

**Galway County Council Planning Department**

**Development Control Section**

**Guidelines to assist applicants to interpret the provisions of the  
Development Plan 2003-2009**

# **Urban Fringe Guideline**

**€1.00**

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# Guidelines for Planning Applicants

## Policy Interpretation Guideline Urban Fringe

**Purpose** The Urban Fringe serves a number of purposes including differentiating between the urban area and the adjoining countryside. It often accommodates essential infrastructure required by the town to develop to service the needs of the urban and rural area.

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Despite strict control of urban sprawl; land use conflicts and environmental problems are evident around Galway City, Tuam, Loughrea, Athenry, and Gort. In these areas, development of urban generated housing in the open countryside is increasing rapidly. It is essential, from a proper planning and sustainable development perspective to exercise effective control on this unsustainable development. The area inside the Galway Transport and Planning Study Area contains the urban fringes of Tuam, Loughrea, Athenry and Gort. The GTPS control zone will contribute to the effective control of urban generated housing within the urban fringe around these towns.

The protection afforded to these rural hinterlands by the development control zones created under the previous plan could lead to complacency and the assumption that these areas are not under threat. If present trends, outside the old control zones, continue at their current scale and extend into the town boundaries there will be a serious and immediate detrimental impact on the rural and urban areas.

In the rural area there will be an increasing environmental impact, in terms of additional car dependent commuting and on the character of the rural areas concerned that will tend to undermine the viability of normal farming activities in those areas.

In the urban areas it will make the identification of routes and locations for the infrastructure needed to cater for national, regional and local development more difficult, thus undermining the economic viability of the town and its natural hinterland. Prior, uncoordinated and ad hoc development of an excessive number of single houses will also prejudice well-planned development that extends urban areas to cater, in the future, for new residential, commercial or other development. Furthermore in the case of Tuam, its designation as a hub center under the National Spatial Strategy requires the implementation of policies to enable the town to achieve the potential that its designation can, if properly managed, yield.

It is a generally accepted principle that urban generated housing, should take place within their built up areas or on lands identified, through the development plan process, for integrated, serviced and sustainable development.

The principles of Proper Planning and Sustainable Development dictate that the erosion of this urban fringe should be discouraged. Applications within the Urban Fringe will be assessed to establish essential rural housing need. The location of the urban fringe around the Towns of Tuam, Loughrea, Gort and Athenry can be established from the attached maps. The Area within 1.5km of the town planning boundary will have the same controls applied to it as exist in the Galway Transportation & Planning Study (GTPS).

Applicants from within the urban fringe of the 4 towns of Gort, Athenry, Loughrea and Tuam can, on establishing housing need, anticipate favourable consideration for applications that meet the Development Plan Criteria. Enurements as per the Enurement Clause Guidelines will apply.

Applicants from outside the urban fringes but within the GTPS area cannot move into the urban fringes of Gort, Tuam, Loughrea and Athenry. The Urban fringe and its associated controls do not apply around the perimeters of the other towns and villages. Each application in these areas will be assessed in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. If trends emerge to indicate that the level of application and development is in the long term unsustainable then the situation will be reviewed.