

CHAPTER 16



CHAPTER 16 Development Management Standards

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16.1 Context and Overview

Development Management is the statutory process undertaken in the assessment of planning applications and is an essential tool utilised in implementing the Development Plan.

This Chapter sets out the development management standards and criteria and is intended to provide a 'toolkit' towards achieving high standards of design, enhance the character of an area and facilitate sustainable development. All planning proposals should comply with the standards applicable to particular development types, be consistent with the policy objectives set out within preceding chapters and be compliant with legislative requirements.

16.1.1 Pre-Planning Consultation

Pre-planning consultations are facilitated and encouraged by the Planning Authority prior to the making of a formal planning application in accordance with Section 247 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Strategic Housing Developments pre-planning consultations are facilitated by the Planning Authority in accordance with the provisions of Section 5(2) of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act, 2016.

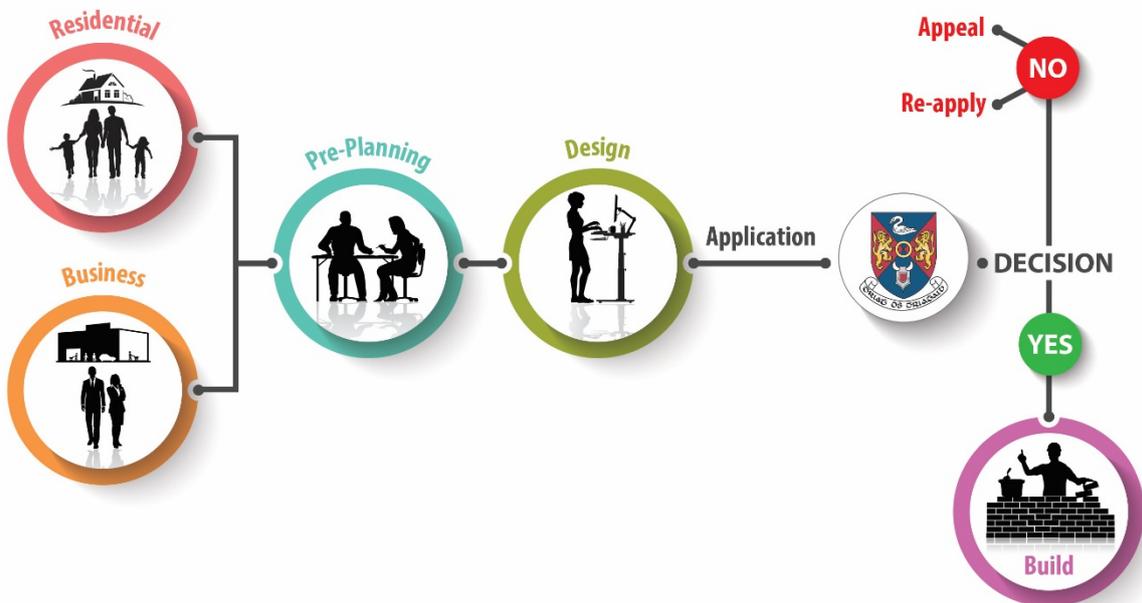


Fig 16.1 – The Planning Process

16.1.2 Overarching Planning Principles

16.1.3 Compliance with Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines

All development proposals (i.e. both urban and rural) should positively contribute to the receiving environment, having regard to sustainable qualitative and quantitative standards outlined in this chapter and Ministerial Guidelines, where relevant.

16.1.4 Universal Access and Inclusive design

The importance of universal equality of access and inclusive design within all aspects of the built environment is recognised by the Council.

The Council encourages that all new development proposals be designed in accordance with the standards outlined in the 'National Disability Authority - Building for Everyone; A Universal Design Approach 2012' and Technical Guidance Document M - Access and Use of the Building Regulations 2010 or any subsequent update.

16.1.5 Sustainable Design

Sustainable design elements should be considered at the initial design stage of the process as these elements will determine siting, orientation of building(s), height, form, materials, density and overall functionality and aesthetics of development proposed.

Energy efficient buildings minimise the consumption of non-renewable resources and waste and create healthy and comfortable buildings and places. New development should employ considered and high-quality sustainable design measures that serve to mitigate and adapt to seasonal and climate change.

Green infrastructure should also be identified at the initial design stage, with proposals incorporated into planning applications that allow for opportunities in delivering natural amenity areas, permeability and linkages with open spaces provided. This will assist in protecting and valuing our important and vulnerable habitats, landscapes, natural heritage and green spaces throughout Westmeath.

16.1.6 Assessments Required

Specific assessments may be required to enable the Planning Authority to make a decision on a planning proposal having regard to legislative requirements and/or to ensure compliance with the Development Plan.

16.1.7 Environmental Assessments:

Appropriate Assessment (AA)

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (1992), there is a requirement placed on the competent authority (i.e. Planning Authority) to consider and determine the possible nature conservation implications of any plan or project (and also the in-combination impacts with other plans and projects) on the Natura 2000 site network before any decision is made to allow that plan or project to proceed. If the Screening for Appropriate Assessment process considers that Appropriate Assessment is required, the applicant will be required to prepare a Natural Impact Statement for the development proposed.

A proposed development will only be approved where it can be determined by the competent authority that, based on best scientific evidence, the project or plan proposed will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site(s) (Natura 2000 site), either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

(Note: The Habitats Directive provides for imperative reasons of overriding public interest where a plan or project must proceed notwithstanding that the proposal will have significant adverse effect on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network and there are no alternative solutions available).

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the process of examining the potential effects of a proposed development on the receiving environment.

The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) lists the mandatory development thresholds where an Environmental Impact Assessment is required in respect of applications for specified classes. In the case of sub-threshold projects, the Council may request by notice in writing a discretionary EIAR, where it considers that the project proposed would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

16.1.8 Other Assessments

Other assessments that may be required as part of planning proposals, in certain instances, include but are not limited to the following:

- Flood Risk Assessment
- Traffic and Transport Assessment
- Architectural Assessment
- Archaeological Assessment
- Landscape Appraisal and Visual Assessment
- Ecological Assessment.

16.2 Design Standards for Urban Development

Positive urban placemaking and design is a central component in creating and sustaining vibrant towns and villages. The Design Standards on urban development seek to assist in achieving positive urban placemaking and enhance a sense of place with access to services and amenities with a high quality of life for all. It is recognised that the development of infill, brownfield and backland sites in urban areas presents greater design challenges in comparison to similar development proposals on greenfield sites. Having regard to this and to assist in enabling their development, the application of policies and development standards shall allow for a degree of flexibility, focusing on design led and performance-based outcomes, rather than applying absolute requirements in all cases.

16.2.1 Urban Design Principles

All development proposals should present high quality and considered design solutions employing best practice standards. The Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) (DoECLG) and Best Practice Urban Design Manual (2009) (DoECLG) provide guidance on best practice urban design principles, with which the urban design criteria and principles applied by the Council are premised. All new urban development proposals will be assessed in accordance with these criteria which are summarised in the figure 16.2 below.

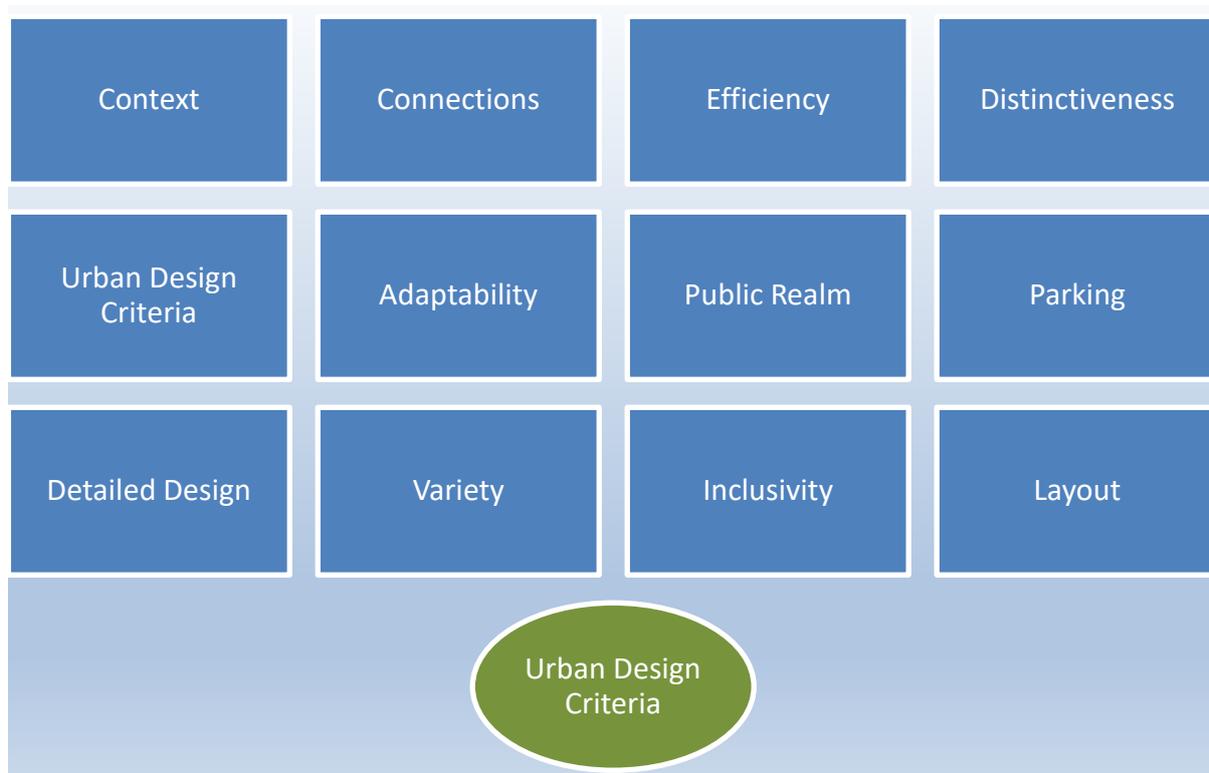


Figure 16.2 Urban Design Criteria

A **detailed Design Statement** (comprising of text, graphics and photographic imagery of the site and surroundings) is required for significant developments proposed (i.e. in terms of scale and/or site sensitivity) and should provide the following:

- Demonstrate the design concept, principles and urban design criteria employed in an integrated manner, in ensuring the effective assimilation of the proposal into the subject site and its wider context.
- Demonstrate compliance with Development Plan standards and Ministerial Guidelines.
- Demonstrate how green infrastructure integrates into the development and detailed proposals for open space provision.
- Provide justification for the development as proposed and any alternative design options considered.
- Provide explanatory on exceptional rather than conventional design approach taken (where applicable).

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to assess urban development proposals, where it is shown to:

CPO 16.1	Apply flexibility in the application of development standards with the consideration of performance-based criteria appropriate to general location, which will provide high-quality design outcomes, where appropriate. This more dynamic performance-based approach, applicable to town centre locations, will facilitate flexible design solutions in instances where a proposal fulfils specific planning requirements.
CPO 16.2	Achieve the delivery of high-quality built environments ensuring that development is designed to a high standard in line with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities and Best Practice Urban Design Manual (DoECLG 2009), the 'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2018), the core strategy for the county and other planning considerations.
CPO 16.3	Require that a detailed design statement be submitted in respect of residential schemes comprising 10 or more units, large scale developments over 350sqm (e.g. commercial, business & enterprise buildings, office, retail, educational facilities etc) and any other development proposed on key strategic or sensitive sites within the urban areas, as determined by the Planning Authority.
CPO 16.4	Encourage the use of green roofs and walls to be incorporated into new developments, where possible.

16.2.2 Shopfronts

The term shopfront encompasses all commercial development types located within our urban areas, including for example; shops, restaurants, offices, public houses and banks. All shopfront design, whether it be traditional or modern, should consider the streetscape, the building itself and the design detail of the shop unit.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council when assessing development proposals for shopfronts, the following criteria is considered:

CPO 16.5	<p>Require that new shopfront design is of a quality design standard that respects the character and architectural heritage of the existing streetscape.</p> <p>Historic shopfronts should be retained and refurbished, where feasible. Such features as existing arches, stringcourses, plaster detailing or existing fascias and brackets should be considered in the new design and new internal alterations or proposed advertising should generally not interfere with such details. Wholesale removal of rendering along a streetscape is generally not encouraged.</p> <p>Contemporary shop front design will be encouraged, where appropriate. Design cues of modern shop fronts should include the basic shopfront elements of fascia, pilasters and stallriser/base and should employ high quality architectural detailing and quality materials appropriate to the size of window openings.</p>
CPO 16.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generally restrict the use of film, adhesive stickers and any other screening that obscures the glazed area of a shopfront window where it negatively impacts upon the streetscape. ▪ Require that security shutters on new shopfronts (where required) are transparent and placed behind the shopfront window glazing, ▪ Illumination of fascia signage, shopfronts or distinctive architectural features should be discreet and limited to spotlighting, uplighting or disguised minimalist strip lighting. In this regard, internally illuminated fascias and internally illuminated signs are generally not permitted. ▪ Ensure that corporate logos (or other similar logos), lighting designs and colours are not used where it would detract from the character and architectural heritage of the streetscape.

16.2.3 Signage

Signage can significantly alter the visual appearance of a building or streetscape by either positively contributing to the receiving environment or resulting in a loss of visual amenity.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives	
It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to:	
CPO 16.7	Evaluate signage proposals in relation to the surroundings and architectural features of the building or structure on which signs are to be displayed, the number of signs in the area and the potential for the creation of undesirable visual clutter.
CPO 16.8	Encourage the use of both the Irish and English language on any new cultural, community and civic signage.
CPO 16.9	Seek energy reduction measures in new and replacements advertising structures, where feasible.

16.3 Residential Development

Sustainable residential development requires the provision of a mix of housing designs and layouts comprising a range of dwelling sizes and typologies to accommodate emerging demographic trends within the County's settlements.

16.3.1 Design, Layout & Housing Mix

New residential developments should deliver high quality architectural design and layout. In this regard, the Councils standards on mix of dwelling types and density should be considered as part of any proposal.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives	
It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council when assessing development proposals for new residential development that the following criteria be applied, as appropriate:	
CPO 16.10	Residential schemes to provide a range of dwelling sizes and typologies to accommodate emerging demographic trends in line with the Westmeath Housing Strategy and Housing Needs Demand Assessment or other evidence supported methodology. Proposals for residential schemes which are proposed on infill or smaller sites should demonstrate the ability of the proposal to provide a mix of dwelling types within the locality as opposed to within the scheme itself.

CPO 16.11	Planning proposals for housing schemes are required to present a considered design approach to tailor the scale, design, layout and density of housing in responding to the individual character of the respective town or village.
CPO 16.12	<p>New housing layouts should provide for a suitable mix and typology of residential units that demonstrates compliance with the following criteria:</p> <p><u>Physical Criteria</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Optimise traffic safety and ensure ease of movement, orientation and navigation, with a fully integrated and connected road network. Avoidance of a roads dominant scheme and use of cul-de-sacs. ▪ Provision of quality pedestrian and cycle linkages and infrastructure to facilitate sustainable modes of transport. ▪ Promotion of a high standard of design and layout that provides legibility, character and local distinctiveness. ▪ Ensure that buildings and streets are designed to enable easy access by all regardless of mobility. <p><u>Social Criteria</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design for life and adaptability meeting the needs of all (including children, older persons and mobility impaired). ▪ Design for social cohesion and interaction based on active and social streets. ▪ Protect levels of privacy and amenity for existing and new residents. ▪ Delivery of active frontages including corner sites providing dual frontage and avoidance of blank facades, fencing and garden walls fronting on to streets and green areas/open space. ▪ Support play policies to address the play and recreation needs of children and young people and ensure the integration of play provision and child-friendly neighbourhoods. ▪ One childcare facility providing for a minimum of 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings proposed should be provided, unless otherwise recommended by the County Childcare Committee. <p><u>Environmental Criteria</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Innovative energy efficient housing to accommodate new typologies and provide adaptable and/ or whole life-cycle homes to create inclusive and socially balanced residential communities. ▪ Reflect and contribute to the local character and identity of place by avoiding repetitive volume builds. ▪ Delivery of high quality accessible open space, public realm and landscaping. ▪ Incorporation of measures to ensure sustainable design such as rainwater harvesting, green roofs and walls etc. <p>Note: In certain circumstances, (e.g. regeneration lands and brownfield sites located within town centres) Performance Based Criteria will be applied in relation to development proposals.</p>

CPO 16.13	Where new developments are proposed adjacent to existing and established neighbourhoods, the design, layout and housing mix should be designed in such a way to enable positive integration, both physically and socially towards building strong integrated communities and social cohesion.
CPO 16.14	Generally require a separation distance of 22m between opposing rear first floor windows to avoid overlooking and protect private residential amenity. Innovative dwelling types, such as houses which have their main sleeping and living areas on one side, and circulation and bathrooms on the other, may allow for a reduction in this standard. Any window proposed at ground floor level should not be less than 1m from the boundary it faces.
CPO 16.15	Apply the recommendations of 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice' – Second Edition, (B.R.E.)' in addressing overshadowing of adjoining lands. Overshadowing daylight and shadow projection diagrams may be required to assist in the assessment of applications.
CPO 16.16	Incorporate Dual Aspect designs into residential schemes, where possible, to ensure provision of active and passive surveillance over street frontages, creation of attractive thoroughfares by avoiding spanning rear garden walls, the creation of more recognisable routes and junctions that aid navigation and contributing energy efficiency advantages, whilst providing for more attractive, usable and adaptable living spaces, and better sunlight/daylight provision to its occupants.
CPO 16.17	Provision of lifetime adaptable homes to accommodate the changing needs of a household over time.
CPO 16.18	<p><u>Boundary Treatment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rear private garden area should be not less than 11m in depth extending the full width of the house. Discretion of this standard will be dependent on-site layout characteristics and flexibility may be employed where performance-based criteria can be adequately demonstrated. (For example, where a side garden of equal or greater dimensions can be substituted for rear garden space and where a situation of overlooking is demonstrably avoided). ▪ Where a front boundary wall or fencing is provided, the design and materials must be such as to provide a subtle but complimentary design feature to the overall housing layout. ▪ Rear boundary walls or fences must be provided to a height of not more than 2 metres and backplanted with native deep-root hedging/trees. ▪ Side Garden walls should generally be presented behind the front building line of the dwelling only, to allow for the openness of residential development and protect visual amenities. ▪ Boundary walls/enclosures should not present blank spanning facades onto thoroughfares. Design solutions may include the use of dual aspect dwellings and alternative site orientation including provision of side access/egress arrangements.

CPO 16.19	Proposals for new apartment schemes should be designed in line with design criteria as set out in the 2018 Ministerial Guidelines - Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (or any subsequent update.)								
CPO 16.20	<p><u>Private Open Space</u> All dwelling houses should generally have an area of private open space located to the rear of their dwelling and comprise a minimum area as follows:</p> <p>Private Open Spaces for Houses</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="379 566 1150 831"> <thead> <tr> <th>Accommodation size</th> <th>Min private open area</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1-2 bedrooms</td> <td>48m²</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3-4-5 bedrooms</td> <td>60-75m²</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inner urban infill dwellings.</td> <td>25m²</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In certain circumstances, a reduction in this standard may be considered where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Innovative layouts within residential schemes are proposed, the Council may consider it appropriate to accept the collective combination of the area of both private and semi-private open space provisions as satisfying the private open space requirement for the proposed dwellings. (ii) Where the open space standards cannot be achieved or where more intensive recreational uses are deemed to be desirable, the Council, at its discretion, may consider arrangements whereby appropriate intensive facilities may be provided in lieu of open space. Intensive recreational/amenity facilities should be in the form of recreational buildings or enclosures, which may include indoor or all-weather recreational facilities. (iii) A contribution in lieu of provision of adequate public space will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances will be assessed on their merits on a case-by-case basis, and in such instances sufficient private and semi-private open space (or, open space for use by all the occupants of the proposed development) should be provided. <p>Exceptional circumstances to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where developments are close to existing public parks and other amenity facilities. - Smaller residential and commercial developments where it may not be appropriate to provide public open space; - The need to protect the established pattern of streets and spaces. 	Accommodation size	Min private open area	1-2 bedrooms	48m ²	3-4-5 bedrooms	60-75m ²	Inner urban infill dwellings.	25m ²
Accommodation size	Min private open area								
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Inner urban infill dwellings.	25m ²								
CPO 16.21	<p><u>Public Open Space Provision & Recreational Amenities</u></p> <p>In general, 15% of gross site area should be provided for multifunctional open spaces at suitable locations within new residential schemes. These open spaces should be easily accessible to all residents and provide for both passive and active uses for persons of all abilities regardless of age or mobility and including design measures and features incorporating sensory design aids, and landscaping, where feasible.</p>								

	<p>Where public open space cannot be provided or where it is not appropriate to provide this, a contribution in lieu of provision towards public open space or recreational facilities in the wider area may be required. This will take the form of a contribution on a per capita basis towards capital investment in creating and/or upgrading parks and spaces and revenue costs for the maintenance of these spaces for a 20-year period.</p> <p>Recreational/amenity facilities (indoor or outdoor) of a more intensive nature in tandem with larger developments may be considered as part of the delivery of open space requirements, within a specified timeframe. Such provision will be at the sole discretion of the Planning Authority and considered in the wider context of the site area.</p> <p>All residential developments provide satisfactory waste storage including provision for segregation of waste materials in an accessible, convenient and visually unobtrusive manner. Where communal refuse storage is required, the collection point for refuse should be accessible both to the external collector and to the resident and be secured against illegal dumping by non-residents.</p>
CPO 16.22	<p><u>Refuse Storage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All residential developments should provide satisfactory waste storage including provision for segregation of waste materials in an accessible, convenient and visually unobtrusive manner. Where communal refuse storage is required, the collection point for refuse should be accessible both to the external collector and to the resident and be secured against illegal dumping by non-residents. ▪ Refuse storage areas should not be located immediately adjacent to the front door or ground floor window, unless adequate screened alcoves or other such mitigation measures are provided. <p>All bin storage should be designed in such a way as to discreetly integrate with the built form/site.</p>
CPO 16.23	<p><u>Water and Wastewater Services</u></p> <p>The applicant or developer is advised to consult with Irish Water regarding arrangements pertaining to water and/or wastewater connection agreement(s), if required, prior to the making of a planning application.</p>

16.3.2 Residential Density

The Council generally seeks that the number of residential units to be delivered on a site should be determined in relation to the hierarchical status of the settlement within the Council's Settlement Hierarchy and its capacity for growth and its access to public transport and necessary social infrastructure. Furthermore, the Council acknowledges and encourages higher densities, where appropriate, given the need to reduce CO2 emissions by reducing energy consumption and to support a more efficient use of energy in the residential and transport sectors, in line with Ireland's commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council when assessing development proposals for new residential development that the following criteria will be considered, as appropriate:

CPO 16.24	Increased residential density within Athlone Regional Centre and Mullingar (key town) is acceptable in principle where the subject lands are (i) within walking distance of the town centre, or (ii) are adequately serviced by necessary social infrastructure and public transport and/or (iii) designated regeneration sites and development lands which comprise in excess of 0.5ha, subject to quality design and planning merit in ensuring compact growth and the creation of good urban places and attractive neighbourhoods.
CPO 16.25	Relaxation in residential density will be permitted in areas identified for the provision of services and serviced sites that create “build your own home” opportunities within the existing footprint of self-sustaining growth towns, rural towns and villages and other rural settlements.

16.3.3 Taking in Charge & Management Companies

Where a housing scheme is proposed to be taken-in-charge by the Council, a site layout plan clearly indicating those areas to be taken-in charge and those areas to remain the responsibility of a properly established management company shall be submitted to the Planning Authority. In this regard, the applicant must have regard to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Governments document ‘Taking in Charge of Residential Developments Circular Letter PL 02/2019 and Westmeath County Council’s Taking in Charge Policy for Private Housing Developments 2019 (or any subsequent update).

It is a requirement of Westmeath County Council that all apartment schemes should be maintained by an established Management Company. Details of proposed maintenance must be submitted for approval of the Planning Authority and include evidence of compulsory membership for all purchasers of individual properties.

16.3.4 Bonds

To ensure the satisfactory completion of development works, such as roads, footpaths, surface water drainage, car parks, public lighting and open space, landscaping and the protection of trees on a site which has been the subject of a grant of permission, a bond or cash lodgement may be required to ensure satisfactory completion of non-water services related infrastructure until the development has been satisfactorily completed. The bond or cash lodgement may be sequestered in part or in its entirety at the discretion of the Planning Authority where the development has not been satisfactorily completed. The amount of such bond or cash lodgement will be determined by the Planning Authority.

16.3.5 Other Residential Development Types

This includes;

- Alterations and extensions to existing dwellings.
- Vehicular Access and Replacement of front gardens with surfaced parking.
- Dependent Relative Accommodation/Granny Flats.
- Residential care homes, retirement homes, nursing homes, retirement villages and sheltered accommodation.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives	
It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council when assessing development proposals for Other Residential Development Types to consider:	
CPO 16.26	<p><u>Alterations and extensions to existing dwellings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extensions and/or alterations should respect the main dwelling. ▪ Where contemporary designs are proposed, proposals should not detract from the visual amenities of the main dwelling or neighbouring properties. ▪ Extension works should not encroach, oversail or otherwise physically impinge third party properties. ▪ Proposals should be designed in such a way as to eliminate overshadowing or overlooking of adjoining property.
CPO 16.27	<p><u>Vehicular Access and Replacement of front gardens with surfaced parking</u></p> <p>Proposals for a new vehicular entrance/driveway to a dwelling will generally only be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is no greater than 50 per cent of the width of the front boundary and no greater than 3 metres in width. ▪ It does not necessitate traffic movements which involves reversing onto the public road/street. ▪ It provides solely for inward opening or sliding gates (gates shall not open onto the public road/footpath). ▪ It provides for the retention/provision of soft landscaping. <p>The removal of front gardens and associated walls and railings will generally not be permitted where the works will have a negative impact on the character of streetscapes. In particular, these works will generally not be permitted in Architectural Conservation Areas, areas of architectural and historic character and within the curtilage of a protected structure.</p>
CPO 16.28	<p><u>Dependent Relative Accommodation/Granny Flats</u></p> <p>Proposals for this accommodation should demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A bona-fide need for such a unit; ▪ A physical connection to the main house with direct access to the main dwelling; ▪ That the proposal does not impact adversely on either the residential amenities of the existing property or the residential amenities of the area;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ That the accommodation can revert back to being part of the original house when no longer occupied by a member of the family.
CPO 16.29	<p><u>Residential care homes, retirement homes, nursing homes, retirement villages and sheltered accommodation</u></p> <p>Proposals for this accommodation should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be located within towns and villages for reasons of sustainability, accessibility, social inclusion and proximity to services. Exceptions will only be considered where a professional and evidence-based need is demonstrated to locate in a rural environment because of the nature of the care required. ▪ Provide adequate open space informed by the need to cater for all levels of ability and in particular the needs of an ageing population and the mobility impaired, in line with Ministerial and Departmental guidelines including Housing Options for Our Ageing Population Policy Statement (Department of Health) (2019) and Thinking Ahead: Independent and Supported Housing Models for an Ageing Population (Housing Agency) (2018). ▪ Provide adequate parking facilities. ▪ Be of a size, scale and incorporate external finishes appropriate to the area. ▪ Not detract from the residential amenities of adjoining lands.

16.3.6 Home-Based Economic Activity (HBEA)

Home based economic activity is defined as domestic scaled commercial activity carried out by residents of a house. Advancements in information communication systems (ICT), a connected world-wide economy and the environmental benefits associated with carbon reduction support the provision of HBEA. HBEA is encouraged where it is ancillary to main residential use and where it does not have any adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring dwellings.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to consider the following criteria when assessing development proposals for home based economic activity:

CPO 16.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The type of business proposed; ▪ The nature and extent of the work; ▪ Reason for its location (e.g. justification on why it is not proposed within settlement centre, etc.); ▪ Anticipated levels of traffic generated by the proposal, accessibility, and car-parking; ▪ The effects on the amenities of the adjoining occupiers particularly in relation to hours of work, noise and general disturbance; ▪ Whether the proposal requires delivery/shipment of goods and details of same;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrangements for storage and collection of waste. (Materials used or goods manufactured, serviced or repaired in the home-based business must be stored within a building). ▪ No goods manufactured, serviced or repaired should be displayed so that they are visible from outside the site. ▪ Should not have any adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring dwellings. <p>A temporary permission may be granted to enable the planning authority to monitor the impact of the development in the area.</p>
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16.3.7 Rural Housing

Notwithstanding an applicants' demonstration of compliance with the rural housing criteria as set out at Chapter 9, it is important to note that applicants are also required to meet overriding sustainable planning practices in terms of visual impact, design standards, environmental and traffic safety issues.

The design of rural housing development requires careful design consideration to ensure that all new development sensitively integrates into the landscape. This requires specific focus on site selection, design, scale and form of the proposed development. The most successful designs subtly integrate with the receiving landscape by selecting naturally sheltered and screened sites and the development of a simple built form complimented with the use of materials that are reflective of traditional vernacular.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council when assessing development proposals for rural housing that the following criteria will be considered:

CPO 16.31	<p>Apply the following guidance in assessing planning applications for rural housing:</p> <p><u>Site Selection and Design</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The scale, form, design and siting of the development should be sensitive to its surroundings and visually integrate with the receiving landscape. ▪ Simple design forms and materials reflective of traditional vernacular should be used. ▪ Have regard to the scale of surrounding buildings. A large house requires a large site to ensure effective integration into its surroundings (either immediately or in the future, through planned screening) ▪ The design, siting and orientation of a new dwelling should be <u>site specific</u> responding to the natural features and topography of the site to best integrate development with the landscape and to optimise solar gain to maximise energy efficiency. ▪ The siting of new development shall visually integrate with the landscape, utilising natural features including existing contours and established field boundaries and shall not visually dominates the landscape. (Cutting and filling of sites is not desirable).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New buildings should respect the landscape context and not impinge scenic views or skylines as seen from vantage points or public roads. ▪ Larger houses (e.g. in excess of 200sqm) should incorporate design solutions to minimise visual mass and scale e.g. sub-divided into smaller elements of traditional form to avoid bulky structures. ▪ Use a simple plan form to give a clean roof shape – a long plan in preference to a deep plan. This will avoid the creation of a bulky shape. ▪ Where existing vernacular structures exist on site, consideration should be given to their re-use, adaptation and extension in preference to new build. ▪ Clustering with existing rural buildings is generally preferable to stand-alone locations. ▪ The applicant should determine if the proposed development is located on any designated natural heritage, archaeological or architectural heritage site. The existence of any of these designated sites within the proposed development site may have implications for the proposed dwelling. <p><u>Materials and Detailing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The detail, texture, colour, pattern, and durability of materials of the proposed development should be sustainable and of a high quality, and sensitive to its proposed location ▪ Local Stone (sandstone/limestone - area specific) and render such as stucco, traditional lime render or lime wash, rough cast render or napped render finish and glass is encouraged. Metal cladding such as copper, timber shingle, self-finished modern renders, and painted timber finish may be acceptable in certain instances or in cases where the design solution calls for an accent material. Brick, stone cladding which clearly reads as non-structural and non-Local Stone or dashes and cladding and other metal or timber finishes which give an engineered or artificial appearance will generally not be permitted. ▪ Where contemporary materials are proposed they should complement and harmonise with traditional materials. ▪ Simple design forms and roof designs with narrow spans (gable-widths) and pitches/profiles are preferable. ▪ Particular attention should be paid to the solid to void ratio of windows and doors. Openings should be proportionate to complement the style of the building. ▪ Decorative fascias and box end soffits should be avoided.
CPO 16.32	<p><u>Boundary Treatment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Application sites should be flanked with a minimum of two established natural boundaries to aid visual integration and help soften the visual impact of the development in the landscape. ▪ Existing hedgerows and landscape features on site should be retained and augmented on site. Where hedgerow removal is required to achieve sight lines, new hedgerow(s) of a native species must be planted inside the line of visibility. ▪ New roadside frontage should be incorporated into existing roadside treatment using compatible hedgerow planting, walls, timber fencing and/or drystone work. ▪ Boundary treatment should reflect local traditions. Traditional dry-stone wall construction or limestone walls with lime mortar, and/or post and wire/timber fencing backplanted with indigenous hedging are considered

	<p>appropriate at entrances. Over-scaled and elaborate designs should be avoided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The design of entrance gates should be in keeping with the rural setting. Entrances, wing walls and piers which are not demonstrated to be in character with the rural location of the proposed development will generally not be permitted. All planning applications must include detailed drawings and specifications for vehicular entrance arrangements. ▪ Driveways, and surfaced areas should be located so as to minimise the visual impacts of these proposed structures for example by following existing contour lines. <p><u>Access and Sight Lines</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All applications for planning permission must include (at a minimum scale of 1:500) comprehensive details of the way in which safe access and egress to the site can be achieved. ▪ Existing roadside hedgerows and trees should be retained as much as possible. The entrance should be carefully considered to achieve the required sight distance with the removal of a minimum extent of existing hedgerow. ▪ Where satisfactory access can be achieved only by removing large stretches of roadside hedgerow/ditches/stone boundaries, an alternative site for the proposed development should be sought. ▪ The sharing of vehicular entrances will be encouraged where appropriate in order to avoid a proliferation of access points. Where a new house is to be sited adjacent to existing dwellings, use of existing entrances, avenues and driveways should be considered. ▪ Safe unobstructed sight distances should be provided and maintained thereafter from vehicular entrances onto the road network as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Roads: 90 metres, (subject to the discretion of the Planning Authority where a lesser distance is demonstrably adequate in terms of traffic safety) - Regional Roads: 150 metres - National Roads: 230 metres <p><u>Landscaping</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landscaping proposals should be submitted with all planning applications for development and shall include a schedule of indigenous native plant species and implementation timeline. <p><u>Surface & Wastewater Treatment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Domestic wastewater treatment plant and percolation areas to comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment Systems Serving Single Dwellings (EPA, 2009) or other superseding standards. These details should be included in any application for a new or replacement dwelling or an extension to an existing dwelling where there is an increase in demand on the treatment capacity of any existing system.
CPO 16.33	<p><u>Domestic Garage/Shed/Store</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The design, form and materials should be ancillary to, and consistent with the main dwelling on site. ▪ Structures should generally be detached and sited to the rear of the dwelling house and be visually subservient in terms of size, scale and bulk.

- Storage facilities should be used solely for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling and not for any commercial, manufacturing, industrial use or habitable space in the absence of prior planning consent for such use.

16.4 Roads and Transportation

The provision of a safe vehicular access is a prerequisite for all development proposals in the interest of traffic safety for all road users. Chapter 10 of the Plan, 'Transport, Infrastructure and Energy' provides the policy context in ensuring the provision of efficient and sustainable infrastructural network, whilst providing for the safety of users. All planning applications will be assessed in accordance with the policy context set out in Chapter 10.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives -

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council in assessing development proposals, that the following road safety considerations be taken into account:

CPO 16.34	<p><u>Traffic Management and Road Safety</u></p> <p>All new road layouts should be designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).</p> <p>Development proposals should also include provision for a sustainable modal split, with pedestrian and cycling facilities recognised as an important aspect of new design proposals.</p> <p><u>Road Safety Audit</u></p> <p>A Road Safety Audit may be required to demonstrate that a proposed development does not pose a risk to road users, create a traffic nuisance or contribute to congestion. It should be carried out by suitably competent persons, in accordance with the TII's Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines.</p> <p><u>Traffic and Transport Assessments (TTAs)</u></p> <p>Development proposals that are likely to create significant vehicular movements will be required to undertake a site-specific assessment to demonstrate the impact of the proposal on the integrated transport system by means of a Transport and Transport Assessment (TTA). The TTA should include an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the full range of modes of transport and incorporate traffic impact statements, road safety audits and measures to maximise accessibility of non-private car related movement.</p> <p><u>Mobility Management Plans (MMPs)</u> (Refer Chapter 10, Section 10.6 Mobility Management Plans for instances where MMPs are required)</p>
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	<p>Mobility Management Plans should include achievable measures to reduce dependency on private car use for daily commutes and incorporate where possible;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measures to promote use of public transport, cycling and walking; - Car sharing/carpooling; - Charges for parking; - Staggered working/business hours. <p>Mobility Management Plans may be subject to annual reviews. It is recognised that the first (and subsequent) annual reviews of an Mobility Management Plan are the key stages in making them tangible as they will be tailored to real travel-to-work patterns and not a generic model based upon assumptions).</p>
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16.4.1 Parking Standards

The purpose and application of parking standards is to ensure that when assessing development proposals, consideration is given to the accommodation of vehicles that will potentially be generated by the development proposed in accordance with national and regional policy objectives and to facilitate a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport. It is generally required that residential, commercial, enterprise and employment developments or otherwise, comply with the parking standards detailed in CPO 16.35 below. However, a reduction in the standard of car parking provision with the designated town centre areas of Athlone (Regional Centre) and Mullingar (Key/County Town) will also be considered.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to:

CPO 16.35	<p>Assess all planning applications for development having regard to the car parking requirements set out under Table 16.2 below.</p> <p>Applications for development should also provide for:</p> <p><u>Disabled Parking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A minimum of 5% of car parking spaces provided should be designed for disabled car parking. ▪ Where the nature of particular developments are likely to generate a demand for higher levels of disabled car parking, the Planning Authority may require a higher proportion of parking for this purpose. ▪ All disabled parking should be conveniently located in proximity to building entrance points and allocated and suitably signed/demarcated. ▪ Parking bay widths for disabled persons should be a minimum of 3.0m wide by 4.75m long. <p><u>Age Friendly Parking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age Friendly Parking spaces, in main towns, near strategic areas e.g. Post office, credit union, doctors' surgery, civic buildings, etc. <p><u>EV charging points</u></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All developments should provide facilities for the charging of battery-operated cars at a rate of up to 10% of the total car parking spaces. The remainder of the parking spaces should be constructed so as to be capable of accommodating future charging points, as required. ▪ New residential development should accommodate at least one car parking space equipped with an EV charging points for every ten car parking spaces being provided for the associated development. ▪ Electric car charging spaces should be clearly demarcated with appropriate signage. <p><u>Rapid Charge Points:</u> Should be provided within centres of commercial activity and clearly demarcated with appropriate signage, in collaboration with ESB networks.</p>
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Land Use	Unit	Countywide	Designated Town Centre Area
		Min. Space /Unit	Min. Space/Unit
Residential	Dwelling	1.00	0
Visitor Parking for Residential	1 visitor space for every three dwellings	1.00	0
Shopping	100m ² gross floor area	6.0	3
Retail Warehousing	100m ² gross floor area	3.0	3
Cash & Carry	100m ² gross floor area	2.00	2.00
Manufacturing	100m ² gross floor area	2.00	1.00
Warehousing	100m ² gross floor area	1.5	1.5
Office	100m ² gross floor area	3.00	1.5
Bank/Financial Institutions	100m ² gross floor area	5.00	0
Bar, function room	100m ² gross floor area	6.00	0
Restaurant	100m ² gross floor area	6.00	0
Take-away	Unit	5.00	0
Hotel/ Guest House	Bedroom	1.00	0.5
Hospital	Bed	0.33	0.10
Nursing Home	Bed	0.33	0.10
Clinics and Group Medical Practices	Consulting room	3.00	1.5
Sports Hall/Club	100m ² gross floor area/ plus each court	2.00	0
Cinema, theatre, Stadium auditorium	Seat	1.0	0

Table 16.3 Car Parking Standards

Provision of secure cycle storage facilities is essential for supporting the promotion and development of cycling as a more sustainable mode of transport. High quality secure cycle storage at origins and destinations is considered to be a key element of any strategy aimed at encouraging cycling.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to:

CPO 16.36	Assess all planning applications for development having regard to the cycling storage requirements set out under Table 16.3 below.
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Housing Developments	1 private secure bicycle space per bed space (note - design should not require bicycle access via living area), minimum 2 spaces 1 visitor bicycle space per two housing units
Offices	10% of employee numbers, (subject to minimum of 10 bicycle storage places or one bike space for every car space, whichever is the greater)
Schools	10% of pupil registration numbers, minimum 10 places Consider separate teacher/ employee storage
Other Developments	1 bike storage space for every car space
Shops	1 storage space per 100 sq. m
Public Transport pick-up points (Rail, tram, taxi ranks and QBCs)	2.5% of number of daily boarders at that point/ station, subject to minimum of 10 bicycle storage places

Table 16.3 Cycle Storage Standards

16.5 Retail Development

The importance of consolidating and protecting the vitality and viability of town centres to enable the towns and villages of Westmeath to thrive is recognised by the Council. In this regard, new planning applications should comply with the retail policy objectives outlined in the development plan (including the County Retail Strategy) and the Retail Planning Guidelines (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012).

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council in assessing planning applications for retail development, to take the following into account:

CPO 16.37	<u>Large-Scale Retail</u> Applications for large scale retail developments will be assessed in accordance with the county retail strategy.
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CPO 16.38	<p><u>Service Stations</u></p> <p>In assessing planning applications for service stations, the following considerations will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forecourt Store/Retail unit associated with a petrol filling station should generally not exceed 100sqm net floor area. Where an increase in this standard is sought, the Sequential Approach to retail development shall apply i.e. the retail element shall be assessed similar to an application for a standalone retail development in the same location. ▪ Forecourt shops should be designed and sited to facilitate safe pedestrian and bicycle access, with unimpeded access for delivery vehicles. The safety aspects of circulation and parking within the station forecourt should be demonstrated fully. ▪ Design and layout of service stations and forecourts should be of high-quality and integrate with the surrounding built environment. In urban centres, where the development would be likely to have a significant impact on the historic or architectural character of the area, the use of standard corporate designs and signage may not be acceptable. ▪ Forecourt lighting, including canopy lighting, should be contained within the site and should not interfere with the amenities of the area. ▪ Ancillary services such as car wash services should be sited so as not to result in queueing onto the public road network or negatively impact on neighbouring residential amenities. ▪ Rapid EV charging point(s) should be provided and clearly demarcated with appropriate signage, in collaboration with ESB networks. ▪ Service stations and associated truck parking facilities in locations at or near national roads will be assessed having regard to the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).
CPO 16.39	<p><u>Fast Food/Take-away Outlet</u></p> <p>In assessing planning applications for fast food outlets, the following considerations will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposals should generally be confined to core retail areas or areas of mixed commercial development. ▪ Proximity to Schools. ▪ The envisaged cumulative effect of the proposed development on the existing mix of land uses and activities within an area/proximity of site. (The Council considers it inappropriate to provide for an excessive concentration of takeaways within a given area in order to maintain an appropriate mix of uses and protect night-time amenities in particular areas). ▪ Proposed Hours of Operation. ▪ Location of vents and other external services and their potential impact on adjoining amenities in terms of noise/odour/visual impact. ▪ Potential impacts on the residential amenities of properties within the vicinity ▪ Potential impacts on the character and amenities of an area. (Such uses are generally incongruous with mid-terrace locations or other locations where neighbouring properties or upper floors unconnected with the business are in residential use). ▪ The scale of the development proposed in keeping with the scale of the building and the pattern of development in the area.

CPO 16.40	<p><u>Secondary Retail Type Outlets (Including Betting Office/Amusement Arcades/Casino/Tattoo Parlour/Vaping Shops)</u></p> <p>In assessing planning applications for these uses, the following considerations will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The need to safeguard the vitality and viability of the defined retail area and to maintain a suitable mix of retail uses; ▪ The number/frequency of such facilities in the area; ▪ The effect on the amenities in the area arising from noise, hours of operation and litter. ▪ The treatment of shop front advertising and window display.
CPO 16.41	<p><u>Market/Casual Trading</u></p> <p>In assessing planning applications for markets/casual trading, the following considerations will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrangements for customers'/traders' parking, servicing, storage, disposal and recycling of refuse and storage of stalls. ▪ The Casual Trading Act of 1995 and specifically any Byelaws made by Westmeath County Council under Section 6 of the Act. ▪ The likely impact on town centre vitality and viability, residential amenity, conservation area(s), the general environment or existing shops. ▪ The capacity of the road network and parking requirements.

16.6 Community Infrastructure and Facilities

Social and community infrastructure plays an important role in developing strong and inclusive communities. Social infrastructure should be easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Shared use and co-location of facilities are encouraged, in order to align service provision, use land more efficiently and facilitate opportunities for further inclusion and community participation.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council in assessing planning applications for the provision of community facilities and social infrastructure to consider the following:

CPO 16.42	<p><u>Childcare Facilities should:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate compliance with the 'Guidelines on Childcare Facilities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) and Circular Letter PL3 2016 or any superseding guidelines. ▪ Provide justification for proposed site location. ▪ Provide details on accessibility, including pedestrian, cycle and public transport provisions and linkages to the proposed development. ▪ Identify adequate and safe set-down and collection areas to facilitate peak traffic movements. ▪ Identify adequate on-site car parking for staff.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify adequate play area(s) for pupils. ▪ New or expanded premises should have regard to traffic impact associated with the number of children and staff to be accommodated and should provide adequate set-down areas and car parking areas to prevent traffic congestion. ▪ Large scale proposals may be required to present a Mobility Management Plan to mitigate against traffic volumes by proposing staggered opening hours and drop off times to avoid congestion at peak times. <p>The following locations are considered appropriate for the provision of childcare facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In communities/larger new housing estates. ▪ The vicinity of concentrations of work places, such as industrial estates, business parks and any other locations where there are significant numbers working. ▪ Near schools. ▪ Neighbourhood and town centres. ▪ Adjacent to public transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways.
CPO 16.43	<p><u>Education Facilities</u></p> <p>The location and provision of schools and other educational facilities are an integral part of the evolution of compact sustainable urban development and the development of sustainable communities, both in an urban and rural context. In this regard, the Council seeks to undertake planned approach to education provision and the location of new school facilities within settlements and with access to public transport and active travel modes, where feasible.</p> <p>In assessing planning applications for educational facilities, the following considerations will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compliance with the ‘Guidelines on The Provision of Schools and the Planning System – A Code of Practice’ (2008). ▪ The need for school accommodation. ▪ Justification for proposed site location. ▪ Details on accessibility, including pedestrian, cycle and public transport provisions and linkages to the proposed development. ▪ Adequate and safe set-down and collection areas to facilitate peak traffic movements and adequate car parking for staff. ▪ Mobility Management Plan for the proposal. ▪ Adequate play area(s) for pupils.
CPO 16.44	<p><u>Health Care Services</u></p> <p>In assessing planning applications for Health Care Services, the following considerations will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Structures proposed should generally comprise a simple form and function and be located on suitably zoned lands within urban areas ▪ Justification for proposal provided by reference to anticipated demand. ▪ Adequate capacity in the local road network and car parking provisions. ▪ Intended hours of operation. ▪ Appropriate signage.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate landscaping.
CPO 16.45	<p><u>Places of Worship</u></p> <p>In assessing planning applications for places of worship, the following considerations will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Location on appropriately zoned lands. ▪ Details of the capacity of the facility (e.g. seating capacity), traffic assessment and intended hours of operation. <p>New or extended places of worship should not create unacceptable traffic congestion; comply with car parking standards; and not impact on amenities of neighbouring residents or businesses (arising from traffic, noise or other disturbance).</p>
CPO 16.46	<p><u>Community infrastructure and facilities</u></p> <p>In assessing planning applications for community infrastructure, the following considerations will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall need in terms of necessity, deficiency, and opportunity to enhance or develop local or County facilities. ▪ Practicalities of site in terms of site location relating to uses, impact on local amenities, desirability, and accessibility. ▪ Conformity with the requirements of appropriate legislative guidelines. ▪ Conformity with land use zoning objectives.

16.7 Enterprise and Employment

The Planning Authority requires high quality energy efficient design, materials, finishes and good quality landscaping for all development proposals on Enterprise and Employment type developments.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council in assessing planning applications for the provision of enterprise and development proposals to consider the following:

CPO 16.47	<p><u>Employment and Enterprise (General)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The principle of development proposed, intensity and nature of the proposed use relative to the receiving environment and the likely impact on amenities of the surrounding area. ▪ Achievement of an appropriate density and scale of development. ▪ Proposals to achieve a positive modal shift towards sustainable transport alternatives. ▪ Potential impact of traffic movement and parking provision. Parking allocation should visually integrate with the overall site and not present as large swathes of forecourt parking. ▪ Quality of design and the treatment of ancillary utility equipment including roof top infrastructure such as vents, elevator shafts, cooling systems etc. ▪ Sustainable waste management measures including location and screening of waste facilities.
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CPO 16.48	<p><u>Seveso Sites</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical advice provided by The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) in respect of planning applications within a certain distance of the perimeter of the Seveso site (this distance varies depending on the nature of the activity at the site). ▪ The siting of new establishments which are designated as a Seveso site. ▪ Modifications to existing establishments which are designated as a Seveso site, ▪ Development in the vicinity of an establishment (Seveso site) which, by virtue of its type or siting, is likely to increase the risk or consequences of a major accident. ▪ Compliance with 'Policy & Approach of the Health & Safety Authority to COMAH Risk-based Land-use Planning' document which sets out the policy of the Authority on the landuse planning requirements of the European 'Seveso' Directive on the control of major accident hazards. ▪
CPO 16.49	<p><u>Business Parks and Industrial Areas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual buildings should exhibit a high-quality contemporary design and finish and the manner in which they conform with the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP). ▪ Car parking should be provided in a discreet, landscaped and well-screened environment with a view to minimising its visual impact, particularly when viewed from approach roads. ▪ Proposals should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and other measures that address adaptation to climate change including rainwater harvesting, the creation of integrated wetlands, the construction of green/living roofs whereby opportunities for existing solar energy and wind energy are taken. ▪ The building line on all principal road frontages should generally not be less than 15 metres from the road and there should be a minimum planted strip of a width of 5 metres on all principal road frontages, in order to ensure an attractive open parkland setting.

16.8 Tourism

The Council promotes and encourages sustainable forms of tourism, niche tourism and recreation in the countryside, where appropriate. Certain facilities and amenities, and associated services, are often required to support the enjoyment of tourism and recreational attractions, including areas of High Amenity value. Examples of facilities of this type ancillary to tourism include car parks, viewing points, sanitary facilities and cafes.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to assess planning applications for tourism and recreational amenities having regard to:

CPO 16.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Structures proposed should generally comprise a high quality design with sensitive siting and design so as not to interfere with the visual setting of sensitive visual attractions. ▪ Justification for proposal provided by reference to anticipated demand. ▪ Adequate signage, and interpretation panels, to inform and enhance the visitor experience and assist in proper site management. ▪ In terms of sustainable forms of niche tourism and recreation, facilities should be located within existing structures, or in buildings of character requiring renovation or in traditional farm houses, where possible. Where new buildings are proposed, they should be modest in scale, sensitively located and designed having regard to existing buildings, topography and landscaped and be adequately serviced and suitably managed.
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16.9 Agricultural Buildings and Structures

Agricultural buildings, structures and associated works (walls, fences, gates, entrances, yards etc.) should relate to the landscape and be sympathetic to their surroundings in scale, materials and finishes. Traditionally this was achieved by having the roof darker than the walls. The grouping of agricultural buildings is encouraged in order to reduce their overall impact in the interests of amenity.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to assess planning applications for agricultural buildings and structures and associated works, having regard to the following:

CPO 16.51	<p><u>Agricultural buildings and structures and associated works</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The design, scale, siting and layout of agricultural buildings should respect, and where possible, enhance the rural environment. ▪ Buildings should generally be located a minimum of 100metres from the nearest dwelling other than the applicants dwelling. ▪ The Council will generally seek to cluster agricultural buildings and structures together and siting to assimilate effectively into the landscape. ▪ The use of harmonious external materials should be used to minimise obtrusion on the landscape. The use of dark coloured cladding, notably dark browns, greys, greens and reds are most suitable for farm buildings, and roof areas should be darker than walls.
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CPO 16.52	<p><u>Reuse of redundant farm buildings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The re-use of redundant farm buildings for small-scale rural enterprise will be considered where; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the building was previously in agricultural use for a reasonable period. - it is no longer required for agricultural purposes. - the use proposed can be largely contained within the existing building.
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16.10 Extractive Industry (Quarries/Sand and Gravel Pits)

Planning applications for any extractive industry should have regard to the Quarrying and Ancillary Activities (DEHLG 2004), Guidelines for Environmental Management in the Extractive Sector (EPA, 2006), Guidance on Biodiversity in the Extractive Industry (NPWS), GSI's Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry, the Archaeological Code of Practice and the Irish Concrete Federation Environmental Code (2005) and any other relevant superseding policy guidance.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to assess planning applications which relate to the extractive industry (including quarries and sand and gravel pits), having regard to the following:

CPO 16.53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Details which should be submitted by the applicant as part of proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Map detailing total site area, area of excavation, any ancillary proposed development and nearest dwelling and/or any other development within 1km of the application site. - Description of the aggregate to be extracted, method of extraction, any ancillary processes (crushing etc), equipment to be used, stockpiles, storage of soil and overburden and storage of waste materials. - Total and annual tonnage of extracted aggregates, expected life time of the extraction, maximum extent and depth of working and a phasing programme. - Details of water courses, water table depth and hydrological impacts, natural and cultural heritage impacts, traffic impact and waste management. - Assessment of cumulative impact when taken with any other extractive operations in the vicinity. - Likely environmental effects, proposed mitigation measures and restoration. - Detailed Rehabilitation and after-care proposals. These should include a report with plans and section drawings, detailing the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anticipated finished landform and surface/landscape treatments (both of each phase proposed (where applicable) and the excavation as a whole), 2. Quality and condition of topsoil and overburden, 3. Rehabilitation works proposed, 4. Type and location of any vegetation proposed,
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	<p>5. Proposed method of funding and delivery of restoration/reinstatement works etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current Legal Planning Status of the Existing Development (Quarry/Sand and Gravel Pit). ▪ Justification on need for the development proposed, the extent of existing authorised quarry supplies available and the impact of the development on the local environment. ▪ Limited duration on permissions may be provided to allow for the re-evaluation of the development in light of unforeseen environmental implications and in light of changes in environmental standards and technology.
CPO 16.54	Require by way of planning condition that the developer lodge a financial bond to ensure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site following the completion of extraction. This bond shall be index linked.
CPO 16.55	A special contribution levy may be required from the developer towards the cost of upgrading or repairing the local roads serving the quarry and to minimise the adverse impacts of associated quarry operations on the road network.

16.11 Telecommunications

An efficient telecommunications system is vital in the development of the economy, however all applications in respect of its justification and appropriate siting are assessed on planning merit also.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to assess planning applications for telecommunications, having regard to the following:

CPO 16.56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Department of the Environment and Local Government's "Planning Guidelines for Telecommunications Antennae and Supports Structures" (1996) and Departmental Circular PSSP 07/12. ▪ Co-location agreements to be provided where possible. Where new facilities are proposed applicants will be required to satisfy the Council that they have made a reasonable effort to share facilities or to locate facilities in clusters. ▪ Visual impacts arising from proposal.
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16.12 Architectural Conservation and Archaeology

16.12.1 Architectural Heritage – Protected Structures

When making a planning application for permission to restore, refurbish, demolish, develop or change

of use of protected structures and other buildings of significant heritage interest, the Council normally requires that the following information should be submitted with each application:

- An Architectural Assessment Report as per the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2004;
- A comprehensive schedule of proposed work as per the above guidelines.

16.12.2 Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)

The overall guiding principle is to protect and positively enhance the unique qualities that make a place special because of its particular character. The requirements for planning application documentation for development within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and for their subsequent assessment is set out in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines (DOEHLG, 2004).

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to:

CPO 16.57	<p>In the assessment of applications for development within an Architectural Conservation Area, the following considerations will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidelines contained within the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004) (DAHG). <p><u>Development Works within an ACA</u> Proposals for development within an ACA that involves a new building, reuse or change of use and extensions will generally be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the ACA; - Respect the scale, massing, proportions, design and materials of existing structures; - Retain important exterior architectural features that contribute to the character and appearance of the ACA. <p><u>Demolition Works within an ACA</u> The demolition of a building within an ACA will generally not be permitted unless the Council is satisfied that the structure or building does not contribute positively to the character or appearance of the ACA or the building /structure is beyond viable renewal.</p>
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16.12.3 Archaeology

The importance of the preservation in-situ of all archaeology remains is recognised by the Council. It is also recognised that in exceptional circumstances, preservation by record may be required.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to:

CPO 16.58	<p>In the assessment of any application for development which is sited within the designated zone of archaeological potential and/or on sites on or abutting monuments identified by the Sites and Monuments Record, any may affect archaeological remains due to ground and sub-surface works and disturbance., the following considerations will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Development proposed within designated Zones of Archaeological Potential and in sites on or abutting Monuments identified by the Sites and Monuments Record, the Council will refer applications for proposed developments to National Monuments Service of the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, to ascertain their requirements and consider their response to same. (ii) A preliminary archaeological investigation by a licensed archaeologist will normally be required where a proposed development would result in significant ground disturbance within a Zone of Archaeological Potential. (iii) A comprehensive archaeological report from a licensed archaeologist will normally be required to be submitted to the Council and to National Monuments Service of DoECLG, for their assessment, prior to the commencement of any development on site, or where considered appropriate prior to the decision by the Council on a Planning Application. (iv) Where a proposed development would result in significant ground disturbance leading to potentially significant archaeological implications in a Zone of Archaeological Potential or in sites on or abutting Monuments identified by the Sites and Monuments Record it will be a requirement that a licensed archaeologist be retained on site to monitor all site works, and in appropriate circumstances the preservation of all or part of any archaeological material so discovered will be required.
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16.13 Climate

Climate change is a global challenge which requires a strong and coherent response at national, regional and local level.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to:

CPO 16.59	<p>Assess applications for development, having consideration to any national guidelines and criteria set out under the sub-headings below in respect of sustainable building practices and renewable energy that serve to reduce energy demand, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the necessity of adaptation to climate change in accordance with national and regional policy.</p>
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All new development proposals will be required to include measures that incorporate sustainable building practices in accordance with the following criteria:

Low Energy Buildings:

- Include design measures which minimise energy use, including by passive solar design, energy-efficient building design and emission reduction measures;
- Design measures which promote renewable and low carbon energy;
- Is designed for flexible use throughout its lifetime;
- Promote the use of green roofs and natural ventilation;
- Promote the use of permeable surfaces to decrease runoff rates;
- Institute grey-water recycling schemes to decrease abstraction of potable surface water resources, thus reducing water stress during periods of low rainfall;
- Maximise water conservation;
- Avoids internal overheating and excessive heat generation;
- Supplies energy efficiently and incorporates decentralised energy systems such as District Heating and uses renewable energy where feasible;
- Procures materials sustainably using local suppliers wherever possible ensuring designs make the most of natural systems both within and around the building;
- Manages flood risk, including through sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) and flood resilient design for infrastructure and property;
- Enhance flood resilience of buildings, e.g. elevated work surfaces and storage facilities, raised sockets and electrical infrastructure, enhanced flood boards;
- Ensures developments are comfortable and secure for users;
- Conserves and enhances the natural environment, particularly in relation to biodiversity, and enables easy access to open spaces;
- Avoids the creation of adverse local climatic conditions;
- Reduces air and water pollution;
- Promotes sustainable waste behaviour in new and existing developments.

16.13.1 Wind Energy

The Council recognises the importance of wind energy as a renewable energy source and its potential in contributing to reductions in fossil fuel dependency and greenhouse gas emissions. Chapter 10, Section 10.23 of the plan outlines the policy context for Wind Energy and should be referred to in the consideration of proposed development. The Council will have regard to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities, prepared by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, or any update made thereto. Further, regard should be given to the Landscape Character Assessment of the County which is contained in the accompanying Volume 2 of this Plan.

16.13.2 Solar farms

The Council recognises that solar farms as a renewable energy source, can contribute to reductions in fossil fuel dependency and greenhouse gas emissions.

Currently, there is no national policy guidelines on solar farms. In the assessment of any applications for solar farms, the Council will consider Section 10.24 of the plan which provides the policy context and criteria required in the assessment of solar farms within County Westmeath.

16.14 Implementation of Planning Permission

16.14.1 Development Contribution Scheme

The Planning Authority will when granting a permission under S.34 include condition(s) requiring the payment of contributions in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in its area and that is provided, or that is intended to be provided, by or on behalf of the Local Authority, in accordance with a Development Contribution Scheme for the County, made under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended.

16.14.2 Supplementary Development Contribution Schemes

The Planning Authority will wherever appropriate, require by condition, payment of a contribution in respect of any public infrastructure service or project, in accordance with a Supplementary Development Contribution Scheme made under Section 49(2) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended.

- a. Specified in a scheme made by the Planning Authority;
- b. Provided or carried out, as may be appropriate, by the Planning Authority or pursuant to an agreement entered into by the Local Authority, by any other person;
- c. That will benefit the development to which the permission relates when carried out.

16.14.3 Special Contribution

The Planning Authority will in addition to the terms of a scheme, require the payment of a special contribution in respect of a particular development where specific exceptional costs not covered by a scheme are incurred by the Local Authority in respect of public infrastructure and facilities which benefit the proposed development, in accordance with Section 48.2(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.



WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí

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