlough, Ballintober, Ballyleague, Carrick-on-Shannon Environs (Cortober), Cloonfad, Elphin, Frenchpark, Loughglinn, Roosky, Strokestown, Termonbarry, Hodson Bay/Barrymore
4	Key villages	Knockcroghery, Athleague, Ballinameen, Bellanagare(DED), Castleplunket (DED), Keadue, Arigna, Ballyfarmon, Ballyforan, Cootehall Lecarrow, Tulsk
5	Smaller Settlements	Bridewell, Castlecoote, Cloontuskert, Croghan, Curraghboy, Dysart, Four Roads, Hillstreet, Kiltewan, Knockvicar, Moore, Mount Talbot, Rahara, Scramoge, Taughmacconnell, Trien, Whitehall
6	Dispersed rural areas	All other rural areas

2.5 SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

The development and settlement strategy which forms part of this Development Plan has as its primary aim to consolidate the County as an attractive place in which to live, work and recreate, and to facilitate the achievement of a high quality of life for residents and visitors through the sustainable development of further economic and social activities in a quality environment.

The plan seeks to achieve this aim through the development of all parts of the county through:

- economic and social development in the towns and villages, where most new development will be channelled and where it can bring benefits both to the settlements themselves and to their rural hinterlands; and,
- growth and diversification in rural areas, especially where there has been an underlying trend of population decline.

The Roscommon County Development Plan (2002) sought to increase the population of the County to over 60 000 people by 2008 and retain a young adult population which will provide the basis for sustaining communities. The Plan encouraged the strengthening of the urban structure and the consolidation of the towns and villages as centres of economic and population growth. Access to employment and a range of services in towns and villages was thought to be key for the development of the County.

This *County Development Plan (2008 – 2014)* seeks to promote the development of settlements in accordance with their location in a hierarchy and as outlined in the NSS and RPG's. As part of this hierarchy, the Plan seeks to promote industrial and commercial development particularly in the larger towns. The strategic aim of these policies is to create a more sustainable balanced development pattern in County Roscommon.

It should be noted also that a Development Plan is primarily concerned with physical planning and land use policies. Unless a specific framework is created, social and economic issues do not receive sufficient attention. The Settlement Strategy and supporting policies provide this framework. It is accepted that unanticipated changes will take place in the distribution of population and that these changes will have an impact on the relative contribution that each centre has to make. It is also accepted that there is a potential need for some provision for those areas that do not qualify as settlement centres but can accommodate some housing.

The following **policies** relate to development in all settlements including villages within the County:

- Policy 1** Improve the quality of life of the residents of the County and make the County an attractive location in which to live in the future.
- Policy 2** Promote a balance of development across the county through the designation of a settlement hierarchy, outlining in broad terms the role and function of all settlements, according to hierarchy level, building upon the existing settlement strategy.
- Policy 3** Development in all instances should be sustainable and account should be taken of the availability of public transport infrastructure, socio-economic profile, creation of appropriate and sustainable levels of employment and commercial activities which are in proportion to residential development within each area, and protection of the rural hinterland and urban greenbelt.
- Policy 4** Ensure there will be sufficient land zoned to accommodate the growing population and endeavour to ensure, in so far as is practicable, that the zoning of land and growth of settlements is accompanied by adequate infrastructural provision, including local social and community infrastructure (such as schools, neighbourhood centres, crèches, community halls, recreation facilities, etc.) at an appropriate rate.

- Policy 5** Development and growth of each of the selected urban centres should be generally restricted to the development envelope, so that they function as the focal points for the development of their rural catchments.
- Policy 6** Discourage development in the immediate vicinity of any defined development envelope, which would compromise the distinction between the open countryside and the built up edge of the settlement.
- Policy 7** Promote compact forms of development with more comprehensive development of the backlands of towns and villages and more efficient use of public infrastructure and services
- Policy 8** Encourage settlements to develop niche activities or roles which will help in their further development
- Policy 9** In all instances RCC should seek the promotion of high-quality urban design that balances the achievement of densities with the provision of high quality services, the management of public safety and the provision of high quality access and networks.
- Policy 10** Prepare a comprehensive suite of Local Area Plans for the larger urban settlements of County Roscommon, where there is potential for large scale development, and where there is a need for plan-led development.
- Policy 11** Establish strong road connections between settlements and promote public transport strategies.
- Policy 12** Encourage the continued sustainable development of rural and urban communities without compromising the physical, environmental, natural, cultural and heritage resources of the County, in so far as is practicable, and ensure the provision of facilities and services for them.
- Policy 13** Protect important landscape features within or on the edge of settlements by restricting development within designated Sensitive Landscapes, unless it can be proven, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, that the development would not detrimentally impact on the amenity and character of settlements and the wider setting, or that it is necessary and can only proceed within such a landscape.
- Policy 14** Prepare Village Design Statements to inform planners, designers, decision makers and the public at large of the local community's needs in relation to future development and to provide recommendations relating to the various ways that new development can harmonise with the 'old' existing settlement form.
- Policy 15** Link land use and transport to encourage the provision of viable catchments to sustain public transport and provide an alternative to reliance on the private car.

The following **objectives** flow from the policies above;

- Objective 1** Prepare Local Area Plans for the settlements contained in Volume 2 of this Plan in accordance with the priority schedule contained as part of Objective 3. These Local Area Plans will replace the individual Written Statements and Detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages contained within this County Development Plan, 2008 - 2014.
- Objective 2** Prepare a report with recommendations on the phasing of plans following the 2011 CDP review

Objective 3 Establish the settlement zone boundaries of Villages and commence preparation of the Village Design Statements and Local Area Plans, in accordance with the schedule below. Those Plans to be prepared from 2011 onwards will be decided at the Mid-term review stage of the County Development Plan. It should be noted that the Village Design Statements will address issues of design, managed growth and associated infrastructure.

PRIORITY FOR THE PREPARATION OF LOCAL AREA PLANS (LAPs) AND VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENTS (VDSs) DURING THE LIFETIME OF THE ROSCOMMON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2008 - 2014

It should be noted that projects are to be undertaken both “in house” and through the help of consultants. SEA scoping for LAPs will be carried out in tandem.

YEAR 1: MARCH 2008 – SEPTEMBER 2009

Rural Design Guidelines

VDSs – Knockcroghery Lecarrow Cootehall Ballyleague Tulsk

LAPS - Monksland/Bellanamullia Elphin Lough Key Strokestown
Roosky

YEAR 2: MAY 2009 – SEPTEMBER 2010

Design Guidelines for Housing Estates in County Roscommon

VDSs - Frenchpark VDS

LAPs - Ballaghaderreen Castlerea Boyle Roscommon

YEAR 3: AUGUST 2010 - SEPTEMBER 2011

VDSs- Termonbarry Ballinlough

LAPs - Hodson Bay Creagh Cortober LAP
SO3 – subject to agreement with WCC

Review/Progress of CDP i.e. Managers Report on progress of CDP.

Objective 4 Identify necessary infrastructural services and facilitate their provision through both public and private investment.

Objective 5 Initiate Land Use and Transportation Plans for settlements as required in the County

Objective 6 Facilitate and encourage the provision of serviced sites in existing settlements demonstrating population or economic decline/stagnation as an alternative to one-off rural housing.

Objective 7 Commence the preparation of Design Guidelines for Rural and Urban Areas in accordance with the schedule contained under Objective 3