

Chapter 6. Housing delivery strategy

Section 94 in Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires the Planning Authority to include a Housing Strategy in its Development Plan, to ensure that the Plan provides for the housing of existing and future population of its functional area.

Section 95 of the Act requires that sufficient land is zoned under the development plan to accommodate the requirements of the Housing Strategy.

The implementation of the housing strategy, must be secured by including objectives in the Plan, specifying the percentage of land zoned for residential use that should be made available for social and affordable housing.

The Affordable Housing Act 2021 defines new forms of affordable housing (e.g. affordable purchase dwellings and cost-rental housing) and amends the required contents of local authority Housing Strategies prepared under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

A Housing Strategy has been prepared in conjunction with the CDP 2024-2030, in accordance with the legislation. The Housing Strategy is informed by a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) carried out on by the Council's Planning and Housing sections, based on the DHLGH-issued data and methodology.

This chapter presents a summary of the prescribed contents, including identified trends, social housing requirements and housing land provision recommended in the Housing Strategy document. It also contains the strategic housing policies of the Council.

6.1 Policy context

6.1.1 Main national policy documents

National Planning Framework (NPF)

The NPF targets the delivery of 550,000 housing units between 2018 and 2040 (NPO 32). In Section 6.6 Housing, it, sets out priorities and principles for the housing sector, indicating that “the long-term vision for Ireland’s housing future aims to balance the provision of good quality housing that meets the needs of a diverse population, in a way that makes our cities, towns, villages and rural areas good places to live now and in the future”.

NPO 34 supports the provision of lifetime adaptable homes that can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time.

NPO 35 requires an increase in residential densities through a range of measures, including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development, regeneration and increased building heights,

NPO 37 introduces the requirement for a **Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA)**¹ to be prepared by each local authority in support of its housing strategy and development plan policies. The NPF specifies that “HNDAs are designed to give broad, long run estimates of what future housing need might be, rather than precision estimates”.

¹ A “HNDA Tool” and a database have subsequently been issued to all local authorities by the DHLGH in April 2021. It is important to note that the housing need estimate for County Sligo produced by the HNDA Tool does not align with the housing allocation calculated using the Housing Supply Target Methodology issued by the DHLGH in 2020 as statutory Section 28 guidelines.

National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP)

The 2021 revision of the National Development Plan indicates that there is a need to accommodate around 600,000 new households by 2040 (above the original NPF target), with the Department of Housing planning to deliver an average of 33,000 homes per annum to 2030. Data from the HNDA provides detailed information on households who will require social housing supports and households who face an affordability constraint to secure their own.

This evidence has supported the development of strategy and targets to deliver the necessary housing solutions. Details of these measures are set out in the Government's, *Housing for All* plan, published in September 2021.

Housing for All (2021)

Part of the *Programme for Government – Our Shared Future*, the document *Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland* is the government's housing policy to 2030.

The vision over the longer term is to achieve a steady supply of housing in the right locations with economic, social and environmental sustainability built into the system, through increased affordability, eradication of homelessness, increasing housing supply and social housing delivery, and addressing vacancy and underuse of existing stock. The document specifies 213 actions to be taken by government departments, local authorities, state agencies and others.

Based on all of the information and resources made available under the *Housing for All* plan and the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) Tool, housing targets have been issued to local authorities, which are required to prepare *Housing Delivery Action Plans* (refer to subsection 6.1.2 below).

6.1.2 Regional and local policy

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020 (RSES)

The RSES, in Section 7.6 **Housing**, focuses on compact in cities, towns and villages, supporting the provision of high-quality, affordable and accessible homes.

RPOs 7.16 to 7.20 require local authorities to ensure, through their development plans, that housing is delivered "in the areas and quantities" identified in the Regional Strategy by means of population targets. New homes should meet the needs of communities in terms of social and affordable provision, lifetime adaptable design etc.

The RSES sets a population growth target for Sligo Town as a Regional Growth Centre, which involves a population increase of 8,000 between 2016 and 2040.

RPO 3.7.38 requires Sligo County Council to facilitate the provision of 3,000 to 5,000 residential units to accommodate the additional Sligo Town population envisaged by 2040.

Sligo 2030 – One Voice, One Vision

Sligo County Council, working in partnership with the Local Community Development Committee, the Strategic Policy Committee for Planning Community & Economic Development and the Sligo Economic Forum, has developed a strategic framework to guide the development of County Sligo over the next 8 to 10 years.

Sligo 2030 - One Voice One Vision is a multi-sectoral Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP), integrating economic, social and community goals and objectives, with an ambition for a smart and green Sligo. The need for more housing, including affordable housing, has been identified as a key message resulting from public consultation on the LECP.

Under **Goal 1** of the **Implementation Plan** associated with the LECP, **Objective 1.2** ‘*Increase the Housing Supply across Sligo*’ requires preparation of a HNDA as part of the County Development Plan process, support for the Housing Deliver Action Plan (see below), bringing vacant and derelict houses back into use etc.

Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026 (HDAP)

Sligo County Council’s first **Housing Delivery Action Plan**, covering the period 2022 to 2026, was published in July 2022. The HDAP aligns with the National Planning Framework, in particular the compact growth objectives, setting out the details on the delivery of local authority housing over the five years of the plan.

Noting the government-set target of 517 dwelling to be delivered between 2022 and 2025, the HDAP indicates that Sligo County Council’s target is set higher, at 621 units by 2026.

The HDAP includes precise details on the location, size and other indicators (age-friendly homes, units adapted for people with disabilities etc.) relating to the targeted dwellings, as well as the manner of delivery.

6.2 Census data and identified trends

At the time of drafting this Plan, the CSO had not yet published housing data collected in the 2022 Census.

6.2.1 Housing in the 2016 Census

- According to Census 2016, there were 24,760 dwellings in County Sligo. Only 1,542 of these (6.3%) were apartments. The high proportion of detached houses (57%) indicates a pattern of low-density development, including one-off dwellings in the countryside.
- Owner-occupied dwellings represented 69% of the total in 2016, while circa 16% of the total number of private households within the County lived in privately rented accommodation.
- Circa 10.2% of the County’s households lived in dwellings rented from the Local Authority or from an approved housing body.
- The Census-recorded vacancy rate was 20.1% in 2016 (down from 22.2% in 2011).
- One-persons households represented 28.3% of the total number in the County.

6.2.2 Local trends

- House completions reached 211 in 2022, a consistent increase from the lowest level in 2014, when only 60 units were completed.
- In 2022, Sligo had 165 commencement notices, the 6th lowest number in the state, after staying among the bottom five counties in the preceding four years.
- There were three remaining unfinished housing schemes in 2023, comprising 36 houses and 73 apartments. Of these, 28 houses were expected to be completed in the short term. The remaining units were awaiting sale or legal resolution.
- Sligo’s social housing stock was 2,298 units in 2023, with a vacancy rate of circa 1.5%.

6.3 Main outputs of the HNDA process

6.3.1 Total forecast

The HNDA indicates that the overall housing need between 2023 and 2031 is likely to be around 4,650 units (on average 465 per annum) and with a potential range of between 4,350 and 5,300. For the Development Plan period (2024 to 2030) the likely housing need will be around 2,790 units.

The HNDA figure is lower than the 3,892 housing requirement calculated using the Housing Supply Target (HST) methodology (refer to Section 5.2 in Chapter 5 Settlement Strategy), which represents the total adjusted demand, including the cumulated undersupply since 2017.

The overall housing allocations in the Core Strategy of the Development Plan are based on the HST methodology, while the HNDA has informed the housing policies of the Plan.

6.3.2 Housing need by tenure

Under a HNDA scenario which seeks to account for the significant growth in house and rent prices from 2019 to 2022, there is likely to be a notable requirement for affordable housing units, with a tenure split of 11% affordable, 28% social rent and 61% private market for the period to 2031.

Over the Development Plan period, this would mean making provision for about 780 social rented houses, 300 affordable housing units and 1,710 private market houses.

6.3.3 Rural houses

Available CSO data on 'one-off houses' granted planning permission and 'new dwelling completions' (single houses) does not accurately represent the number of houses built in rural areas, as it may include individual houses constructed within designated settlement boundaries.

Since 2011, Sligo County Council granted planning permission for 922 one-off houses. During the same period, 978 one-off houses were built (representing on average 82 houses per year).

An analysis of planning permissions for housing granted by Sligo County Council from 2011 to 2022 indicates that the proportion of one-off dwellings relative to total number of units permitted has remained above 40%. The peak was reached in 2015, when permissions for single houses amounted to 98% of total, but the long-term average is circa 66%. The proportion of single houses has started to decline since 2018, as the delivery of housing schemes in urban areas has increased.

On the basis of recent trends, it is considered reasonable to assume a potential demand for approximately 80 individual housing units in the countryside annually over the period 2024-2030, equating to circa 480 houses.

6.4 Social housing requirements

6.4.1 Housing need

The 2021 Housing Need Assessment carried out by Sligo County Council indicated that 1,573 households were eligible and in need of social housing support, with the net housing need being 582 households. By April 2023, this had increased to 1,679 households, with the net housing need being 732, an increase of 25% in 18 months. Almost 50% of the households eligible for support in 2023 were one-person households.

For the purpose of the Housing Strategy, it is assumed that the number of persons requiring social housing will grow at the same rate as the general population grew in the period 2016-2022, i.e. at a rate of 1.3% per year.

It is estimated that the number of persons requiring social housing by 2030 will be 4,702 (which equates to 1,836 households if the 2016 average household size of 2.56 is applied).

Over the Development Plan period, this would mean making provision for about 780 social rented houses, 300 affordable housing units and 1,710 private market houses.

6.4.2 Planned delivery of social and affordable housing

Sligo County Council's Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026 (HDAP) sets out housing targets and the methods of delivery for both social and affordable housing. The HDAP is designed to be a dynamic document, which will be reviewed regularly to take account of opportunities that might arise during the lifetime of the Plan, such as working with the private sector through Part V agreements.

Social housing

In relation to social housing the HDAP indicates the locations of Local Authority landholdings and the requirements for acquisition of additional land and "turnkey" dwellings.

The HDAP targets are detailed by year of planned delivery, location, delivery stream (i.e. Part V, Buy and Renew"), type (e.g. Disability, Age Friendly) etc. The targeted delivery on Local Authority lands is consistent with the NPF and RSES compact growth provisions which require a certain proportion of new residential development to be delivered on infill and brownfield sites, within the built-up footprints of settlements.

Affordable housing

DHLGH guidance for local authorities, in relation to setting targets for affordable housing, is that where the HNDA indicates an affordability constraint of 5% or below over the term of the HDAP, there is no requirement to set specific targets in the Housing Delivery Action Plan.

The HNDA undertaken by Sligo County Council in advance of preparing the HDAP and this Development Plan, based on the default settings of the HNDA Tool (as provided by the DHLGH) indicates a negligible requirement for affordable housing before 2025. The requirement for affordable units, at a level above 5% of the total annual housing need, is likely to occur after 2025.

Notwithstanding this, Sligo County Council will keep this assessment under review, considering the available opportunities to respond to affordability constraints using schemes promoted by the DHLGH such as:

- The First Home Affordable Purchase Shared Equity Scheme
- The Local Authority Loan Home Scheme
- Deployment of New Croí Cónaithe Town Fund to service sites and refurbish vacant properties in towns and villages
- The Help to Buy Scheme

Table 6.1 Summary of planned delivery of social housing under the HDAP 2022-2026

Settlement	Total number of units proposed under the HDAP 2022-2026	Number of units proposed on brownfield sites	Number of units proposed on infill sites	Proportion of dwellings on brownfield and infill sites
Sligo Town	402	112 (28%)	290 (72%)	100%
Ballymote	30	0	30	100%
Tobercurry	29	15	14	100%
Strandhill	42	0	42	100%
Collooney	20	0	20	100%
Small villages and rural areas	98	22	n/a	20%
Total	621	149	396	

6.5 Housing land provision

The total adjusted demand for new housing in County Sligo during the Plan period was calculated in Section 5.2.1 of Chapter 5 Settlement Strategy, in accordance with the HSTM Guidelines. It was determined that **circa 3,892 new dwellings would be required by 2030**.

The **Core Strategy Table** (refer to Section 3.3 in Chapter 3) indicates that this Development Plan zones approximately **135 ha for residential and mixed uses** (including residential), which represents sufficient provision to accommodate the calculated housing demand while allowing for a degree of location choice.

Details regarding the location and amount of housing land in each settlement are provided in Chapters 11 to 22 (town and village plans).

Strategic housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-HOU-1** Encourage a balanced supply of housing in the county, in a manner that is consistent with the Core Strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy, and which will support the creation of sustainable communities through the provision of an appropriate range of house types and high-quality residential environments.
- SP-HOU-2** Reserve 20% of eligible sites which are subject to new residential development (or a mix of uses including residential) for the development of social housing units, in accordance with the Housing Strategy and the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- SP-HOU-3** Ensure that the needs of older people, people with disabilities, and other persons and households with diverse/special needs are adequately catered for in new residential developments.

Strategic housing objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- SO-HOU-1** Implement the relevant provisions of the Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026 and successor documents.
- SO-HOU-2** Monitor residential development and manage the supply of new housing to ensure that it is consistent with the requirements of the Core Strategy and the infrastructural capacity of each settlement.