

Donegal County Council – Preliminary Council Consultation on the Preparation of a Review of the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 (as varied); and the Preparation of a New County Development Plan & Environmental Report.	27th July 2016
Planning Committee	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Outcome
Leader & Champion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will establish key relationships with Government agencies and potential strategic partners in NI and external to it which helps us to deliver our vision for this Council area.
Protect the environment in which we live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All environments in the area will benefit from pro-active decision making which protects the natural features, characteristics and integrity of the Borough;
Lead Officer	Sharon Mulhern
Cost:	N/A

For Decision

1.0 Background

1.1 Donegal County Council wrote to Council on 2nd and 16th June 2016 (re; extension of time) advising of their intention to:

- Review the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 (as varied); and
- Prepare a New County Development Plan & Environmental Report.

2.0 Detail

2.1 Donegal County Council adopted its existing County Development Plan (CDP) 2012-2018 in July 2012. It has been varied on three separate occasions since this date. It will remain operational until July 2018 when the new Plan will be adopted.

2.2 The Planning Authority has given notice of its intention to review the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 (as varied) and to prepare a new County Development Plan (2018-2024) for the functional area of Donegal County

Council, including the former Town Council Areas of Letterkenny, Bunrana and Bundoran.

- 2.3 This will be the first consolidated County Development Plan since the dissolution of the former Town Councils in the County.
- 2.4 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and an Appropriate Assessment will be carried out to consider the potential effects of the Plan on the environment and on EU protected sites known as "Natura 2000" sites and their networks.
- 2.5 The planning authority intends to review the zoning of the Development Plan area for the purposes of developing new objectives and policies to deliver an overall strategy for proper planning and sustainable development and for the purposes of developing its Core Strategy.
- 2.6 The Plan programme is currently at "Issues Paper" stage, and the published document (see Appendix 1) is designed to initiate debate on the important issues relevant to the Plan area, including: economic development; retailing and town centres; renewable energy; natural, built and cultural heritage; and infrastructure and roads.
- 2.7 The closing date for submission of comments has been extended to Tuesday 9th August 2016.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 None

3.0 Other Implications

- 3.1 None

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Elected Members note the content of the Issues Paper attached at Appendix 1 and agree to the Head of Planning submitting a response on behalf of Council.



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council**

*Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2015,
Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 and
Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*

**Review of the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 (As Varied) and Preparation of a New
County Development Plan and Environmental Report**

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Part II, Section 11 (1) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2015 that Donegal County Council intends to review the existing County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 (As Varied) and to prepare a new County Donegal Development Plan, 2018-2024 for the functional area of Donegal County Council, including the former Town Council areas of Letterkenny, Buncrana and Bundoran as provided for by Section 11C (b) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2015.

This is the first consolidated County Development Plan for the whole functional area of Donegal County Council to be developed since the dissolution of the former Town Councils in the County. The preparation of a new development Plan for the County will be strategic in nature for the purposes of developing objectives and policies to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the Development Plan and the Core Strategy.

Strategic Environmental Assessment – In compliance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) and in accordance with Article 13B of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004); and in compliance with the *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*, (I) the Planning Authority proposes to carry out an environmental assessment as part of the review of the existing development plan and the preparation of a new development plan, and (II) for this purpose, the planning authority will prepare an environmental report of the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the new plan.

Appropriate Assessment - Pursuant to the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 94/43/ECC and Section 177U of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2015, a Stage One Appropriate Assessment Screening of the new development plan shall be carried out as part of the process and a Stage Two Appropriate Assessment (AA) shall be carried out, if required.

Issues Papers and Public Consultation

To inform the preparation of the new County Development Plan, the Council is carrying out a preliminary consultation exercise as required by Section 11 (3) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2015. It is within that context that submissions or observations regarding the preparation of the new development plan are being invited.

Further information on the purpose and content of the new development plan, together with Issues Papers can be accessed at www.donegalcoco.ie

A copy of the Issues Papers may also be inspected during normal office hours, Monday to Thursday (9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.00pm to 5.00pm) and Friday (9am to 12.30pm and 1pm to 4.30pm) from 3rd June 2016 to 29th July 2016 (both dates inclusive) at the following Council offices:

- The Planning Office, Donegal County Council, County House, Lifford.
- Letterkenny Public Services Centre, Neil T. Blaney Road, Letterkenny.
- Milford Public Services Centre, Main St., Milford.
- Dungloe Public Services Centre, Gweedore Road, Dungloe.
- Carndonagh Public Services Centre, Malin Road, Carndonagh.
- Donegal Public Services Centre, Drumlonagher, Donegal Town.

The Issues Papers may also be inspected at the library facilities in the County during their respective normal opening hours.

Submissions or observations regarding objectives and policies to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan may be made in writing between 3rd June 2016 to 29th July 2016 (both dates inclusive) to the Planning Authority at: The Central Planning Unit, Donegal County Council, County House, Lifford. Submissions or observations may also be emailed to donegalcdp@donegalcoco.ie. Submissions made via email must include the full name and address of the person making the submission.

Note: Please make your submission by one medium only i.e. hard copy or email. **The final date for the receipt of submissions is 4.30pm on Friday 29th July, 2016**

Children, or groups or associations representing the interests of children, are entitled to make submissions or observations regarding the objectives and policies to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan.

The Planning Authority intends to review the zoning of the area of the Development Plan for the purposes of developing objectives and policies to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development Plan and for the purposes of developing the core strategy. Requests or proposals for zoning of particular land for any purpose shall not be considered at this stage. There will be an opportunity to make submissions on zoning at a later stage of the process.

Liam Ward,
Director of Community, Enterprise and Planning Services,
County House,
Lifford,
County Donegal,
F93Y622



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

**REVIEW OF THE COUNTY DONEGAL
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2012-2018 (AS VARIED)**

ISSUES PAPERS

**Central Planning Unit,
Community, Enterprise and Planning Services,
Donegal County Council.**

June 2016

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Issue Paper No. 1- General Information

What is the review of the Plan about?

On 3rd June 2016, Donegal County Council is commencing a review of the existing County Donegal Development Plan 2012- 2018 (As Varied) and the process to be undertaken is set out in the Planning & Development Acts, 2000- 2015. The purpose of a County Development Plan is to set out the way in which County Donegal will be developed into the future and it is a material consideration in making decisions on planning applications.

The existing Development Plan was adopted in July 2012 and has been varied on three separate occasions. It will remain in operation until July 2018 after which time the review process will be complete and the new County Donegal Development Plan will be in place. The existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied) can be viewed at the following link: countydonegaldevplan2012-2018asvaried

Figure 1: The existing County Donegal Development Plan 2012- 2018 (as varied)



The County Development Plan provides the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Donegal including:

- The supply of appropriately zoned land for future growth of the population (Issue paper No. 2 refers);
- The economic development of the County (Issue Paper No. 3 refers);
- The future of our towns in relation to retailing and town centres (Issue Paper No. 4 refers);
- The appropriate development of the County's renewable energy resource (Issue Paper No. 5 refers);
- The appropriate development of the County's built, natural & cultural heritage (Issue Paper No. 6 refers) and;
- The strategic development and management of the County's infrastructure (Issue Paper No. 7 refers)

What is the scope of the review?

The review process will consider the entire extent of the area of Donegal County Council's jurisdiction. This area is currently covered by four separate Development Plans (the County Donegal Development Plan, 2012-2018 [As Varied]; the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan, 2009-2015 [As Varied]; the Buncrana & Environs Development Plan, 2014-2020; and the Bundoran & Environs Development Plan, 2009-2015 [As Varied]). This will result in the publication of a new document which will reflect and respond to changes such as revised National/ Regional strategy and guidelines. In other words, the review process will focus on the components of the existing Development Plans that require revision whilst the other parts of the Plans that are operating effectively will be carried over into the new Plan with only limited adjustment. The Plan will be the subject of two environmental assessments namely a Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment to consider the potential effects of the Plan on the environment and on EU protected sites known as Natura 2000 sites and their networks.

What is the relationship of the plan with other Plans and Guidelines?

The County Development Plan is part of a systematic hierarchy of land use and spatial plans at National and Regional levels and must be consistent with these plans as well as National Guidelines. To this end, a new National Planning Framework is currently being developed to succeed the National Spatial Strategy. It will include a focus on economic development and investment in housing, water services, transport, communications, energy, health and education infrastructure. In addition, a new Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy shall be prepared and adopted by the Northern & Western Regional Assembly and it shall be consistent with the National Framework. While the timescale to review the County Development Plan will commence prior to the making of the new National and Regional Strategies being in place, the process will be required to coordinate in so far as practicable with the Strategies.

The County Development Plan must also be aligned horizontally with other relevant plans such as the County Donegal Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016- 2022 which identifies a programme of activity to promote the economic and community development of the County to 2022.

What is the timescale for the review?

The timescale and process to review the Plan is prescribed by the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended). In total the process will take 2 years and involves a series of public consultation stages. The current stage in the process is a period of public consultation that will subsequently lead to and inform the preparation of a draft County Development Plan. This is shown as Stage 1 in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The stages in the process to prepare the County Development Plan (dates are indicative only)



We are Here

How can you take part in the consultation at this stage?

To inform the preparation of the draft County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024, the Council is carrying out a consultation exercise. You can make a submission or observation regarding the preparation of the draft Plan in either of the ways set out below **to be received no later than 4.30pm on Friday 29th July 2016**. Please note that requests or proposals for zoning of particular land for any purpose shall not be considered at this stage as set out in the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended). Submissions or observations can be made either:

- By email to donegalcdp@donegalcoco.ie or,
- By post to: The Central Planning Unit, Donegal County Council, County House, Lifford.

There will also be a series of consultation events that will be held at a number of venues throughout the County and during which members of staff will be available to discuss and explain what the Plan is about. These will be advertised in local press and at www.donegalcoco.ie

Issue Paper No. 2- Core Strategy

The Core Strategy of the existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied)

The Core Strategy of the existing [County Donegal Development Plan 2012- 2018 \(as varied\)](#) sets out the over-riding aim and strategic approach to guide where new development should take place in the County. It sets out a settlement hierarchy of the towns and villages in the County. It also provides details of the land zoned for residential development together with the amount of housing units that are planned throughout the County and within each tier of the settlement hierarchy. The Core Strategy also demonstrates how the Plan is consistent with National and Regional strategies.

Figure 1 shows the settlement hierarchy of the CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied) where Letterkenny is the Tier 1 town described as the linked 'Gateway' with Derry and as the primary driver of growth in the County and therefore the existing Plan aims to promote the further development of Letterkenny.

The Gateway town of Letterkenny is followed by a network of nine Tier 2 towns described as 'Strategic Support Towns' namely Bridgend, Buncrana, Bundoran, Ballybofey- Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Camdonagh, Donegal Town, Dungloe and Killybegs. The Plan aims to grow these towns and to sustain their existing vibrancy and vitality by directing 50% of projected future population growth across these Tier 2 towns.

Tier 3 & Tier 4 are described as 'Strong Towns & Villages' and 'Small Villages.' These Tiers are characterised, to varying degrees, by infrastructural deficiencies such as capacity of waste water and water supply. Having regard to these constraints, the Core Strategy of the existing Plan directs only 10% of future projected population growth to Tier 3 and a further 5% to Tier 4.

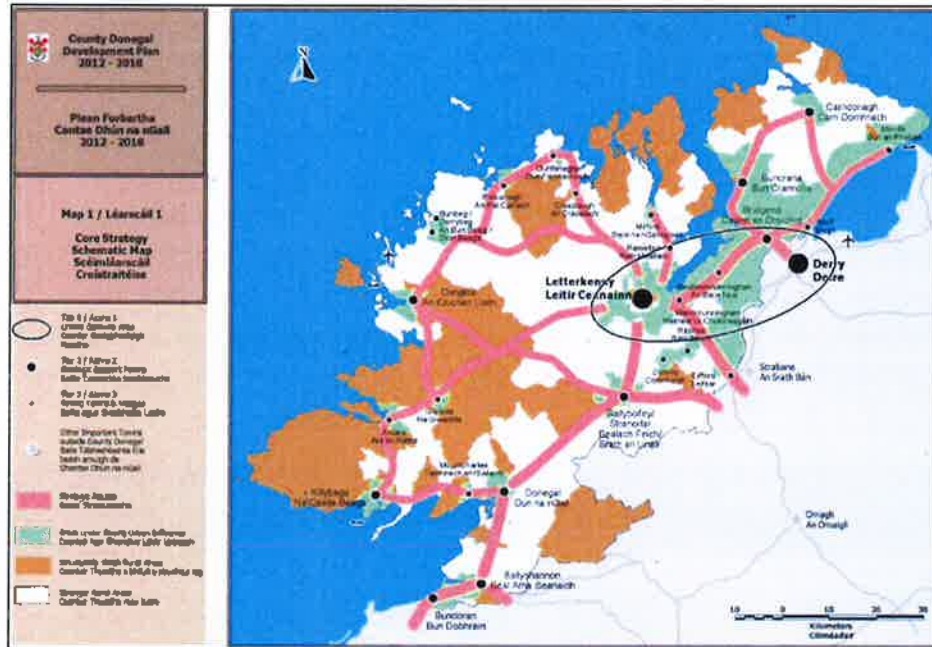
Tier 5 is made up of the remainder of the County and is described as the 'Rural Area'. In order to sustain and grow rural communities, the existing Plan directs 35% of future population

Figure 1: Settlement Hierarchy of the CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied)



growth to Tier 5. The strategy for the rural area is driven through three different rural areas types namely 'Areas Under Strong Urban Influence'; 'Structurally Weak Rural Areas' and; 'Stronger Rural Areas.' Figure 2 shows the spatial distribution of the 'Rural Area Types'. The policies relating to the 'Rural Area Types' aim to guide rural housing to appropriate locations and in a manner that will sustain rural communities without having subsequent negative impacts.

Figure 2: Map 1 (Core Strategy) of the CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied) showing the 'Rural Area Types.'



The National & Regional Context

The Core Strategy of the Development Plan is required to show that the development objectives of the Development Plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with National and Regional development objectives set out in the new National Framework being prepared and in the forthcoming Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. While the timescale to review the County Development Plan will commence prior to the making of the new National and Regional Strategies being in place, the process will be required to coordinate in so far as practicable with the Strategies. In the interim period, the Plan is required to be consistent, as far as practicable, with the National Spatial Strategy 2002- 2020 and the Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010- 2022.

Other relevant national guidelines that are to be considered in the review of the Core Strategy, as regards consistency, include the Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines 2005.

What are the types of issues that need consideration?

Have Your Say: The questions below are examples of the types of considerations that will be made in reviewing the Core Strategy element of the Plan and may be of use to help you in your thinking around the Core Strategy:

- What should the over-riding aim and vision of the Core Strategy of the Plan be?
- Is the existing settlement hierarchy and placing of settlements within the hierarchy appropriate and sustainable or should it be revised?
- What level of growth should be directed to each tier in the settlement hierarchy?
- To what extent should the County's main towns grow and develop?
- Are there any measures that would help to regenerate towns and attract new business and new homes to towns?
- How can the Core Strategy plan for sustainable rural housing patterns?
- Are there parts of rural Donegal where more rural housing would be appropriate than in other areas?
- What type of policy is needed in rural areas that have experienced a lot of development pressure for rural housing?

How can you take part in the consultation at this stage?

To inform the preparation of the draft County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024, the Council is carrying out a consultation exercise. You can make a submission or observation regarding the preparation of the draft Plan in either of the ways set out below **to be received no later than 4.30pm on Friday 29th July 2016**. Submissions or observations can be made either:

- By email to donegalcdp@donegalcoco.ie or,
- By post to: The Central Planning Unit, Donegal County Council, County House, Lifford.

There will also be a series of consultation events that will be held at a number of venues throughout the County and during which members of staff will be available to discuss and explain what the Plan is about. These will be advertised in local press and at www.donegalcoco.ie

Issue Paper No. 3- Economic Development

Economic Development in the existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied)

The strategy for Economic Development in the existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied) is focussed on guiding the location of new economic development and on identifying the enabling activities required to facilitate the further development of the County's economic sectors. The types of enabling activities required include for example the planning and coordination of necessary infrastructure or implementation of economic development initiatives. In particular, the Strategy includes:

- The promotion and further development of our Letterkenny- Derry linked Gateway as the major driver of economic development in the County and this includes across all the business sectors such as retail, tourism, industry, technology, research and innovation;
- The strengthening of the broad economic development of our 9 Strategic Support Towns (Ballybofey- Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Bunrana, Bundoran, Bridgend, Camdonagh, Donegal Town, Dungloe and Killybegs);
- The encouragement of sustainable rural economic development in areas such as agriculture, value added food production, renewable energy, forestry, biomass as well as the growing rural economic development opportunities in the tourism sector;
- The support and promotion of the tourism sector through improving accessibility to the tourism product in tandem with tourism product development and a particular focus on the County's strategic tourism locations such as Slieve League, Fanad Lighthouse, Malin Head and Glenveagh National Park;
- The growth in the marine sector including fishing, marine tourism and renewable ocean energy developments.

The global economic downturn has had significant impacts on business and communities in Donegal. Employment trends in 2011 showed that the number of people at work in Donegal declined by -6% which is in line with the decrease nationally. The 2016 census will provide important information regarding the more up to date trend.

Notwithstanding the difficult economic climate there have been significant economic and business strengths in the County such as the diversity of the existing economic base; the increase in employment in Agency Assisted Foreign Owned Companies (+36% over the 2006- 2013 time period); the strong inward investment base that is home to a number of world renowned and world class companies operating a range of sectors from engineering, medical technology, financial

services and business services and; the strong base of indigenous Donegal companies.

Of all the sectors, the tourism sector is growing significantly and this is demonstrated by the increasing numbers of tourists visiting Donegal. In 2013, 199,000 overseas visitors came to Donegal, increasing by 14.3% since 2012. The growth in the sector is supported by the establishment and promotion of the Wild Atlantic Way delivering a coordinated approach along the west coast of Ireland. The strategy has been embraced by Donegal communities and business and the opportunities are significant to showcase the range of tourism products such as the County's landscape, cultural tourism, heritage and the network of tourism destinations and activities throughout the County.

The National & Regional Context

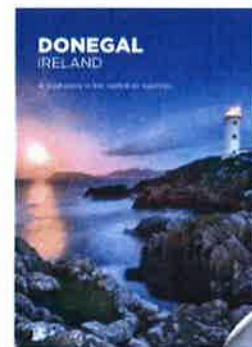
The review of the CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied) will have regard to the Governments approach to economic recovery and this is set out in a number of strategies including:

- Making it Happen- Growing Enterprise for Ireland, Forfás, 2010
- OECD LEED (Local Economic and Employment Development) Report on Delivering Local Development, 2014
- Energising Irelands Rural Economy- The report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) 2014
- Construction 2020
- Integrated Marine Plan (IMP), 'Harnessing Our Oceans Wealth,' July 2012
- The Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan, 2014
- Delivering on Green Potential – Government Policy Statement on Growth and Employment in the Green Economy, 2012
- North East/ North West Action Plan for Jobs, November 2015

The National and Regional context will be further developed through the Governments forthcoming National Framework as well as the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy that is to be prepared by the Northern & Western Regional Assembly.

At a local level, the County Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) was adopted in January 2016 and it aims to promote economic development and community development in the County over the next 6 years through the identification of a range of objectives and actions. It is closely aligned to the County Development Plan with direct complementarities between both strategic documents across land use, economic priority areas and enabling activities such as the provision of infrastructure.

The Donegal Prospectus



What are the types of issues that need consideration?

Have Your Say: The questions below are examples of the types of considerations that will be made in reviewing the Economic Development Strategy of the Plan and may be of use to help you in your thinking around Economic Development:

- What are the key strengths and sectors in County Donegal that can be harnessed for lasting economic development and job creation?
- Where should new economic development take place in the County?
- What types of policies should be introduced to strengthen business opportunities in our towns?
- Is there enough land zoned for business and economic developments in our towns?
- Should new business and economic development be permitted in rural areas?
- Are there particular types of business and economic development that should not take place in rural areas or other types that are best suited to rural areas?
- Should the economic strategy prioritise the reuse of vacant commercial and business properties?
- What and where are the main infrastructural investments needed to enable business and economic development?

How can you take part in the consultation at this stage?

To inform the preparation of the draft County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024, the Council is carrying out a consultation exercise. You can make a submission or observation regarding the preparation of the draft Plan in either of the ways set out below **to be received no later than 4.30pm on Friday 29th July 2016**. Submissions or observations can be made either:

- By email to donegalcdp@donegalcoco.ie or,
- By post to: The Central Planning Unit, Donegal County Council, County House, Lifford.

There will also be a series of consultation events that will be held at a number of venues throughout the County and during which members of staff will be available to discuss and explain what the Plan is about. These will be advertised in local press and at www.donegalcoco.ie

Issue Paper No. 4- The Retail Strategy & Town Centres

The Retail Strategy & Town Centres in the existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied)

The Retail Strategy of the existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied) aims to facilitate a diverse range of retail activities at appropriate locations in urban areas, thereby ensuring vitality and viability and improving competition within our town centres.

It prioritises the strengthening of our town centres as the primary locations for retail development through the establishment of a sequential approach. The sequential approach outlines that the preferred location for new retail development is the town centre and that where it is not possible to provide the form and scale of development that is required on a town centre site, then consideration can be given to a site on the 'edge of the centre' and subsequently to an 'out of centre' site. The approach aims to ensure the incremental growth of retailing centres outwards from the core. Appendix A of the existing Plan (Settlement Frameworks) identifies the extent of town centres for each town in Tiers 2 & 3 (Letterkenny, Buncrana and Bundoran town centres addressed separately in their respective Development Plans). It is these defined areas that the existing Plan promotes as the primary retail cores and priority locations for new retail development.

The existing Retail Strategy also identifies a retail hierarchy that is in line with the settlement strategy of the Plan, therefore, placing Letterkenny at the top of the hierarchy and identifying it as the main retailing centre within the County, followed by the Tier 2 towns (Ballybofey- Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Buncrana, Bundoran, Bridgend, Camdonagh, Donegal Town, Dungloe and Killybegs). The strategy guides the location of the different types of retailing that will be appropriate in each tier of the hierarchy focusing on greater scale and higher order retailing in Tiers 1 & 2. Figure 1 summarises the retailing types that are to be guided to each Tier within the existing Plan.



In a broader context, the Plan recognises the importance of strong town centres as the heart of our County towns, serving not only as retailing centres but also as service centres, tourist destinations, residential areas and places of public gathering and cultural expression and, in this regard the built heritage is central and this is reflected in the 'Built Heritage' chapter of the existing plan.

Figure 1: Retail Types

Tier	Retail Type
1. The Gateway-Letterkenny	District food store, large food stores, discount food stores; retail parks/ retail warehouses; factory outlet centres; retail warehouse clubs (cash and carry's); local (neighbourhood) shops
2. The Strategic Support Towns	Large food stores, discount food stores; retail parks/ retail warehouses factory outlet centres; retail warehouse clubs (cash and carry's); local (neighbourhood) shops
3. Strong Towns & Villages	Discount food stores; shops; local (neighbourhood) shops
4. Small Villages	Shops; village shops; local (neighbourhood) shops
5. Rural Areas	Village shops; local (neighbourhood) shops

In relation to the existing vitality of our town centres, the 'Profile of the County' that forms part of the County Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan 2016- 2022 (LECP) outlines that instances of vacancy and dereliction, as an indicator of vitality, are prevalent within our town centres with only 4 of the 26 settlements within Tiers 1- 3 recording under 8% vacancy/ dereliction. It also outlines that the number of people living within our town centres is lower than the average in the country.

The National & Regional Context

Since the preparation and making of the existing Development Plan, the DECLG published the Retail Planning Guidelines, 2012 and therefore the review of the Plan will be required to ensure consistency with the content of the Guidelines. The Guidelines outline the importance of the retail sector in providing direct and indirect employment and in playing a major role in attracting people to the centre of towns and villages and therefore contributing to the overall vitality of these centres and supporting their role as centres of social and business interactions within the community. The Guidelines also emphasise that retail development be plan-led and focus in particular on:

- Promoting town centre vitality through the sequential approach;
- Ensuring that retail development should be appropriate to the scale and function of each settlement;
- Securing competitiveness in the retail sector by actively enabling good quality developments in suitable locations;
- Facilitating increased access to retailing by public transport, walking and cycling and;
- Delivering quality urban design outcomes

Donegal Town



What are the types of issues that need consideration?

Have Your Say: The questions below are examples of the types of considerations that will be made in reviewing the Retail Strategy and Town Centre elements of the Plan and may be of use to help you in your thinking around the Retail Strategy and Town Centre:

- What are the ingredients of a successful town centre?
- Is the existing retail hierarchy and distribution of retail types within the hierarchy the best approach?
- Are the 'Town Centre' boundaries identified in the existing Settlement Frameworks appropriate?
- What policies should be introduced to further support town centre retailing so as to contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of our town centres?
- How can the plan prioritise town centre as the location for new retail development over 'edge of centre' and 'out of centre' locations?
- Should the Plan prioritise the reuse of underutilised/ derelict and vacant land in town centres?
- What policies should be introduced to ensure the physical environment of our towns is protected and enhanced?
- Should the Plan contain policies to protect historic streetscapes in order to contribute to the quality of the physical environment in town centres?

How can you take part in the consultation at this stage?

To inform the preparation of the draft County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024, the Council is carrying out a consultation exercise. You can make a submission or observation regarding the preparation of the draft Plan in either of the ways set out below **to be received no later than 4.30pm on Friday 29th July 2016**. Submissions or observations can be made either:

- By email to donegalcdp@donegalcoco.ie or,
- By post to: The Central Planning Unit, Donegal County Council, County House, Lifford.

There will also be a series of consultation events that will be held at a number of venues throughout the County and during which members of staff will be available to discuss and explain what the Plan is about. These will be advertised in local press and at www.donegalcoco.ie

Issue Paper No. 5 - Renewable Energy

Renewable Energy in the existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied)

The Energy Strategy of the existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied) aims to facilitate the development of a diverse energy portfolio by the sustainable harnessing of the potential of wind, solar, hydro, wave, tidal, biomass, bio energy, oil and gas. To facilitate the appropriate development of associated infrastructure to enable the harnessing of these energy resources and to promote and facilitate the development of Donegal as a Centre of Excellence for Renewable Energy. Also to facilitate the development of appropriately located on and offshore wind energy proposals in accordance with the Wind Energy Strategy.

Donegal recognises the environmental benefits and economic opportunities arising from the development of available renewable energy resources, particularly wind, wave, tidal and hydro energy.

The renewable energy industry in the County may be about to go into a period of transition from that identified above. Solar, hydro and bio-energy all have major commercial scale potential to offer sustainable energy to the grid and enhance local employment prospects going forward. Notwithstanding, Wind will continue play a significant role in terms of Renewable Energy generation and with rapidly evolving technology, power output is rising exponentially, as with all RE technologies. Accordingly the re-powering of existing windfarms may become a viable option for many established wind farm sites, subject to appropriate approval and assessments. Whilst wave / tidal energy may be challenging in terms of its not commercial viability, it may still offer real prospects for the future energy mix in Donegal.

The harnessing of these technologies will require careful environmental and landscape evaluation, good road access and enhanced grid connectivity.



The National & Regional Context

Since the preparation and making of the existing Development Plan, the government have published the White Paper 'Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030' which updates all previous targets and guidelines. By 2020

the renewable energy target is to increase the share of final energy consumption made up of renewable energy sources (RES) to 16%. This target is broken into three key sectors with individual targets for each sector: 40% of electricity supply (RES-E), 12% of heating (RES-H), and 10% of transport (RES-T). Ireland also has a target of a 20% improvement in energy efficiency by 2020.

The government recognise the importance of renewable energy in providing direct and indirect employment and in playing a major role in contributing towards national and EU targets to increase energy supplied by RE, and towards reducing the dependence upon imported expensive fossil fuels and to reduce our carbon emissions.

The Guidelines also emphasise that renewable energy proposals should be planned and focus in particular on:

- Identification of the best sites for renewable energies and those sites for protection.
- Use the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) to evaluate landscape types (Donegal County Council completed its LCA in January, 2016 and this document will be a vital tool in formulating the wind energy policies of the new Development Plan).
- Diversifying the renewable energy portfolio and enhancing the grid connections to harness all forms of renewable energy.
- Meeting the challenges of re-powering larger turbines on the sites of existing turbines which are decommissioned upon reaching their end of life.

What are the types of issues that need consideration?

Have Your Say: The questions below are examples of the types of considerations that will be made in reviewing the Renewable Energy Strategy elements of the Plan and may be of use to help you in your thinking around Renewable Energy:

- To identify a Wind Energy Strategy for the County.
- Identification of the best sites for wind energy.
- Identification of sites for protection.
- There is a need to upgrade the transmission network to harness the energy.
- Assessing impact on landscape, water quality, habitats, soil stability.
- The role of Planning Authorities in offshore tidal, wave and wind energy proposals.
- Opportunities for rural diversification through emerging industries such as wind /tidal energy, biocrops, biomass.

How can you take part in the consultation at this stage?

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- By email to donegalcdp@donegalcoco.ie or,
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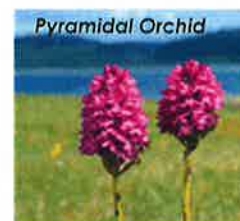
There will also be a series of consultation events that will be held at a number of venues throughout the County and during which members of staff will be available to discuss and explain what the Plan is about. These will be advertised in local press and at www.donegalcoco.ie

Issue Paper No. 6- The Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage

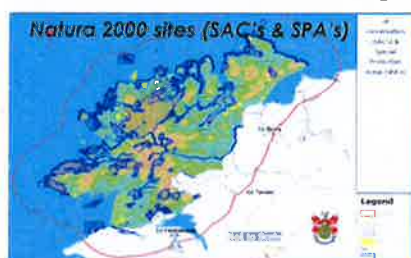
The Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage In the existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied)

The existing Plan aims to conserve, protect and enhance the County's natural, built and cultural heritage for future generations and encourage appreciation, access and enjoyment of these resources. The Plan identifies these resources as representing the rich and distinctive identity of Donegal and its people and recognises their role in relation to culture, society, the environment, tourism and the economy. Therefore, the Plan promotes that the natural, built and cultural heritage is to be managed in a sustainable manner.

The existing Plan was the subject of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) to determine the potential for significant effects on the environment and on Natura 2000 sites and networks, of implementing the Plan. The SEA and AA process is particularly important in the context of the natural, built and cultural heritage as it identifies potential areas of conflict with these valuable resources and identifies appropriate and effective methods to mitigate these effects. As a result, the existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied) consists of an extensive suite of objectives and policies designed to ensure protection and safeguards in relation to the natural, built and cultural heritage.



In relation to the natural heritage of the County, the Plan addresses designated nature conservation sites including Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation - SAC's and Special Protection Areas- SPA's), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's), designated Shellfish Waters and Freshwater Pearl Mussel SAC's. The policies of the existing Plan are focussed on the protection and safeguarding of the conservation status of these sites. In a broader context, the objectives and policies of the existing Plan also extend to requiring the protection of ecological networks, the County's



coastline as well as particular views, prospects and landscapes of scenic quality. In relation to landscapes of scenic quality and as a result of the SEA process, the existing plan contained an objective to prepare a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) in order to provide a framework for the identification, assessment, protection,

management and planning of the landscape including seascape. To this end, a Landscape Character Assessment has been prepared, the content of which has been endorsed at a meeting of Donegal County Council in May 2016. The LCA will be an important component in the review of landscape and scenic designations and have resultant implications for land use policy in the rural areas including rural housing and wind energy.

Regarding the built heritage, the existing Plan takes a proactive approach to protecting and harnessing the historic built fabric of the County in its many forms including streetscapes, collections of buildings, individual buildings, buildings within landscapes and the setting of buildings. This is implemented through a number of mechanisms including the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), Architectural Conservation Areas, Heritage Towns (Ardara, Ballyshannon, Merville, Ramelton and Raphoe) and a suite of objectives and policies across historic detailing, reuse and refurbishment, quality design solutions as well street furniture and public space in historic streetscapes and townscapes. In total, the Ministerial recommendations identify almost 3000 structures to be added to the RPS ranging from country houses, churches and public buildings to vernacular houses and farm buildings.



Similarly, the Plan takes a proactive approach to the safeguarding and harnessing our archaeological heritage through the implementation of the DECLG's Historic Towns (Ballyshannon, Donegal Town, Killybegs, Lifford, Ramelton) and their archaeological zones. In addition, the objectives of the existing Plan extend to the protection and enhancement of Archaeological Monuments included on the Record of Monuments and Places and, where appropriate, to the character and setting of any unrecorded archaeological object or site.

The Cultural Heritage aspect of the existing Plan aims to provide for the integration of land use planning with social, community and cultural requirements so as to sustainably develop cultural assets and social infrastructure in an effort to strengthen communities and towns. The relationship between land use policy and community development has been further reaffirmed through the adoption of the Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan 2016- 2022. In particular the existing Plan guides the location of new social infrastructure and local services to locations close to the communities that are to be served. It also sets approaches and standards as regards new schools, childcare facilities, health, sport and recreation infrastructure and libraries and cultural services.



Having the second largest Gaeltacht in the country, the existing Plan recognises the cultural distinctiveness of the Donegal Gaeltacht and Islands (6 of which inhabited) as a rich resource in relation to the Irish language, the environment, heritage and landscape and identifies the particular potential that exists in relation to tourism. The language is supported in the existing Plan through the appropriate application of Language Impact Assessments and through acknowledgement of the role of Gaeltacht towns and villages as potential drivers for the surrounding area. This objective is reflected in the recent approach of Government to identify, develop and promote 'Gaeltacht Service Centres' and furthermore through the preparation of the County Donegal Irish Language Plan and local Language Plans.



The National & Regional Context

The Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage extends across a broad range of considerations and issues and this is reflected in the national and regional context. The range of relevant strategies and guidelines in relation to the natural, built and cultural heritage include:

- Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (as amended),
- EU Habitats Directive
- Water Framework Directive
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Guidelines, 2004
- Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines, 2000
- European Landscape Convention 2000.
- Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines, 2004
- Recommendations of the Minister of the Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht to add structures (identified in the NIAH) to the County Donegal Record of Protected Structures.
- Governments 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030.
- The Provision of Schools and the Planning System - Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, 2008
- Childcare Facilities Guidelines, 2001 (in conjunction with Circular PL3/2016, March 2016)

What are the types of issues that need consideration?

Have Your Say: The questions below are examples of the types of considerations that will be made in reviewing the Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage elements of the Plan and may be of use to help you in your thinking around the Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage:

- What are the main pressures on the environment of County Donegal?
- What policies can be introduced to safeguard and protect the environment?
- Does the Plan adequately protect the County's most scenic landscapes?
- How can the Landscape Character Assessment be used to further refine the identification of scenic landscape that should be safeguarded?
- Should the Plan consider introducing networks of active and passive open space in rural area e.g. indicative greenways, walkways, cycleways?
- Are there additional policies that are needed to safeguard the built and archaeological heritage of the County?
- What is the best approach to adding NIAH buildings to the Record of Protected Structures?
- Should the Plan introduce Architectural Conservation Areas where there is a high concentration of RPS/ NIAH structures?
- Are there gaps in the provision of particular types of community facilities and how can the Plan help to alleviate this.
- What policy should be introduced regarding the provision of childcare facilities as part of housing developments?
- What policy should be introduced regarding the provision of open space as part of housing developments?

How can you take part in the consultation at this stage?

To inform the preparation of the draft County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024, the Council is carrying out a consultation exercise. You can make a submission or observation regarding the preparation of the draft Plan in either of the ways set out below **to be received no later than 4.30pm on Friday 29th July 2016**. Submissions or observations can be made either:

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Issue Paper No. 7 – Infrastructure and Roads

Infrastructure and Roads in the existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied)

The Infrastructure Strategy of the existing CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied) aims to achieve quality International, National and Regional links to sea, air and rail from Donegal to other Gateways, locations and markets; to provide for high quality connectivity within the County in line with the Core Strategy; and to deliver optimum accessibility and ease of movement to provide for the economic, social and environmental development of the County into the future. The Strategy lists a number of new road proposals which aim to be delivered. It also identifies the hierarchy of roads around the County and seeks to enhance access to key infrastructure such as the airport, ports and the Gateway corridor. The Plan seeks to safeguard the role and function of these roads, enhance road safety and safeguard the carrying capacity of these roads.

Policies will be introduced to safeguard vulnerable areas from flooding, to enhance telecommunications and broadband coverage throughout the County and to support the appropriate development of water and wastewater infrastructure.



The National & Regional Context

Since the preparation and making of the existing Development Plan, there have been a number of relevant national publications and guidelines which need to be considered such as; Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, Grid 25, Development Plan Guidelines, National Broadband Plan, Irish Water Capital Plan and therefore the review of the Plan will be required to ensure consistency with the content of those publications and guidelines.

'Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DECLG 2012) has set out planning policy considerations relating to development affecting national primary and secondary roads, including motorways and associated junctions, outside the 50-60 kph speed limit zones for cities, towns and villages.

The 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' (DTTS & DECLG) seeks to address street design in an integrated design approach for all urban areas. Therefore design must be influenced by the type of place in which the street is located, and balance the needs of all users. Well designed streets can create connected physical, social and transport networks that promote real alternatives to car journeys, namely walking, cycling or public transport.

The Government's National Broadband Plan (2012) seeks to enhance national broadband coverage ensuring that all citizens and businesses have access to high speed broadband, wherever they live or work. This will be delivered through a combination of commercial and State led investment. Nationally, policies and regulatory measures have been introduced to accelerate commercial investments in high speed broadband. However, commercial operators have clarified that there are parts of the country they cannot address commercially.

Enhanced infrastructure into the County is necessary to ensure that Donegal remains competitive in terms of its economic potential. Clearly Donegal has many locational advantages for tourism, renewable and non energy and fishing however there is a need to enhance roads, water and wastewater infrastructure, the electricity grid and broadband connectivity to provide conditions that will attract inward investment.

The Guidelines also emphasise that infrastructure should be plan- led and that infrastructural development will not be forthcoming in the event of excessive and unnecessary land zoning in development plans.

- Zoning should support the achievement of sustainable travel patterns, reducing reliance on private car usage and promoting public transport, as well as cycling and walking.
- Zoning objectives and other measures, such as the application of maximum parking standards, would also support sustainable modes of transport.
- Plans should support the timely commissioning of energy grids and communications (including mobile telephony) infrastructure. The development plan should identify and protect key corridors for infrastructure provision such as electricity lines, gas pipelines or communications ducting.
- Encouraging efficiency in the use of energy, transport and natural resources through the careful location of residential, commercial and industrial development and by controls on the shape, structure and size of settlements
- The reservation of corridors for transport infrastructure such as roads and public transport is vital to facilitating the provision of such infrastructure in a timely and cost-effective manner. In addition, consideration of land uses along major transport corridors must take account of the need to preserve their capacity to cope with increasing demands for safe and effective transport.

What are the types of issues that need consideration?

Have Your Say: The questions below are examples of the types of considerations that will be made in reviewing the Infrastructure Strategy elements of the Plan and may be of use to help you in your thinking around Infrastructure:

- Can the Development Plan ensure that development is coordinated so that landuse and transportation matters facilitate sustainable development?
- How can the towns, villages and rural areas be made more accessible?
- Should policy standards for new developments reflect the need to reduce car dependency? Also, can they be applied without compromising the highest quality of urban design, particularly in our heritage towns?
- How can we develop successful streets that easily facilitate vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians in our towns and villages?
- How do we achieve greater linkages and connections between existing and proposed residential areas in our towns and villages and out into the countryside?
- How can road safety be improved on our strategic roads and in our towns?
- Is mobile phone and broadband provision adequate in terms of coverage and quality in the County?
- Where and how should telecommunications masts be permitted? – Are all new locations necessary? Or is co-location possible?

How can you take part in the consultation at this stage?

To inform the preparation of the draft County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024, the Council is carrying out a consultation exercise. You can make a submission or observation regarding the preparation of the draft Plan in either of the ways set out below **to be received no later than 4.30pm on Friday 29th July 2016**. Submissions or observations can be made either:

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