

CHAPTER 15



CHAPTER 15 Land Use Objectives

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15.1 Context

This chapter sets out the general land-use and zoning policies and objectives of the plan. It provides an explanation of the land use categories and the zoning objectives that apply to them. These zoning policies and objectives have been derived in line with the Core Strategy.

15.2 Land Use Zoning

The land use zoning emphasis of this plan is that of compact growth and urban consolidation which supports the re-using of 'brownfield' land, infill sites and underutilised lands in towns and villages across the settlement hierarchy. The settlement plans for each of the towns aim to promote continued sustainable growth, providing for increased employment and supporting social infrastructure to deliver a higher quality of life.

The purpose of these zoning objectives is to indicate the land use policy for all lands within the County. The zonings aspire to promote the orderly development of the County by eliminating potential conflicts between incompatible land uses and establishing an efficient basis for investment in public infrastructure and facilities. Associated zoning policy also has regard to the strategic policies underlying the Development Plan. These include the principles of climate action, sustainable development through consolidated growth, the integration of land use and transportation planning and the maintenance and improvement of the quality of life across the County as a whole.

15.3 Land Use Zoning Categories

The following sections set out the objectives and requirements of the Planning Authority for the main categories of land use. In total there are eleven land-use zoning categories as follows:

- Established Residential
- Proposed Residential
- Self-Sustaining Rural Consolidation
- Mixed Use
- Consolidation Site
- Expanded Settlement Centre
- Enterprise & Employment
- Commercial
- Sporting Recreational
- Open Space
- Community, Educational & Institutional

Table 15.1 sets out the Land Use Zoning Matrix for the Plan. Each land use zoning type has an objective and an explanation which sets the context for the consideration of future development and indicates whether development would be permitted, open for consideration or not normally permitted on such zoned lands.

P = 'Permitted in Principle':

'Permitted in Principle' means that the proposed use is generally acceptable subject to the normal planning process and compliance with the relevant policies, objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the County Development Plan, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. If a proposal is indicated to be 'Permitted in Principle' in the zoning matrix, this does not imply that planning permission will automatically be granted as other factors must be considered and each proposal for development will be considered on its individual merits.

O = 'Open for Consideration'

The proposed use may be permitted where the local authority is satisfied that it is in compliance with the zoning objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the County Development Plan, and that the proposal would not conflict with the permitted, existing or adjoining land-uses by reason of its nature and scale, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

X = 'Not Normally Permitted'

The proposed use will not normally be favourably considered by the local authority, except in exceptional circumstances, and in such instances, the development may represent a material contravention of the Plan.

Uses Not Listed in the Indicative Zoning Matrix

Proposed land-uses which are not listed in the indicative land-use zoning matrix will be considered on their merits having regard to the most appropriate use of a similar nature indicated in the matrix, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and compliance with the relevant policies and objectives, standards set out in both this Plan and relevant Section 28 Guidelines.

Non-conforming Uses

'Non-conforming uses' are established uses that do not conform to the primary zoning objectives of the Plan. These include instances where such uses; were in existence on 1st October 1964 (i.e. prior to planning legislation); have valid permission; are unauthorised but have exceeded the time limit for enforcement proceedings; have no permission and may or may not be the subject of enforcement proceedings. Development proposals that relate to the intensification of non-conforming uses, will be permitted only where the proposed development would not be detrimental to the amenities of the surrounding area and is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

15.4 Established Residential

This ‘Established Residential’ zoning is intended to reflect existing established residential areas. In such areas sustainable intensification of gap infill, unused or derelict land can be achieved through infill development, the subdivision of larger houses, backland development and the development of corner sites.

The sensitive intensification of housing development in established residential areas is supported by the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DEHLG (2009), which recognises that the provision of additional dwellings in towns can revitalise such areas.

Proposals for development involving the intensification of residential uses within established residential areas will be required to clearly demonstrate that the proposal respects the existing character of the area and would not harm the amenity value of adjacent properties.

Land Zoning Policy Objective – Established Residential	
It is a policy of Westmeath County Council to:	
CPO 15.1	Support high quality residential consolidation and sustainable intensification at appropriate locations in a manner that does not impact negatively on the amenities or character of an area.

15.5 Proposed Residential

This ‘Proposed Residential’ zoning provides principally for residential development. Other uses open for consideration include local shops, education, nursing homes, creches, health centres, community and recreational facilities and guesthouses where they are appropriate in scale and do not unduly interfere with the predominant residential land use. In keeping with the ethos of the plan, the aim is to create vibrant sustainable communities supported by social and community infrastructure.

Where development proposals do not relate to the overall development of the lands in question, the applicant will be required to demonstrate by way of an overall plan for the development of the lands, that the proposed development would not adversely affect the comprehensive development of the lands in the future.

Land Zoning Policy Objective – Proposed Residential	
It is a policy of Westmeath County Council to:	
CPO 15.2	Provide for high quality residential development and associated services in line with the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure.

15.6 Self-Sustaining Rural Consolidation

This ‘Self-Sustaining Rural Consolidation’ zoning provides for a mix of development types that supports the sustainable growth of the rural area and community as part of existing established village settlements. Development on these lands can include a range of uses that are considered to have the potential to improve the rural fabric of the settlement and its surrounding area. Development may include, but is not limited to, small scale residential, community facilities, neighbourhood shops, local business and enterprise, sports, recreation and amenity facilities.

Proposals for development will need to clearly demonstrate that the proposal respects the existing character of the area, is compatible, where appropriate, with existing development in the settlement and would not negatively impact on the sustainability of the settlement. Within this zoning category, sustaining vibrant rural communities, reversing rural decline, regeneration and renewal will be the Council’s priority in accordance with the National Planning Framework. Potential developers are advised to consult with the Planning Authority regarding any proposed ‘Self-Sustaining Rural Consolidation’ developments at the pre-planning stage.

Land Zoning Policy Objective – Rural Consolidation	
It is a policy of Westmeath County Council to:	
CPO 15.3	Provide for self-sustaining development which seeks to support and improve the rural fabric of the settlement and its surrounding area.

15.7 Community, Educational & Institutional

This ‘Community, Educational & Institutional’ zoning provides for the safeguarding and provision of facilities that serve and contribute to the creation of viable and stable communities. Such facilities include schools, churches, community centres, creches and childcare facilities, nursing homes, libraries, museums, health centres, fire stations, graveyards, arts/entertainment facilities and infrastructure as well as sporting, recreational and cultural facilities.

In certain instances, the regeneration of institutional lands may be considered in terms of the provision of enterprise and employment, hotel, state services and tourism use subject to the

protection of the character of the lands. Such development proposals associated with institutional complexes will be required to respect the architectural and cultural heritage value of the complex.

Land Zoning Policy Objective – Community, Educational & Institutional	
It is a policy of Westmeath County Council to:	
CPO 15.4	Protect, provide and improve community, civic and educational facilities and to preserve the open character of institutional lands and the setting of heritage buildings contained within such lands.

15.8 Consolidation Site

This ‘Consolidation Site’ zoning supports compact consolidated development of towns, at an appropriate scale in line with their position in the Settlement Hierarchy. The zoning seeks to promote the sustainable consolidation of town centres with a focus on the regeneration of infill and brownfield sites through the establishment of a mix of uses, including residential to encourage greater vibrancy outside of business hours. The zoning provides for a range of uses, making provision where appropriate for commercial, retail, residential, community, amenity and public realm development. Any development proposals on these lands must have regard to the Core Strategy, Retail Strategy and associated development management policies.

Land Zoning Policy Objective – Consolidation Site	
It is a policy of Westmeath County Council to:	
CPO 15.5	Strengthen and consolidate existing settlements by encouraging the development of infill and brownfield lands through providing for a range of uses including residential development, retail, commercial and community uses.

15.9 Mixed Use

This ‘Mixed Use’ zoning reflects the mixture of uses which have always co-existed in town/village centres and which offers the variety required to make them attractive and important places for community interaction. The zoning provides for a range of uses to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres, making provision where appropriate, for primary and secondary uses e.g. commercial/retail/service development as the primary use with residential development as a secondary use. Secondary uses will be considered by the local authority having regard to the particular character of the area and its role in the Settlement Hierarchy.

On lands that have been zoned 'mixed-use' in or near town or village centres, a diverse range of day and evening uses is encouraged and an over-concentration of any one use in the area will not normally be permitted. These areas require high levels of accessibility, including pedestrian, cyclists and public transport (where feasible).

Land Zoning Policy Objective – Mixed Use	
It is a policy of Westmeath County Council to:	
CPO 15.6	Provide for, protect and strengthen the vitality and viability of town centres, through consolidating development, encouraging a mix of uses and maximising the use of land.

15.10 Enterprise & Employment

This 'Enterprise and Employment' zoning provides for the creation of enterprise and employment uses save for traditional commercial functions that should locate within a town core area. Lands zoned for 'enterprise and employment' include the use and development of land for high-end research and development, business, science and technology-based industry, financial services, call centres/telemarketing, software development, enterprise and incubator units, small/medium manufacturing, warehousing and corporate offices in high quality campus/park type development. This zoning also provides for 'walk to' support facilities such as canteen, restaurant or crèche services which are integrated into employment units and are of a nature and scale to serve the needs of employees on the campus.

It is intended that such developments will have high quality architectural design and landscaping, associated transportation infrastructure such as car and bicycle parking and bus stop shelters may also be required as part of any development proposal. This zoning does not include general retail, retail park outlets and heavy industrial undertakings.

'Enterprise and Employment' lands in Tier 5 Towns and Villages of the Core Strategy should be taken to include small-scale business and enterprise development such as incubator units, craft centres/workshops, small-scale manufacturing, local digital/technology businesses etc. Retail uses on these sites will only be considered where it is ancillary to the main activity taking place.

Land Zoning Policy Objective – Enterprise & Employment	
It is a policy of Westmeath County Council to:	
CPO 15.7	Provide for Enterprise & Employment and related uses including industrial and service uses including compatible uses such as office and distribution.

15.11 Commercial

This 'Commercial' zoning provides for commercial and business uses such as offices, service industry, warehousing, hotel, car parking and the facilitation of enterprise/retail park/office type uses as appropriate. Retailing is open for consideration on this zoning, provided that a sequential test is carried out and the lands are demonstrably the optimum location for the nature and quantum of retail development proposed.

Land Zoning Policy Objective – Commercial	
It is a policy of Westmeath County Council to:	
CPO 15.8	Provide for appropriately scaled commercial development that compliments the town centre.

15.12 Expanded Settlement Centre

This "Expanded Settlement Centre" zoning primarily relates to lands adjacent to town and village core areas. It is the intention that these lands will facilitate expanded town/villages services including a range of uses such as commercial, health uses and retail development together with residential use. Development proposals associated with these lands must have regard to the Core Strategy and Retail Strategy and associated development management policies. A diverse range of day and evening uses is encouraged on such lands.

Land Zoning Policy Objective – Expanded Settlement Centre	
It is a policy of Westmeath County Council to:	
CPO 15.9	Provide for, protect and strengthen the vitality and viability of town centres, through encouraging a mix of uses and maximising the use of land.

15.13 Sporting Recreational

This 'Sporting Recreational' zoning provides for development that is incidental to or contributes to the enjoyment of recreation or leisure in addition to development that enhances the amenity value of such areas. This zoning provides for the use of land as sports grounds/playing pitches, golf courses, tennis courts, and other active indoor and outdoor recreational facilities as well as ancillary services that contribute to meeting the leisure, recreation and amenity needs of the immediate community and/or the wider area.

Land Zoning Policy Objective – Sport Recreational

It is a policy of Westmeath County Council to:

CPO 15.10	Provide for, protect and improve the provision, attractiveness, accessibility and amenity value of sporting and recreational facilities.
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15.14 Open Space

This 'Open Space' zoning provides for the use of land for playgrounds, open spaces within housing estates, parks, amenity areas, riparian zones, environmental buffers and development incidental to the enjoyment of open space, such as the provision of shelters, changing rooms, caretaker accommodation and similar facilities. The protection of residential amenity in housing schemes is a key priority of the zoning, as is the protection of the natural environment. Consideration will be given to the provision of public utilities and associated enabling infrastructure on lands zoned for open space, provided that such development would not compromise the overall zoning objective.

Land Zoning Policy Objective – Open Space

It is a policy of Westmeath County Council to:

CPO 15.11	Provide for, protect and enhance the provision, attractiveness, accessibility and amenity of public open space.
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Table 15.1 Land Use Zoning Matrix

Type of Development	Established Residential	Proposed Residential	Self-Sustaining Rural Consolidation	Community, Educational & Institutional	Consolidation Site	Mixed Use	Enterprise & Employment	Commercial	Expanded Settlement Centre	Sporting Recreational	Open Space
Advertising Structures	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X
Agri-business	X	X	P	X	O	O	O	O	O	X	X
Agricultural Building	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agri-tourism	X	X	P	X	O	O	O	O	O	X	O
Amusement Arcade	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	X
Bank/Financial Services	X	X	O	X	P	P	X	O	P	X	X
Betting Office	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	X
Boarding Kennels	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	X	X	X
Caravan Park Residential	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cemetery	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Childcare Facilities	P	P	P	P	P	O	O	O	P	O	X
Church/Place of Worship	O	O	O	P	O	O	O	X	P	X	X
Cinema	X	X	X	O	O	P	X	O	P	X	X
Commercial Carpark	X	X	X	O	O	P	P	P	P	O	X
Community Hall	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	O	O
Cultural Use	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	O	P	O	P
Dance Hall/Discotheque	X	X	X	X	O	P	X	O	P	O	X
Doctor/Dentist	P	O	P	P	P	P	X	O	P	X	X
Education	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	O	O	O	X
Renewable Energy Production	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
End of Life Vehicles (ELVs)	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Equipment Hire	X	X	O	X	O	O	P	O	O	X	X
Fire/Ambulance Station	X	X	O	P	O	P	P	O	P	X	X
Fuel Filling Station	X	X	O	X	O	O	O	O	O	X	X
Fuel Depot/Distributor	X	X	X	X	O	O	P	X	X	X	X
Funeral Home	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X
Garden Centre	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	X	X
Golf Course	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	O
Guesthouse	P	P	P	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	X
Health Centre	O	P	P	P	P	P	O	O	P	O	X
Hostel	X	X	X	O	O	P	O	O	P	X	X
Industry Light	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	X	X
Hospital	X	X	X	P	O	O	O	O	O	X	X
Hotel	O	O	O	P	O	P	O	P	P	X	X
Motor Sales Outlet/Showroom	X	X	O	X	O	P	O	P	P	X	X
Multi-storey Carpark	X	X	X	X	O	P	P	P	P	O	X
Offices<100m2	X	X	O	O	P	P	O	O	P	X	X
Offices100m2-1000m2	X	X	X	O	P	P	O	O	P	X	X
Offices>1000m2	X	X	X	X	P	P	O	P	P	X	X
Off Licence	X	X	O	X	P	P	X	O	P	X	X
Open Space	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Park & Ride	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	P	O	O	X
Park/Playground	P	P	P	P	O	O	O	O	O	P	P
Playing Fields	O	O	O	P	X	X	X	X	X	P	O
Public House	O	O	O	X	O	P	X	O	P	O	X
Recycling Facilities	O	O	O	O	O	O	P	O	O	O	X
Recycling Waste Transfer Site	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Residential Institution	O	O	X	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	X
Residential Multiple	P	P	P	X	P	P	X	X	P	X	X
Residential Single	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	X	P	X	X

Type of Development	Established Residential	Proposed Residential	Self-Sustaining Rural Consolidation	Community, Educational & Institutional	Consolidation Site	Mixed Use	Enterprise & Employment	Commercial	Expanded Settlement Centre	Sporting Recreational	Open Space
Restaurant/Café	X	O	O	O	P	P	O	P	P	O	X
Retail (Convenience)	O	O	O	O	P	P	X	O	P	X	X
Retail (Comparison)	X	X	X	X	P	P	X	O	P	X	X
Retail Warehouse	X	X	X	X	O	O	P	O	O	X	X
Retirement Home/Scheme or Nursing Home	P	P	P	P	O	O	X	O	O	X	X
Shops-local	O	O	P	O	P	P	O	O	P	O	X
Shops-neighbourhood	X	O	O	X	P	P	X	O	P	X	X
Shops-major	X	X	X	X	O	P	X	O	P	X	X
Workshop	X	X	X	X	O	O	P	O	O	X	X
Sports Facility	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Take-away/Fast-food	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	X
Taxi Office	X	X	O	O	O	P	X	O	P	X	X
Telecommunications	O	O	O	O	O	O	P	P	O	O	O
Tourism-recreational Complex	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X
Training Centre	O	O	O	P	P	P	P	O	P	O	X
Transport Depot	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X
Urban-Nature Reserve	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	P
Vehicle Servicing & Repairs	X	X	O	X	O	O	P	O	O	X	X
Veterinary Surgery	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	P	X	X
Warehousing	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	P	X	X	X
Wholesale Outlet	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X



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