

Galway County Council Planning Department

Development Control Section

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

Settlement Centres Guideline

€1.00

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Guidelines for Planning Applicants

Policy Interpretation Guideline Settlement Centres

- Purpose Settlement centres are the means whereby the concepts developed in the Settlement Strategy will be delivered namely:
- 1) Reversal of rural decline, particularly in the peripheral areas of the County and the loss of community services in small towns and villages.
 - 2) Deployment of residential growth in a manner consistent with sustainable principles and the balanced development of the County
 - 3) Reduce congestion in the rural area close to the City
 - 4) Maximise the public investment, which has already been made in servicing towns and villages
 - 5) Comply with National policies, which advocate balanced development, social integration, urban renewal and maintenance of strong rural communities.
 - 6) Promote sustainable development and provide for the optimum use of land as a finite resource.

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Most of the larger towns in the County have their own Local Area Plans, which include various land use designations. These plans have been revisited and amended in accordance with Chapter 11 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 & 2002 amendments.

The local service centres and small settlements, which are listed in Tables 2.3 to 2.7, are chosen to give a choice of rural living to applicants, consistent with the preservation of village scale and character, the conservation of the environment of the countryside, the sustenance of existing public and private services and the optimisation of future investment in infrastructure.

Land uses within these centres will not be prescribed or subjected to formal zoning. Instead applications for development will be based on the “friendly neighbour” principal. In other words if the development is consistent with the existing land uses then it will be viewed favourably. Additionally development will be considered on the basis of its connectivity, capacity and compliance with the settlement strategy. Other important considerations are good design and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. If it is not but local consensus is reached on the development then consideration may also be given to the application.

Favourable consideration will be given to developments which bring together tracts of land for development within settlements and consider environmental, social and cultural requirements of the area, as part of their development.

Affordable housing is an important consideration underlying the concept of the Settlement Strategy. It is considered that this may be achieved by giving favourable consideration to housing co-operatives seeking to provide serviced sites or housing within settlement centres. This will enable these groups to negotiate with landowners for the purchase of suitable sites. It should be borne in mind that specific lands are not zoned within Settlement Centres and the overall rate of growth within each centre is controlled through the numbers designated in Tables 2.3 to 2.7 and Policy 18. First option of available capacity will be given to developments showing community gain or housing co-operatives where possible.

Various developments will be encouraged to locate within the rural settlement centres. Have regard, in particular, to policies 1 to 24 and 123 to 130, along with objectives 1 to 8 and D.C. Standards 15 to 20, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37 and 38.

For the application of Enurements Clauses please refer to the Enurement Clause Guidelines.