

JOBS FOR TOWNS



SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED TOWNS
ON RADIAL ROUTES IN THE WESTERN REGION





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Western Development Commission

December 2003

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Foreword

Small and medium-sized towns are an integral part of the landscape, character and economy of the Western Region from Donegal to Clare. Their origins and histories vary – crossing points on rivers, trading and fishing ports, positions on key routes or as local markets. While differing considerably in geography, size and economy, and in experiencing growth or decline in recent years, the future prospects of towns are largely determined by their locations and their relationships with the world outside their boundaries.

The Western Development Commission has, in earlier publications, highlighted the importance of such towns to the Western Region's economic and social structure. We are particularly conscious of the challenges that they face in an increasingly globalised and competitive world where it is easy to associate development with 'critical mass' and to dismiss the prospects of smaller centres. We have sought to address some of these issues in our work, while emphasising the importance of infrastructure provision and support for inward investment and indigenous enterprises.

As Ireland has prospered in recent years, it has become possible for more and more people to live in smaller centres. Western towns are regarded as attractive places to live and work and, when employment opportunities are available, migration trends of decades are being reversed.

When the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Eamon Ó Cuív, T.D. asked the WDC to examine how well small and medium-sized towns were positioned to attract investment and how their strengths might be built upon, we were pleased to undertake this work. We hope that this report will make a useful contribution towards helping such towns to grow, and to achieving balanced, sustainable growth in the Western Region.

Michael Farrell
Chairperson
December 2003

1.1 Operationalising the National Spatial Strategy in the Western Region – The Role of Small and Medium-Sized Towns in Regional Development

The Western Development Commission (WDC) has responsibility for fostering and promoting economic and social development in the seven county Western Region.¹ Since its establishment as a statutory agency in 1999, the WDC has produced a series of in-depth analyses of many of the development challenges facing the region and has set out detailed strategies to tackle them.² Given that the Western Region is predominantly rural, and dominated by a structure of small market towns, the WDC has consistently emphasised the importance of such towns as key elements of the strategic development of the region. Indeed, in its submission to the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), the WDC pointed out the potential of some western towns (with populations in excess of 1,500) to become focal points for the creation of a critical mass of economic and social activity which could underpin the development of the surrounding region.

In line with the approach taken in the NSS, the WDC recognises that, while there is a need to target gateways and hubs for investment and as centres of knowledge, much more is needed to develop the predominantly rural Western Region. In order to ensure the stabilisation or indeed growth of population and rural regeneration, it is necessary to focus on the rural economy and on the role of smaller centres. This is acknowledged in the NSS which, in referring to the revitalisation of the West, states

*The critical factor is underpinning the sustainable development of strategically placed medium-sized towns to reinforce dynamic rural economies.*³

Development of such centres could, in turn, stimulate further demand for transport infrastructure investment such as the

development of Knock airport, or the Western Rail Corridor. Thus, the WDC believes that a greater understanding of the role of smaller towns in the Western Region and their interaction with rural areas, and with gateways and hubs, is essential to the development of appropriate policy for rural areas.

1.2 Request from the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív T.D.

In order to develop a better understanding of the rural economy in the region, the WDC began analysing the role and potential of small and medium-sized towns and their relationship to their hinterlands earlier this year. While this was ongoing, the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív T.D. asked the Western Development Commission to work with the local and regional authorities in the seven western counties to co-ordinate a development strategy for towns on radial routes in the West.

The Minister requested that the WDC concentrate, in the first instance, on towns on the radial and cross-radial routes in the West – both road and rail including the Western Rail Corridor – and with access to international airports such as Knock and Shannon. In response to this request, the WDC undertook to examine how well such towns (most of which are located in or near CLÁR areas) were positioned to attract investment and how their strengths might be built upon. In the Minister's view

*Development and infrastructure should... go together and reinforce each other – each should make the other happen. The way forward, therefore, is a co-ordinated, planned approach towards spatial planning in the West that plays to our strengths and maximises the benefit that will accrue from major investment in roads and the fact that the West of Ireland has potentially the most intensive rail network outside of Dublin.*⁴

¹ Counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare.

² See Blueprint for Success; Blueprint for Promoting Foreign Direct Investment in the West; Blueprint for Tourism Development in the West; Blueprint for Organic Agri-Food; The State of the West.

³ National Spatial Strategy, 2002. Chapter 3.3.4. p.47.

⁴ Extract from Press Statement: 'The West Must Plan According to its Strengths', July 7, 2003.

The Minister believes that the decentralisation⁵ of government departments and state bodies, to which the Government is committed (see Section 3 below), could provide a very significant boost to towns in the West, particularly those other than gateways and hubs. Decentralisation of state offices is a form of inward investment which provides long term, stable employment and can provide a major boost to local economies. Moreover, the growth in population and economic activity which flows from such an influx of employment, people and purchasing power can provide a strong rationale for additional infrastructural investment and also increase the usage of that which is currently available. However, in an environment where towns are inevitably competing for investment and decentralisation with others outside the region, it is essential that there be a coherent and well-coordinated approach to attracting decentralisation to the Western Region.

A central element of towns' attractiveness for commercial investment and decentralisation is access (from Dublin especially), and the ease with which workers can commute to work locally within the region. By the same token, the presence of a substantial concentration of workers in towns along existing rail routes (even if not currently operational) could substantially enhance their viability as connecting and commuter routes. This could increase demand for and the viability of the Western Rail Corridor.⁶ The issue of rail access to/from small and medium-sized towns is therefore central to this report.

1.3 Project Objectives

The WDC undertook to facilitate the development of a strategy to position towns in the Western Region as attractive locations for investment and for the decentralisation of government departments and state bodies, involving:

- the development of a matrix of towns (with populations of more than 1,500) which attempts to match the facilities available in them to industrial and commercial development needs and to the requirements of government departments and state bodies;
- liaison with regional and local authorities regarding their strategic approach to the development of towns in their region, particularly those towns most appropriate to and in need of inward investment and decentralisation, and those situated on the Western Rail Corridor.

1.4 Methodology and Report Structure

This report is based on intensive research and consultation carried out by the WDC between September and November 2003. This research and consultative process had several elements which included:

- consultation with local authorities regarding their strategic approach to the development of towns in their region, particularly those most appropriate to and in need of inward investment, and those on rail routes; agreement with them on the principles upon which to base the matrices of towns;
- consultation with the Regional Authorities on the development and preparation of the Regional Planning Guidelines which follow from the National Spatial Strategy to ensure congruence and consistency in our respective approaches and avoidance of overlap;

⁵ It is important to recognise that decentralisation in this context equates to the physical relocation of government and state offices and their staff rather than to any devolution of administrative functions or powers from national to regional level.

⁶ The Western Rail Corridor (WRC) refers to the rail route from Sligo to Limerick, part of which is currently disused.

- collection of detailed information on the attributes of towns in the Western Region with a population of more than 1,500;
- compilation of matrices and maps which summarise the information collected;
- assembly of background information and the preparation of this report.

1.5 Report Outline

In Section 2 we provide a brief discussion of the context for the project. Section 3 contains a discussion of the factors associated with the development of towns in the Western Region with a particular focus on the decentralisation of government departments and state bodies as a development strategy. In Section 4, we outline the content and rationale for the indicators used in the matrices of towns. In Section 5 the six matrices are set out and explained. In Section 6 we discuss how the development of rail links in the West might be accelerated and the outcome of our consultations with local authorities in this regard. Section 7 contains the summary and conclusions to the report.

2.1 National Policy Objectives

Balanced regional development is one of the key national policy objectives as stated in the White Paper on Rural Development, the National Development Plan 2000-2006 (NDP) and, most recently, in the National Spatial Strategy, which sets out a twenty year strategic framework for regional development. While much of the discussion following the publication of the NSS has focused on the challenge of providing a development counterpoint to the rapid growth of the Greater Dublin Area and how the development of gateways and hubs might be accelerated, the WDC has pointed out that the development of smaller towns and their associated rural areas are also an integral part of the NSS.

Small and medium-sized towns and rural areas are experiencing some of the greatest constraints in relation to economic growth. The NSS identified five different rural area types and those that are 'weak', 'remote' and 'culturally distinctive' are particularly relevant in the Western Region. Those rural areas categorised as 'weak' in the West are by and large characterised by networks of small towns (see Fig. 1 below and Appendix 4).

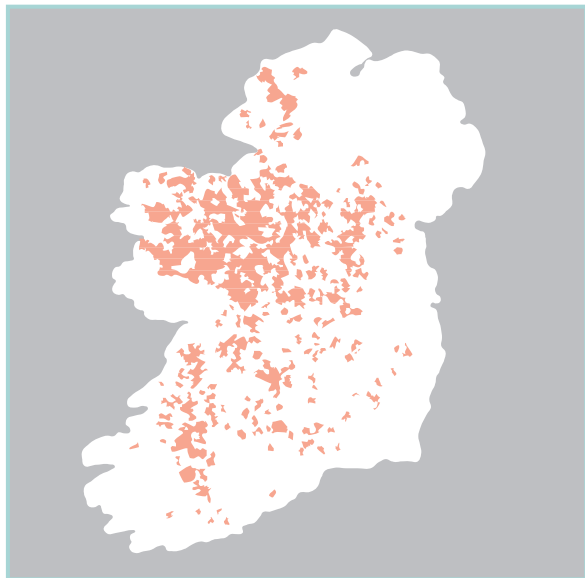


Figure 1: NSS map of weak areas.

In order to develop the most rural or remoter parts of the region it is therefore important to concentrate on towns *other than* gateways and hubs. Such towns and their prospects for the future are the focus of this study – gateways and hubs are therefore not considered.⁷

2.2 Western Region

The Western Region comprises 37 per cent of the landmass of the state and has been characterised by population decline for much of the twentieth century. As was the case nationally, the region had considerable population growth during the 1990s, amounting to 7.3 per cent over the period 1996-2002. The region had a total population of just over 705,000 persons in 2002.⁸ Within the region, all counties experienced increases in population since 1996, but the size of these increases varied considerably, ranging from 15 per cent in Galway City to 3 per cent in Leitrim. The population patterns for towns will be examined in Section 2.3 below.

In relation to employment, the sectoral composition within the Western Region tends to differ from that of the state. In particular, the region has a higher than average proportion of total employment in the agriculture sector,⁹ and construction sectors. There has been a significant decline in the proportion employed in the agriculture sector from 16 per cent in 1998 to just 10 per cent in 2003.¹⁰ This is consistent with the trends elsewhere and is likely to continue. There has also been a decline in employment in what are termed Other Production Industries from 21 per cent to 17 per cent over the same period. Employment in the services sector has increased, particularly in the retail, hospitality and financial services sectors. Another feature of the sectoral distribution of employment within the region is the slightly lower proportion of total employment in public administration and defence – 4.4 per cent, compared to 5.2 per cent nationally.

⁷ An exception is made in the case of Tuam and the rationale for this is explained in Section 4.2 below.

⁸ CSO, Census of Population 2002

⁹ This agriculture sector includes agriculture, fishing and forestry.

¹⁰ CSO, Quarterly National Household Survey - Second Quarter 2003, Special Run

The unemployment rate¹¹ in the Western Region tends to be above the national average and in 2002 was 3.9 per cent, compared with 3.5 per cent nationally.¹² Unemployment rates within the region differed substantially however, with Donegal having a rate of 5.8 per cent, the highest in the country in April 2002, according to the Census.

2.3 Towns in the Western Region

The Western Region is predominantly rural with 69 per cent of the population living outside of population centres of 1,500.¹³ The region has few large towns, but there are a significant number of small rural 'market' towns. Many of these semi-rural towns and their hinterlands have suffered long-term population declines, or have failed to show significant growth even as the population of the region has become more urbanised.

The small percentage of the population in towns of more than 10,000 is particularly significant. Only 19 per cent of the population of the Western Region live in such towns compared to 48 per cent of the population of the rest of Ireland.¹⁴ There is one major city (Galway) and four other 'large' towns (Ennis,¹⁵ Sligo, Letterkenny and Castlebar) with populations of more than 10,000. Each of these is designated as gateway (Galway, Sligo, Letterkenny), or hub (Ennis, Castlebar/Ballina) in the NSS. A further six towns¹⁶ have populations of between 5,000 and 10,000. It is notable that each of the towns with a population of more than 5,000 experienced population growth between 1996 and 2002. The increases ranged from almost 6 per cent in Tuam to 33 per cent in Castlebar.

Population growth in the period 1996-2002 in towns in the Western Region has been quite uneven. Larger towns and cities (Galway in particular) have grown rapidly and benefited significantly from the recent economic boom. There has also been substantial growth in the population of some of the smaller towns particularly, but not exclusively, those close to larger centres (Athenry, Loughrea, Gort, Ballinrobe, Oranmore, and Westport). Over the same period, three towns in the region with populations in excess of 1,500, lost population but the numbers involved and rates of decline were very small¹⁷ and a number of others had very low growth rates. Inward investment could provide a much needed stimulus to such towns.

An important recent trend in Ireland has been the emergence of satellite and dormitory towns around cities. The rapid growth of such towns was a key feature of the 1996-2002 intercensal period, as is evident from the map showing population change (see Appendix 2) and was particularly significant in the Western Region where the trend had been somewhat slower to develop than in other parts of the country. Yet, as this report emphasises, the growth of other towns is important in maintaining population in rural areas, as remoter areas had population losses over the same period.

¹¹ The unemployment rate as used here refers to the number of unemployed expressed as a percentage of the total population aged 15 years and over.

¹² CSO, Census of Population 2002: Principal Socio-Economic Results, Table 15A

¹³ Areas outside of population centres of 1,500 or more are defined as 'rural' by the CSO.

¹⁴ When Dublin is excluded 30 per cent of the population live in towns of over 10,000.

¹⁵ Ennis (22,051); Sligo (19,735); Letterkenny (15,231); Castlebar (11,371)

¹⁶ Ballina (9,647); Shannon (8,561); Ballinasloe (6,219); Tuam (5,947); Westport (5,634); Buncrana (5,271)

¹⁷ Ballyshannon -2.2%; Boyle -0.8%; Castlerea -0.1%.

3 Targeting Towns for Development

3.1 Inward Investment as a Growth Stimulus

The need for an emphasis on attracting inward investment to towns in the West has been consistently pointed out in WDC reports. Inward investment can contribute to local economies through, for example, direct employment creation and skill enhancement, indirect employment through local purchases of goods and services, the development of indigenous sub-supply industries and services, and transfer of technology and know-how to local workers and enterprises. All of these effects contribute to the creation of sufficient 'critical mass' to ensure continued growth. It is important to recognise that while we commonly think of inward investment as involving private-sector development, the location of substantial public sector employment in a town can also have a very significant impact on the local economy.

In *Blueprint for Investing in the West*, which focused on foreign direct investment in the Western Region, the WDC, on the basis of detailed research, identified ten 'first tier' towns in the region which could become the focal points for small and medium-sized overseas firms. Since then, six of these towns have been designated as gateways or hubs in the NSS and are set to become focal points for development. However, towns outside those designated as gateways and hubs also have many strong, well-rooted and successful indigenous SME¹⁸ firms. Such towns can become focal points for the creation of a critical mass of economic and social development, which would underpin the development of the surrounding region.

3.2 Factors Influencing Inward Investment in Towns

International experience, the experiences of investment agencies and the WDC's own research suggest that the key factors that influence investors' decisions about the location of inward investment include the following: transport infrastructure for ease of

access (road, rail and air); availability of suitable development sites; broadband telecommunications infrastructure; quality and availability of other infrastructure and services (housing, energy, water and wastewater capacity); availability of skilled labour; proximity to a larger centre; access to third level education facilities; quality of life in chosen location; and a supportive policy environment. The relative importance of these factors can vary according to the nature, size and sector of the potential investment.

The quality of life available in rural communities and small towns is being increasingly recognised and valued. This is not just a matter of cheaper housing, easier commuting and lower cost childcare, but reflects an awareness of the worth of a clean environment, safety and security, scenic beauty and a unique culture. Recent migration to smaller centres in the West is evidence of the attractiveness of rural living once the opportunities exist to earn a good income.

3.3 Decentralisation of State Employment as a Regional Development Strategy

As noted above, Government is committed to the decentralisation of state employment. One of the driving forces behind this is the related development benefits associated with the transfer of civil and public servants to some of the less developed regions. Indeed, decentralisation is put forward as a regional development strategy in the NDP where it is stated that

*Direct investment in the Productive Sector will be complemented by a major further programme of decentralisation of State Agencies to the Regions from the Dublin area.*¹⁹

¹⁸ Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs)

¹⁹ National Development Plan, 2000, Chapter 3 Regional Development, para 3.39, p. 47.

This commitment was reiterated in the 2000 Budget when the Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy, T.D. stated

*The Government intends that the next round of decentralisations will be more radical than those to date. We intend to transfer the maximum possible number of public service jobs from Dublin. In pursuit of this policy, we will transfer almost complete Departments of State and other public bodies to provincial centres.*²⁰

The commitment to move government departments and state agencies is also contained in the *Agreed Programme for Government 2002* which stated

*We will move forward the progressive decentralisation of Government Offices and Agencies taking into account the National Spatial Strategy.*²¹

The fact that decentralisation is seen as an element of regional development policy is significant in that it underlines the potential development benefits which can be associated with the decentralisation of civil service departments and public sector agencies. The benefits associated with decentralisation are similar to those which arise from other forms of inward investment. Decentralisation is, in effect, a form of inward investment in a regional services sector, indeed the stable nature of the jobs involved provides longer term security than is the case with many foreign direct investments.

In addition to the benefits decentralisation brings to regional locations, there would be additional positive outcomes including reduced traffic congestion in and around Dublin and a reduction in rental expenditures. The state is currently estimated to spend €80 million annually on the rental of office accommodation in Dublin city centre.²²

To date, decentralisation has mainly occurred in the following ways:

- relocation of sections of government departments to regional centres;
- relocation of complete ('stand alone') state agencies to regional locations; and
- initial establishment of such agencies in regional locations.

Past decentralisation has typically involved *sections* of government departments being relocated, often operational type units with a high proportion of clerical staff (usually around 75 per cent),²³ while the more senior officials remain in Dublin. However advances in information and communications technology, modern working arrangements and the possibility of location in regional centres with relatively good access to Dublin (which is particularly important for senior civil servants) may allow for relocation of entire departments. Access to Dublin is a less important consideration for state agencies which operate more autonomously. According to Department of Finance statistics for 2002, 60 per cent of civil servants are currently located in Dublin while 12 per cent are located in the Western Region.

3.4 Decentralisation Trends in other European States

Relocation of civil servants or state agencies to regional locations is occurring in other European states, also driven by the regional development benefits of decentralisation, along with the recognition of the high costs of maintaining a large number of civil and public servants in the capital cities or in other more expensive regions.

In Norway eight state regulatory agencies (of about forty) are to move out of Oslo to other cities.²⁴ This involves about 900 jobs. The transfer represents not only a regional policy initiative, but also an attempt to make those

²⁰ Budget 2000 Speech, made in December 1999

²¹ Agreed Programme for Government 2002.

²² The Irish Times, 21 April 2003

²³ Civil and Public Service Union Annual Report 2001, pg 21

²⁴ www.eiro.eurofound.ie/2003/05/Feature/NO0305103F.html "Regulatory agencies to be moved out of Oslo"

bodies more cost efficient and to some extent more independent. The Norwegian government has suggested that relocating such agencies will contribute to more balanced regional development as well as to the development and strengthening of alternative areas of competence and know-how in Norway. Oslo (as many would argue is the case with Dublin) is seen as playing too dominant a role in this regard at the expense of other areas. The transfer of the state jobs means an enhancement of qualifications and competence in other parts of the country, with the additional benefit of making agencies more competitive in the local labour market and providing a more stable labour force within the agencies themselves.

In the UK, as part of the last budget (April, 2003), the Chancellor announced a substantial programme of relocation. This will be based on an independent review to make firm recommendations on which departments and agencies could relocate. Again, the importance of civil service relocation in achieving the aim of more balanced economic growth between regions was stressed.

3.5 Location Requirements of Government Departments and State Agencies

We have noted above the locational requirements of investors, and the needs of the state sector do not differ substantially from these. However, in the case of government departments, senior civil servants will continue to have a requirement to interact with their Ministers, members of the Oireachtas and other government departments and agencies located in Dublin. They will also require international access. Location on key transport corridors (national primary or secondary road routes, and/or rail routes) and being within a reasonable distance of Dublin is therefore important, as is access to an international airport. State agencies, on the other hand, are stand alone operations with specific functions. They tend to have less need for continuous interaction with other agencies and can therefore be more flexible in relation to their location. The availability of

existing office space or appropriate serviced sites at reasonable cost is another factor that will enhance a town's attractiveness as a location for state offices.

It is important also that a location is attractive to staff currently based in the capital. Thus, affordable housing, quality schools, access to third level education and sport and leisure facilities are key attributes. The Western Region has significant strengths with regard to quality of life, with a clean environment, good educational facilities, low crime rate, vibrant cultural heritage and a wealth of leisure opportunities. Certain key services (such as childcare) are considerably cheaper than in larger centres. A lack of traffic congestion in most areas is a marked contrast to the situation in the capital and surrounding counties.

Much of this report has emphasised the benefits associated with the move of government departments and state agencies out of Dublin, yet we recognise that there are advantages to having a number of departments or agencies in close proximity or in a 'cluster'. This cluster, however, does not have to be in the capital. Instead, consideration should be given to the creation of a cluster of departments in an area which would benefit significantly from regional development. This could increase the development benefits from decentralisation and at the same time the relocated agencies and departments would benefit from the development of a critical mass of public sector activity and employment in a relatively small area. This would give rise to the potential for sharing services and skills and also allow greater opportunities for staff transfers and promotions within the locality.

Clearly, there are a variety of requirements which must be fulfilled if a town is to be regarded as a suitable site for decentralisation. It is therefore very important that objective information about the attributes of towns is available to facilitate decision-making about the appropriateness of sites for relocation. In the following sections we collate and present this information for towns in the Western Region.

4 Towns in the West – Contents of Matrices

4.1 Introduction

As outlined earlier, one of the main objectives of this project was the preparation of detailed information on the characteristics of Western towns and the facilities in them that are relevant to the locational requirements of investors, and government departments and state bodies. It is considered that a matrix (or large spreadsheet) is the most convenient format for the presentation of such information.

On the basis of what has been stated above regarding the factors which affect the location decisions of investors and state bodies, such a matrix should contain information on population and population changes, transport and telecommunications infrastructure, availability of environmental services and actual or potential office space as well as other indicators of infrastructure and quality of life.

The information compiled by the WDC is detailed in a set of six matrices which are set out in Section 5 below. In the remainder of this section, we outline the rationale for the selection of particular indicators.

4.2 Towns and Population

Twenty towns in the Western Region form the basis of the analysis. These towns each have a population of over 1,500. As noted above, gateway towns have been excluded from this list on the basis that they are of significant size, are already priority targets for inward investment, and have benefited significantly from earlier programmes of decentralisation. Hub towns have also been excluded for similar reasons, with the exception of Tuam which has not yet been part of a decentralisation programme. Tuam is therefore the only hub which has been considered and the decision to include it followed consultation with the local authority.

The population figures are from the 2002 Census, using the definitions of the towns established by the CSO.²⁵ Population changes 1996-2002 are also included for each town.

Population 2002

Population change 1996-2002

4.3 Rural Disadvantage

Inward investment to small and medium-sized towns can help to address the problems of areas which have suffered long term population decline and out-migration. The CLÁR programme (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais), which was launched in October 2001, is a targeted investment programme in rural areas. Areas included are those which have suffered the greatest population decline from 1926 to 2002 (see Appendix 3). The CLÁR programme covers 890 District Electoral Divisions (DEDs) and a population of 362,000. The CLÁR designation provides a good indicator of areas which have suffered particularly from the problems of rural depopulation, decline and lack of services. The matrix indicates towns which are in CLÁR areas and those which are within 15 miles of such areas.

CLÁR area

4.4 Transport Infrastructure

As outlined above, road, rail and air linkages and the time taken to travel to Dublin are particularly significant considerations in location decisions. National road routes are important for towns' accessibility, while distance from Dublin and expected travel time are indicators of ease of access to the capital. The presence of a rail link to Dublin can make a major difference to access, while the presence of other rail routes or potential routes is also important. Thus, information on road and rail routes and on journey times and services are included in the matrices. The proximity of regional or international airports is an indicator of international accessibility; indeed air may also be a quick and efficient

²⁵ In a few cases where the CSO gives population of the environs of towns, these figures are incorporated.

means of travel to the capital from remoter parts of the region. Nearest regional and international airports are also included, as is distance and travel time to them.

National Road (primary & secondary)

Distance/time to Dublin

Rail line

Rail journey time to Dublin & number of services

Distance/time to regional airport

Distance/time to international airport

4.5 Physical Distance from Gateways and Hubs

Remoteness and access to other larger centres is important to many towns. Close proximity to a gateway or to another large town indicates good access to a diversity of services. Much of the Western Region, however, is relatively remote in terms of proximity to larger towns and this is one of the arguments for the necessity of policy and action which can stimulate regional development, such as increased inward investment or decentralisation. At the same time, it should be recognised that towns which are relatively distant from large centres tend to provide a higher level of services to their local community than towns that are close to cities and which may serve a mainly residential function.

Distance/time to nearest town (10,000 +)

Distance/time to nearest Gateway

4.6 Access to Telecommunications and Energy Infrastructure

Access to broadband telecommunications infrastructure is a requirement for business in an increasingly knowledge-based society, where capacity for electronic transfer of information at high speed is essential.

Indicators of whether a town is on the national backbone fibre network (making access relatively easy for a large user) and whether broadband access is currently available in the town are included in the matrix.

Basic information about electricity infrastructure (voltage of the line supplying the town) is recorded. This is particularly important for manufacturing or larger service industries. By comparison government departments and state agencies would not be heavy users of electricity. The availability of natural gas supplies in the towns and possible future availability is also recorded in the matrix, as the importance to industry of the availability of an alternative energy source is recognised.²⁶

Backbone fibre network & other broadband

Electricity voltage

Gas grid

4.7 Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

The capacity of a town to accommodate large scale inward investment or decentralisation is heavily dependent on water supply and wastewater treatment facilities. Because of this, information on these essential environmental services is recorded in the matrix. The availability of water supply, and current levels of demand are noted, and the available surplus is regarded as a key indicator. Similarly the wastewater treatment capacity (in person equivalents) and the current demand are recorded, as is the surplus available. Water supply and wastewater treatment capacities are essential to towns and to areas hoping to benefit from significant inward investment such as decentralisation.

Water supply/demand/spare capacity

Wastewater treatment capacity

²⁶ Natural gas is not widely available in the region. There are delays in relation to the expansion of the gas transmission network in the West due to uncertainty about the Corrib gas field and the necessity for economic returns on investment in gas transmission infrastructure. The WDC has argued, in other work, that natural gas is an essential infrastructure and that it is necessary to expand the network in the region to enable it to compete with other parts of the country that already have access to natural gas. It has also pointed out that the route of any pipeline should be such as to maximise the number of towns with access.

4.8 Site Availability

The availability of sites for the location of a decentralised office or private inward investment can be a critical factor in location decisions. The matrix contains information (obtained from local authorities) on land which is already zoned for residential, commercial or industrial development. Some local authorities own land which is suitable for development, and indeed which they have earmarked as appropriate for the accommodation of decentralised offices, this information is also contained in the matrix. Similarly, office space which is currently available, under construction, or which has been granted planning permission is also included, as is land owned by the IDA. Some towns have indicated that privately owned land is immediately available for development. Although the availability of such land may be considered an important part of a town's readiness and attractiveness as a location for inward investment, verification and objective analysis of privately owned land is beyond the scope of this project. Thus, private land has not been included in the matrices.

Land zoned for residential / commercial / industrial

Development land held by local authority/IDA

Office space

4.9 Education and Health Facilities

Access to education and health facilities is important for people living in any town and is likely to be especially important for those moving from a larger city where such facilities are more readily available. Therefore, the number of post primary schools is recorded in the matrix as is the nearest university and institute of technology (IT) as well as their distance from the town and the time taken to get there. While primary education and childcare facilities are recognised as being very important, it is considered that these are more responsive to rapid increases in demand than the facilities mentioned above and so they were not included in the matrix. Details of the nearest hospital with acute services and the distance and time taken to reach it are also given.

Post-primary schools

Distance/time to nearest university

Distance/time to nearest IT

Distance/time to nearest hospital with acute services

4.10 Business and Leisure Facilities

Hotel and conference facilities are necessary for most enterprises, either to accommodate visitors or to allow larger meetings and conferences to take place locally. They are an important local service as good quality hotel and conference facilities can attract business from a considerable distance. The matrix details the number of three and four star hotels in each town and the presence of conference facilities.

The presence of a leisure centre and sports facilities is also important from the point of view of those relocating, and while most towns have some sporting facilities, good indoor facilities, in particular a swimming pool, are especially attractive, as is the presence of a golf course, and these are included in the matrix. The availability of social and cultural amenities such as a cinema, theatre, museum or library is also noted.

Hotel (3-star/4-star)

Conference facilities

Leisure and cultural facilities

4.11 Local Administration

Finally being a county town or the presence of a local authority office in the town is a simple indication of the significance of a town within a county and also indicates the presence of public sector employment.

County town

Local authority office

5 The Matrices of Towns

5.1 Introduction

In this section we set out six different matrices. Five of these are based on an initial 20 towns (see Figure 2) and the sixth is based on towns in the hinterland of Knock Airport.

- 1 **Baseline Matrix – 20 towns**
- 2 **Matrix of Towns with Road and Rail Links – 10 towns**
- 3 **Matrix of Towns with Road Links only – 10 towns**
- 4 **Matrix of Towns with Road and Rail Links and Population Growth of less than 20 per cent 1996-2002 – 7 towns**
- 5 **Matrix of Towns with Road Links only and Population Growth of less than 20 per cent 1996-2002 – 7 towns**
- 6 **Matrix of Towns in the hinterland of Knock Airport – 8 towns**

5.2 Baseline Matrix of Towns

The detailed Baseline Matrix is set out in Appendix 1. This contains the most detailed information on all twenty towns, with the indicators arranged more or less in order of their significance to location decisions. A shorter summary version of this matrix, together with a map of the relevant towns is set out opposite. This contains only the most important information on the towns in relation to the requirements of inward investment. This baseline matrix is then divided into two smaller matrices on the basis of the towns' transport linkages.

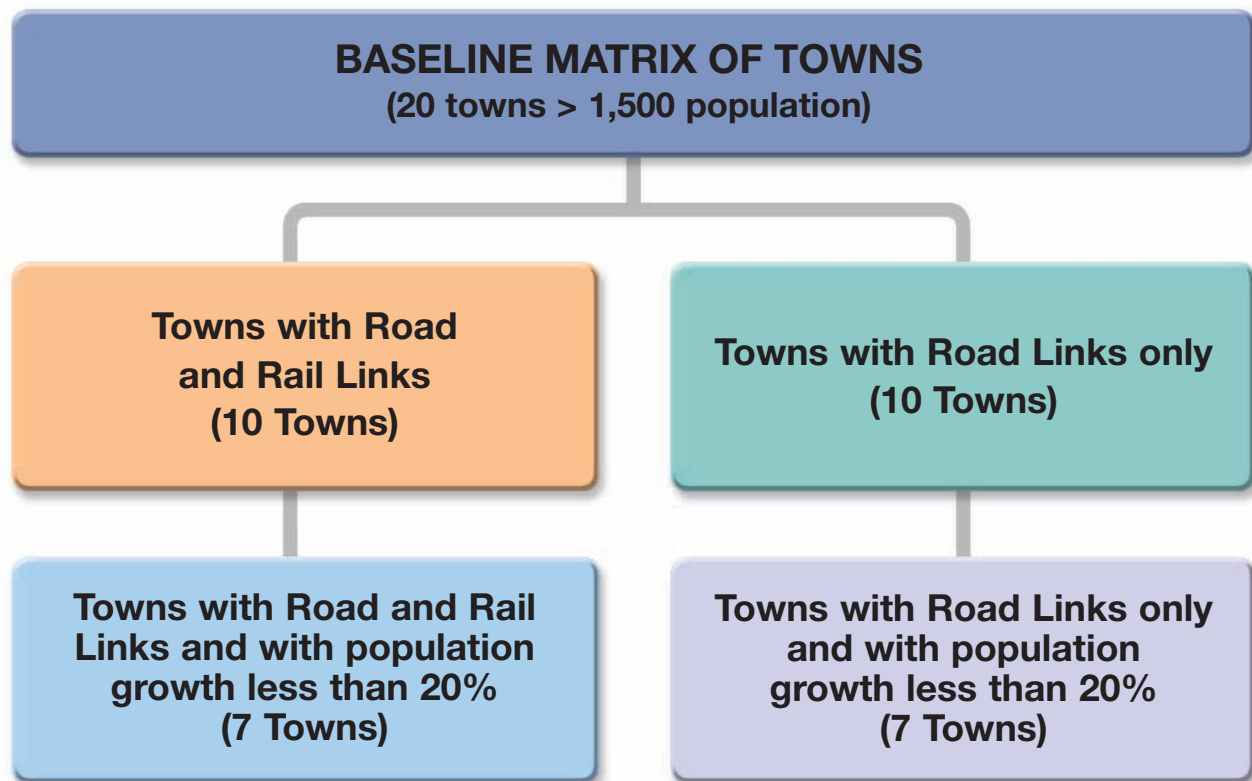
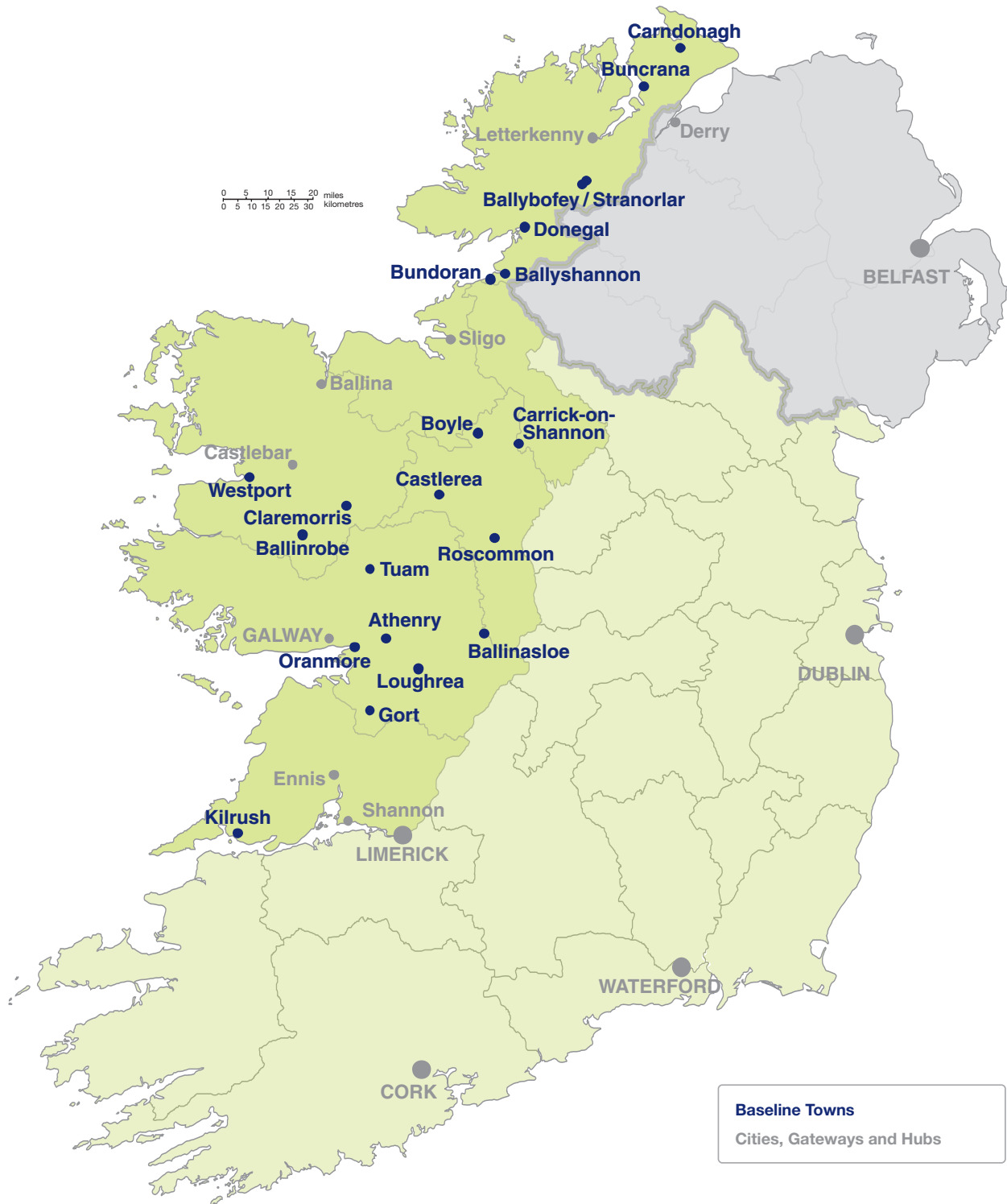


Figure 2

Figure 3



5 The Matrices of Towns

5.2 Summary Baseline Matrix of Towns

	TOWN	POPULATION		CLÁR	ROAD ACCESS		RAIL ACCESS		
		Pop. 2002	Pop. Change 1996-2002 (%)	CLÁR area / Within 15 miles of a CLÁR area ^c	National Primary and Secondary Roads	Distance/ Drive Time to Dublin ^d	Rail	Length of Rail journey to Dublin ^f	No. of Rail services per day to/from Dublin ^f
1	Ballinasloe, Co Galway^{a b}	6,219	8.6%	Within 15 miles	N6	94.5 miles/ 2h 07min	Dublin-Galway line	Max: 2h14min Min: 1h 49min	5
2	Tuam, Co Galway	5,947	5.7%	Within 15 miles	N17, N83	122.1 miles/ 3h 00min	WRC ^e	N/A	N/A
3	Westport, Co Mayo^a	5,634	24.6%	Within 15 miles	N5, N59	159.9 miles/ 3h 37min	Dublin-Westport line	Max: 3h 36min Min: 3h 30min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
4	Buncrana, Co Donegal^a	5,271	9.7%	Within 15 miles	No	164.4 miles/ 3h 42min	No	N/A	N/A
5	Roscommon Town, Co Roscommon	4,489	14.7%	Within 15 miles	N60, N61, N63	95.6 miles/ 2h 12min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line	Max: 2h 8min Min: 2h 1min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
6	Loughrea, Co Galway	4,004	20.1%	Within 15 miles	N6, N66	113.4 miles/ 2h 32min	No	N/A	N/A
7	Ballybofey-Stranorlar, Co Donegal	3,603	18.2%	Within 15 miles	N13, N15	146.1 miles/ 3h16min	No	N/A	N/A
8	Ballyshannon, Co Donegal^a	2,715	-2.2%	Within 15 miles	N3, N15	127.1 miles/ 3h 08min	No	N/A	N/A
9	Kilrush, Co Clare	2,699	4.0%	CLÁR	N67, N68	172.7 miles/ 3h 57min	No	N/A	N/A
10	Donegal Town, Co Donegal	2,453	6.8%	Within 15 miles	N15, N56	135.8 miles/ 3h 24min	No	N/A	N/A
11	Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim^b	2,237	19.8%	CLÁR	N4	97.6 miles/ 2h 14min	Dublin-Sligo line	Max: 2h 23min Min: 2h 08min	3 + 1 extra on Monday and Friday
12	Boyle, Co Roscommon^a	2,205	-0.8%	CLÁR	N4, N61	108.0 miles/ 2h 28min	Dublin-Sligo line	Max: 2h 35min Min: 2h 21min	3 + 1 extra on Monday and Friday
13	Atherry, Co Galway	2,154	33.5%	Within 15 miles	No, about 5km from N6	120.2 miles/ 2h 50min	Dublin-Galway line and WRC ^e	Max: 2h 36min Min: 2h 12min	5
14	Claremorris, Co Mayo	2,101	9.8%	CLÁR	N17, N60	137.4 miles/ 3h 09min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line and WRC ^e	Max: 2h 58min Min: 2h 52min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
15	Bundoran, Co Donegal^a	1,842	2.6%	Within 15 miles	N15	131.1 miles/ 3h 14min	No	N/A	N/A
16	Castlereagh, Co Roscommon	1,788	-0.1%	Within 15 miles	N60	113.9 miles/ 2h 36min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line	Max: 2h 28min Min: 2h 21min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
17	Gort, Co Galway	1,776	50.3%	Within 15 miles	N18, N66	128.4 miles/ 2h 56min	WRC ^e	N/A	N/A
18	Oranmore, Co Galway	1,692	20.0%	No	N6, N18	130.1 miles/ 2h 56min	No	N/A	N/A
19	Carndonagh, Co Donegal	1,673	5.9%	Within 15 miles	No	171.7 miles/ 3h 56min	No	N/A	N/A
20	Ballinrobe, Co Mayo	1,626	24.2%	Within 15 miles	N84	150.9 miles/ 3h 32min	No	N/A	N/A

(See footnotes on page 30)

5 The Matrices of Towns

	AIR ACCESS		PHYSICAL REMOTENESS		TELECOMS		WATER / WASTEWATER		LAND
	Distance/ Time to Nearest Regional Airport ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Int'l Airport ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Large Town (population > 10,000) ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Gateway ^d	Backbone Fibre Network ^h	Other Broadband Access in Town ⁱ	Spare Capacity of Water supply (m ³ /day)	Spare Capacity of Wastewater treatment (p.e.) ^g	Local Authority Land for Development ^f
	Galway - 37.8 miles/ 52min	Knock - 54.5 miles/ 1h 29min	Athlone - 15.3 miles/ 19min	Athlone ^g - 15.3 miles/ 19min	✓	✓	500	8,000	No
	Galway - 17.6 miles/ 25min	Knock - 33.5 miles/ 46min	Galway - 20.7 miles/ 29min	Galway - 20.7 miles/ 29min	✓	✓	1,000	11,000	No
	Knock - 41.1 miles/ 56min	Knock - 41.1 miles/ 56min	Castlebar - 10.9 miles/ 14min	Galway - 50.9 miles/1h 17min	✓	✓	800m ³ /day surplus supply and treatment, new plant planned ⁿ	6,000	1.21Ha
	Derry - 20.3 miles/ 31min	Derry - 20.3 miles/ 31min	Letterkenny - 26.9 miles/ 39min	Letterkenny ^g - 26.9 miles/ 39min	✓	✓	400		No
	Knock - 41.6 miles/ 58min	Knock - 41.6 miles/ 58min	Athlone - 19.9 miles/ 30min	Athlone ^g - 19.9 miles/ 30min	✓	MAN ^j	Safe yield of springs is greater than average daily demand	At, or close to, capacity	
	Galway - 18.9 miles/ 27min	Shannon - 49.3 miles/ 1h 09min	Galway - 23.1 miles/ 32min	Galway - 23.1 miles/ 32min	✓	✗	500	1,000	No
	Derry - 35.9 miles/ 52min	Derry - 35.9 miles/ 52min	Letterkenny - 13.5 miles/ 19min	Letterkenny ^g - 13.5 miles/ 19min	✓	✗	0	Phase II -2000	No
	Sligo - 31.8 miles/ 46min	Knock - 61.7 miles/ 1h 23min	Sligo - 26.1 miles/ 35min	Sligo - 26.1 miles/ 35min	✓	✓	0	1,800 ^p	No
	Shannon - 41.7 miles/ 1h 01min	Shannon - 41.7 miles/ 1h 01min	Ennis - 26.4 miles/ 41min	Shannon - 41.7 miles/1h 01min	✓	✗	4,500 (from West Clare Regional Water Supply Scheme)	N/A	1.42Ha
	Sligo - 45.9 miles/ 1h 07min	Knock - 75.8 miles/ 1h 44min	Letterkenny - 31.0 miles/ 43min	Letterkenny ^g - 31.0 miles/ 43min	✓	✓	0	3,000 ^p	1.00Ha (town centre)
	Sligo - 37.7 miles/ 54min	Knock - 34.7 miles/ 56min	Sligo - 35.0 miles/ 46min	Sligo - 35.0 miles/ 46min	✓	✓	4,500	10,000 by 2005	8.09Ha
	Sligo - 28.6 miles/ 42min	Knock - 28.9 miles/ 48min	Sligo - 25.9 miles/ 35min	Sligo - 25.9 miles/ 35min	✓	Possible Pilot Project	Safe yield of springs is greater than average daily demand	1,000	
	Galway - 10.2 miles/ 17min	Knock - 50.5 miles/ 1h 18min	Galway - 14.4 miles/ 22min	Galway - 14.4 miles/ 22min	✓	Jan-04	2,500	0	No
	Knock - 17.4 miles/ 23min	Knock - 17.4 miles/ 23min	Castlebar - 16.7 miles/ 23min	Galway - 38.2 miles/ 54min	✓	✗	n	1,300	18.61Ha Business/Tech Park & 0.81Ha adjoining the rail station
	Sligo - 27.6 miles/ 40min	Knock - 57.5 miles/ 1h 17min	Sligo - 21.9 miles/ 29min	Sligo - 21.9 miles/ 29min	✓	✗	0		0.3Ha (town centre)
	Knock - 22.9 miles/ 32min	Knock - 22.9 miles/ 32min	Castlebar - 40.2 miles/ 55min	Sligo - 43.6 miles/ 1h 07min	✓	✗	200	2,000 ^q	
	Galway - 18.8 miles/ 27min	Shannon - 34.3 miles/ 45min	Galway - 23.0 miles/ 32min	Galway - 23.0 miles/ 32min	✓	✗	0	0	No
	Galway - 2.6 miles/ 05min	Shannon - 50.3 miles/ 1h 08min	Galway - 5.8 miles/ 10min	Galway - 5.8 miles/ 10min	✓	MAN ^j	2,500	5,500	No
	Derry - 25.5 miles/ 41min	Derry - 25.5 miles/ 41min	Letterkenny - 38.6 miles/ 1h 00min	Letterkenny ^g - 38.6 miles/1h 00min	✓	✗	0	0	No
	Knock - 30.9 miles/ 47min	Knock - 30.9 miles/ 47min	Castlebar - 17.5 miles/ 25min	Galway - 31.2 miles/ 41min	✓	✗	800m ³ /day surplus supply and treatment. New plant planned ⁿ	3,000	0.81Ha

5.3 Towns with Road and Rail Links

The second matrix highlights the ten towns with both road and rail links, including those on the Western Rail Corridor. As previously discussed, convenience of travel to Dublin is a very important factor in relation to the needs of business, and particularly to the location of decentralised government departments.

The fact that these towns all have both road and rail links²⁷ and are on (or close to) radial road routes increases their accessibility and the options for travel to the capital and to local centres (see Figure 4).

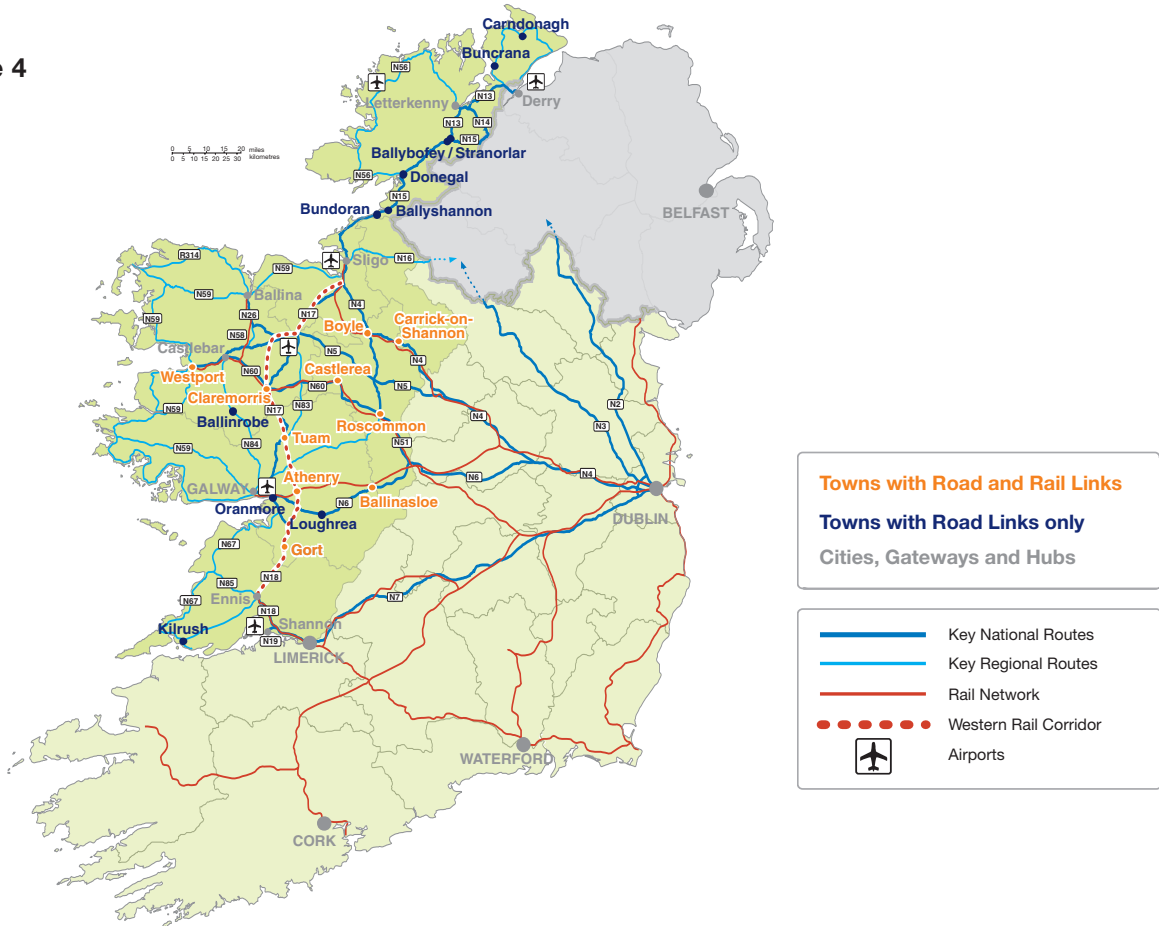
5.3 Matrix based on Towns with Road and Rail Links

	TOWN	POPULATION		CLÁR area / Within 15 miles of a CLÁR area ^c	ROAD ACCESS		RAIL ACCESS		
		Pop. 2002	Pop. Change 1996-2002 (%)		National Primary and Secondary Roads	Distance/ Drive Time to Dublin ^d	Rail	Length of Rail journey to Dublin ^f	No. of Rail services per day to/from Dublin ^f
1	Ballinasloe, Co Galway ^{a,b}	6,219	8.6%	Within 15 miles	N6	94.5 miles/ 2h 07min	Dublin-Galway line	Max: 2h 14min Min: 1h 49min	5
2	Tuam, Co Galway	5,947	5.7%	Within 15 miles	N17, N83	122.1 miles/ 3h 00min	WRC ^e	N/A	N/A
3	Westport, Co Mayo ^a	5,634	24.6%	Within 15 miles	N5, N59	159.9 miles/ 3h 37min	Dublin-Westport line	Max: 3h 36min Min: 3h 30min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
4	Roscommon Town, Co Roscommon	4,489	14.7%	Within 15 miles	N60, N61, N63	95.6 miles/ 2h 12min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line	Max: 2h 8min Min: 2h 1min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
5	Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim ^b	2,237	19.8%	CLÁR	N4	97.6 miles/ 2h 14min	Dublin-Sligo line	Max: 2h 23min Min: 2h 08min	3 + 1 extra on Monday and Friday
6	Boyle, Co Roscommon ^a	2,205	-0.8%	CLÁR	N4, N61	108.0 miles/ 2h 28min	Dublin-Sligo line	Max: 2h 35min Min: 2h 21min	3 + 1 extra on Monday and Friday
7	Atherry, Co Galway	2,154	33.5%	Within 15 miles	No, about 5km from N6	120.2 miles/ 2h 50min	Dublin-Galway line and WRC ^e	Max: 2h 36min Min: 2h 12min	5
8	Claremorris, Co Mayo	2,101	9.8%	CLÁR	N17, N60	137.4 miles/ 3h 09min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line and WRC ^e	Max: 2h 58min Min: 2h 52min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
9	Castlerea, Co Roscommon	1,788	-0.1%	Within 15 miles	N60	113.9 miles/ 2h 36min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line	Max: 2h 28min Min: 2h 21min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
10	Gort, Co Galway	1,776	50.3%	Within 15 miles	N18, N66	128.4 miles/ 2h 56min	WRC ^e	N/A	N/A

²⁷ Tuam and Gort are on the Western Rail Corridor.

5 The Matrices of Towns

Figure 4



AIR ACCESS		PHYSICAL REMOTENESS		TELECOMS		WATER / WASTEWATER		LAND
Distance/ Time to Nearest Regional Airport ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Int'l Airport ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Large Town (population > 10,000) ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Gateway ^d	Backbone Fibre Network ^h	Other Broadband Access in Town ⁱ	Spare Capacity of Water supply (m ³ /day)	Spare Capacity of Wastewater treatment (p.e.) ^o	Local Authority Land for Development ^f
Galway - 37.8 miles/ 52min	Knock - 54.5 miles/ 1h 29min	Athlone - 15.3 miles/ 19min	Athlone ^g - 15.3 miles/ 19min	✓	✓	500	8,000	No
Galway - 17.6 miles/ 25min	Knock - 33.5 miles/ 46min	Galway - 20.7 miles/ 29min	Galway - 20.7 miles/ 29min	✓	✓	1,000	11,000	No
Knock - 41.1 miles/ 56min	Knock - 41.1 miles/ 56min	Castlebar - 10.9 miles/ 14min	Galway - 50.9 miles/ 1h 17min	✓	✓	800m ³ /day surplus supply and treatment, new plant planned ⁿ	6,000	1.21Ha
Knock - 41.6 miles/ 58min	Knock - 41.6 miles/ 58min	Athlone - 19.9 miles/ 30min	Athlone ^g - 19.9 miles/ 30min	✓	MAN ^j	Safe yield of springs is greater than average daily demand	At, or close to, capacity	
Sligo - 37.7 miles/ 54min	Knock - 34.7 miles/ 56min	Sligo - 35.0 miles/ 46min	Sligo - 35.0 miles/ 46min	✓	✓	4,500	10,000 by 2005	8.09Ha
Sligo - 28.6 miles/ 42min	Knock - 28.9 miles/ 48min	Sligo - 25.9 miles/ 35min	Sligo - 25.9 miles/ 35min	✓	Possible Pilot Project	Safe yield of springs is greater than average daily demand	1,000	
Galway - 10.2 miles/ 17min	Knock - 50.5 miles/ 1h 18min	Galway - 14.4 miles/ 22min	Galway - 14.4 miles/ 22min	✓	Jan-04	2,500	0	No
Knock - 17.4 miles/ 23min	Knock - 17.4 miles/ 23min	Castlebar - 16.7 miles/ 23min	Galway - 38.2 miles/ 54min	✓	✗	n	1,300	18.61Ha Business /Tech Park & 0.81Ha adjoining the rail station
Knock - 22.9 miles/ 32min	Knock - 22.9 miles/ 32min	Castlebar - 40.2 miles/ 55min	Sligo - 43.6 miles/ 1h 07min	✓	✗	200	2,000 ^q	
Galway - 18.8 miles/ 27min	Shannon - 34.3 miles/ 45min	Galway - 23.0 miles/ 32min	Galway - 23.0 miles/ 32min	✓	✗	0	0	No

(See footnotes on page 30)

5 The Matrices of Towns

5.4 Towns with Road Links Only

The third matrix highlights the ten towns with road links only. These towns vary in terms of their distance from Dublin and their access to radial routes (see Figure 4).

5.4 Matrix based on Towns with Road Links Only

	TOWN	POPULATION		CLÁR area / Within 15 miles of a CLÁR area ^c	ROAD ACCESS		RAIL ACCESS		
		Pop. 2002	Pop. Change 1996-2002 (%)		National Primary and Secondary Roads	Distance/ Drive Time to Dublin ^d	Rail	Length of Rail journey to Dublin ^f	No. of Rail services per day to/from Dublin ^f
1	Buncrana, Co Donegal ^a	5,271	9.7%	Within 15 miles	No	164.4 miles/ 3h 42min	No	N/A	N/A
2	Loughrea, Co Galway	4,004	20.1%	Within 15 miles	N6, N66	113.4 miles/ 2h 32min	No	N/A	N/A
3	Ballybofey-Stranorlar, Co Donegal	3,603	18.2%	Within 15 miles	N13, N15	146.1 miles/ 3h 16min	No	N/A	N/A
4	Ballyshannon, Co Donegal ^a	2,715	-2.2%	Within 15 miles	N3, N15	127.1 miles/ 3h 08min	No	N/A	N/A
5	Kilrush, Co Clare	2,699	4.0%	CLÁR	N67, N68	172.7 miles/ 3h 57min	No	N/A	N/A
6	Donegal Town, Co Donegal	2,453	6.8%	Within 15 miles	N15, N56	135.8 miles/ 3h 24min	No	N/A	N/A
7	Bundoran, Co Donegal ^a	1,842	2.6%	Within 15 miles	N15	131.1 miles/ 3h 14min	No	N/A	N/A
8	Oranmore, Co Galway	1,692	20.0%	No	N6, N18	130.1 miles/ 2h 56min	No	N/A	N/A
9	Carndonagh, Co Donegal	1,673	5.9%	Within 15 miles	No	171.7 miles/ 3h 56min	No	N/A	N/A
10	Ballinrobe, Co Mayo	1,626	24.2%	Within 15 miles	N84	150.9 miles/ 3h 32min	No	N/A	N/A

(See footnotes on page 30)

5.5 Population Growth

The population of Ireland and the Western Region grew rapidly in the intercensal period 1996-2002. It is widely accepted that those areas which are thriving tend to experience population growth while regional decline is associated with a failure to retain population. Most of the twenty towns in the baseline matrix experienced population growth over the period 1996-2002. As discussed in Section 2 above, population increase is an important indicator of growth and development in a town, and in its hinterland. A population

increase of more than 20 per cent in the intercensal period indicates that a town has grown very rapidly and it is considered that towns which have been experiencing such population growth have already achieved considerable momentum, largely due to their proximity to larger centres (gateways and hubs in the region) and their capacity to avail of the associated 'spin-offs'.

Of the ten towns in the matrix of towns with road and rail links above, three – Westport, Athenry and Gort – had population growth of 20 per cent or more between 1996 and 2002.

5 The Matrices of Towns

AIR ACCESS		PHYSICAL REMOTENESS		TELECOMS		WATER / WASTEWATER		LAND
Distance/ Time to Nearest Regional Airport ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Int'l Airport ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Large Town (population > 10,000) ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Gateway ^d	Backbone Fibre Network ^h	Other Broadband Access in Town ⁱ	Spare Capacity of Water supply (m ³ /day)	Spare Capacity of Wastewater treatment (p.e.) ^g	Local Authority Land for Development ^f
Derry - 20.3 miles/ 31min	Derry - 20.3 miles/ 31min	Letterkenny - 26.9 miles/ 39min	Letterkenny ^g - 26.9 miles/ 39min	✓	✓	400		No
Galway - 18.9 miles/ 27min	Shannon - 49.3 miles/ 1h 09min	Galway - 23.1 miles/ 32min	Galway - 23.1 miles/ 32min	✓	✗	500	1,000	No
Derry - 35.9 miles/ 52min	Derry - 35.9 miles/ 52min	Letterkenny - 13.5 miles/ 19min	Letterkenny ^g - 13.5 miles/ 19min	✓	✗	0	Phase II-2000	No
Sligo - 31.8 miles/ 46min	Knock - 61.7 miles/ 1h 23min	Sligo - 26.1 miles/ 35min	Sligo - 26.1 miles/ 35min	✓	✓	0	1,800 ^p	No
Shannon - 41.7 miles/ 1h 01min	Shannon - 41.7 miles/ 1h 01min	Ennis - 26.4 miles/ 41min	Shannon - 41.7 miles/ 1h 01min	✓	✗	4,500 (from West Clare Regional Water Supply Scheme)	N/A	1.42Ha
Sligo - 45.9 miles/ 1h 07min	Knock - 75.8 miles/ 1h 44min	Letterkenny - 31.0 miles/ 43min	Letterkenny ^g - 31.0 miles/ 43min	✓	✓	0	3,000 ^p	1.00Ha (town centre)
Sligo - 27.6 miles/ 40min	Knock - 57.5 miles/ 1h 17min	Sligo - 21.9 miles/ 29min	Sligo - 21.9 miles/ 29min	✓	✗	0		0.30Ha (town centre)
Galway - 2.6 miles/ 05min	Shannon - 50.3 miles/ 1h 08min	Galway - 5.8 miles/ 10min	Galway - 5.8 miles/ 10min	✓	MAN ^j	2,500	5,500	No
Derry - 25.5 miles/ 41min	Derry - 25.5 miles/ 41min	Letterkenny - 38.6 miles/ 1h 00min	Letterkenny ^g - 38.6 miles/ 1h 00min	✓	✗	0		No
Knock - 30.9 miles/ 47min	Knock - 30.9 miles/ 47min	Castlebar - 17.5 miles/ 25min	Galway - 31.2 miles/ 41min	✓	✗	800m ³ /day surplus supply and treatment, new plant planned ^l	3,000	0.81Ha

In the matrix of ten towns with road links only, three – Loughrea, Oranmore and Ballinrobe – also had population growth of 20 per cent or more between 1996 and 2002.

In the following two matrices, **only towns with population growth of less than 20 per cent 1996-2002 are included.**

5 The Matrices of Towns

5.6 Towns with road and rail links and population growth of less than 20 per cent 1996-2002

In this matrix the seven towns with road and rail links and with population growth of less than 20 per cent 1996-2002 are set out. These towns are all located in central Connacht and have, therefore, relatively good access to Dublin (see Figure 5).

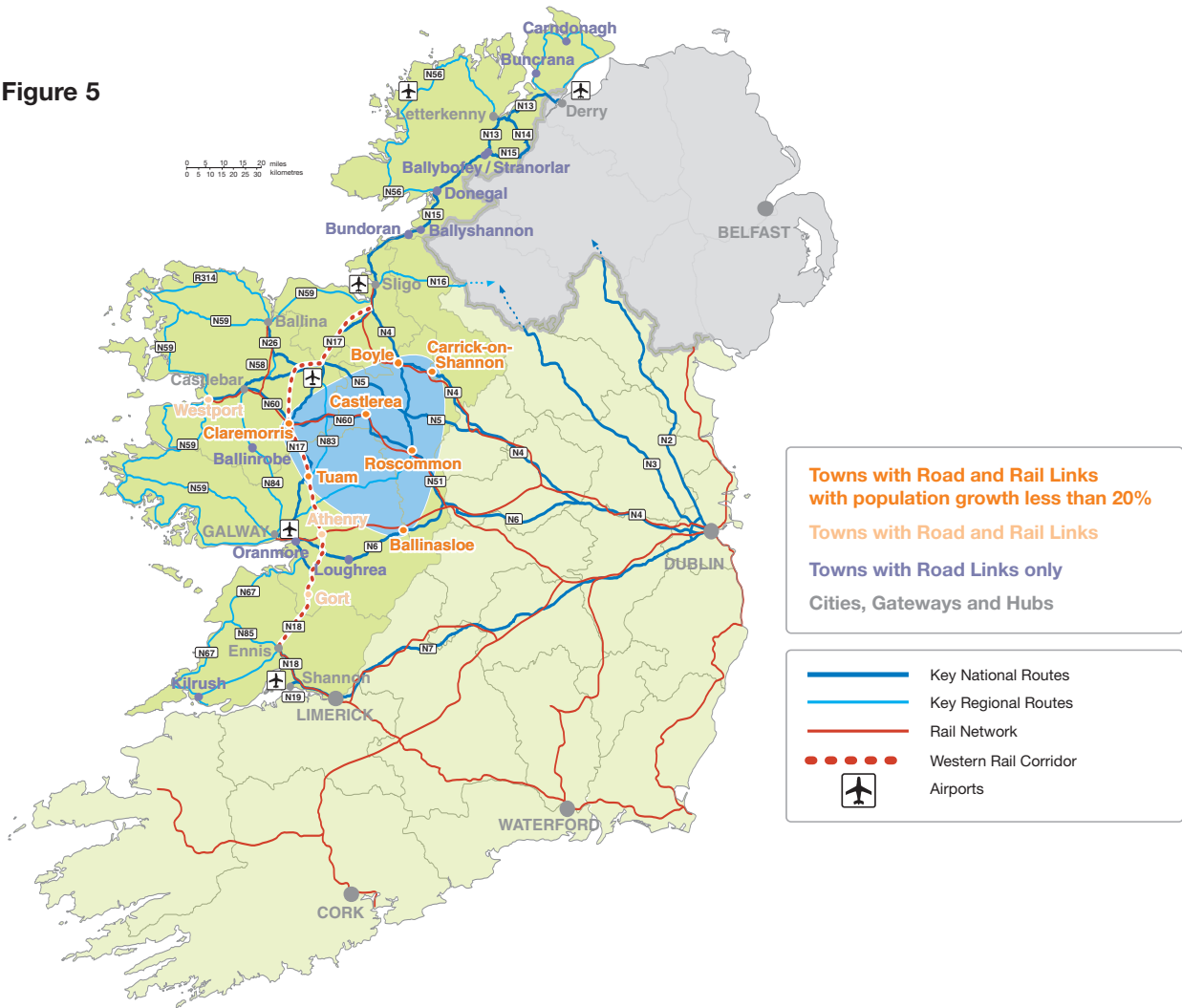
5.6 Matrix of Towns with Road and Rail Links and population growth of less than 20% (1996-2002)

	TOWN	POPULATION		CLÁR	ROAD ACCESS		RAIL ACCESS		
		Pop. 2002	Pop. Change 1996-2002 (%)	CLÁR area / Within 15 miles of a CLÁR area ^c	National Primary and Secondary Roads	Distance/ Drive Time to Dublin ^d	Rail	Length of Rail journey to Dublin ^f	No. of Rail services per day to/from Dublin ^f
1	Ballinasloe, Co Galway^{a b}	6,219	8.6%	Within 15 miles	N6	94.5 miles/ 2h 07min	Dublin-Galway line	Max: 2h 14min Min: 1h 49min	5
2	Tuam, Co Galway	5,947	5.7%	Within 15 miles	N17, N83	122.1 miles/ 3h 00min	WRC ^e	N/A	N/A
3	Roscommon Town, Co Roscommon	4,489	14.7%	Within 15 miles	N60, N61, N63	95.6 miles/ 2h 12min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line	Max: 2h 8min Min: 2h 1min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
4	Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim^b	2,237	19.8%	CLÁR	N4	97.6 miles/ 2h 14min	Dublin-Sligo line	Max: 2h 23min Min: 2h 08min	3 + 1 extra on Monday and Friday
5	Boyle, Co Roscommon^a	2,205	-0.8%	CLÁR	N4, N61	108.0 miles/ 2h 28min	Dublin-Sligo line	Max: 2h 35min Min: 2h 21min	3 + 1 extra on Monday and Friday
6	Claremorris, Co Mayo	2,101	9.8%	CLÁR	N17, N60	137.4 miles/ 3h 09min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line and WRC ^e	Max: 2h 58min Min: 2h 52min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
7	Castlerea, Co Roscommon	1,788	-0.1%	Within 15 miles	N60	113.9 miles/ 2h 36min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line	Max: 2h 28min Min: 2h 21min	3 + 1 extra on Friday

(See footnotes on page 30)

5 The Matrices of Towns

Figure 5



AIR ACCESS		PHYSICAL REMOTENESS		TELECOMS		WATER / WASTEWATER		LAND
Distance/ Time to Nearest Regional Airport ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Int'l Airport ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Large Town (population > 10,000) ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Gateway ^d	Backbone Fibre Network ^h	Other Broadband Access in Town ⁱ	Spare Capacity of Water supply (m ³ /day)	Spare Capacity of Wastewater treatment (p.e.) ^o	Local Authority Land for Development ^f
Galway - 37.8 miles/ 52min	Knock - 54.5 miles/ 1h 29min	Athlone - 15.3 miles/ 19min	Athlone ^g - 15.3 miles/ 19min	✓	✓	500	8,000	No
Galway - 17.6 miles/ 25min	Knock - 33.5 miles/ 46min	Galway - 20.7 miles/ 29min	Galway - 20.7 miles/ 29min	✓	✓	1,000	11,000	No
Knock - 41.6 miles/ 58min	Knock - 41.6 miles/ 58min	Athlone - 19.9 miles/ 30min	Athlone ^g - 19.9 miles/ 30min	✓	MAN ^j	Safe yield of springs is greater than average daily demand	At, or close to, capacity	
Sligo - 37.7 miles/ 54min	Knock - 34.7 miles/ 56min	Sligo - 35.0 miles/ 46min	Sligo - 35.0 miles/ 46min	✓	✓	4,500	10,000 by 2005	8.09Ha
Sligo - 28.6 miles/ 42min	Knock - 28.9 miles/ 48min	Sligo - 25.9 miles/ 35min	Sligo - 25.9 miles/ 35min	✓	Possible Pilot Project	Safe yield of springs is greater than average daily demand	1,000	
Knock - 17.4 miles/ 23min	Knock - 17.4 miles/ 23min	Castlebar - 16.7 miles/ 23min	Galway - 38.2 miles/ 54min	✓	✗	n	1,300	18.61Ha Business/Tech Park & 0.81Ha adjoining the rail station
Knock - 22.9 miles/ 32min	Knock - 22.9 miles/ 32min	Castlebar - 40.2 miles/ 55min	Sligo - 43.6 miles/ 1h 07min	✓	✗	200	2,000 ^q	

5.7 Towns with road links only and population growth of less than 20 per cent 1996-2002

In this matrix, the seven towns without rail links and with population growth of less than 20 per cent 1996-2002 are highlighted. Six of these are in Donegal and one in Clare (see Figure 6).

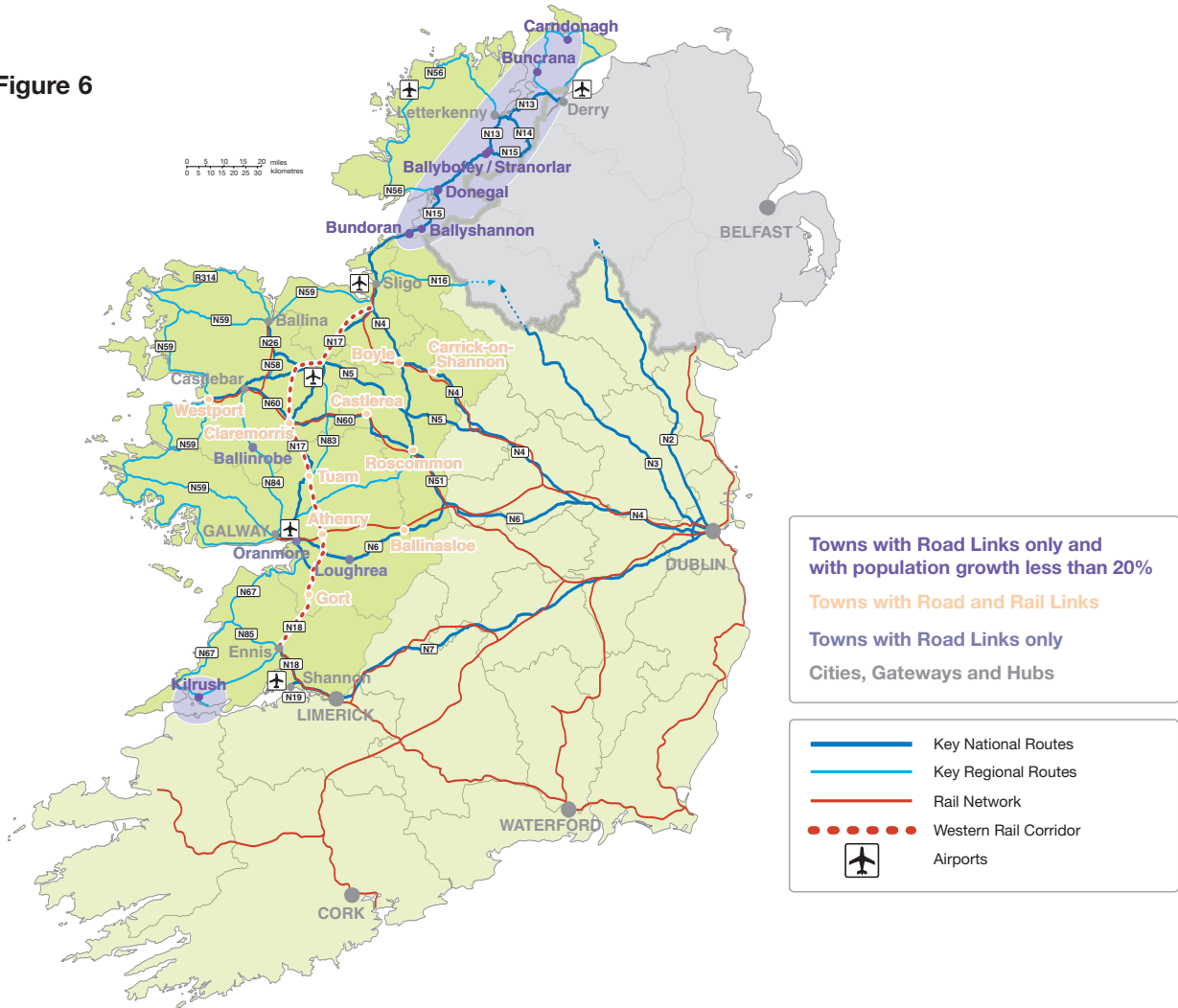
5.7 Matrix of Towns with Road Links Only and population growth of less than 20% (1996-2002)

	TOWN	POPULATION		CLÁR	ROAD ACCESS		RAIL ACCESS		
		Pop. 2002	Pop. Change 1996-2002 (%)	CLÁR area / Within 15 miles of a CLÁR area ^c	National Primary and Secondary Roads	Distance/ Drive Time to Dublin ^d	Rail	Length of Rail journey to Dublin ^f	No. of Rail services per day to/from Dublin ^f
1	Buncrana, Co Donegal^a	5,271	9.7%	Within 15 miles	No	164.4 miles/ 3h 42min	No	N/A	N/A
2	Ballybofey-Stranorlar, Co Donegal	3,603	18.2%	Within 15 miles	N13, N15	146.1 miles/ 3h 16min	No	N/A	N/A
3	Ballyshannon, Co Donegal^a	2,715	-2.2%	Within 15 miles	N3, N15	127.1 miles/ 3h 08min	No	N/A	N/A
4	Kilrush, Co Clare	2,699	4.0%	CLÁR	N67, N68	172.7 miles/ 3h 57min	No	N/A	N/A
5	Donegal Town, Co Donegal	2,453	6.8%	Within 15 miles	N15, N56	135.8 miles/ 3h 24min	No	N/A	N/A
6	Bundoran, Co Donegal^a	1,842	2.6%	Within 15 miles	N15	131.1 miles/ 3h 14min	No	N/A	N/A
7	Carndonagh, Co Donegal	1,673	5.9%	Within 15 miles	No	171.7 miles/ 3h 56min	No	N/A	N/A

(See footnotes on page 30)

5 The Matrices of Towns

Figure 6



AIR ACCESS		PHYSICAL REMOTENESS		TELECOMS		WATER / WASTEWATER		LAND
Distance/ Time to Nearest Regional Airport ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Int'l Airport ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Large Town (population > 10,000) ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Gateway ^d	Backbone Fibre Network ^h	Other Broadband Access in Town ⁱ	Spare Capacity of Water supply (m ³ /day)	Spare Capacity of Wastewater treatment (p.e.) ^o	Local Authority Land for Development ^f
Derry - 20.3 miles/ 31min	Derry - 20.3 miles/ 31min	Letterkenny - 26.9 miles/ 39min	Letterkenny ^g - 26.9 miles/ 39min	✓	✓	400		No
Derry - 35.9 miles/ 52min	Derry - 35.9 miles/ 52min	Letterkenny - 13.5 miles/ 19min	Letterkenny ^g - 13.5 miles/ 19min	✓	✗	0	Phase II-2000	No
Sligo - 31.8 miles/ 46min	Knock - 61.7 miles/ 1h 23min	Sligo - 26.1 miles/ 35min	Sligo - 26.1 miles/ 35min	✓	✓	0	1,800p	No
Shannon - 41.7 miles/ 1h 01min	Shannon - 41.7 miles/ 1h 01min	Ennis - 26.4 miles/ 41min	Shannon - 41.7 miles/ 1h 01min	✓	✗	4,500 (from West Clare Regional Water Supply Scheme)	N/A	1.42Ha
Sligo - 45.9 miles/ 1h 07min	Knock - 75.8 miles/ 1h 44min	Letterkenny - 31.0 miles/ 43min	Letterkenny ^g - 31.0 miles/ 43min	✓	✓	0	3,000 ^p	1.00Ha (town centre)
Sligo - 27.6 miles/ 40min	Knock - 57.5 miles/ 1h 17min	Sligo - 21.9 miles/ 29min	Sligo - 21.9 miles/ 29min	✓	✗	0		0.3Ha (town centre)
Derry - 25.5 miles/ 41min	Derry - 25.5 miles/ 41min	Letterkenny - 38.6 miles/ 1h 00min	Letterkenny ^g - 38.6 miles/ 1h 00min	✓	✗	0		No

5.8 Towns in the hinterland of Knock Airport

An airport and its associated infrastructure can, as in the case of Shannon, be used as a driver for regional development. Likewise, the international airport at Knock could become a particular focal point for regional development.

Knock airport is strategically significant for the Western Region, situated as it is in the heart of Connacht. It is accessible to gateways and hubs (Galway is about seventy-five minutes drive), it provides national and international air services with daily flights to Dublin, London Stansted, Manchester and Birmingham, and is on the N17 National Primary route and close to the N5. It is also close to the Western Rail Corridor. The airport site has almost 65 hectares of land available for development (owned by both the airport and private developers), and more than 600m² of office space is available.

Knock airport is at the centre of the rural Western Region particularly those areas classified in the NSS as being weak and is also in a CLÁR area (see Fig. 1 and Appendix 3).

This area of central Connacht is quite accessible to Dublin and will become more so as transport infrastructure continues to improve (see Appendix 5 on the current status of road routes).

Table 5.8 Facilities available at Knock Airport

Knock International Airport	
Available development land owned by Airport	24.28Ha
Available development land owned by private developers	40.49Ha
Available office space	603.87 m ²
Hotel	2 x 3-star hotels (Knock village)
Conference facilities	Yes (Knock Village)

Significant inward investment associated with commercial development or decentralisation of state employment could provide an impetus to Knock airport to become a regional development hub. This could have a major

5.8 Matrix of Towns in the hinterland of Knock Airport

	TOWN	POPULATION		CLÁR area / Within 15 miles of a CLÁR area ^c	ROAD ACCESS		RAIL ACCESS		
		Pop. 2002	Pop. Change 1996-2002 (%)		National Primary and Secondary Roads	Distance/ Drive Time to Dublin ^d	Rail	Length of Rail journey to Dublin ^f	No. of Rail services per day to/from Dublin ^f
1	Swinford, Co Mayo	1,497	8.0%	CLÁR	N5, N26	132.3 miles/ 3h 00min	WRC ^e	N/A	N/A
2	Ballaghaderreen, Co Roscommon	1,416	13.5%	CLÁR	N5	115.3 miles/ 2h 37min	No	N/A	N/A
3	Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo	1,381	7.3%	CLÁR	N60, N83	126.2 miles/ 2h 52min	Dublin -Westport/ Ballina line	Max: 2h 43min Min: 2h 36min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
4	Tubbercurry, Co Sligo	1,171	7.5%	CLÁR	N17	132.7 miles/ 3h 01min	WRC ^e	N/A	N/A
5	Kiltimagh, Co Mayo	1,000	9.1%	CLÁR	No	138.8 miles/ 3h 11min	WRC ^e	N/A	N/A
6	Ballymote, Co Sligo	981	-1.3%	CLÁR	No	119.2 miles/ 2h 50min	Dublin-Sligo line	Max: 2h 52min Min: 2h 34min	3 + 1 extra on Monday and Friday
7	Foxford, Co Mayo	878	-7.0%	CLÁR	N26, N58	140.3 miles/ 3h 13min	Dublin-Ballina line	Max: 3h 35min Min: 3h 29min	3 + 1 extra on Friday
8	Charlestown-Bellahy, Co Mayo^b	753	11.6%	CLÁR	N5, N17	125.5 miles/ 2h 51min	WRC ^e	N/A	N/A

(See footnotes on page 30)

5 The Matrices of Towns

impact on the smaller towns and rural areas which surround it. A special matrix has been developed for the towns in its hinterland which would be likely to benefit most from such development. The towns included are Swinford, Ballaghaderreen, Ballyhaunis, Tubbercurry,²⁸ Kiltimagh, Ballymote, Foxford and Charlestown. It is anticipated that these towns would provide many retail and service functions required by such development and would also be the residential locations for workers. Because the towns themselves are not the primary sites for investment, somewhat different information has been included in this matrix.

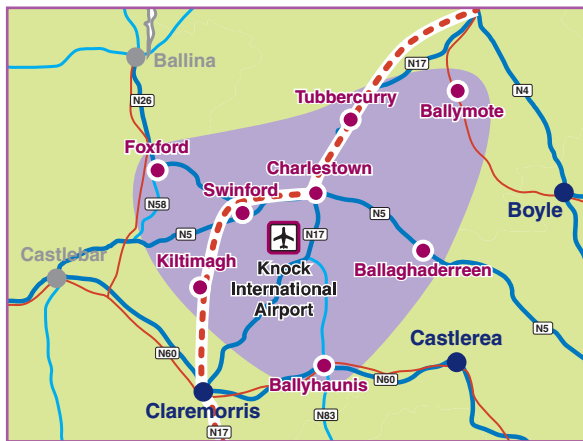
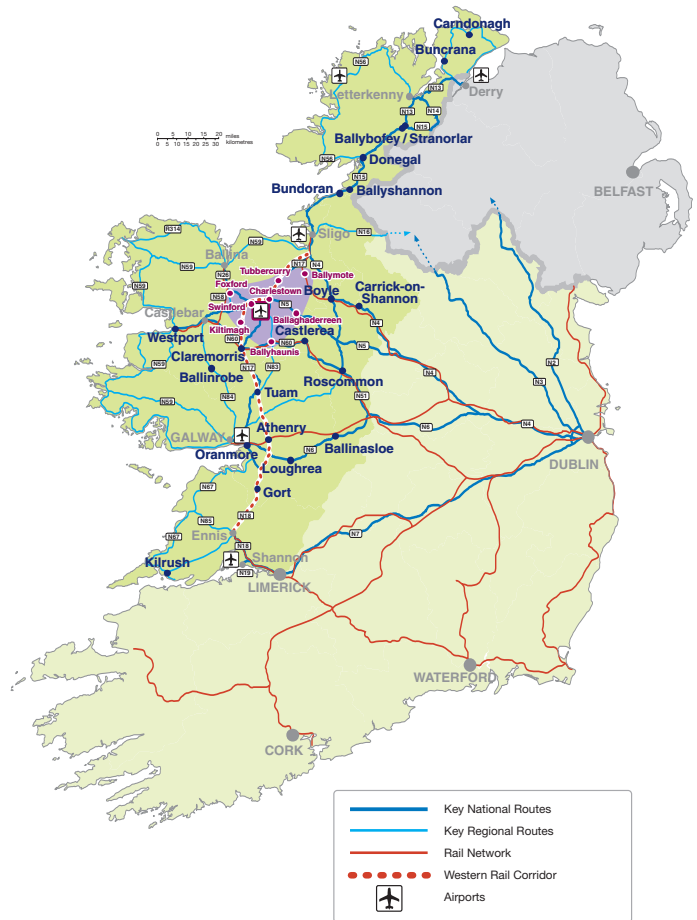


Figure 7



	KNOCK AIRPORT	PHYSICAL REMOTENESS		TELECOMS	
	Distance/ Time to Nearest International Airport ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Large Town (population > 10,000) ^d	Distance/ Time to Nearest Gateway ^d	Backbone Fibre Network ^h	Other Broadband Access in Town ⁱ
	13.5 miles/19min	Castlebar - 17.2 miles/ 24min	Sligo - 35.7 miles/ 47min	✓	✗
	11.7 miles/ 20min	Castlebar - 33.9 miles/ 46min	Sligo - 30.8 miles/ 51min	✓	✗
	10.6 miles/ 16min	Castlebar - 27.9 miles/ 39min	Galway - 40.4 miles/ 1h 01min	✓	✓
	13.9 miles/ 19min	Sligo - 21.7 miles/ 28min	Sligo - 21.7 miles/ 28min	✓	Possible Pilot Project
	15.5 miles/ 22min	Castlebar - 16.4 miles/ 23min	Galway - 49.9 miles/ 1h 10min	✗	MAN ^j pending
	24.8 miles/ 39min	Sligo - 15 miles/ 22min	Sligo - 15 miles/ 22min	✓	✗
	21.5 miles/ 32min	Castlebar - 14.5 miles/ 20min	Sligo - 43.7 miles/ 1h 00min	✓	✗
	6.7 miles/ 10min	Castlebar - 23.7 miles/ 32min	Sligo - 28.9 miles/ 38min	✓	✗

²⁸ This spelling 'Tubbercurry' is that used by the CSO in the Census of Population. It is used throughout the report rather than the alternative spelling 'Tobercurry'.

Footnotes

N/A Not Applicable

Where information is not available, the cell in the matrix has been left blank.

- a** Population figures for these towns refer to the town and its environs.
- b** These towns incorporate District Electoral Divisions spanning more than one county, the county in which the majority of the population reside is indicated in the matrices. Ballinasloe incorporates DED's in Galway and Roscommon, Carrick-on-Shannon incorporates DED's in Leitrim and Roscommon, Charlestown-Bellahy incorporates DED's in Mayo and Sligo.
- c** Information from CLÁR maps on Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs web-site. Refers to towns within CLÁR areas and also towns within 15 miles of a CLÁR area.
- d** AA route planning www.aaireland.ie
- e** Western Rail Corridor
- f** Iarnród Éireann Timetable 2003.
- g** Athlone is part of a linked Gateway incorporating Athlone, Tullamore and Mullingar. Letterkenny is also part of a linked Gateway incorporating Letterkenny and Derry.
- h** Update on Telecommunications in the Western Region, Western Development Commission, 2002.
- i** 256 kilobytes per second or above.
- j** Metropolitan Area Network.
- n** All the towns are supplied from the Lough Mask Regional Water Supply Scheme. The overall spare capacity is 1,000m³/day, which can be assigned to any of the towns if required. Additional capacity of 13,000m³/day will be available when the treatment capacity is increased. This is due to happen in 2005-2006.
- o** p.e. refers to person equivalents.
- p** Estimated completion of these wastewater schemes in 2006.
- q** Figures based on new plant for which construction is to commence soon.
- r** Local authority land available for development other than residential.

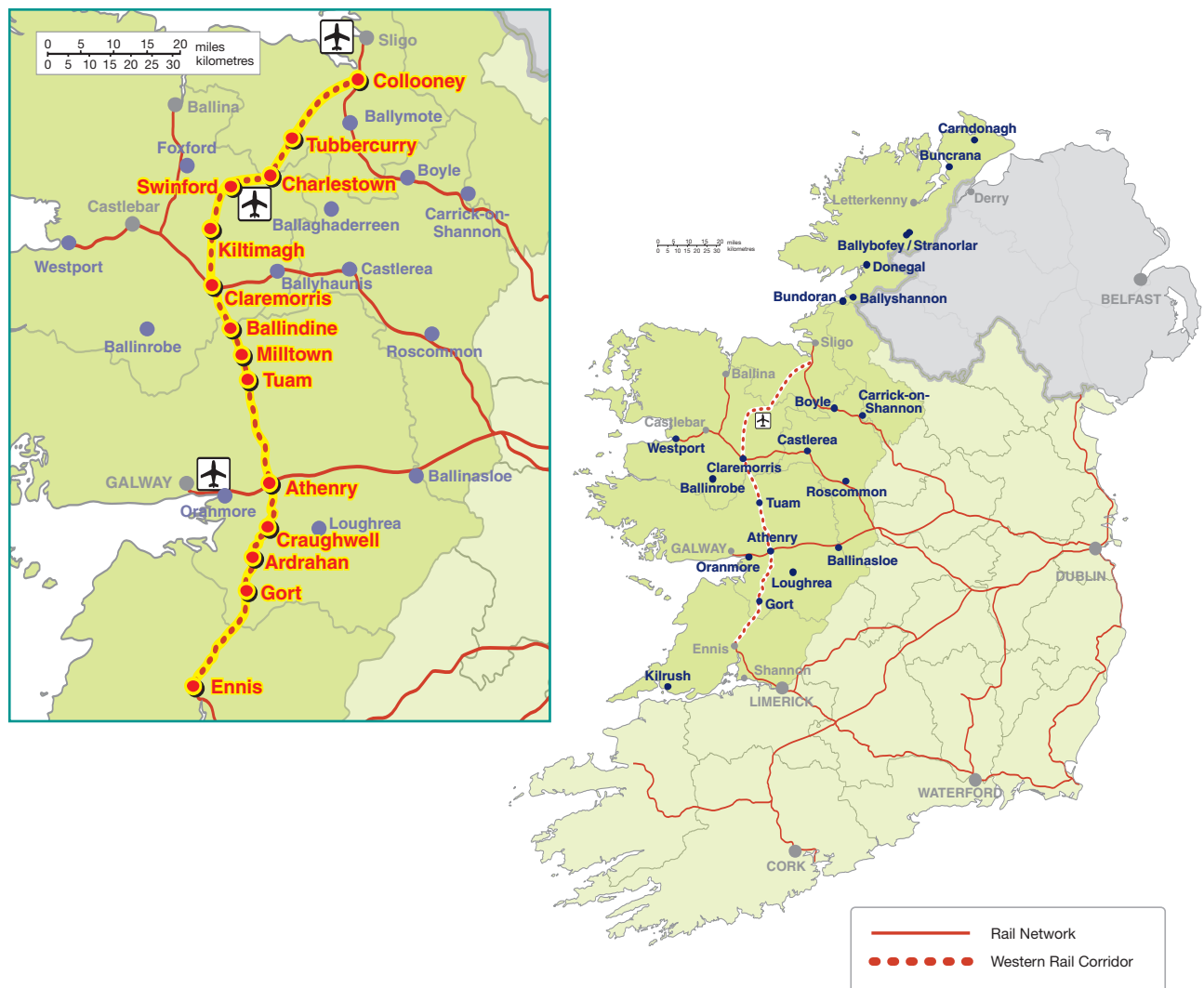
6 Accelerating the Development of Rail Links in the West

6.1 Rail Links and Infrastructural Development

Development, such as that arising from inward investment, drives the demand for improved infrastructure and increases the intensity of infrastructural use. At the same time the availability of quality infrastructure attracts investment. A concentration of development in the small and medium-sized towns in the region, which are served by primary infrastructure can therefore both drive, and be driven by, infrastructural improvements. This factor was one of the key elements behind Minister Ó Cuív's request (see Section 1.2) to the Western Development Commission to examine the small and medium-sized towns on radial and cross radial routes in the Western Region.

The Western Region could have the most intensive rail network outside Dublin (see Fig. 8) with four mainline routes from Dublin and the possibility of the key north-south route between Sligo and Limerick in the Western Rail Corridor (WRC) with onward connections to Cork, Waterford and Rosslare. This network has the potential to provide both good internal regional linkages, and links to the capital, as well as a number of different commuter services. An important benefit of inward investment, including decentralisation could be to increase demand for, and the feasibility of, new rail services.

Figure 8: Rail Network



As is evident from the matrices, many towns are well-positioned along the radial and cross-radial routes in the West – both road and rail – including the Western Rail Corridor. If these towns were developed it could, in the future, enhance the feasibility of the Western Rail Corridor which in turn would reinforce the development potential of the towns. The presence of a substantial concentration of workers in towns along existing rail routes (even if not currently operational) could also substantially increase their viability as commuter routes.

For example, if there were significant inward investment in Tuam this could accelerate demand for a rail link between Tuam and Athenry, both for commuting purposes and in order to connect Tuam to Dublin, while at the same time linking part of the Western Rail Corridor. This, in turn, could stimulate further investment and development in Tuam. Similarly if Knock airport were a focal point for regional development, it would enhance the feasibility of rail services between Charlestown and Claremorris to create a rail link to Dublin, while also connecting part of the Western Rail Corridor.

In the Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001–2020, one of the key themes is a redirection of development to corridors that can be efficiently served by public transport, especially rail, on the basis that this will contribute to a more sustainable future pattern of development in the area. In order to facilitate this reorientation of growth, significant investment in the local rail network is proposed. Similar prioritisation of towns positioned on the Western Rail Corridor would both enhance their development potential, and also stimulate demand for investment in the local rail network.

6.2 Consultation with Local Authorities

The Western Development Commission wrote to the four Local Authorities on the route of the Western Rail Corridor to establish if towns in each county have been prioritised for growth in part because of their positioning on the Western Rail Corridor. Each local authority responded with their position in relation to the development of the towns and the rail links. These responses are summarised below.

6.2.1 Sligo

The response from Sligo noted that the role and required future expansion of public transport, specifically rail infrastructure along the existing Dublin-Sligo line are emphasised in the Draft Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2004-2010. The benefits of this are included in the growth centre proposals for the towns of Ballymote and Colloney (also on the Western Rail Corridor) in the existing County Development Plan (1999-2004). This strategic thinking in relation to rail is to be extended to the WRC proposals and will be outlined in the Review of the County Development Plan (in progress). It is recognised that the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor would assist the consolidation of Tubbercurry as it would receive developmental impetus secured by continuing or re-instigated railway investment. The County Development Plan (the draft of which is currently in preparation) will make specific reference to the WRC.

6.2.2 Mayo

The Mayo County Development Plan 2003 supports the development of Mayo towns. It makes specific reference to the Western Rail Corridor and supports any proposals for the reinstatement of the corridor. It is a Council objective to protect the lands required for the development of public transport facilities, and they also aim to safeguard and protect all existing rail lines, associated facilities and land from redevelopment for non-transport related purposes in order to allow for their future use as an operational transportation network. Central to the Mayo County Development

Plan is the improvement of public transport provision and the development of modern transport facilities such as bus-rail interchanges and commuter linkages. The response from Mayo County Council also noted that it is an objective of the Council to support decentralisation by the potential that exists for accommodating higher levels of population and jobs growth in those settlements currently served by main rail lines.

In relation to Mayo County Council's transport policy it is an aim of the Council to promote, in conjunction with other local authorities and organisations, the development of the Western Transportation Corridor as a means of improving the development potential of the county and the West Region. It is also an objective of the Council to promote Charlestown as a major transport hub for the North West on the basis of its strategic location at the intersection of the N5 and N17, its proximity to Knock International Airport and the fact that it is on the Western Rail Corridor.

6.2.3 Galway

In its response, Galway County Council noted that its current County Development Plan sets out a clear settlement strategy for towns and villages in the county including Gort, Ardrahan, Craughwell, Athenry, Tuam and Milltown which are located on the Western Rail Corridor. Other settlements lie close to the rail network and could also benefit from some form of commuter train service, if it were available. Town plans are in place for Gort, Athenry and Tuam, and a new local area plan is being prepared for the hub town of Tuam along with new local area plans for Gort, Athenry and Craughwell. These plans will incorporate zoning and clear objectives to integrate land use and transportation policies and to promote the efficient use of infrastructure. Proposals will also be prepared for Ardrahan and Milltown. The local area plans for Gort, Athenry and Tuam will reflect the up to date transport corridors integrated with land zoning.

Galway County Council also noted in their submission to the West Regional Authority (which is currently preparing a regional strategy and guidelines) the importance of progressing the north-south road and public transport corridor, thus promoting the growth of the hub town of Tuam and other towns along the route.

6.2.4 Clare

Clare County Council noted that its approach in terms of development plans and policies has been to encourage development in towns and villages and restrict development in the open countryside. The response from Clare emphasised the preparation of the South Clare Economic Corridor Local Area Plan. This plan sets out detailed settlement Strategies for the settlements of Shannon, Newmarket on Fergus, Sixmilebridge, Bunratty and Quin. It also gives recognition to the proposed Shannon Rail Link and identifies and safeguards a number of corridors to facilitate such a development. The Plan states that the link will not only improve access to Shannon including the international airport, Shannon Freezone and Shannon Town but will act as a linkage between the South Clare Corridor and the proposed Western Strategic Corridor Rail Link and the greater Dublin area. According to the Clare Plan, the link will contribute to relieving existing and predicted traffic congestion in the corridor and will assist the attainment of a sustainable national transport policy.

6.3 Conclusion

Clearly, each of the local authorities concerned support the Western Rail Corridor in their plans and have taken rail links into consideration. As pointed out above, the development of small and medium-sized towns in the region could provide an important stimulus for rail development.

7.1 Focus of the Report

The Western Development Commission believes that developing strategies for the growth of small and medium-sized towns is crucial to the economic and social development of the predominantly rural, seven county, Western Region. Many such towns are already sites for successful commercial enterprises (both foreign and indigenous) and are actively promoting their strengths as locations for further investment. In the belief that a greater understanding of the role of smaller towns in the Western Region and their interaction with rural areas and with gateways and hubs is needed, the WDC began analysing the role and functioning of small and medium-sized towns in the rural economy earlier this year (2003).

Following a request from the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the WDC undertook to examine how well small and medium-sized towns on radial and cross-radial road and rail routes in the West were positioned to attract inward investment. This report is the WDC's response to the Minister's request.

The Government's commitment to regional development is set out in the National Development Plan, the Agreed Programme for Government and most recently in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) which provides a strategic framework for regional development. The NSS designated a number of gateways and hubs as centres for the development of critical mass, but it also emphasised the importance of smaller towns and rural areas in regional development. The main focus of the report is on small and medium-sized towns (rather than gateways and hubs) which are typical of the Western Region but whose strengths and functions are not well understood.

A key means of stimulating the growth and development of these towns is inward investment. The possibility of associating their growth with an acceleration of investment in transport infrastructure in the Western

Region, particularly rail, was the second focus of this work. As requested by the Minister, the WDC consulted with local authorities and regional authorities in relation to their strategies for towns, their views on the appropriateness of various indicators of 'investment readiness', and their approach to the development of towns with rail links.

7.2 Inward Investment and Regional Development

Inward investment can contribute to local economies through direct employment and indirectly through increased local purchasing power, the development of sub-supply industries and services, and transfer of technology and know-how to local workers and enterprises. This can create a growth momentum through which a self sustaining 'critical mass' is achieved. Although we commonly associate the term inward investment with private sector development, the WDC believes that the location of substantial public sector employment in a town is, in effect, a form of inward investment in the services sector that can also have a very significant impact on the local economy. Indeed, the driving force behind the Government's commitment to decentralisation is its perceived regional development effects. Thus, in this report we focused on how well towns are positioned to attract inward investment both in terms of private sector investment and decentralisation of government departments and state agencies.

The relocation of government departments and state agencies has the potential to stimulate demand for transport infrastructure such as rail services, as well as transport and communications services provided by the private sector (air and telecoms for example). Thus, an overall increase in both population and demand arising from significant decentralisation should help to boost the region's infrastructure.

7.3 Why Move to the Western Region?

While stressing the benefits of inward investment to towns within the region, the WDC has also highlighted its attractiveness as a location. The cost of living in the Western Region compares very favourably with that in the capital, particularly in relation to major expenses such as the purchase or rental of accommodation or fees for childcare. Similarly the region has significant strengths in regard to quality of life, with a clean environment, good educational facilities, low crime rates, vibrant cultural heritage and a wealth of leisure opportunities. A lack of traffic congestion in most areas makes a pleasant change from the situation in Dublin and surrounding counties. The availability of suitable and affordable development sites is another important attraction for inward investment including public sector services.

In the past, decentralisation has typically involved the relocation of *sections* of government departments, often operational type units with a high proportion of clerical staff. However, advances in information and communications technology, modern working arrangements and the possibility of location in regional centres with relatively easy physical access to Dublin can allow for relocation of entire departments. Access to Dublin is a less important consideration for state agencies which operate more autonomously. The creation of clusters of decentralised departments or agencies brings benefits in terms of shared services, staff transfer, promotion and networking.

7.4 Matrices of Towns

The WDC decided that a matrix (or large spreadsheet) is the most convenient format for the presentation of information on the characteristics of Western towns and their facilities, which is relevant to the locational requirements of investors, and government bodies. Thus, having identified the key factors which influence the selection of towns as locations for investment, a set of matrices for groups of small and medium-sized towns was compiled in which the relevant information on each town is presented.

We began with a baseline matrix of twenty towns, other than gateways and hubs, and then extracted four further matrices based on road and rail links and population growth. Because of its strategic location at the centre of Connacht and its accessibility and infrastructure value to the region, a sixth matrix of towns located in the hinterland of Knock Airport was also compiled.

The matrices allow us to assess how well positioned various towns are to support inward investment in the form of private sector development or decentralisation. The WDC hopes that the compilation of these data in an accessible form will aid small and medium-sized towns in the West in their efforts to attract commercial investment and decentralisation of government bodies.

7.5 Stimulating Investment in Rail

The Western Region has the potential to have the most intensive rail network outside Dublin providing access to Dublin, good internal regional linkages, and various commuter services. As is evident from the matrices, many towns are well-positioned along the radial and cross-radial routes in the West – both road and rail – including the Western Rail Corridor. Significant investment in such towns could accelerate demand for rail links to Dublin and/or local commuter routes that could, in the future, enhance the feasibility of the Western Rail Corridor.

For example, if there were significant inward investment in Tuam this could accelerate demand for a rail link between Tuam and Athenry, both for commuting purposes and in order to connect Tuam to Dublin, while at the same time linking part of the Western Rail Corridor. This, in turn, could stimulate further investment and development in Tuam. Similarly if Knock airport were to become a focal point for regional development, it would enhance the feasibility of rail services between Charlestown and Claremorris to create a rail link to Dublin, while also connecting part of the Western Rail Corridor.

Consultation with local authorities regarding their plans for towns on rail routes indicated that they supported the Western Rail Corridor and had taken the positioning of towns on rail routes into consideration in the preparation of county plans.

7.6 Concluding Comment

In preparing this report on towns the Western Development Commission were responding to a request which set the broad parameters of the project. However, as mentioned at the outset, this work was carried out in the context of a larger study of the rural economy in the Western Region. Thus, in the future, the WDC would envisage expanding and augmenting the work carried out for this project and focusing on smaller towns and their functions and potential in relation to the development of the region.

The WDC is aware also that the preparation of Regional Planning Guidelines by the Regional Authorities is 'the next step' in operationalising the National Spatial Strategy. How small and medium-sized towns are positioned within the RPGs will be important for the future of rural economies.

The WDC hopes that this report will be useful, both to Government and other state agencies, as a contribution to developing a strategy for investment and employment in Western towns.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Full Baseline Matrix of Twenty Towns

TOWN	POPULATION		CLÁR	ROAD ACCESS		RAIL ACCESS		AIR ACCESS			PHYSICAL REMOTENESS	
	Pop. 2002	Pop. Change 1996-2002 (%)		CLÁR area / Within 15 miles of a CLÁR area ^c	National Primary and Secondary Roads	Distance/ Drive Time to Dublin ^d	Rail	Length of Rail journey to Dublin ^f	No. of Rail services per day to/from Dublin ^f	Distance/ Time to Nearest Regional Airport ^g	Distance/ Time to Nearest Int'l Airport ^g	Distance/ Time to Nearest Large Town (population > 10,000) ^d
1 Ballinascloe, Co Galway ^{a b}	6,219	8.6%	Within 15 miles	N6	94.5 miles/ 2h 07min	Dublin-Galway line	Max: 2h 14min Min: 1h 49min	5	Galway - 37.8 miles/ 52min	Knock - 54.5 miles/ 1h 29min	Athlone - 15.3 miles/ 19min	Athlone - 15.3 miles/ 19min
2 Tuam, Co Galway	5,947	5.7%	Within 15 miles	N17, N83	122.1 miles/ 3h 00min	WRPC ^e	N/A	N/A	Galway - 17.6 miles/ 25min	Knock - 33.5 miles/ 46min	Galway - 20.7 miles/ 29min	Galway - 20.7 miles/ 29min
3 Westport, Co Mayo ^a	5,634	24.6%	Within 15 miles	N5, N59	159.9 miles/ 3h 37min	Dublin-Westport line	Max: 3h 36min Min: 3h 30min	3 + 1 extra on Friday	Knock - 41.1 miles/ 56min	Knock - 41.1 miles/ 56min	Galway - 50.9 miles/ 1h 17min	Galway - 50.9 miles/ 1h 17min
4 Buncrana, Co Donegal ^a	5,271	9.7%	Within 15 miles	No	164.4 miles/ 3h 42min	No	N/A	N/A	Derry - 20.3 miles/ 31min	Derry - 20.3 miles/ 31min	Letterkenny ^g - 26.9 miles/ 39min	Letterkenny ^g - 26.9 miles/ 39min
5 Roscommon Town, Co Roscommon	4,489	14.7%	Within 15 miles	N60, N61, N63	95.6 miles/ 2h 12min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line	Max: 2h 8min Min: 2h 1min	3 + 1 extra on Friday	Knock - 41.6 miles/ 58min	Knock - 41.6 miles/ 58min	Athlone ^g - 19.9 miles/ 30min	Athlone ^g - 19.9 miles/ 30min
6 Loughrea, Co Galway	4,004	20.1%	Within 15 miles	N6, N66	113.4 miles/ 2h 32min	No	N/A	N/A	Galway - 18.9 miles/ 27min	Shannon - 49.3 miles/ 1h 09min	Galway - 23.1 miles/ 32min	Galway - 23.1 miles/ 32min
7 Ballybofey-Stranorlar, Co Donegal	3,603	18.2%	Within 15 miles	N13, N15	146.1 miles/ 3h 16min	No	N/A	N/A	Derry - 35.9 miles/ 52min	Derry - 35.9 miles/ 52min	Letterkenny ^g - 13.5 miles/ 19min	Letterkenny ^g - 13.5 miles/ 19min
8 Ballyshannon, Co Donegal ^a	2,715	-2.2%	Within 15 miles	N3, N15	127.1 miles/ 3h 08min	No	N/A	N/A	Sligo - 31.8 miles/ 46min	Knock - 61.7 miles/ 1h 23min	Sligo - 26.1 miles/ 35min	Sligo - 26.1 miles/ 35min
9 Kiltrush, Co Clare	2,699	4.0%	CLÁR	N67, N68	172.7 miles/ 3h 57min	No	N/A	N/A	Shannon - 41.7 miles/ 1h 01min	Shannon - 26.4 miles/ 41min	Shannon - 41.7 miles/ 1h 01min	Shannon - 41.7 miles/ 1h 01min
10 Donegal Town, Co Donegal	2,453	6.8%	Within 15 miles	N15, N56	135.8 miles/ 3h 24min	No	N/A	N/A	Sligo - 45.9 miles/ 1h 07min	Knock - 75.8 miles/ 1h 44min	Letterkenny ^g - 31.0 miles/ 43min	Letterkenny ^g - 31.0 miles/ 43min
11 Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim ^b	2,237	19.8%	CLÁR	N4	97.6 miles/ 2h 14min	Dublin-Sligo line	Max: 2h 23min Min: 2h 08min	3 + 1 extra on Monday and Friday	Sligo - 37.7 miles/ 54min	Knock - 34.7 miles/ 56min	Sligo - 35.0 miles/ 46min	Sligo - 35.0 miles/ 46min
12 Boyle, Co Roscommon ^a	2,205	-0.8%	CLÁR	N4, N61	108.0 miles/ 2h 28min	Dublin-Sligo line	Max: 2h 35min Min: 2h 21min	3 + 1 extra on Monday and Friday	Sligo - 28.6 miles/ 42min	Knock - 28.9 miles/ 48min	Sligo - 25.9 miles/ 35min	Sligo - 25.9 miles/ 35min
13 Athlery, Co Galway	2,154	33.5%	Within 15 miles	No, about 5km from N6	120.2 miles/ 2h 50min	Dublin-Galway line and WRPC ^e	Max: 2h 36min Min: 2h 12min	5	Galway - 10.2 miles/ 17min	Knock - 50.5 miles/ 1h 18min	Galway - 14.4 miles/ 22min	Galway - 14.4 miles/ 22min
14 Claremorris, Co Mayo	2,101	9.8%	CLÁR	N17, N60	137.4 miles/ 3h 09min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line and WRPC ^e	Max: 2h 58min Min: 2h 52min	3 + 1 extra on Friday	Knock - 17.4 miles/ 23min	Knock - 17.4 miles/ 23min	Castlebar - 16.7 miles/ 23min	Castlebar - 16.7 miles/ 23min
15 Bundoran, Co Donegal ^a	1,842	2.6%	Within 15 miles	N15	131.1 miles/ 3h 14min	No	N/A	N/A	Sligo - 27.6 miles/ 40min	Knock - 57.5 miles/ 1h 17min	Sligo - 21.9 miles/ 29min	Sligo - 21.9 miles/ 29min
16 Castleterrace, Co Roscommon	1,788	-0.1%	Within 15 miles	N60	113.9 miles/ 2h 36min	Dublin-Westport/ Ballina line	Max: 2h 28min Min: 2h 21min	3 + 1 extra on Friday	Knock - 22.9 miles/ 32min	Knock - 22.9 miles/ 32min	Castlebar - 40.2 miles/ 55min	Sligo - 43.6 miles/ 1h 07min
17 Gort, Co Galway	1,776	50.3%	Within 15 miles	N18, N66	128.4 miles/ 2h 56min	WRPC ^e	N/A	N/A	Galway - 18.8 miles/ 27min	Shannon - 34.3 miles/ 45min	Galway - 23.0 miles/ 32min	Galway - 23.0 miles/ 32min
18 Oranmore, Co Galway	1,692	20.0%	No	N6, N18	130.1 miles/ 2h 56min	No	N/A	N/A	Galway - 2.6 miles/ 05min	Shannon - 50.3 miles/ 1h 08min	Galway - 5.8 miles/ 10min	Galway - 5.8 miles/ 10min
19 Cardonagh, Co Donegal	1,673	5.9%	Within 15 miles	No	171.7 miles/ 3h 56min	No	N/A	N/A	Derry - 25.5 miles/ 41min	Derry - 25.5 miles/ 41min	Letterkenny ^g - 38.6 miles/ 1h 00min	Letterkenny ^g - 38.6 miles/ 1h 00min
20 Ballinrobe, Co Mayo	1,626	24.2%	Within 15 miles	N84	150.9 miles/ 3h 32min	No	N/A	N/A	Knock - 30.9 miles/ 47min	Knock - 30.9 miles/ 47min	Castlebar - 17.5 miles/ 25min	Galway - 31.2 miles/ 41min

Appendix 1: Full Baseline Matrix of Twenty Towns (continued)

TOWN	TELECOMS		ENERGY		WATER SUPPLY			WASTEWATER TREATMENT			SITE AVAILABILITY					
	Backbone Fibre Network ^h	Other Broadband Access in Town ⁱ	Electricity Infra-structure	Natural Gas Grid	Water Supply (treated) m ³ /day	Water Demand m ³ /day	Spare Capacity (Water supply-Water demand) m ³ /day	Wastewater Treatment Capacity (p.e.) ^j	Wastewater Demand (p.e.) ^j	Spare Capacity (Wastewater treatment capacity-demand) (p.e.) ^j	Land Zoned Residential	Land Zoned Commercial	Land Zoned Industrial	Local Authority Land for Development ^l	IDA Land for Development	Office Space Available
1 Ballinasloe, Co Galway ^{a,b}	✓	✓	38kW	✓	1,500	1,000	500	20,000	12,000	8,000	141.15Ha (Undev.)	7.74Ha (Undev.)	30.33Ha (Undev.)	No	12.92Ha	1,087 m ²
2 Tuam, Co Galway	✓	✓	110kV	✗ ^l	4,000	3,000	1,000	29,000	14,000	11,000	175Ha (Dev) 118Ha (Undev.)		121.4Ha	No	15.33Ha	
3 Westport, Co Mayo ^a	✓	✓	38kW	✗ ^l	n	n	800m ³ /day surplus supply and treatment, new plant planned ^h	18,000	12,000	6,000	40.47Ha - some with planning permission	20.23Ha with planning permission	1.21Ha	15.19Ha	Small amount of private office space	
4 Buncrana, Co Donegal ^a	✓	✓	38kW	✗	2,100	1,700	400				220.96Ha	40.47Ha	25.9Ha	No	2.86Ha	Only small amounts of office space available in advance.
5 Roscommon Town, Co Roscommon	✓	MANJ	110kV	✗	6,500	5,500	Safe yield of springs is greater than average daily demand	9,550	9,500	At or close to capacity	36.4Ha	38.4Ha		No		
6 Loughrea, Co Galway	✓	✗	38kW	✗ ^m	1,500	1,000	500	5,000	4,000	1,000	32.8Ha (Dev) 106Ha (Undev.)			No	1.86Ha	
7 Ballyhoey-Stranorlar, Co Donegal	✓	✗	110kV	✗	6,000	8,000	0	4,000	4,000	Phase II-2000	678.25Ha	81.75Ha	None	No	None	Public Service Centre for CoCo and W/HB. Some capacity for other tenants may exist.
8 Ballyshannon, Co Donegal ^a	✓	✓	110kV	✗	1,450	1,450	0	6,000 ^p	4,200 ^p	1,800 ^p	67.18Ha	40.87Ha	102.79Ha	No	3.86Ha	Only small amounts of office space available in advance.
9 Kiltrush, Co Clare	✓	✗	400kV	✗ ^m	681	681	4,500 (from West Clare RWSS)	0	5,000	N/A	24.51Ha	4.67Ha	18.65Ha	1.42Ha	None	
10 Donegal Town, Co Donegal	✓	✓	110kV	✗	2,400	2,400	0	9,000 ^p	6,000 ^p	3,000 ^p	484.0Ha	54.63Ha	68.8Ha	1.00Ha (town centre)	2.79Ha	CoCo developing a Public Service Centre capacity for other tenants.
11 Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim ^b	✓	✓	220kV	✗	10,500	6,500	4,500	3,500	3,500	10,000 by 2005	112Ha Zoned General Development (Undev.)	32.37Ha		8.09Ha	8.09Ha	2.78m ² to hand (in different lots) 9.594m ² under construction (one lot) 8.522m ² with Planning (two lots)
12 Boyle, Co Roscommon ^a	✓	Possible Pilot Project	38kW	✗	6,000	4,800	Safe yield of springs is greater than average daily demand	6,000	5,000	1,000	25.77Ha	80.76Ha			None	
13 Athlery, Co Galway	✓	Jan-04	220kV/ 110kV	✗ ^l	5,000	2,500	2,500	5,000	5,000	0	18Ha (Dev) 32.9Ha (Undev.)			No	0.10Ha	
14 Claremorris, Co Mayo	✓	✗	110kV	✗ ^l	n	n	n	5,300	4,000	1,300	16.19Ha - in existing built up town centre	40.47Ha (p.220) (Undev.)	18.61Ha Business/tech Park & 0.81Ha adjoining the rail station	None	None	Office space could be accommodated in proposed business park and site adjoining rail station.
15 Bundoran, Co Donegal ^a	✓	✗	110kV	✗	3,800	3,800	0				214.89Ha	25.9Ha	4.05Ha	0.3Ha (town centre)	None	Only small amounts of office space available in advance.
16 Castlereagh, Co Roscommon	✓	✗	38kW	✗	1,600	1,400	200	5,340 ^q	3,400 ^q	2,000 ^q	77.38Ha	16.35Ha			7.61Ha	
17 Gort, Co Galway	✓	✗	400kV/ 220kV/ 110kV	✗ ^m	1,000	1,000	0	3,500	3,500	0	29.5Ha (Dev) 34.4Ha (Undev.)			No	1.61Ha	
18 Oranmore, Co Galway	✓	MANJ	110kV	✓ ^k	5,000	2,500	2,500	8,000	2,500	5,500	28.5 Ha (Dev) 270.5 Ha (Undev.)			No	None	Only small amounts of office space available in advance.
19 Carnonagh, Co Donegal	✓	✗	38kW	✗	1,800	1,800	0	5,000	5,000	0	328.2Ha	32.37Ha	4.05Ha	No	None	Only small amounts of office space available in advance.
20 Ballinrobe, Co Mayo	✓	✗	38kW	✗	3,200 ⁿ	2,400 ⁿ	800m ³ /day surplus supply and treatment, New plant planned ^h	8,000	5,000	3,000	318Ha - 160.66Ha serviced and 13.15Ha unzoned	18.21Ha - in existing built up town centre	10.52Ha zoned and 13.15Ha unzoned	0.81Ha	0.09Ha	Small amount of private office space

Appendix 1: Full Baseline Matrix of Twenty Towns (continued)

TOWN	EDUCATION			HEALTH	HOTEL / CONFERENCE		SOCIAL / CULTURAL			LOCAL ADMINISTRATION	
	Post Primary Education (all types) [§]	Distance / Time to Nearest University ^d	Distance / Time to Nearest Institute of Technology (IT) ^d		Distances/ Time to Nearest Hospital with Acute Services ^d	Hotel (3-star or higher grade)	Conference Facilities (no grade)	Leisure Centre/ Swimming Pool / Golf Course	Cinema/ Theatre/ Museum/ Library	County Town	Local Authority Office
1 Ballinasloe, Co Galway ^{a,b}	3	NUI, Galway - 42.0 miles/ 57min	Athlone IT - 15.3 miles/ 19min	Portlucula, Ballinasloe - In the town	1 x 3-star hotel	✓	Swimming pool/ Golf course	Library/ occasional theatre	✓	✓	
2 Tuam, Co Galway	5	NUI, Galway - 20.7 miles/ 29min	GMT, Galway - 20.7 miles/ 29min	University College Hospital, Galway - 20.7 miles/ 29min	None	✗	Golf course/ Swimming club	Museum/ Library	✓	✓	
3 Westport, Co Mayo ^a	3	NUI, Galway - 50.9 miles/ 1h 17min	GMT, Castlebar - 10.9 miles/ 14min	Mayo General Hospital, Castlebar - 10.9 miles/ 14min	6 x 3-star hotels and 3 x 4-star hotels	✓	Leisure centres/ Swimming pools/ Golf courses	Museum/ Library	✓	✓	
4 Buncrana, Co Donegal ^a	2	University of Ulster, Derry - 13.4 miles/ 21min	Letterkenny IT - 26.9 miles/ 39min	Altnagelvin Area Hospital, Derry - 13.4 miles/ 21min	1 x 3-star hotel	✓	Swimming pool / Golf courses	Cinema/ Library	✓	✓	
5 Roscommon Town, Co Roscommon	3	NUI, Galway - 48.6 miles/ 1h 14min	Athlone IT - 19.9 miles/ 30min	Roscommon County Hospital - In the town	1 x 3-star hotel	✓	Public indoor swimming pool / Golf course	Arts centre/ Cinema/ Theatre/ Library.	✓	✓	
6 Loughrea, Co Galway	2	NUI, Galway - 23.1 miles/ 32min	GMT, Galway - 23.1 miles/ 32min	University College Hospital, Galway - 23.1 miles/ 32min	2 x 3-star hotels	✓	Golf courses	Library/ Heritage centre	✓	✓	
7 Ballybofey -Stranorlar, Co Donegal	2	University of Ulster, Derry - 28.7 miles/ 42min	Letterkenny IT - 13.5 miles/ 19min	Letterkenny General Hospital - 13.5 miles/ 19min	3 x 3-star hotels	✓	Swimming pool/ Golf courses	Theatre	✓	✓	
8 Ballyshannon, Co Donegal ^a	1	University of Ulster, Derry - 58.8 miles/ 1h 24min	Sligo IT - 26.1 miles/ 35min	Sligo General Hospital - 26.1 miles/ 35min	1 x 3-star hotels	✓	Swimming pool	Abbey Centre/ Cinema	✓	✓	
9 Kiltrush, Co Clare	1	University of Limerick - 49.0 miles/ 1h 11min	Tralee IT - 34.6 miles/ 1h 28min	Ennis General Hospital - 26.4 miles/ 41min	None	✗	Golf course	Library	✓	✓	
10 Donegal Town, Co Donegal	1	University of Ulster, Derry - 46.2 miles/ 1h 06min	Letterkenny IT - 31.0 miles/ 43min	Letterkenny General Hospital - 31.0 miles/ 43min	4 x 3-star hotels and 1 x 4-star hotel	✓	Indoor swimming pool	Cinema/ Museum	✓	✓	
11 Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim ^b	1	NUI, Galway - 75.3 miles/ 1h 51min	Sligo IT - 35.0 miles/ 46min	Roscommon County Hospital - 26.3 miles/ 37min	1 x 3-star hotel and 1 x 4-star hotel	✓	Outdoor swimming pool (indoor pool/ leisure centre construction 2004)	Cinema/ Library	✓	✓	
12 Boyle, Co Roscommon ^a	1	NUI, Galway - 67.9 miles/ 1h 50min	Sligo IT - 25.9 miles/ 35min	Sligo General Hospital - 25.9 miles/ 35min	None	✗	Golf course	Library/ Museum	✓	✓	
13 Athlone, Co Galway	2	NUI, Galway - 14.4 miles/ 22min	GMT, Galway - 14.4 miles/ 22min	University College Hospital, Galway - 14.4 miles/ 22min	None	✗	No	Library/ Museum	✓	✓	
14 Claremorris, Co Mayo	2	NUI, Galway - 38.2 miles/ 54min	GMT, Castlebar - 16.7 miles/ 23min	Mayo General Hospital, Castlebar - 16.7 miles/ 23min	1 x 3-star hotel	✓	Swimming pool/ Golf course	Library	✓	✓	
15 Bundoran, Co Donegal ^a	1	University of Ulster, Derry - 63.0 miles/ 1h 30min	Sligo IT - 21.9 miles/ 29min	Sligo General Hospital - 21.9 miles/ 29min	3 x 3-star hotels and 1 x 4-star hotel	✓	Swimming pool/ Golf course	Cinema	✓	✓	
16 Castlereagh, Co Roscommon	1	NUI, Galway - 50.2 miles/ 1h 17min	GMT, Castlebar - 40.2 miles/ 55min	Roscommon County Hospital - 18.7 miles/ 26min	1 x 3-star hotel	✓	Outdoor heated swimming pool/ Golf courses	Library	✓	✓	
17 Gort, Co Galway	1	NUI, Galway - 23.0 miles/ 32min	GMT, Galway - 23.0 miles/ 32min	University College Hospital, Galway - 23.0 miles/ 32min	1 x 3-star hotel	✓	Golf course	Library/ Theatre	✓	✓	
18 Oranmore, Co Galway	1	NUI, Galway - 5.8 miles/ 10min	GMT, Galway - 5.8 miles/ 10min	University College Hospital, Galway - 5.8 miles/ 10min	3 x 3-star hotels	✓	Golf courses	Library	✓	✗	
19 CarnDonagh, Co Donegal	1	University of Ulster, Derry - 20.7 miles/ 35min	Letterkenny IT - 38.6 miles/ 1h 00min	Altnagelvin Area Hospital, Derry - 20.7 miles/ 35min	None	✗	No	None	✓	✓	
20 Ballinrobe, Co Mayo	1	NUI, Galway - 31.2 miles/ 41min	GMT, Castlebar - 17.5 miles/ 25min	Mayo General Hospital, Castlebar - 17.5 miles/ 25min	None	✗	Golf course	Library	✓	✓	

Appendix 1: Full Baseline Matrix of Twenty Towns (continued)

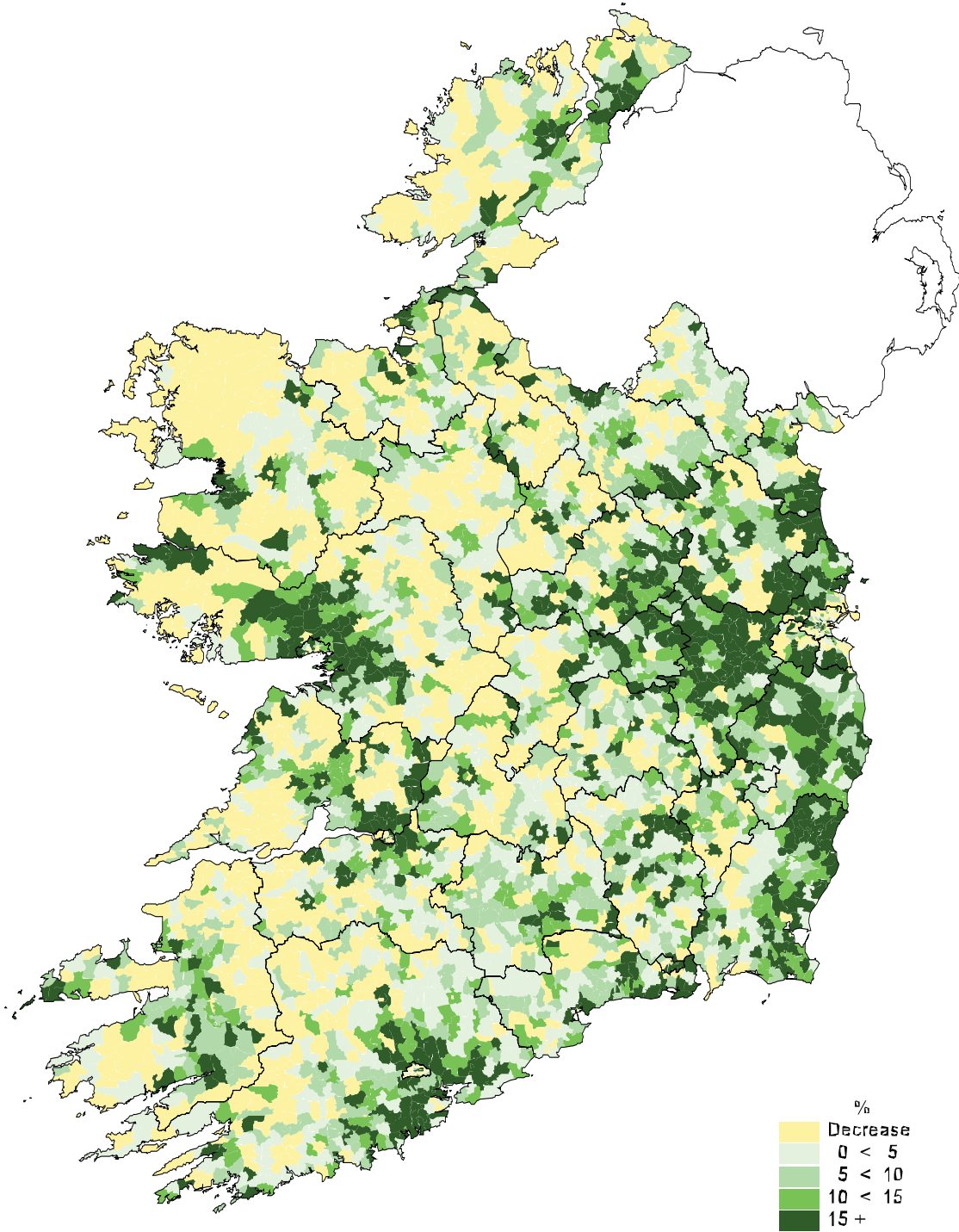
Footnotes

N/A Not Applicable

Where information is not available, the space has been left blank.

- a** Population figures for these towns refer to the town and its environs.
- b** These towns incorporate District Electoral Divisions spanning more than one county, the county in which the majority of the population reside is indicated in the matrices. Ballinasloe incorporates DED's in Galway and Roscommon, Carrick-on-Shannon incorporates DED's in Leitrim and Roscommon, Charlestown-Bellahy incorporates DED's in Mayo and Sligo.
- c** Information from CLÁR maps on Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs web-site. Refers to towns within CLÁR areas and also towns within 15 miles of a CLÁR area.
- d** AA route planning www.aaireland.ie
- e** Western Rail Corridor
- f** Iarnród Éireann Timetable 2003.
- g** Athlone is part of a linked Gateway incorporating Athlone, Tullamore and Mullingar. Letterkenny is also part of a linked Gateway incorporating Letterkenny and Derry.
- h** Update on Telecommunications in the Western Region, Western Development Commission, 2002.
- i** 256 kilobytes per second or above.
- j** Metropolitan Area Network.
- k** Supply will commence in the very near future.
- l** Potential spur from proposed Mayo-Galway pipeline.
- m** Potential spur from existing pipeline.
- n** All the towns are supplied from the Lough Mask Regional Water Supply Scheme. The overall spare capacity is 1,000m³/day, which can be assigned to any of the towns if required. Additional capacity of 13,000m³/day will be available when the treatment capacity is increased. This is due to happen in 2005-2006.
- o** p.e. refers to person equivalents.
- p** Estimated completion of these wastewater schemes in 2006.
- q** Figures based on new plant for which construction is to commence soon.
- r** Local authority land available for development other than residential.
- s** Department of Education and Science 2001.

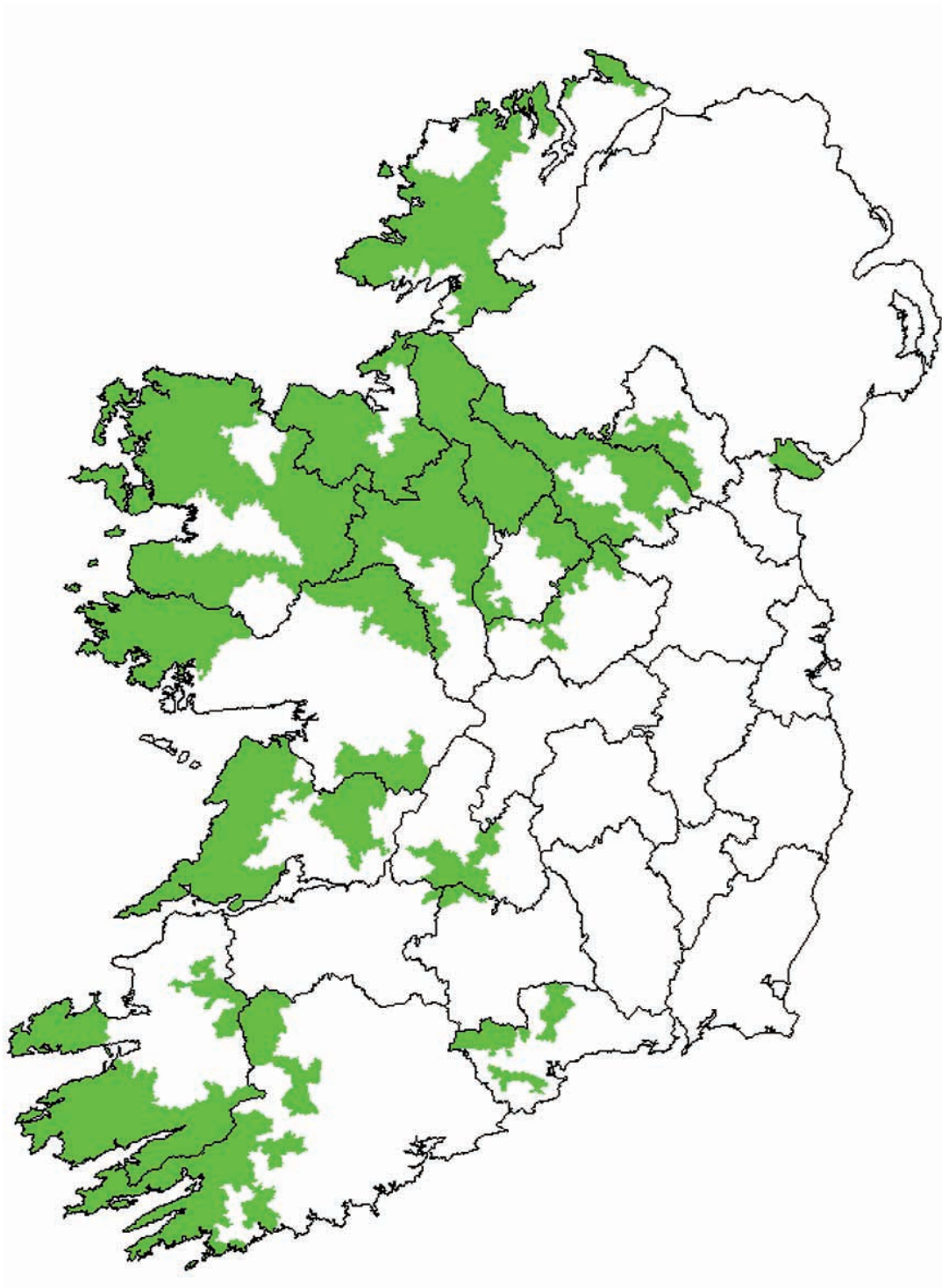
Appendix 2: Percentage change in population of Electoral Divisions, 1996-2002



Reproduced with the permission of the Ordnance Survey

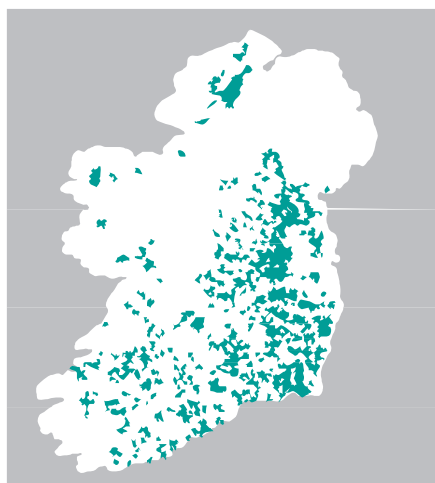
Source: CSO

Appendix 3: CLÁR map

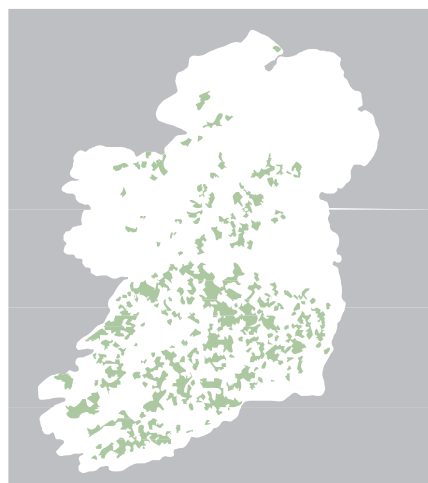


Source: Prepared by NIRSA, Data provided by OSi, CSO. Dept. of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

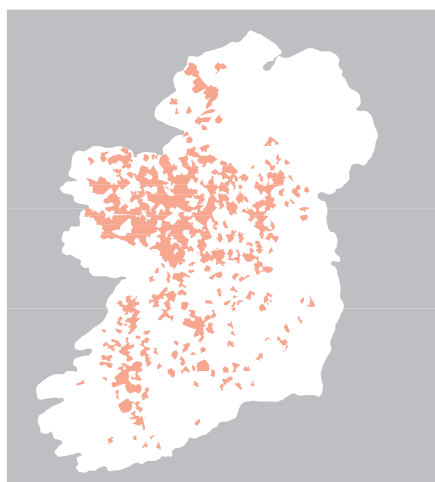
Appendix 4: Rural Area Types



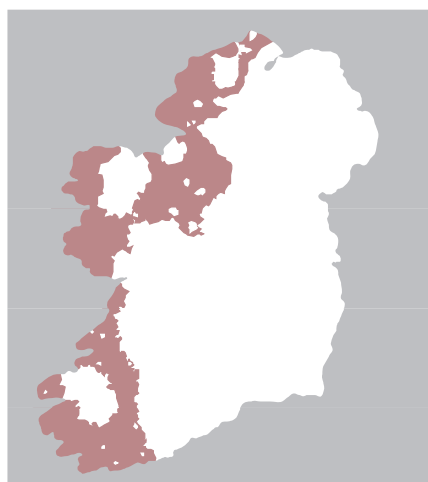
1. Areas that are Strong



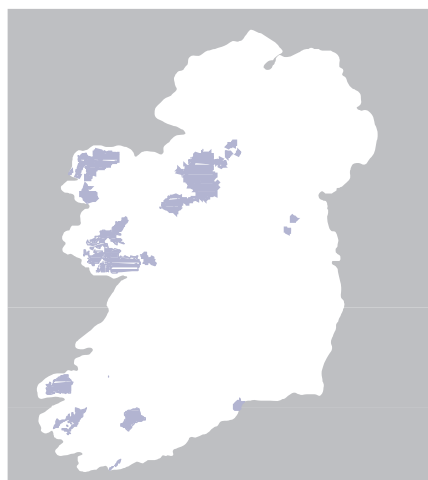
2. Areas that are Changing



3. Areas that are Weak



4. Areas that are Remote



5. Areas that are Culturally Distinctive

Source: NSS

Appendix 5: Current Status of Key Road Routes in the Western Region

Update on key Radial Routes:

N4: The preferred route for the realignment of the link between the Drumsna Bypass and the Longford Town Bypass was agreed in early 2003 and it is expected that the first section of this route (Dromod to Roosky) will reach Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) stage by the end of 2003. A €4.4 million contract has recently been awarded for the Hughestown/ Meera road improvements, located between Boyle and Carrick-on Shannon and that project is due for completion in 2004. The route for the bypass of Carrick-on-Shannon has also been selected and is incorporated into the County Development Plan with future progress dependent on funding.

N5: The major Longford/ Strokestown improvement scheme is due for completion in early 2004 and a Constraints Study is currently underway on the proposed bypassing of Strokestown. The route selection process has almost been completed for the Ballaghaderreen Bypass and it is hoped that Preliminary Design and CPO documentation can be completed by mid 2004. The Charlestown Bypass meanwhile is currently at CPO and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documentation preparation stage and Mayo County Council consider it to be a major priority. The improvement of a 15km stretch between Westport and Castlebar is also currently at Preliminary Design stage.

N6: The Preliminary Design and EIS for the proposed Athlone/ Ballinasloe Bypass is expected to be completed by the end of the year, while the CPO and EIS for the Ballinasloe to Galway scheme (including the bypassing of Loughrea) should also be published by the end of the year. The latter scheme has been identified as a potential Public-Private Partnership and both schemes form part of the new motorway/ dual carriageway from Dublin to Galway that was set down in the National Development Plan.

The route for the Outer Bypass of Galway City has been selected, though the location of the Corrib crossing is still being investigated by the consultants and ground investigations are due to commence.

N26: A major scheme between Ballina and Bohola, divided into two phases, is currently being planned. Mayo County Council awarded a contract for the first phase, from Ballina to Carrowntreila in September 2003 and construction commenced in October 2003. The second phase from Carrowntreila to Bohola will incorporate the Foxford Bypass and will cater for

traffic travelling from Ballina to Dublin, Galway and Castlebar. The Preliminary Design and EIS stage is due to be completed in the first half of 2004.

N60: Pavement and minor improvement works were carried out at a number of locations on the N60 during 2002 and 2003 including Kilkenny Cross, Oran, Castlebar-Balla and Kilknock. A preferred route has been identified for the Castlebar to Claremorris scheme, however no allocation was made to this scheme in 2003 so its current status is unclear.

Update on key Cross-Radial Routes:

N13: An 18km scheme at the N13/N14 Junction for Manor Cunningham to Lifford is currently at the planning stage.

N15: The CPO and EIS have been approved for the Bundoran/ Ballyshannon Bypass and archaeological testing and land acquisition is currently under way with €3.5 million allocated to the scheme in 2003. It is hoped that CPO will be made for the Ballybofey/ Stranorlar Bypass by the end of the year 2003 and planning is also ongoing on a proposed 18km scheme from Stranorlar/ Ballybofey to Lifford.

N17/18/19: The Knock/ Claremorris Bypass was opened to the public at the end of 2002. Route selection reports have now been completed for the scheme from the Mayo county boundary to Milltown, the Tuam Bypass and also the dual-carriageway between Tuam and Galway. The route selection report is still in the process of being prepared for the N18 dual-carriageway between Oranmore and Gort with ecological studies being carried out, while preliminary design has been completed on the Gort/Crusheen Bypass.

The bypass of Newmarket-on-Fergus has now been completed which forms an integral link with the Hurler's Cross scheme and the N19 link to Shannon. This scheme forms part of the strategic Western Route Corridor linking Sligo, Galway and Limerick to Rosslare. One of the major schemes on this route, the bypassing of Ennis, has recently gone to tender and it is hoped that this €200 million scheme will commence in March 2004 and is expected to take three years to complete.

Source: National Roads Authority, November 2003

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