

## **Supplementary County Manager's Report to Members in relation to Scenic Landscapes**

Under Section 12 (4) of the Planning and  
Development Act 2000

**Supplementary Manager's Report  
in relation to Scenic Landscapes**

## 1.0 OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY:

The main aim of this review of scenic landscapes is:

- To emphasise the positive aspect of the County's landscape particularly with regard to sustainable economic and tourism development.
- To recommend the replacement of the 72 areas of scenic landscape areas identified in the Draft County Development Plan, defined generally in the 1970s, with seven new larger cohesive areas based on the Draft Landscape Strategy to reflect and prioritise the most significant landscape areas in terms of their intrinsic value and value for the economy and tourism.
- To develop new objectives, replacing the existing objectives which focus mainly on the issues of rural housing in the scenic landscape, with new objectives to promote appropriate development and provide a framework for the protection of the character of the County's landscapes as required by the Planning and Development Act 2000.
- To include an objective in the County Development Plan providing for Local Area Plans to designate additional areas of local landscape importance.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND:

Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 for the first time introduces a mandatory requirement to include objectives in development plans relating to Landscape Character of the area. A development plan shall include objectives for:

*(e) the preservation of the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the planning authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation of views and prospects and amenity of places and features of natural beauty or interest;*

In the County Development Plan 2003 a full assessment of the landscape character of the County, although in preparation, was not complete. The policies and objectives of the Plan relied on earlier designations in relation to scenic routes and scenic landscape areas.

The landscape character assessment of the County has now reached a stage where these policies designations can be reviewed. The review of the scenic routes designations was included in the Draft County development Plan 2007. This report now sets out recommendations following the parallel review of the scenic landscape areas in relation to the Landscape Character Assessment of the County that has been in progress since the new legislation was introduced.

The following diagram illustrates above process.

The aim of the Review of the Scenic Landscapes is:

- To assess whether the existing designations are appropriate given the view of the landscape emerging from the Draft Landscape Strategy,

- To identify new areas based on the Draft Landscape Strategy where new designations reflect and prioritise the most significant areas in terms of their intrinsic value and value for the economy and tourism,
- To identify new areas which reflect the broad values that the citizens of the County might place on the County's landscape.

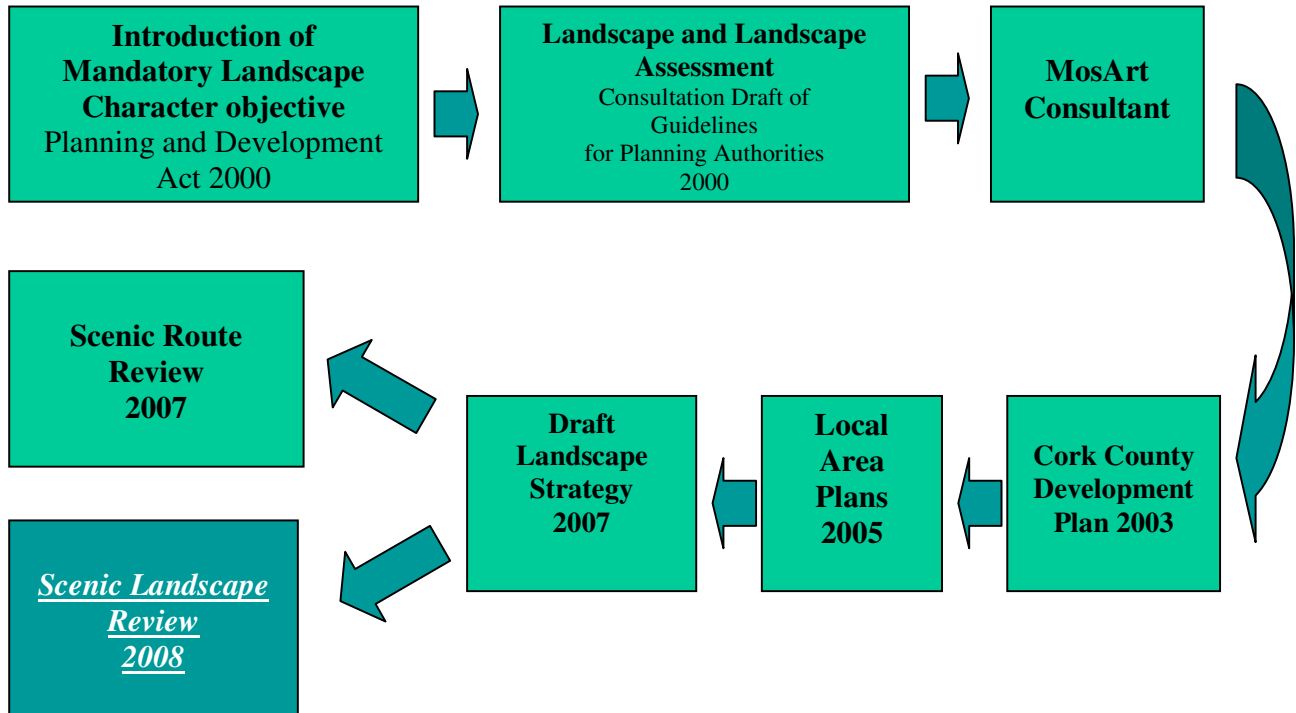


Diagram 1.1

### 3.0 EXISTING SCENIC LANDSCAPE DESIGNATION

The Cork County Development Plan 2003 has 72 Scenic Landscape Areas originally designated in the 1970's.

These areas were defined in the An Foras Forbartha study in the 1970's, while local consideration at County Development Plan level led to the identification of the smaller areas.

However, the basis for their original designation is not recorded and they have never been updated. Some of the locations are nowadays built-up and with completely modified land cover.

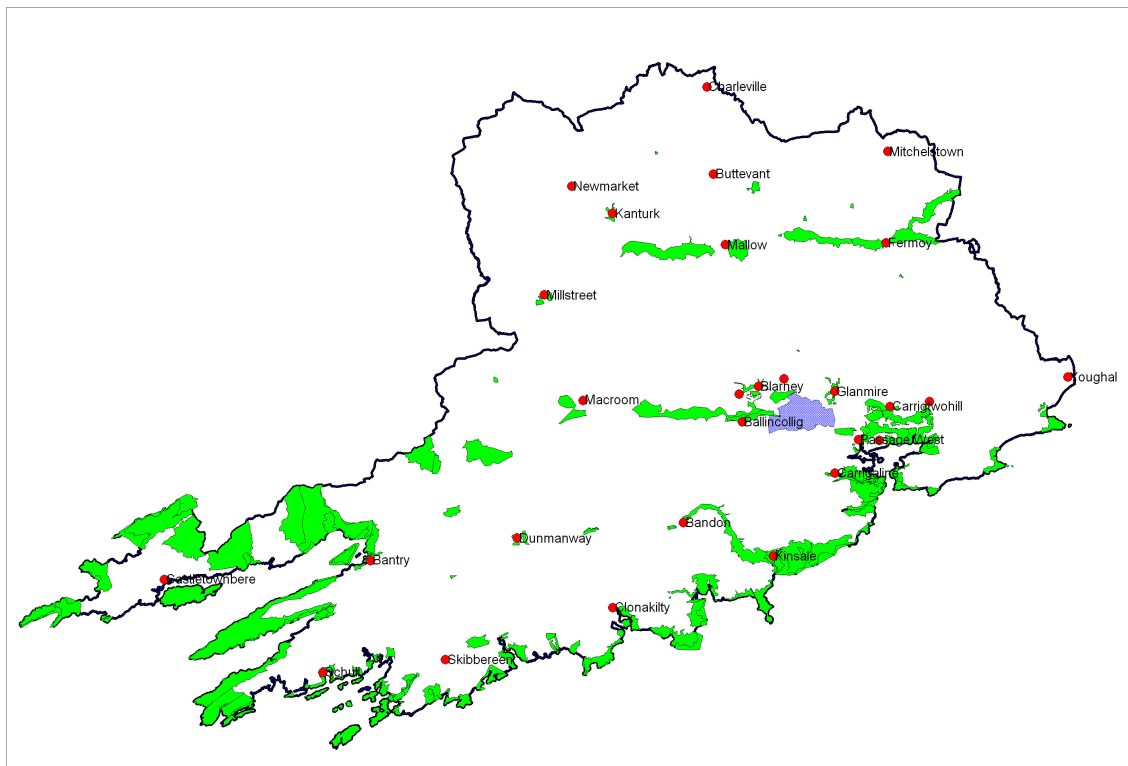


Figure 1 – Scenic Landscape areas in County Development Plan 2003

## CURRENT POLICY

The policy framework adopted towards the areas of scenic landscapes has been perceived to be negative and restrictive rather than emphasise the positive aspect of the landscape, particularly with regard to tourism and development. The aim of the policy review is:

- To fully address the requirements of section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 in relation to Landscape Character,
- To encourage a positive approach to the landscape,
- To integrate scenic landscape objectives and other plan objectives, particularly economy and tourism.

To achieve this aim the approach needs to move away from the small areas and move towards large cohesive areas in order:

- To have real meaning to ordinary citizen in terms of the identity of the County.
- To have a meaningful relationship to significant spatial units of the landscape where people live, work and recreate.
- To recognise that the landscape is not just a natural product it is also the product of man's intervention.

## PROPOSED SPECIAL SCENIC LANDSCAPE AREAS

The review of the Scenic Landscape has identified seven areas of Special Scenic Landscape Area as follows:

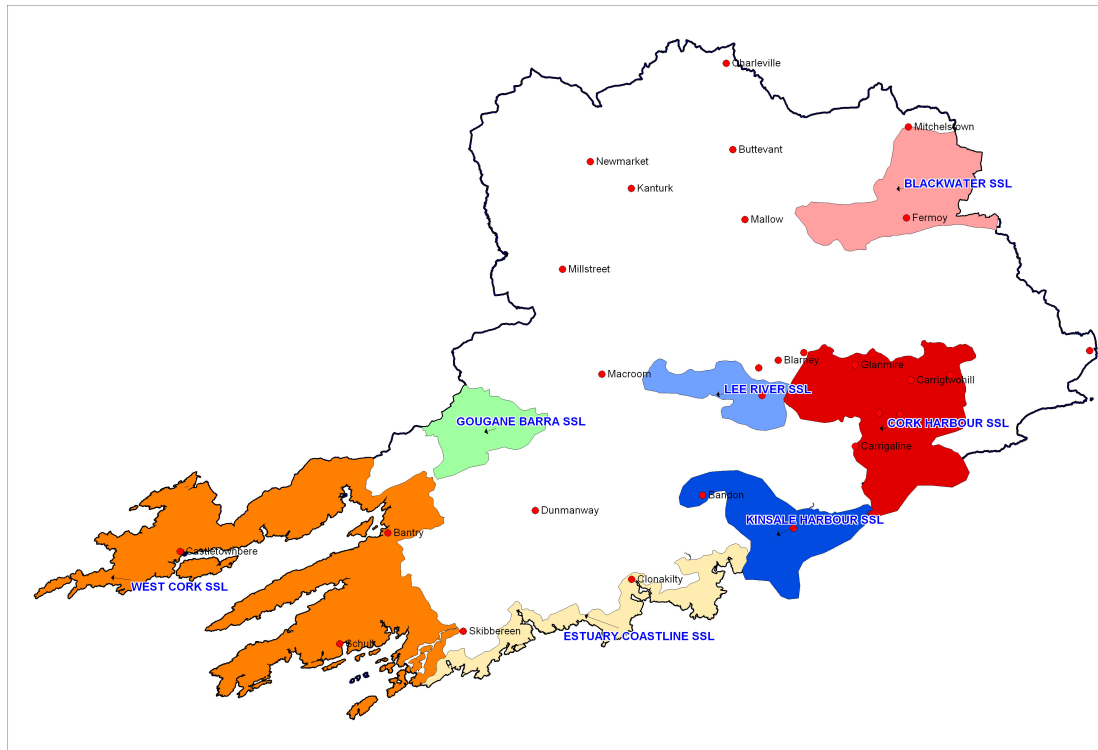


Figure 2 – Special Scenic Landscapes

Seven areas of Special Scenic Landscapes are proposed:

1. **Blackwater Special Scenic Landscape:** Overall aim - To promote agriculture as the major land use in the Blackwater Special Scenic Landscape Area to maintain the landscape character of the area. Major development will be directed towards the main towns while smaller scale development will be directed towards designated key villages, villages etc which will reflect the scale and character of those settlement. Rural housing will be guided by normal planning considerations with the exceptions of the main town greenbelts. The local economy must be considered in a sustainable manner with sustainable tourism having an important role to play in rural diversification.
2. **Lee River Special Scenic Landscape:** Overall aim - To preserve the scenic and amenity values of the Lee Valley through promotion of agricultural land use as a major economic activity but also to improve public access to River Lee for amenity and recreational use. Significant urban development will be directed to the town of Ballincollig and smaller scale development to the designated key villages and villages. Rural housing will be guided in the majority of the area by the Greenbelt and Rural Housing Control Zone policies. Protecting the scenic quality of the area will provide the potential for water based and land based recreational value of the Lee River for the citizens of the County and those from further a field.

3. **Cork Harbour Special Scenic Landscape:** Overall aim - To promote sustainable economic and population growth of Cork and its Metropolitan towns whilst recognising their unique setting within the Special Scenic Landscape Area. The urban areas together function as a Gateway within the National Spatial Strategy. There are strong controls on rural housing within the Metropolitan Green Belt. To maintain the distinctive landscape character of the harbour as a brand image for Cork and create the opportunities for a high quality of living by providing attractive places to live and work and developing the cultural and tourist assets of the area.
4. **Kinsale Harbour Special Scenic Landscape:** Overall aim - To promote Kinsale and its harbour, the Bandon River Valley, Bandon town and the Old Head of Kinsale, as a region of high tourist potential. To enhance the function of the main towns of Bandon and Kinsale and to encourage sustainable smaller scale development in the key villages and smaller settlements. Protect the settings of the towns and attractive river valley and harbour as a tourist asset for the County.
5. **Gougane Barra Special Scenic Landscape:** Overall aim - To promote Gougane Barra Special Scenic Landscape area as a unique spiritual, cultural and tourist area with high potential for hill walking, cycling and recreation.
6. **Estuary Coastline Special Scenic Landscape:** Overall aim - To protect the unique character of the estuary coastline. To enhance the function of the main town of Clonakilty (Strategic Employment Centre) and to encourage sustainable small-scale development in the key villages and smaller settlements in which sustainable tourism will be encouraged. Rural housing is guided by existing coastal policy.
7. **West Cork Special Scenic Landscape:** Overall aim - To promote traditional pattern of land use through supporting agriculture and encouraging diversification into other economic areas including tourism. The towns of Castletownbere, Bantry and Schull need to maintain themselves as attractive places to live and work and attractive centres for tourism. Rural housing is guided by the existing coastline policies.

Of the 72 Scenic Landscape areas designated in the Draft County Development Plan, 28 fall within the new Special Scenic Landscape areas proposed in this report.

The remaining areas (44 in total) currently designated as areas of scenic landscape will no longer be designated as areas of scenic landscape in the County Development Plan to take effect in 2009. However, it is recommended that provision be made to encourage Local Area Plans to designate where appropriate areas of local landscape significance and these former scenic landscape areas could be reconsidered on that stage.

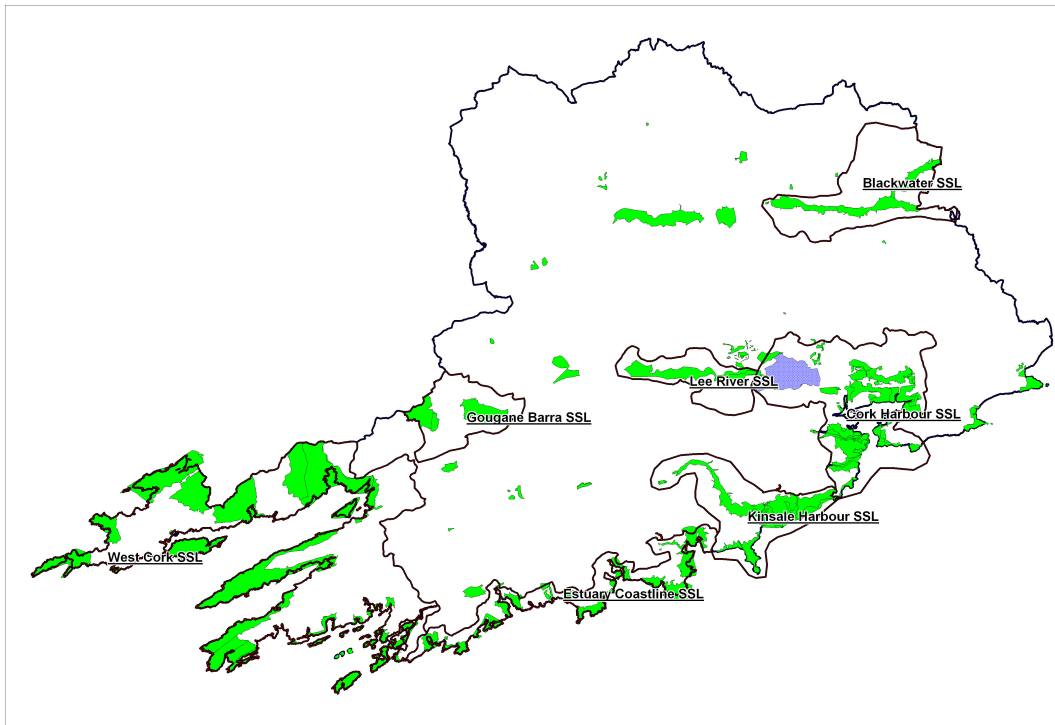


Figure 3 – Proposed Special Scenic Landscape Areas and Scenic Landscape Areas, County Development Plan 2003

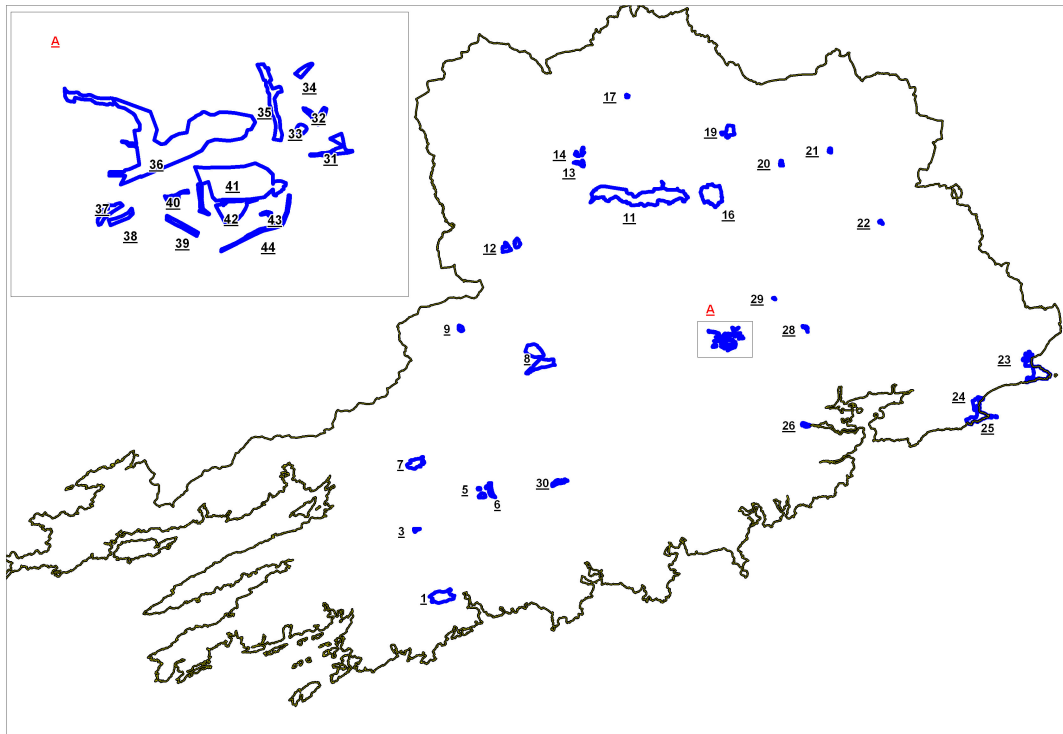


Figure 4 – Scenic Landscape areas for Local Area Plan Consideration

**DRAFT PLAN AREAS OF SCENIC LANDSCAPE NOT INCLUDED WITHIN  
PROPOSED SPECIAL SCENIC LANDSCAPE AREAS**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Name</b>
1	Shreelane, Skibbereen
2	Dromdaleague, Drimoleague
3	Dromdaleague, Drimoleague
4	Tonafora (ED Dunmanway South)
5	Dunmanway North, Dunmanway
6	Milleenanannig, Dunmanway
7	Cousane, Kealkill
8	Macroom
9	Gortnatubbrid, Ballyvourney
10	Gortnatubbrid, Ballyvourney
11	Mallow - Blackwater
12	Mountleader, Millstreet
13	Kanturk
14	Curragh (Ed Kanturk)
15	Greenane, Kanturk
16	Mallow
17	Liscarroll
18	Doneraile
19	Doneraile
20	Castletownroche
21	Glanworth
22	Kill-Saint-Anne South, Rathcormac
23	Clonpriest East, Ballymacoda
24	Ballynamona, Ballycotton
25	Ballynamona, Ballycotton
26	Kilmoney, Carrigaline
27	Kilmoney, Carrigaline
28	Knocknahorgan, Glanmire
29	Knocknahorgan
30	Enniskean
31	Shean Lower, Blarney
32	Shean Upper, Blarney
33	Shean Upper
34	Curraghnalaght, Blarney
35	Shean Upper, Blarney
36	Boolypatrick, Blarney
37	Coolflugh, Blarney
38	Dromasmole, Blarney
39	Woodside, Blarney
40	Bawwnafinny, Blarney
41	Blarney
42	Knocknagorty, Blarney
43	Ballygrohan, Blarney
44	Knocknagorty, Blarney



## 4.0 PROPOSALS

### PROPOSED OBJECTIVES FOR THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

It is proposed that objectives along the lines of the following paragraph be included in the County Development Plan to give effect to the 7 Special Scenic Landscape Areas recommended in this report.

1. To facilitate and encourage the provision of opportunities for public enjoyment of the Special Scenic Landscapes for sustainable tourism and recreational purposes together with the provision of such facilities in suitable locations.
2. It is an objective to promote a sustainable approach to new development, including housing within Special Scenic Landscapes areas which respects the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the Special Scenic Landscape.
3. To protect and enhance the distinctiveness of the Special Scenic Landscapes as an asset for future generations to enjoy and appreciate and to recognise their individual capacities to sustainably integrate appropriate development.
4. To conserve and promote the high scenic quality of the Special Scenic Landscape areas as a regional resource and promote sustainable tourism in those areas.
5. It is an objective that areas of local scenic importance be identified at Local Area Plans level and include objectives which relate to these areas.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The approach taken presents seven Special Scenic Landscape Areas, which represent distinctive scenic units of Cork County, and is seen as an appropriate approach to the management and promotion of the economy and sustainable tourism of the County. The positive aspects of the Special Scenic landscapes are recognised as an important way to develop and promote Cork County's tourism potential.

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATION

### CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO AMENDING THE DRAFT PLAN TO:

- Include explanatory paragraphs relating to the proposal to include seven Special Scenic Landscape Areas in Section 7.2 of the Plan.
- Revise objectives ENV 2-1 to 2-4 to incorporate proposals for seven Special Scenic Landscape Areas.
- Remove objective ENV 2-5 Scenic landscape.
- Include new objective relating to Special Scenic Landscapes along the lines set out in Section 4.0
- Include new objective relating to need for areas of local scenic importance to be identified in their respective Local Area Plans.

- Re-examine objective ENV 4-10 Design in relation to design and landscaping of new buildings.
- Review objective RCI 2-15 to remove references to scenic areas so that this objective, whilst continuing to apply to coastal areas, will no longer apply to Scenic areas so it that will read broadly as follows:

Development Plan Objectives: Rural Houses in <del>Scenic and Coastal</del> Areas	
RCI 2-15	<p>Rural Houses in <del>Scenic and Coastal</del> Areas</p> <p>(a) It is an objective to recognise that the <del>scenic and-coastal</del> parts of the County generally have limited capacity, both in environmental and scenic amenity terms, to accommodate individual dwellings in the countryside.</p> <p>(b) It is an objective to strongly discourage new dwellings in such areas except within established villages (or village nuclei). This restriction is relaxed in principle for the year-round occupation of people from the local area and subject to suitable sites being available.</p> <p>(c) For the purposes of this objective, 'coastal areas' means those areas within sight of the sea, a lake or an inlet. <del>and 'scenic areas' includes those areas identified as scenic landscape on the scenic amenity maps in Volume 3 of this plan. (However, it is intended to review the Scenic Areas of the County having regard to the Landscape Strategy before the amendment stage of the Draft Plan).</del></p>

*N.B. Further changes to this objective are recommended on foot of Manager's Report to issue 4.25 (County Manager Report, page 61) and these are additional to those suggested above.*