

Planning Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area
(Drogheda, East Meath, South Louth)

Drogheda Borough Council, Meath County Council,
Louth County Council.

Issues Paper [March 2005](#)

This Issues Paper was prepared by RPS McHugh Planning and Environment, RPS Transport Planning, RPS MCOS Consulting Engineers, DKM Economic Consultants and Douglas Wallace Architects.

The Issues Paper was prepared in conjunction with the Working Group comprised of personnel from Drogheda Borough Council, Meath County Council and Louth County Council. The content was informed by the commentary from key stakeholders (for a full list of the consulted stakeholders see Appendix V) and by a meeting held with the councillors of the Steering Committee on 27th January, 2005.

Further meetings were held with councillors representing the East Meath area on 7th February, 2005 and the Strategic Policy Committee for Planning in County Louth on 23rd February, 2005. The comments raised at these meetings have been taken on board. The comments, in conjunction with the Issues Paper, will inform the detail and content of the emerging Planning Strategy.

Please note that this document is an Issues Paper only and as such it is intended to stimulate debate on the relevant issues that the final report might address. It is not intended to be the final report.



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1.0 Introduction - Scope of Strategy

This study was commissioned by Drogheda Borough Council, Louth County Council and Meath County Council. The Strategy will provide a framework within which the future planning of Drogheda will take place and which will provide a strategic context for present and future statutory plans.

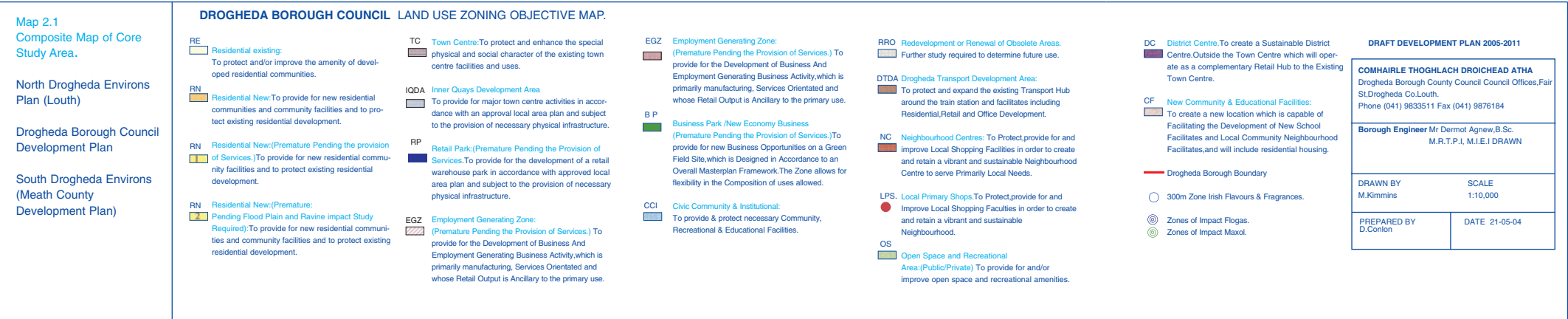
The Strategy will take full guidance from national and regional strategic planning documents in the form of the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines. The Strategy will be a further step in the roll out of the overall spatial framework now established for the state.

The purpose of this Planning Strategy is to establish for the Greater Drogheda Area a cohesive and interlined Strategy for the period 2004 – 2024. The report will emphasise the locational strengths of the Study Area by reference to the Dublin-Belfast Corridor; proximity to Dublin; accessibility to rail and road infrastructure and to points of National access (Dublin Airport, seaports). At the heart of the Strategy brief are the following objectives:

For the linked aspirations of the three local authorities to be accentuated:

- To provide for a prosperous and vibrant town centre;*
- To report on the provision and best utilisation of services and infrastructure capacity;*
- To identify and exploit the benefits from access to high frequency transport corridors (rail and road) linking the Study Area to Dublin in particular (also Belfast);*
- To propose improvements to the capability of movement within the study area;*
- To identify and focus on the delivery of economic investment.*

This Issues Paper has been compiled as a first step towards the final Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area. It incorporates the baseline research done on behalf of the consultant team and feedback from the initial phase of the stakeholder consultation. The purpose of the Issues Paper is to promote an element of lateral thinking, all to complement the current and emerging statutory development plan context for the three local authority areas. It is intended that the Issues Paper will be sent onward to the key stakeholder listing. In conjunction with that listing and with the Steering Committee for this project, the Issues Paper will serve as a catalyst for debate and for a more determined direction to the final Strategy.



RRO Redevelopment or Renewal of Obsolete Areas.

Further study required to determine future use.

DTDA Drogheda Transport Development Area:

To protect and expand the existing Transport Hub around the train station and facilities including Residential,Retail and Office Development.

NC Neighbourhood Centres:

To Protect,provide for and improve Local Shopping Facilities in order to create and retain a vibrant and sustainable Neighbourhood Centre to serve Primarily Local Needs.

LPS Local Primary Shops:

To Protect,provide for and improve Local Shopping Facilities in order to create and retain a vibrant and sustainable Neighbourhood.

OS Open Space and Recreational Area:(Public/Private)

To provide for and/or improve open space and recreational amenities.

DC District Centre:

To create a Sustainable District Centre,Outside the Town Centre which will operate as a complementary Retail Hub to the Existing Town Centre.

CF New Community & Educational Facilities:

To create a new location which is capable of Facilitating the Development of New School Facilities and Local Community Neighbourhood Facilities,and will include residential housing.

Drogheda Borough Boundary

300m Zone Irish Flavours & Fragrances.

Zones of Impact Flagas.

Zones of Impact Maxol.

DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2005-2011

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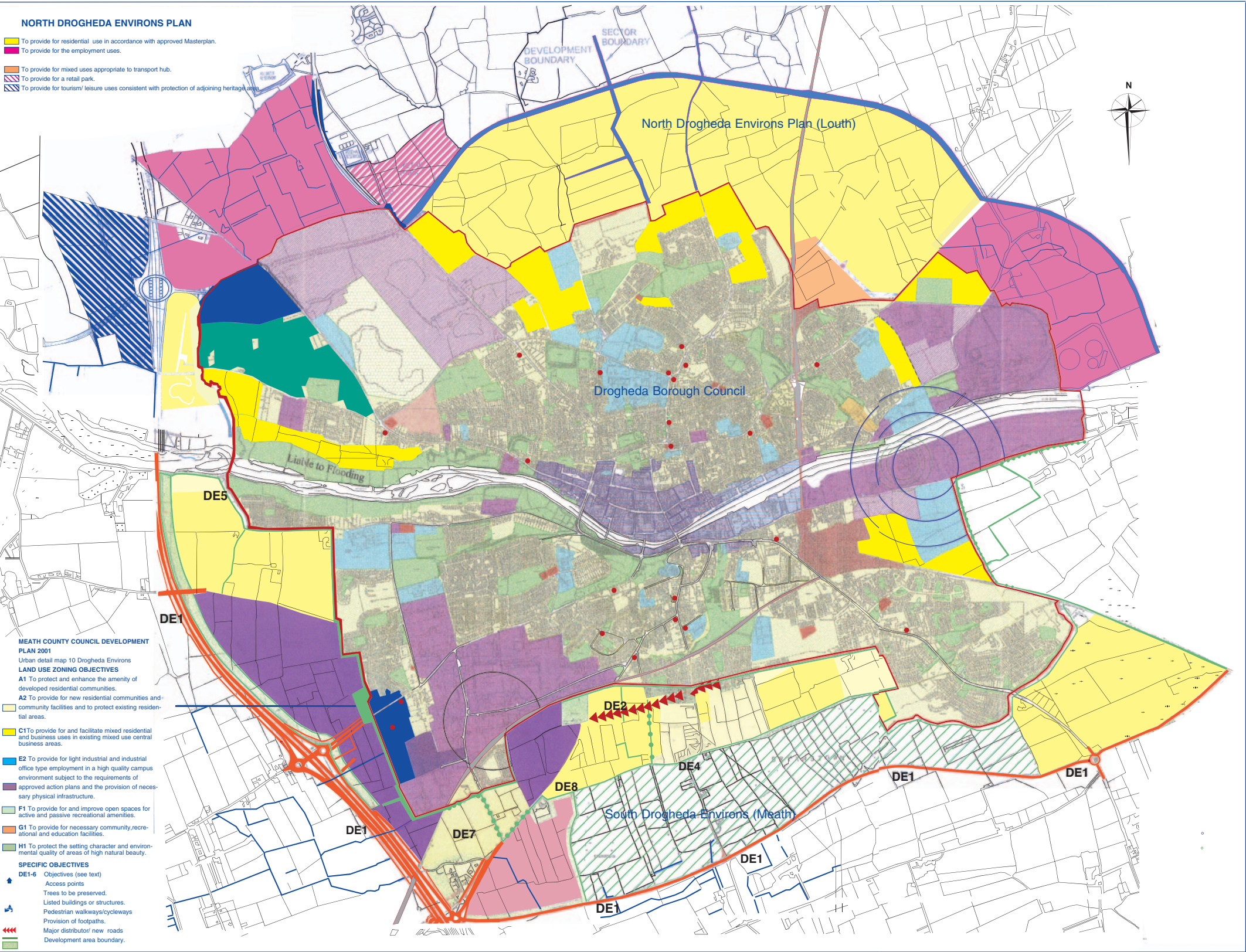
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PREPARED BY D.Conlon

DATE 21-05-04



2.0 The Study Area

The overall study area is considered in two ways:

- **Core Study Area:** this equates to the entire area of Drogheda Borough Council, the northern environs of the town in Co. Louth for which a Local Area Plan has been prepared and the southern environs of the town within County Meath which have been zoned under the 2001 Meath County Development Plan (see Map 2.1). The 2002 population of the core study area is approximately 31,000 persons.

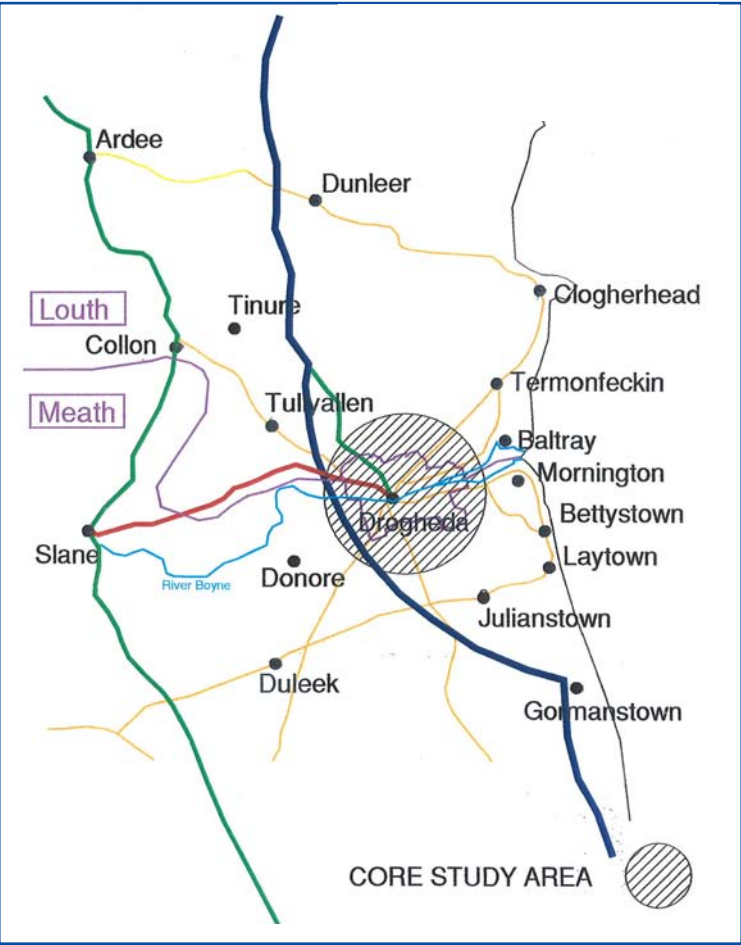
- **Broader Area of Influence:** this equates to the hinterland area of Drogheda within Counties Meath and Louth.

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Map 2.1 Composite Map of Core Study Area.

below

Map 2.2 Broader Area of Influence Planning Strategy for Greater Drogheda Area Indicative Map.



3.0 Brief profile of Drogheda and Environs

3.1 Population

The population of Drogheda Borough and the adjoining lands north and south of the Borough boundary as calculated from the Census data was 31,020 in 2002, up from 25,282 in 1996. The area for which the population change is shown below in Table 3.1 is the closet approximation to the footprint of the core study area available. The increase of 5,738 persons over the six-year period represented a cumulative percentage change of 22.7 per cent, far in excess of the State's 8 per cent increase over the same period. The growth rate varied considerably within the study area, as follows:

Clearly growth is very rapid in the suburban areas, and in Mornington/Bettystown/Laytown, but growth in the Municipal Borough has also been quite strong. While there are no precise local population numbers for the period since 2002, national population growth has accelerated since the Census, so it is reasonable to assume that local population growth has continued in tandem. The villages within the broader area of influence around Drogheda have also seen some population increase over recent years, with some of the villages experiencing significant increases. Some of the more recent Local Area Plans for these villages also indicate that population growth has continued to be strong (for full details see Appendix I). Note that Ardee is not included for statistical purposes (see Planning and Land Use Issues at Section 4.0).

Table 3.1: Population of the Core Area

Area	Persons 1996	Persons 2002	Cumulative Percentage Change 1996-2002
Drogheda Municipal Borough	24,460	28,333	15.8
Environs of Drogheda (North)-Parts of St. Peter's DED (Co.Louth)	36	554	1,438.9
Environs of Drogheda (South)-Parts of St.Mary's and Julianstown DEDs (Co. Meath)	786	2,133	171.4
Total	25,282	31,020	22.7

Source: CSO, Census of Population 2002:Population Classified by Area (Table 5: Population of Towns ordered by County and size, 1996 and 2002)

Table 3.2 : Population Of Villages In The Drogheda Hinterland

Area	Persons 1996	Persons 2002	Actual Change 1996-2002	Cumulative Percentage Change 1996-2002
Towns/Villages in County Louth				
Dunleer	988	1,014	26	2.6
Clogherhead	775	906	131	16.9
Tullyallen	429	617	188	43.8
Termonfeckin	530	503	-27	-5.1
Collon	308	424	116	37.7
Tinure	-	296	-	-
Towns/Villages in County Meath				
Laytown- Bettystown- Mornington	3,678	5,597	1,919	52.2
Duleek	1,731	2,173	442	25.5
Stamullen	427	779	352	82.4
Gormanstown	435	504	69	15.9
Julianstown/Whitecross	424	422	-2	-0.5
Donore	293	334	41	14.0
Total	10,018	13,569	3,551	35.4

Source: CSO 2002

3.2 Recent Development Activity

Drogheda has seen strong levels of development activity in recent years. A number of major urban developments are under construction in the town centre, most notably the Scotch Hall development on the waterfront and the Grammar School development in the town centre. There are also a number of other mixed use developments that will have a combined impact on the town centre in terms of shopping, living, working and leisure activity.

New housing development is also taking place on the outskirts of the town, with some substantial housing developments already on stream. Demand for new housing is high in the northern environs. A number of applications were turned down pending the publication of masterplans for the overall northern environs area in Co. Louth which have now gone to tender. The southern environs in Co. Meath have also seen strong demand for new housing (especially in the Colpe Cross area) and this trend is set to continue with the drafting of a Local Area Plan for some of the lands outstanding. These areas will accommodate a substantial new population for Drogheda.

Some commercial and industrial development activity has also taken place. In particular the new IDA site for Drogheda in Co. Meath and two new retail parks, one in Co. Meath and one in Drogheda Borough. There has also been some demand for new units in established business parks. A list of all major developments in the Drogheda Borough Council Area and in the northern and southern environs is attached in Appendix IV.

3.3 Physical and Transport Infrastructure Improvements

A number of transport improvements that were recently completed have greatly benefited the town, most notably the completion of the M1 Motorway and the Drogheda Bypass which opened in 2003. This new section of the motorway represents a major improvement to the EO1 Euroroute. Drogheda is now directly linked to Dublin and Dundalk by motorway.

Public Transport links have also been upgraded with the introduction of a new fleet of suburban trains and service enhancements on the Drogheda to Dublin rail service. Bus services to and from the town have also been improved in recent years.

3.4 Services Infrastructure

The information recorded below is a synopsis of the full detailed baseline and report research work undertaken by the Consultant Team for the first stage of the Greater Drogheda Area Development Strategy.

3.4.1 Water Supply

The study area encompasses five different Water Supply Areas (WSAs). There are four WSAs in the East Meath region – Slane WSA, Windmill Hill WSA, Staleen WSA and Kiltrough WSA. Important towns around Drogheda such as Mornington, Bettystown, Laytown, Julianstown, Donore and Duleek fall within these East Meath WSAs. The Drogheda WSA includes infill developments in Drogheda Town, new developments to the North and East of Drogheda and the proposed export of water to South Louth and Mid-Louth Water Supply Schemes. The water resource is allocated amongst the three local authorities.

The Preliminary Report for the East Meath, South Louth & Drogheda Water Improvement Scheme (EMSL&D WIS) prepared by McCarthy Tobin JV, evaluates the existing supply and makes proposals for a future water supply scheme to serve the area for the next 20 years, up until 2023. As it stands, many parts of the Greater Drogheda Area are experiencing low service levels.

Significant targeted investment is necessary to deliver serviced development in accordance with the identified policies and objectives of the development plans for the three local authorities. The Issue of water services can be categorised into the components of: Supply, Distribution and Storage.

The available supply from existing water sources in the EMSL&D WIS study area as a whole, is 37 Million litres/day (MI/d). The current report predicts that demand for the Study Area will increase from its current value of 32.7 MI/d to 72.3 MI/d by 2023. This means that new sources must be brought on line.

The study area has inadequate distribution mains to deliver sufficient water to meet the growing demand and it also has insufficient storage. The study area as a whole currently experiences water losses of some 48%.

Existing storage capacity is 33.8 MI and hence the area will require an extra 44.4 MI of storage to meet the required 24 hour storage needs for 2023 in line with development assumptions. Two new reservoirs are already planned. The new Donore reservoir is proposed to be in operation by 2007 with the Killineer reservoir coming on line in 2010.

Identification of additional supply sources and tackling of water loss during the distribution process are key issues which must be addressed now to provide a working platform for the overall strategy for development within the Greater Drogheda Area. The evidence presented to date suggest that there are indeed technical solutions to these core water supply requirements. It is of critical importance that delivery of these recommendations is secured.

Secondly, it is imperative that the increased supply and distribution capacity is efficiently allocated. This issue will cross-refer to the emerging strategy for land use development including the positioning of new development areas and possible issues of phasing of landbank roll out.

3.4.2 Wastewater

The current Lagavooren Wastewater Treatment Plant (WwTP) in Drogheda is currently operating to the limits of capacity. Within the town core, solids- handling capacity is reduced and hydraulic overloading occurs during large storms, due to the combined nature of the foul sewers in the older parts of Drogheda Town.

We are informed that Louth County Council is examining industrial loadings at present, to assess whether they can tighten up on shock loads arriving at the WwTP. This could deliver efficiency improvements to the overall network operation. As a consequence of the over-loading and capacity deficit, we are informed that at present there is an effective prohibition on the granting of planning permission for any major development proposals from which a connection to the wastewater network is required. This creates a clear difficulty in that the ability of the local authorities to secure the development objectives of their respective development plans is being hindered, not by policy and strategy, but by a current technical deficit.

The Lagavooren WwTP is due to be further developed in a Phase II expansion that will cater for a design capacity of 101,400 Population Equivalent (PE) by mid-2006. Connection of developments discharging to the WwTP catchment may be allowed into the system when construction is substantially complete, i.e. early 2006.

The design (PE) of 101,400 is predicted to cater for development up to 2015. After this time, long term planning will have to be applied in order to extend the plant further.

In addition to the WwTP at Drogheda, we are informed that Meath County Council is currently assessing the feasibility of constructing a WwTP in the Gormanstown area. If constructed, this plant could cater for parts of the recently completed East Meath Coastal Sewerage Scheme, such as Julianstown, which currently discharges to Drogheda WwTP.

At present, lack of capacity is determining the roll out of development within the Study Area. Upgrade to the wastewater capacity is proposed and is due for completion within the short term. A key Issue of the Greater Drogheda Area strategy will be to make the most efficient use of this increased capacity and to determine which development areas would best merit access to this service infrastructure.

3.4.3 Stormwater

The Boyne River runs through Drogheda and is susceptible to floods in certain low-lying areas, i.e. natural flood plains which would normally be associated with large rivers. Tributaries of the Boyne in North Drogheda, particularly the Ushers and Beaulieu Streams, are currently undergoing flood assessment as part of Tobin's Drainage Infrastructure Proposal for the North Drogheda Area. The South Drogheda Stormwater Study is also nearing completion by Tobins. The capacity of the tributaries in both the north and south of Drogheda are under pressure due to existing/newly constructed development.

The issue of stormwater is growing in prominence in respect of all new urban based development projects. The evidence for the purposes of this Issues Paper is that specific flow attenuation requirements should be mandatory for all new development projects and that this will inform development control policy.



above
Waste Water Treatment Plant and
Water Storage Tower.

Section II

4.0 Spatial Planning and Land Use Issues

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 The Land Use and Planning Baseline
- 4.3 Planning and Land Use Objectives
- 4.4 Planning and Land Use Issues Associated with Strategy Development



4.1 Introduction

Land Use and Planning is the driving force behind the successful completion of a Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area. In summary the land use and planning purpose of this Strategy is to articulate the local and regional function of the Greater Drogheda Area, to align these functions with the current statutory development plan policies (or to comment on the areas of interaction), to apply strategic commentary to the ongoing roll out of development within the Study Area by reference to services capabilities, transport and economic opportunities (and weaknesses) and thereby to set out a Strategy that is coherent, plausible and which serves as a usable advocate for the managed and progressively more self-sustained growth of Drogheda and environs.

4.2 The Land Use and Planning Baseline

4.2.1 Strategic Policy - National Guidance

There is a wealth of strategic guidance and policy for land use planning in Ireland. This has been fully scrutinised and researched in the preparation of the Issues Paper. The full detailing of this as per its relevance to Drogheda will be contained in the final Strategy Report. For the purposes of this Issues Paper we have prepared a (non-exhaustive) synopsis of the applicable elements of this strategic guidance.

4.2.1.1 Sustainable Development:
A Strategy for Ireland (1997)

This report represents very much the first wave of analysis of how sustainable policy should best be put into the heart of all land use and planning work in Ireland. In this regard it is important to note the guiding principles set out therein.

The overall aim of the National Sustainable Development Strategy for Ireland was to set out policy guidance “to ensure that economy and society in Ireland can develop to their full potential within a well protected environment without compromising the quality of that environment.”

The strategy sets out a number of policies in relation to strategic spatial planning:

- Closer coordination between land use and transport planning;
- Minimisation of traffic growth through improvements in the public transport network;
- Promotion of more efficient urban areas through higher development densities;
- The prudent use of land in the provision of new housing and reduced demand for infrastructure services;
- A general presumption against commuter housing in rural areas.

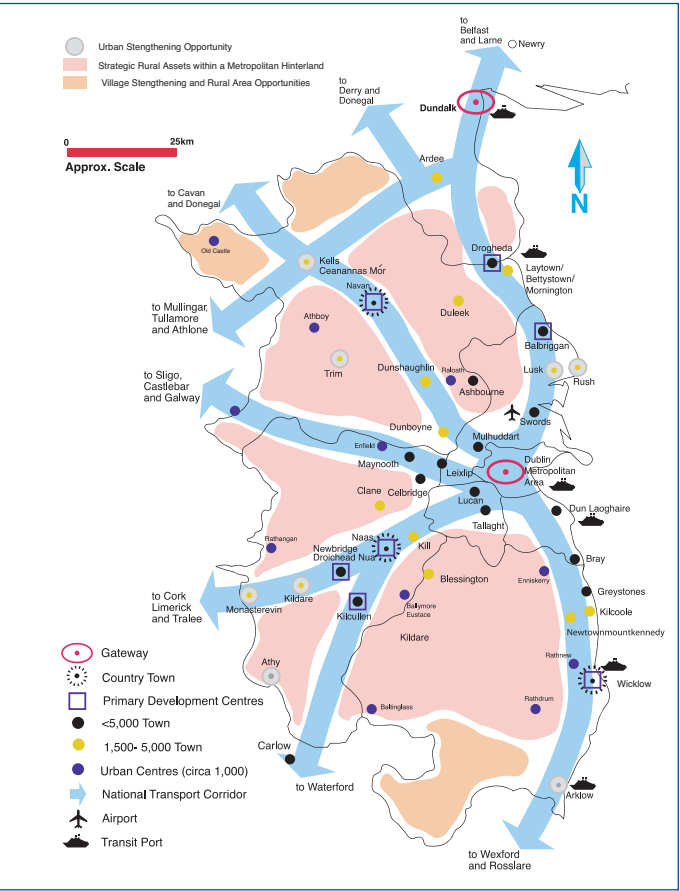
4.2.1.2 National Spatial Strategy, 2002-2020

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS), published in 2002, sets out a twenty year planning framework for the Republic of Ireland, which is designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions. It provides a national framework and policy guidance for the implementation of regional, county and city plans. The NSS identifies a number of 'Gateways' and 'Hubs' into which future development will be directed and facilitated. These are dispersed throughout the eight regions in Ireland.

The concept of balanced regional development is central to the NSS. The NSS aims to sustain Dublin's role as the engine of the economy while strengthening the drawing power of other areas, bringing people, employment and services closer together. The overall aim is to provide for a better quality of life for everybody in Ireland through aiming for less congestion, less long distance commuting, more regard to the quality of the environment and increased access to services like health, education and leisure. The NSS aims to make the most of Ireland's cities, towns and rural places. The overall land use and planning vision for the Greater Drogheda Area will be derived from the policy guidance set out in the National Spatial Strategy.

The NSS identifies key points in relation to sustainability and strategic spatial planning. These act as a starting point from which the final vision is likely to emerge. Chapter 1.3 sets out the Sustainable Development Framework for the National Spatial Strategy “From the point of view of strategic spatial planning, sustainable development will, among other things, mean:

- maximising access to and encouraging use of public transport, cycling and walking;
- developing sustainable urban and rural settlement patterns and communities to reduce distance from employment, services and leisure facilities and to make better use of existing and future investments in public services, including public transport;
- promoting cost-effective provision of public services like roads, drainage, waste management facilities, lighting, public amenities and schools;
- contributing to the evolution of socially integrated communities in both urban and rural areas;
- minimising the consumption of non-renewable resources like soils, groundwater and agricultural land;
- avoiding adverse impacts on environmental features such as landscapes, habitats and protected species, river catchment, the maritime environment and the cultural heritage;
- ensuring that construction design is of a high quality and appropriate to the scale and context of its surroundings.” (NSS, Chapter 1.3)



above
Map 4.1 National Spatial Strategy
Strategy Map for Dublin and Mid-East Region.

4.2.1.3 Drogheda's role under the National Spatial Strategy.

Under the NSS Drogheda is not designated as a gateway or a hub, instead Drogheda's close relationship with the Greater Dublin Area is recognised. It is designated a Primary Development Centre alongside other towns in the Greater Dublin Area. The NSS states that: “Drogheda has much potential for development given its scale, established enterprise base, communications and business and other links with the Greater Dublin Area.” (Chapter 4.3)

The NSS also recognises and supports the role of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor and records Drogheda's position on that corridor. Overall, the NSS notes:

“While Drogheda is an inherent part of the Border region its development is strongly influenced by its relative proximity to Dublin. In seeking to develop the potential future role of Drogheda, therefore, account must also be taken of

- Drogheda's relationship with its own catchment;
- its role within the Border region;
- its role as a significant port;
- its role in the spatial development of the Greater Dublin Area having regard to the town's close functional and physical links with the area.”

4.2.1.4 Key Concepts of the NSS

Other important messages that emanate from the NSS are the relationship between urban and rural areas, criteria for attractive enterprise locations, housing location in urban areas and quality of life issues for larger urban areas.

Urban-rural partnerships

Chapter 2.3 makes specific reference to the concept of urban-rural partnerships. This concept is based on the strong inter-dependencies of these areas in terms of the complex flows of people and services and the fact that towns in more rural areas of a country will have an ever more important role in the development of those rural areas.

Attractive enterprise locations

The NSS makes specific reference to a number of factors that are seen as essential to foster economic activity, such as the need for a critical mass of population, the importance of entrepreneurship and a competitive business environment. The NSS further notes that “there are a number of specific elements within these factors, whose assembly at strategic locations in a targeted way, is vital to foster a wide range of enterprise activity and employment creation. These include:

Integrated strategies for physical, economic and social development and environmental protection, to guide and promote sustainable development, particularly with regard to planning, land use and transportation. This is the underlying purpose of the Greater Drogheda Area Planning Strategy.

Sufficient numbers of people in the city or town and the wider area to which the urban area relates

The Study Area has a population in the range of 40,000 residents at present and emerging resident populations targets from strategic guidance and statutory development plan policy range from 60,000 to 70,000 persons. The issue here therefore is not securing sufficient numbers of people to create the thresholds needed for full urban diversity, but setting out proposals to identify how that diversity can be delivered and secured.

Regional or national centres of learning

This issue arises also within the Economics Chapter of the Issues Paper. Drogheda is close to Dublin with its full educational resource provision across all sectors. Dundalk also has a role in Third Level education both at present and potentially with the ongoing roll out of the Gateway function of the town. Drogheda has secured outreach facilities from Dundalk Institute of Technology and this, in conjunction with the proximity to the full resource of Dublin, suggests that the availability of access to third level education is strong for Drogheda but without any likely significant increase in direct services for the Study Area.

Clustering of businesses and firms, including those involved in inter-related activities and in high-growth, knowledge-intensive and technology-based specialisation.

This is a key issue for the Economics Chapter.

A focal point for national, regional and local road and public transport systems, with good access to the national road and rail network and access to airports, with a range of well-timed and appropriate services facilitating business activity, and deepwater ports.

Drogheda has excellent road and transport network connections and with a strong directional focus on access to the heart of the Dublin Area, but also a clear link on the Dublin-Belfast corridor. The Port facility is important for the town and wider regions. It is a land use of obviously specific needs. The biggest issues for the Greater Drogheda Area Strategy are: to secure the best means of road access to and from the Port (and to lever these as part of network improvements which serve the established town and zoned areas) and also to identify town based development options consequent to the final siting requirements of the Port.

Effective urban transport systems, including facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

This is a key Issue under the Transportation Chapter. Drogheda at its town core has a small footprint, with strong potential to draw in pedestrian and cycle movements. The emerging analysis of urban-based public transport is predicated on bus access from the new development zones to the edge of the town core.

Reliable, secure and cost-competitive energy supply.

Noted.

Effective telecommunications, including broadband.

Noted.

Access to healthcare facilities and facilities for persons with special needs.

Noted.

Regional cultural venues such as theatres/galleries/arts and sports centres.

Drogheda has a capability to deliver on these.

A high quality built environment, including parks, green spaces and other amenities.

The Urban Design Chapter of the Issues Paper looks in some detail at a strategy of identifying open space by function and location and thus its ability to determine urban character.

Adequate zoned and serviced land banks for uses such as residential and industrial development.

The issue here is principally servicing. A baseline assessment of the zoned landbanks suggests that the ability (notwithstanding servicing) to accommodate population target needs within the current zoned area is readily possible. A key issue is the position of some of this zoned landbank and whether the Strategy should set out a phasing roll out or locational prioritisation for growth.

Water supply, wastewater disposal systems, an environment capable of accommodating current water services requirements and major additional requirements into the future.

Noted as above.

Effective waste management structures and facilities.

Noted.

The vision and enthusiasm of the key bodies and interest groups locally to move forward together (Chapter 2.6).

From the evidence to date from key stakeholders and from the teams directly involved in the completion of this Strategy, this is not in doubt.

Quality of life issues

The NSS notes in Chapter 5.4.2 that an increasingly mobile, international labour force has certain locational preferences. This has implications for places that try to attract such a highly skilled labour force. The NSS lists some of the elements that contribute to the attractiveness of places in terms of quality of life:

- a thriving, human-scale, cultural and social environment, concentrated around distinctive street patterns, mixes of restaurants, cafés, bars and attractive shops;
- a high quality physical setting in terms of sensitive conservation of heritage buildings, contemporary architecture, street paving, formal and high quality public spaces and parks;
- pedestrian friendly zones.

4.2.2 Regional Guidelines

In the pursuit of a more detailed roll-out of the policies contained in the NSS, Regional Authorities are required to draw up Regional Planning Guidelines for their respective areas. Most of the regional guidelines have either been adopted or are in the process of being adopted.

Within the overall framework of the NSS, Drogheda straddles two regions. While it is clearly seen as having strong linkages with the Greater Dublin Area (see Map 4.1 page 13), in terms of its location Drogheda is part of the Border Region. Reference to Drogheda is therefore contained in both the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region and in the guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area.

4.2.2.1 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Regional Authority

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) provide a 20-year strategic planning framework for the Border Region (see Map 4.2). The Border Region by virtue of its geographical nature and diversity has been broadly divided into three sub-regions. They are: North West (Donegal), West (Sligo, Leitrim) and Central and East (Cavan, Monaghan and Louth).

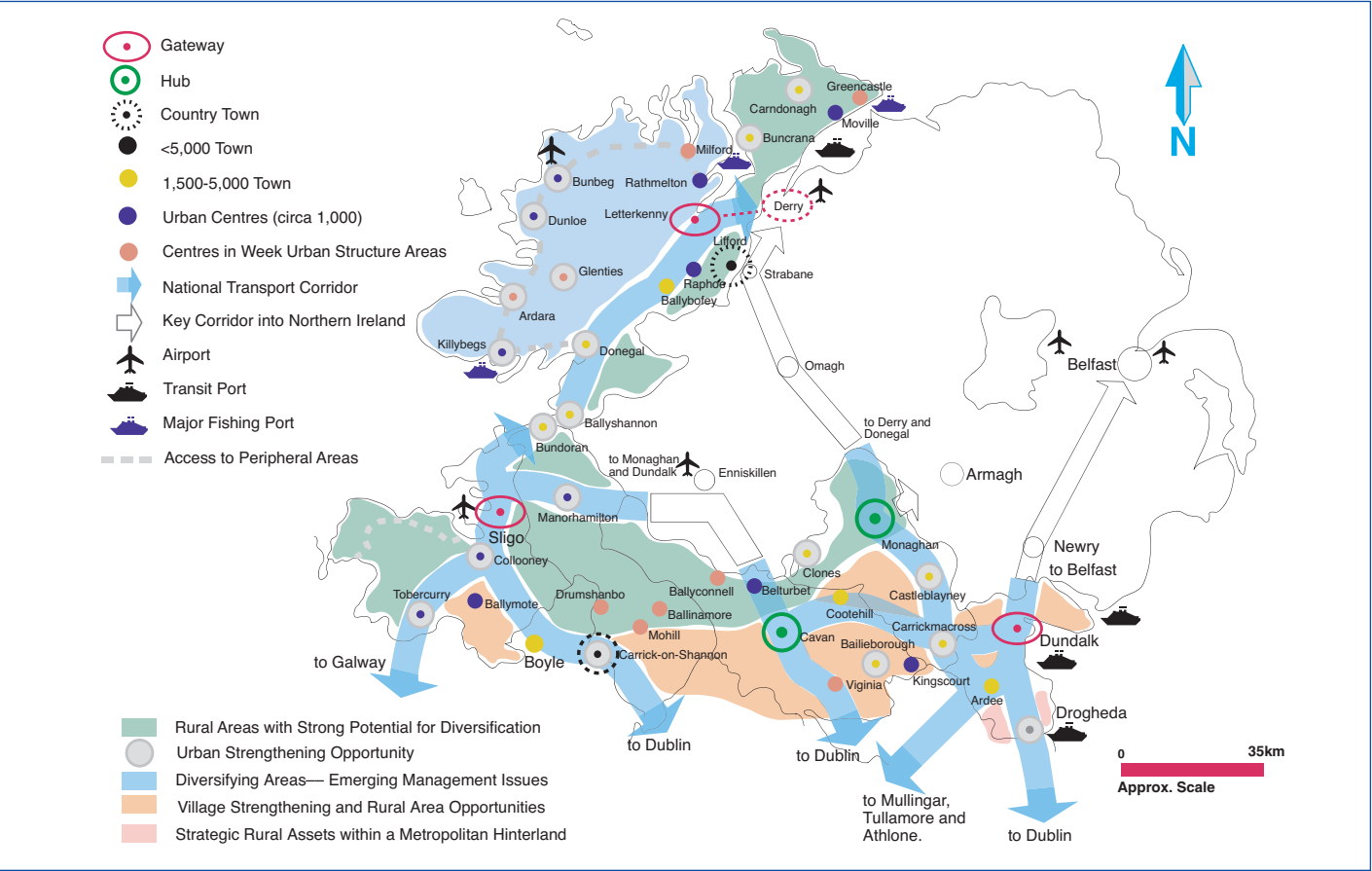
Specific reference to Drogheda is made on a number of points. Overall, the Guidelines note the strong relationship of Drogheda with the Greater Dublin Area and the town's strategic position within the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor.

The Guidelines note that future growth along the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor within the Border Region will be driven by the development of the Gateway town of Dundalk and the development of Drogheda as a Primary Development Centre. The Guidelines acknowledge that the improved road and rail connections and factors outside the Border Region (particularly the town's relationship with Dublin) will be, in the main, responsible for driving Drogheda's future development.

The Guidelines state that, although the specific designations for Dundalk and Drogheda are different (as per the NSS) the Strategy suggests that population growth will deliver two settlements of comparable size (around the 60,000 resident population range). This might suggest that Dundalk will require a more focused investment and delivery intervention derived from NSS policy, while Drogheda is well placed to exploit the established dynamic of the town and the characteristics of growth derived from its proximity to Dublin.

below

Map 4.2 National Spatial Strategy
Strategy Map for the Border Region.



4.2.2.2 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, 2004-2016 (RPGs) supersede the previously prepared Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and incorporate the rationale and analysis of these and of the NSS.

The RPGs divide the overall Greater Dublin Area (GDA) into a Metropolitan Area and a Hinterland Area. Drogheda is sited at the northern edge of the Hinterland Area. The Strategy for the Hinterland Area is to channel development into a number of self-sufficient growth towns, separated by areas of Green Belt with only limited commuting to Dublin in the long term (see Map 4.3).

A key objective of the Guidelines is to increase employment in the strategic growth centres in the Hinterland Area while at the same time increasing housing output in the Metropolitan Area. This is seen as a necessity to reduce the average distance between home and work throughout the Greater Dublin Area. To this end jobs ratios, i.e. the relation between jobs and resident labour force in an area, are set to increase for the three local authorities in the hinterland area.

The majority of new employment is envisaged for the primary growth towns.

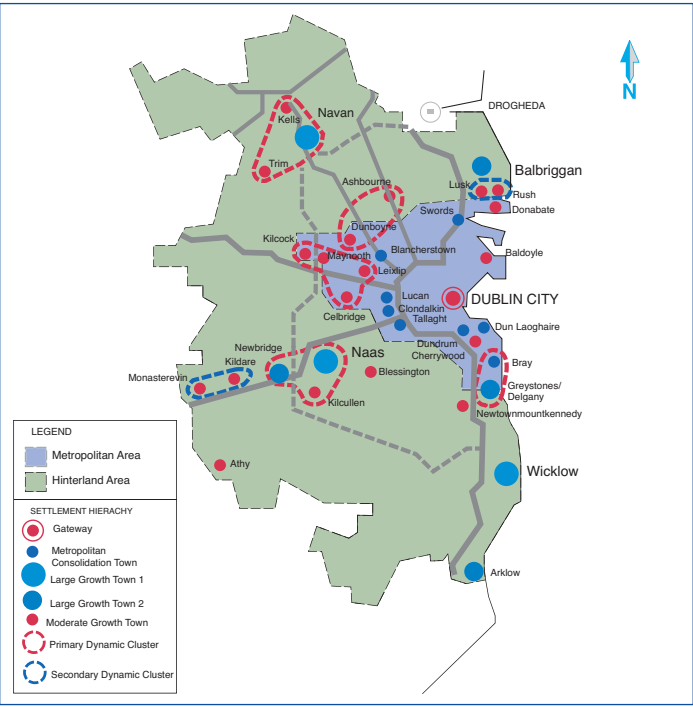
4.2.3 Sectoral Guidance

4.2.3.1 Dublin Transportation Office: A Platform For Change

The DTO strategy provides the transport planning framework for the Greater Dublin Area to the year 2016. The Strategy has two independent variables which are to be implemented in a coherent and integrated way:

- Infrastructure and Service Improvements: to increase the supply of transport, including a substantial expansion of the public transport network, some strategic road construction and traffic management.
- Demand Management: to reduce the growth in travel through the application of land use and other policies while maintaining economic progress. This is designed to encourage a transfer of trips, especially at peak periods, from the private car to sustainable modes of transport (such as public transport, cycling and walking).

The DTO Strategy seeks to transform the transportation system in the Greater Dublin Area. It envisages an extensive, high-quality, fully accessible, integrated network for DART/ suburban rail, LUAS, METRO, bus, roads, cycling and walking.



above
Map 4.3 Regional Planning Guidelines Greater Dublin Area Settlement Strategy.

The DTO strategy makes specific reference to Drogheda in relation to rail:

- Upgrading of signalling on Dublin - Dundalk line to allow a substantial increase in the number of peak hour trains;
- The segregation of intercity services from suburban services on the Dublin - Dundalk line. This requires three- or four-tracking from Connolly Station to north of Howth Junction.

4.2.3.2 Strategic Rail Review

The Strategic Rail Review, published in February 2003, was commissioned by the Department of Transport to evaluate the long-term rail requirements from a national perspective in the light of emerging spatial planning and regional development trends and policies. The review's purpose was to provide the government with a basis for establishing a 20-year strategic policy framework.

The vision statement of the review implicitly endorses the notion of a frequent commuter railway between Dublin and Drogheda by stating:

“The focus of the railway into the future should be as predominantly passenger railway with an effective mass urban transit operation in Dublin; regular quality commuter services to and from Dublin on the Kildare, Maynooth, Dundalk and Arklow corridors; and a good mix of quality intercity radial and ‘fit for purpose’ non-radial services.”

The review also endorses the recommendations of the DTO's Platform for Change and recognises the need to undertake a more detailed analysis of the major GDA rail corridors.

4.2.3.3 Residential Density Guidelines, 1999

The Residential Density Guidelines, published in 1999, seek to promote increased residential densities in appropriate locations, such as brownfield sites, sites in proximity to town centres or public transport corridors in the interest of providing a more sustainable residential pattern.

The guidelines set out the benefits of increased densities as follows:

- more economic use of existing infrastructure and serviced land,
- a reduced need for the development of green-field sites, urban sprawl and ribbon development, reduced need for investment in infrastructure,
- better access to existing services and facilities, and more sustainable commuting patterns.

The guidelines advise planning authorities that in the implementation of higher residential densities, a high quality of design and layout, and a good quality living environment are essential. This includes the availability of adequate shopping, social, transport and leisure infrastructure.

4.2.3.4 Retail Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, 2002

The retail planning guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area seeks to ensure that *“there is a sufficiency of retail floor-space to accord with population and expenditure growth, and that it is located in an efficient, equitable and sustainable manner”*. The guidelines set out a hierarchy of different order shopping centres throughout the Greater Dublin Area. They take account of the policies set out under the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, 1999 and the policies of the Dublin Transportation Office.

Drogheda, although outside the GDA, was included because of its influence on shopping patterns amongst Meath residents in particular. Drogheda is ranked as a county retail centre alongside Navan in County Meath. These centres are seen as the most important centres outside the Metropolitan Area serving a wide catchment population and providing for all different types of higher order shopping activity.

4.2.4 Statutory Planning Policy Context

The following sets out the statutory planning context set by the three Local Authorities responsible for Drogheda town and environs. This includes the Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Action Area Plans and reviews thereof.

4.2.4.1 Drogheda Borough Council Corporation of Drogheda Development Plan, 1999

The 1999 Plan promotes the regional role of Drogheda and the development of its industrial, commercial, shopping, entertainment and communications sectors within the settlement hierarchy of the North East region. It further seeks to consolidate the town centre as the social, cultural and commercial centre of the Borough.

The plan set out a population target of 70,000 persons for the Greater Drogheda Area with an ultimate population project in the region of 100,000 persons. However, this target is not further elaborated.

In terms of employment generation policies, the growth in manufacturing employment is seen as imperative as it also has the spin-off effect of creating service sector jobs. The plan sets out policies to strengthen the existing industrial areas and further zone lands for industrial use.

Urban renewal and the reversal of dereliction was also seen as a high priority of the 1999 Plan and a lot of the envisaged town centre renewal and redevelopment is currently under way.

The Development Plan is currently under review and will be superseded by the 2005-2011 Development Plan after its adoption at the end of the statutory review process.

Drogheda Borough Council Draft Development Plan, 2005-2011

The Draft plan takes cognisance of the fact that Drogheda Borough is fast approaching its natural capacity and therefore seeks to coordinate future development of the town with the adjoining local authorities. It expects the Greater Drogheda Area to grow to a resident population of 70,000 by the year 2020. The plan sees the town of Drogheda thriving at the heart of this Greater Drogheda Area and

“to form the natural point for a wide variety of urban functions including Employment, Retail, Leisure, Healthcare, Tourism, Community Facilities, Transportation, Infrastructure and Services. The 2005-2011 Draft Development Plan has been framed with the aim of consolidating Drogheda’s ‘lynch pin’ role within both the envisaged ‘Greater Drogheda Area’ but also within the wider South Louth and East Meath context.”

The main policies in the Draft Plan in relation to housing are the promotion of higher densities in line with overall government policy and the redevelopment of brownfield sites close to the town centre and near public transport corridors. The plan notes that large suburban type housing estates are likely to be located outside the town boundary in future.

In relation to employment, the plan notes that the key challenge is to cater for the anticipated population growth and the need to create more local jobs thereby reversing the unsustainable trend of large numbers of the workforce commuting to Dublin. The main strengths are the improved transport network whereas the weaknesses of the town are the predominance of small manufacturing firms,

the lack of substantial Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), the untapped potential tourism market and the low participation rate in higher education. In light of this, some lands near the M1 northern interchange (near Mell) were rezoned from residential to business park/new economy use.

The plan notes that major improvements in transportation have taken place over recent years with the completion of the M1 Motorway and a new fleet of trains on the suburban commuter line. The Drogheda Rail station takes on a central part in facilitating a new zone of high density mixed use development near the train station (Drogheda Transport Development Area, DTDA). The need for a northern access route (in conjunction with Louth County Council) is stressed to alleviate congestion in the town centre, particularly HGVs. The need for a Southern Access Route is also pointed out in the light of Drogheda Port expanding some facilities to the south of the River Boyne. This route will be facilitated in conjunction with Meath County Council.

In relation to retailing the plan notes that this sector has not always kept pace with development. The strategy provides for the reinforcement and further development of the town centre as the main retail location and in particular the development of the “The Inner Quays” area (IQDA) and the DTDA zone adjacent the rail station. The plan also notes the possibility of a new district centre as part of the overall retail hierarchy. Furthermore, provisions are made for a retail park on the north-western edge of the town (near the M1 at Mell) where lands were rezoned from 'light industrial' (under the 1999 Plan) to 'Retail Park'.

4.2.4.2 Meath County Council
Meath County Development Plan, 2001

The Meath plan seeks to facilitate and promote the development of Drogheda on the Dublin Belfast economic axis as a vibrant major development centre in co-operation with the adjacent planning authorities of Louth County Council and Drogheda Corporation.

Section 10 of Volume 2 of the Meath Plan sets out the general context for the southern environs of Drogheda, i.e. the areas adjacent the southern town boundary. It makes particular reference to the 1998 Drogheda Environs Development Plan and the Action Area Plan for South Drogheda and Adjacent Area commissioned by Meath County Council and Drogheda Corporation and published in October 2000 (Final Report).

The Development Plan states that any development of zoned lands can only be considered after strategic regional infrastructure has been put in place. There are substantial development lands zoned which are subject to an Action Area Plan.

The plan notes the need for a link route between the M1 and the N1 at Colpe Cross which will in the longer term act as a southern distributor road for the Greater Drogheda Area. The Bryanstown Cross route, an orbital link road closer to the town centre, still remains an objective of the plan.

Both residential zoning (130 ha) and commercial/industrial zonings (230 ha) remain in line with the 1998 Drogheda Environs Development Plan.

East Meath Development Plan, 2000
(currently under review)

Under the East Meath Development Plan substantial amounts of additional lands were zoned for residential use around the villages of Mornington, Donacarney, Bettystown-Laytown, Julianstown, Gormanstown and Stamullen.

East Meath Local Area Plans Strategic Issues Paper 2004
The existing East Meath Development Plan will be reviewed in the form of two local area plans, one for the north and one for the South of the plan area. A strategic issues paper has been published for the purpose of public consultation on the relevant issues for the plan area.

The overall aim of the Issues Paper is to transform, in the medium term, the existing commuting villages of Mornington, Laytown, Bettystown and Stamullen from Commuting Villages to Small Growth Towns and to develop a small Growth Town north of the existing village of Gormanstown. The classification of Small Growth Town is taken from the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (2004-2016) and these allocate a population horizon of 5,000 persons under the settlement typology. The Issues Paper notes the steep increase in population of the East Meath area and states that the East Meath Development Plan has zoned lands in excess of that which could reasonably be required to accommodate the additional population growth envisaged under the Regional Planning Guidelines.

The strong links of the area with the town of Drogheda are clearly asserted. In particular, there is an emphasis on the possible further utilisation of the rail link from Drogheda to Dublin for the plan area.

The issues paper also notes the capacity constraints in relation to infrastructure provision in the area, the current dependence on the private car as the dominant form of transport, the lack of employment, economic and commercial development and the resultant commuting to Dublin, the need to provide community facilities, the need to protect the built and natural heritage (particularly the coastline) and the poor layout and design of the area.

Bettystown Action Area (AAP) Plan 2001

The AAP for Bettystown covers an area of approximately 140 acres which includes the existing village centre of Bettystown. The main purpose of the plan is “to create a coordinated structure for future development in the area in order to serve the surrounding increasing population with a strong town centre.” The plan sets out an urban design-led approach to high-density mixed use development at this location with a possible future population of 6,000 persons to be accommodated in the plan area. The overall aim of the AAP for Bettystown is therefore to create a town centre hub that will serve the entire East Meath area.

4.2.4.3 Louth County Council
Louth County Development Plan, 2003 - 2009

The Development Plan acknowledges Drogheda's position as the largest town in the county. The plan refers to the preparation of a Local Area Plan for the Northern Environs which will accommodate an additional population of up to 20,000. The plan acknowledges Drogheda's role as a commuter town and the council states that it is “anxious that the town should develop as a self-sustaining settlement providing employment opportunities for its inhabitants.”

The policy for future development of the town is clearly asserted in the settlement strategy for Co. Louth:

“To promote and facilitate the growth of Drogheda as a major urban centre that can accommodate substantial population growth and act as a driver for development in the south of the county and wider surrounding region”.

The Plan makes further reference to Ardee in its settlements policy. Ardee is seen as an important urban centre located in the mid-Louth area. The policy of the council is to promote Ardee as an important and substantial urban settlement to service its own population and that of the surrounding hinterland. Given its designated plan role under the Development Plan as a service and employment centre in its own right and its relative distance from Drogheda, Ardee has not been included statistically in the study area. In other words, the direct development options for Greater Drogheda under this Strategy will not rely on the Ardee landbank or specific local functions.

Drogheda Northern Environs Plan 2004

The plan notes that demand for development in the lands adjacent Drogheda on the County Louth side has increased over recent years. However, many applications had to be refused in the absence of a development policy for this area and a deficiency in infrastructure services. The aim of the plan is therefore to facilitate existing demand and to direct future demand in an orderly, economic, sustainable and coherent manner.

The plan states that potential exists for a population of up to 20,000 people on the zoned lands. However, the plan states that it will not be possible to fully develop the lands in the northern environs plan until the infrastructure constraints have been addressed and the northern access route has been completed. The bulk of the lands in the plan are zoned for residential purposes subject to a Master Plan. To the east and west of the residentially zoned lands there are large tracts of land zoned for employment uses. In addition to this, lands along the North Road are zoned for a 'retail park' and lands adjacent the proposed train station are zoned for 'mixed uses appropriate to a transport hub'.

Local Area Plans for Louth Villages

A number of Local Area Plans have been adopted for villages in the hinterland of Drogheda. After years of moderate increase or even stagnating population, substantial development has taken place in recent years in the Villages of Dunleer (270 new houses granted since the last Census), Clogherhead (180 new houses granted), Termonfeckin/Baltray (134 houses granted) and Collon. The Local Area Plans for these villages also see some substantial increase in the medium to long-term future with Dunleer and Termonfeckin/Baltray approximately quadrupling their population in the long term and Clogherhead and Collon approximately doubling their current population.

The villages of Tinure and Tullyallen have also seen increases but are not set for any major population growth for the medium to long-term future (for full detail on Local Area Plans, see Appendix II).

4.3 Planning and Land Use Objectives.

4.3.1 Drogheda's Position in the National and Regional Spatial Planning Framework.

It is of paramount importance to any future strategic plan for Drogheda to take full account of the national and regional planning context. The following seeks to determine Drogheda's position in the overall spatial planning framework in which the Greater Drogheda Area is embedded.

There is a wealth of strategic guidance from national to regional level. Drogheda is referred to in this guidance, but appears to fall between stools. There is an impression in reading the guidance (for example Greater Dublin Area Guidance) that the full analysis of Drogheda is always dealt with elsewhere. Delivery of a clear statement of strategic context for Drogheda is therefore imperative.

In evaluating and determining Drogheda's position in the national and regional planning context, a number of salient points emerge:

- The development of Drogheda is strongly linked to its close relationship with Dublin;
- At the same time, the aim for Drogheda is to develop as self-sustaining growth: Drogheda needs development in its own right to equal growth of Dundalk with a population horizon of around 60,000 residents;
- Drogheda's relationship with its rural hinterland and the interdependencies thereof need to be taken account of.
- In attracting high quality employment to the town, quality of life issues have become increasingly important in order to attract an increasingly mobile workforce in a globalised economy;
- Attractive enterprise locations are determined by a number of key factors that need to be taken account of in the development strategy, these include the clustering of businesses, effective urban transport systems, a high quality built environment, a range of cultural and recreational facilities and adequate zoned and serviced land banks;
- The location and design of future housing needs to be carefully planned and evaluated to make for an attractive living environment, this can be helped by evaluation frameworks;
- In order to pursue the overall goal of achieving a self-sustaining growth centre, the release of residential land could be linked to employment creation, thereby reducing Drogheda's dependency on Dublin;
- There is a need for a compact urban form to encourage sustainable forms of transport including walking and cycling
- The provision of physical infrastructure needs to be secured for further development, this includes access routes to the port, broadband availability for business and the efficient supply of water and energy and wastewater discharge;
- There is a need for readily available, fully serviced development sites for new economy uses.

It is also important to note that the NSS is not simply an exercise in settlement designations. Equally it is not the purpose of the NSS to stall any underlying dynamic within growth centres such as Drogheda solely to reflect separate designations.

4.4 Planning and Land Use Issues Associated with Strategy Development

4.4.1 Scenario Building

To understand the strategic guidance and thus set out planning and land use issues, it is useful to develop a number of development scenarios for Drogheda.

Drogheda as a commuter town for Dublin

Under this scenario, Drogheda would be open to unrestricted residential growth and a continuation of current trends by accommodating the residential overspill from Dublin. While this might have the benefit of continued growth at least in the medium term, this option would have at least three negative effects:

- a) It would put a strain on existing infrastructure and services without providing an adequate rates base;
- b) It would depend on the continuing strong economic performance of Dublin along with a continued shortfall of housing output in the core of the GDA (should Dublin improve its performance, the growth impetus for Drogheda would diminish);
- c) It might create a less diverse population mix with an unduly strong presence of newcomers to the housing market.

Drogheda as a self sustaining centre

As suggested in the SPGs, residential growth in the town could be directly linked to employment targets in a phasing approach. In practice, if pursued, this would mean that should employment targets not be met, there would be no release of new residential land. The problem is that to avoid a one-sided approach there is a need for incentives for employment creation to counterbalance the disincentives to residential development. Concrete policies would therefore be needed to foster employment growth.

The obvious advantage of this approach would be that Drogheda would be less dependent on Dublin for employment, thereby reducing the demand for long-distance commuting. This approach might also foster greater identification of the new residents with Drogheda, i.e. Drogheda would become the place to live and work rather than simply a dormitory suburb of Dublin. In addition it would allow for a more managed rate of resident population growth.

Consolidation of Drogheda at current population levels:

This *no growth* option would have the benefit of consolidating the existing town without putting undue pressure on existing services. Investment by the local authorities could be channelled into improving and diversifying local services for the established population rather than having to expand them to serve new communities. However in the absence of an adequate rates base a stagnant population might pose problems on infrastructure constraints. Economies of scale may not be reached and thus the range and diversity of services in Drogheda might become vulnerable. Equally it would be hard to secure national investment for Drogheda if it was to have a stagnant population. Furthermore, it would be almost impossible to ignore or reverse already existing Development Plan policies as pressure for new residential development would build up and would be difficult to resist, given the current statutory policy range which does not set a specific phasing or prioritisation to residential change.

Mixed approach to future growth

A combination of the above scenarios might be the most realistic option for the future. This could see some phasing approach in relation to new residential land without being too strict on the employment targets but nonetheless recognising the fact that future employment is needed for the self-sustaining growth of Drogheda. To do this, we have focused on the NSS recommendation which is set out at 4.4.2 below.

4.4.2 Drogheda's Relationship with its own Catchment

The land use spread of the Study Area, particularly into East Meath means that the relationship of the town core with these areas needs to be substantially improved by means of quality bus public transport.

The lack of such a service leads to a related inability to supply car access to the level of people's expectations. This accentuates the perception of distance/detachment of these parts of the Study Area from Drogheda. A key land use issue therefore is to determine what scale of densification is needed on the established zoned land banks to facilitate thresholds of patronage for bus public transport.

It appears that the delivery of a population increase to some 60,000 persons may not require any material addition to the current zoned land area (See Appendix III). Regional Guidance has considered the growth of Drogheda and environs to a resident population of circa 60,000. This Planning Strategy for Greater Drogheda has been asked to examine population options beyond this estimate. However, first off, the Strategy will determine the capability of the Greater Drogheda Area to accommodate and sustain the Regional Guidance target of 60,000 persons.

There will never be a seamless relationship between the employment and resident populations of the Study Area (nor any area). There is always an element of inward and outward commuting for example. However, the Regional Guidance is clear in that we should set in place policies to encourage and achieve more self sustaining settlements. In this regard, we suggest that a key land use planning issue for the Authorities to consider is what formalised relationship they would hope to have between new employment populations and new resident population. Should there be linked phasing and control on same?

The services section of this Issues Paper makes clear the constraints currently affecting the Study Area; but also points to technical solutions which can be put in place. There are timing, funding and procedural aspects to the delivery of these services, but equally it must be emphasised that a strategic overview of the 20 year development cycle of the Study Area is pointless without a full determination of the enabling authorities to commit to these projects and to deliver them.

On the other hand, there may be locations at and around the core of the Study Area where landbanks are better placed to accommodate new development. This in turn implies that some areas already zoned within the broader Study Area should receive a lesser priority in terms of development roll out. This is a contentious issue given the fact of zoning in the statutory context (and the Greater Drogheda Area Planning Strategy will have no zoning function). However it could be argued that the current services deficit is effectively a tool of phasing at present.

4.5 Summary of Key Issues

The key land use planning issues can be summarised as follows: The strategy for substantial resident population growth is enshrined in strategic guidance for Drogheda and is also anticipated and allocated for (at least in physical land terms) within the statutory development plans for the Study Area. This growth strategy is therefore adopted policy and needs to be matched by commitments and detailing as to related services capability.

In determining the best approach to the roll out of development land, the most efficient use of all services and infrastructure networks must be sought (including for example linkage to road corridors which may also serve town based functions such as port access).

The strategy for employment development is more complex, as the difficulties in using the land use planning process to secure employment are well known. On the other hand the key land use and planning issue under this category is for the Greater Drogheda Area Planning Strategy to find answers under the NSS "Attractive Enterprise Locations" listing. This is recorded above.

below
Aerial View Drogheda



Section II

5.0 Transportation Issues

5.1 Introduction

5.2 The Transport Baseline

5.3 Transport Objectives

5.4 Transport Issues Associated with Strategy Development

5.1 Introduction

Transport will be a key issue in the Planning Strategy Study and in the development of a comprehensive spatial strategy for the area. It will both influence and be influenced by, the economic development and land use/spatial planning strategies.

This section of the Issues Paper therefore sets out the following:

- i) In Section 5.2, key baseline conditions and issues which emerge from this;
- ii) In Section 5.3, the proposed aims and objectives for the transportation aspects of the study;
- iii) In Section 5.4, the key transport issues to be studied set out in the brief, and more detailed aspects identified by stakeholders as well as issues related to the delivery of the strategy;
- vi) In Section 5.5, transport issues related to the land use/spatial development options.

It should be noted that this is a Strategic Planning Study and, likewise, the consideration of transportation issues will be at a strategic level, appropriate for identifying the transport measures (or strategy) needed to support the growth of Drogheda and the surrounding area. Many of the issues identified by stakeholders, and repeated in this section of the Issues Paper, are detailed in nature and the key exercise is to comprehend these in terms of how they might affect the overall strategy.

5.2 The Transport Baseline

5.2.1 Introduction

The baseline transportation position has been established by review of key planning and transportation documents, liaison with stakeholders and by visits to Drogheda and the surrounding area. It should be noted that there is very little data available on transport conditions and travel patterns and the baseline position set out here is, by necessity, a general picture of transport issues in Drogheda and its environs.

5.2.2 Overview

Drogheda lies on the north-west axis between Dublin and Dundalk and its recent growth is, in part, due to its highly accessible location. This has been improved recently by the completion of the M1 motorway, the Drogheda Bypass, which opened in 2003 and links the town with Dublin, Dublin Airport, Dundalk and destinations further north by motorway.

Strategic public transport links have also been improved. Drogheda is served by the rail link between Dublin and Belfast and is a key station on this route. A new fleet of suburban trains has also been introduced.

Strategic transportation infrastructure has therefore been improved but whilst this significantly enhances the accessibility and connectivity of the town, it also makes it easier for Drogheda residents to out-commute. This is manifested in average travel distances for commuting which are higher than for Ireland as a whole. This, if left unchecked, can lead to problems derived from the 'dormitory' syndrome, with reduced benefits and interlinkage from this component of the overall population, in terms of economic development, for Drogheda itself.

The strategic accessibility of the town is good. The town and environs is well served by national road and rail infrastructure. Accessibility must also be understood in conjunction with mobility. In this case, the good locational characteristics of Drogheda and the Study Area, in relation to Dublin, means that the population enjoys good mobility options (for example the large employment resource of the Greater Dublin Area is almost on the doorstep).

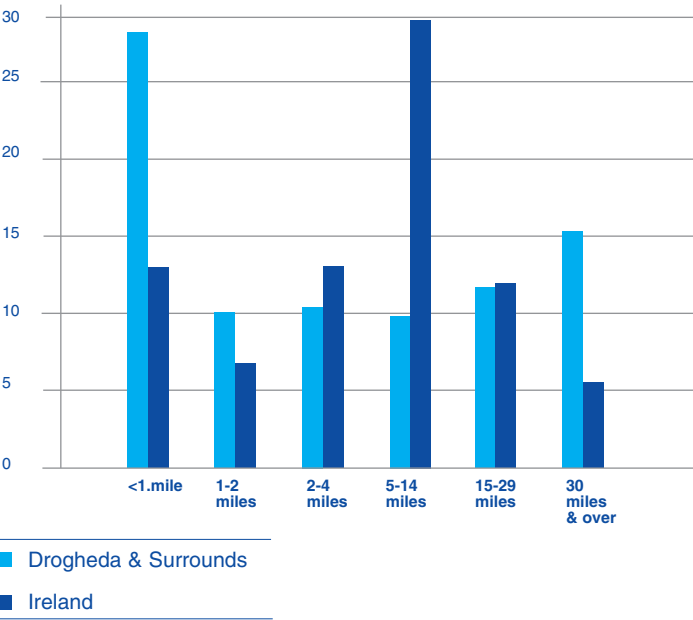
On the other hand, local access within and across the town is, at times, problematic. The causes of this are largely three-fold: firstly, demand for overall travel is predominantly by private car (despite improvements in local bus provision); secondly, the land-use pattern appears to favour car use with development spread around the town (this in turn may reflect the growing effect of Dublin derived movements as a percentage of overall resident transport activity); and, thirdly, the road network is constrained, particularly in the town centre and across the River Boyne.



above
Public Transport:
Bus and Rail Services

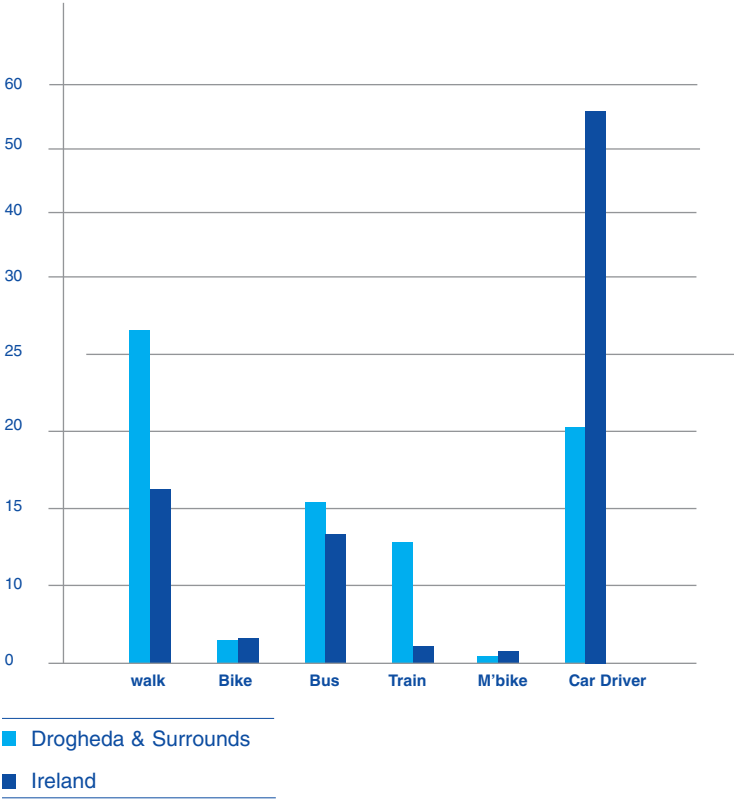
5.2.3 Commuting Patterns and Model Split

Travel to work (and full-time education) distances in Drogheda (and its surrounds) and the whole of Ireland are shown below:



The travel to work distances generally reflect both the size of the town and its strategic location. Drogheda has a significantly higher proportion of short distance trips (c.44% under 2 miles compared with the state average of c.27%), reflecting the size of the town, with most of the built development within a 3 km/2 mile radius of the town centre. There are significantly fewer 'medium' distance trips (c.21% between 5-29 miles compared with the state average of c.42%). Longer distance trips (greater than 30 miles) account for c.15% of trips compared with a state average of c.6%, reflecting the attraction of Dublin. In other words Drogheda plays a role (at least in part) as an annex to Greater Dublin. Yet it is not a direct suburb of Dublin and thus residents who travel to employment opportunities are likely to be either close to their workplace, given Drogheda's relatively modest current footprint, or else the travel distance is quite large.

The modal split again reflects travel distances within the town. Almost a quarter walk to work/full-time education, reflecting the existing short travel distances within the urban area. The higher train modal share results from the out-commute to Dublin. In some respects, these are encouraging figures. They reflect the strong mature form of the current town within a relatively modest footprint and the capability of this form to influence movement patterns. The key issue now is to manage and influence the movement requirements and expectations of existing and future residents within the wider environs of the Study Area, so that they can be drawn in more closely to the social, commercial and employment vitality of Drogheda.



5.2.4 Road Network and Traffic Conditions

The M1 motorway provides a bypass of Drogheda as well as strategic connections between the town and Dublin to the South and Dundalk and Belfast to the north. Whilst the increase in strategic north-south capacity has resulted in benefits, some problems remain. In particular, the location of the tolls on the M1 is such that some traffic, particularly HGVs, continue to use the R132 (old N1 route) through Drogheda. It should be stressed that our stakeholder consultation with the Irish Hauliers Association reports that this is a diminishing issue for them and that compromise has been reached whereby the appropriate M1 usage for pass through traffic is working well alongside the local access needs for Drogheda commercial traffic.

North-West access around the West of the town is good via the M1 but the R132 route through the centre of Drogheda is congested at peak times. The Boyne river means that movements are focussed on the two bridges in the centre of Drogheda. These act as a significant constraint with queuing and delays throughout much of the day but particularly during peak periods. This will increase if traffic grows as a result of development. An issue therefore is the reality of congestion. The Strategy will articulate the nature of this congestion in practical terms and also as a perception of the town. On this point it may be that little little ability (nor any meaningful benefit) can be secured by providing for significant additional car access capacity to the centre of the town. Related issues such as urban design, heritage and the fact that the core of the town can be made to work more effectively for pedestrians will guide this issue.

5.2.5 Public Transport

The rail services from Drogheda, particularly to the capital, are generally good but issues have been raised regarding the fare structure and the capacity of the sub-urban rail system.

The bus modal share for travel to work is good and there have been recent improvements in service quality but congestion on the road network affects reliability. Bus Eireann have reported that they will not upgrade services because of existing congestion levels. They have also noted that they would like to better connect the town centre to the station but that this is not feasible because of congestion.

The two categories of public transport (inter-urban and local based) are not necessarily working together to best effect at present. The key issue is can local based bus services throughout the Study Area provide a realistic alternative to the car?

Stakeholders have also reported that they believe there is a lack of parking in the town. The price and availability of car parking partly determines modes used for travel. Reduced parking (or providing it on the edge of the town at Park and Ride sites) and high charges will discourage car use and increase the use of public transport. Contrary to this, economic development is often only possible if a plentiful supply of parking is provided. In any rational strategy for the town, control on absolute parking numbers is necessary. The key issue is can we reach a consensus on the estimate of this, and can we deliver the compensatable provisions of edge parking, public transport capacity and improved incentives for pedestrian/cycle movements? To do this we must be clear on the different types of parking. Resident based parking is as much an issue of storage as it is of use.

For employment schemes the locational context is critical and good locations can allow for significantly reduced parking provision. Thirdly The broad category of 'visitor' or shopping type parking is the key to a successful transport strategy. The issue here is (a) to attempt to confirm a rational capacity for the town area, (b) to minimise the number of 'hope' trips (i.e. those who come to an area seeking a space and who find difficulty. This creates movement and congestion on the streets themselves and of course exasperates the drivers who may ultimately decide to take their business elsewhere. This can never be eliminated particularly at peak periods, but it is an appropriate issue to examine further, with a view to providing a more seamless access strategy for the town).

5.2.6 The Port

Trade at the Port is expected to grow and has the potential to become an employment area for certain industrial activities. Access is, however, constrained by the road network. Traffic, including HGVs, from the M1 and N1 south of Drogheda accesses the Port via the bridges across the Boyne and Drogheda town centre. This partly results from HGV traffic avoiding the tolls on the M1. Transport issues here relate to the need to best ensure the continued commercial strength of the Port. In addition, the opportunity to exploit shared access provision with other town uses such as the ability to provide improved road space and routing for public bus services is a key issue to be examined as part of the Port Access argument.

5.3 Transport Objectives

The summary of baseline transport conditions has demonstrated that there are already significant issues which need to be tackled if transport is to be improved in Drogheda. Growth will lead to inevitable pressures on the transport system. Some hard choices may need to be made. In particular, regarding the balance (of investment and road space allocation) between new road and new for public transport, also combined with demand management measures. It is important that these are considered 'in the round' with the spatial planning and economic development aspects of the Planning Strategy.

The possible aims and objectives of the transport element of the study have therefore been established, taking account of the policies in the existing and emerging development plans.

- a) To develop a transport strategy which supports the growth of Drogheda, including economic development;
- b) To develop a transport strategy that assists with the phased and coherent delivery of both residential and employment development;
- c) To develop a strategy that ensures development is sustainable and which minimises the use of the private car;
- d) To develop a strategy which seeks to minimise impacts of transport on the environment;
- e) To develop a strategy which promotes social inclusion and connects, rather than separates, all the main areas of the town and surrounding environs;
- f) To develop a strategy that is deliverable, taking account of costs, funding opportunities, timescales etc.

5.4 Transport Issues Associated with Strategy Development

5.4.1 Introduction

The brief indicates that transport is a key aspect of the study, particularly its relationship with the spatial planning and economic development aspects of the study. All need to be considered together, not in isolation. The brief then identifies the key transport considerations in the strategy area, effectively aspects for the study to consider and, subsequently, make recommendations upon. These are set out below. Furthermore detailed aspects of the study are then considered.

5.4.2 Key Transport Considerations

The brief identifies that the following should be considered:

- Proposals for an integrated transportation system within the area of the strategy;
- Sustainable traffic issues;
- Measures to promote public accessibility to and use of public transport and to reduce dependence on the motor car;
- Proposals for traffic management, traffic calming and car parking;
- Proposals for improved pedestrian facilities and cycle ways, including suggestions for pedestrianised areas within the area of the strategy;
- The provision of a new railway station north of the River Boyne and the development of park and ride facilities;
- The development of a transport corridor through the development of rail stations at Bettystown;
- The development of the Northern Cross Route to accommodate development in the area and facilitate port related traffic;
- The M1-N1 link road to facilitate development in the Drogheda Environs in Meath;
- Safety issues;
- Impact of the motorway developments on the general area of the strategy
- Cross-river linkages;
- Existing road/street capacities.

5.4.3 Detailed Transport Issues

The various transport and planning documents and the stakeholder consultation has identified a range of more detailed issues to be considered as part of the strategy development process. Many of these are beyond the strategic nature of this study but the most relevant issues are set out below.

Policy Issues

- Parking in Drogheda town centre: the price and supply (restriction?) of parking.
- Parking standards for new development: should they be restricted, particularly for employment?
- Parking around an inner Drogheda (outer town centre) ring: are car parks currently in the right place? Should any be relocated?
- How much reliance should be placed on the Greater Dublin Area public transport and restraint policies?

Roads and Traffic

- How much additional road capacity should be provided? Should capacity be delivered to meet demand or used as a restraint mechanism?
- Are new cross-river linkages needed - either to access the port or to relieve the existing Boyne bridges which are at capacity for much of the day?
- Are new East-West routes, bypassing Drogheda, needed? How would these relate to new M1 junctions and how could better access to the Port be provided? Is the southern access route needed?
- What traffic management measures are needed in Drogheda town centre to control traffic?
- Need to consider Dublin Outer Orbital Route (DOOR).
- Is there a case for adjusting the M1 tolls to encourage all M1 traffic to use the motorway?

Rail

- Will rail play a significant role in accessing development in a possible Transport Development Area around the station (i.e. objective TRANS1 in the Draft DBC Development Plan)?
- Is there potential for a new commuter rail station north of Drogheda (Objective TRANS2)?
- What potential is there for a new railway station serving Bettystown (E Meath Development Objective PT1)?
- Is there scope for re-opening the Drogheda to Navan railway line (Objective TRANS4) and what would be the benefits and effects on the spatial strategy?
- How might the DTO strategy of segregating inter-city and suburban services affect Drogheda and the role of rail in the strategy?



Buses

- What is the potential for bus priority in Drogheda town centre and the main approaches to the town (Objective TRANS7).
- Is there scope for Park and Ride (TRANS8), combined with a parking restraint policy?
- Are there opportunities for a new town bus service?
- Is the existing road layout suitable for buses or can roads be adapted to provide for buses?
- What mass and mix of development is needed to support high quality bus services?

Walking and Cycling

- The overall potential of these modes will be considered but not the detailed provision. Account will be taken of Objectives TRANS10-17.

Delivery Issues

- How much will the strategy cost (capital and operating, with account of revenues)?
- How will it be funded?
- What potential is there for developer funding?
- What are the timescales associated with the delivery of infrastructure? How do these relate to development timetables and funding streams?
- What land will be needed?
- How should the strategy be phased, particularly in relation to development?

5.5 Development Issues

The scale of growth, with possible expansion of the population from c.30,000 to c.60,000 (and possibly beyond this population level depending on evolving settlement growth during this period), will lead to significant increases in travel demand. An overall population of this order could generate c.150,000 trips per day. The transport strategy will need to show how this growth can be managed and delivered.

It is envisaged that the following scenarios will be tested:

- 1) Drogheda as a commuter town for Dublin
- 2) Drogheda as a self sustaining centre
- 3) Consolidation of Drogheda at current population levels
- 4) Mixed approach to future growth

The spatial planning and economic development aspects of the study will consider many issues associated with both the levels of growth and its distribution. The above spatial scenarios will result in different transport characteristics and issues. Particular transport aspects to be considered in the development of the transport strategy are as follows:

- The levels of travel (by all modes) generated by different options;
- How the spatial distribution affects travel O-Ds and modal splits (eg. levels of out-commuting, car dependency);
- Dispersed vs. concentrated development patterns and their effects on traffic capacity, the ability to support public transport etc;
- Mixed use or single use and opportunities to reduce the overall need to travel, as well as the potential of the Transport Development Area;
- The phasing of residential and employment development, whether this should be controlled and how this might affect the scope of the transport strategy and its delivery;
- Supporting uses (retail, leisure, education, medical etc) and the need to support these with public transport.

Section II

6.0 Economic Issues

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Economic Baseline Data

6.3 Economic Issues Associated with Strategy Development



6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main economic issues facing the Drogheda area. The chapter considers the area's strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities for success in the future. The areas examined are: population, current employment profile, industry, tourism, retail, the port, Small & Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) and 3rd level education. We also consider Drogheda's location on the Dublin-Belfast corridor. Reference is made on a number of occasions to the 2002 Census of Population.

We are also mindful of the recently-published Drogheda Economic Development Group Action Plan 2004-2007, which builds on the 2001 Economic & Spatial Development Study of Drogheda and its Environs report (Bacon report). This Action Plan addresses many of the points raised here.

6.2 Economic Baseline Data

6.2.1 Population
As stated in Chapter 3, the population of the core study area grew by 22.7 per cent between 1996 and 2002, which was far in excess of the eight per cent national growth for the same period.

While population growth is expected to continue for the short to medium term, it is expected to moderate over time due to falling birth rates. The other main source of growth is inward migration, and its continuation will depend on labour market conditions in Ireland, which depend on the state of the economy.

6.2.2 Employment Profile
The 2002 Census indicates the sectors in which Drogheda residents are employed, though not whether they are actually employed in Drogheda. Table 6.2 summarises the figures:

Table 6.2: Population 15+ at Work, by Broad Industrial Group, 2002

	Drogheda Municipal Borough	Mornington/ Bettystown/ Laytown	Total	% age of Total
Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry	99	22	121	0.8
Mining,Quarrying & Turf	74	9	83	0.5
Manufacturing	2,562	312	2,874	18.7
Electricity, Gas & Water	73	8	81	0.5
Construction	1,145	211	1,356	8.8
Wholesale & Retail	1,907	368	2,275	14.8
Hotels & Restaurants	620	109	729	4.7
Transport, Storage & Communications	999	242	1,241	8.1
Banking & Finance	545	142	687	4.5
Real Estate, Renting & Business Activities	1,159	231	1,390	9.0
Public Administration & defence	649	164	813	5.3
Education	709	159	868	5.6
Health & Social Work	1,367	245	1,612	10.5
Other Community, Social & Personal Services	580	103	683	4.4
Not Stated	498	87	585	3.8
Total	12,986	2,412	15,398	100.0%

Source: CSO, Census of Population, 2002.

The study area suffers from a higher than average unemployment rate, as set out in Table 6.3:

Table 6.3: Unemployment Rate (ILO Definition)		
		%
001	Fair Gate	10.7%
002	St. Laurence Gate	6.8%
003	West Gate	9.7%
041	St. Peter's	5.7%
047	St. Mary's (part in Drogheda MB)	8.8%
047	St. Mary's (part in Co. Meath)*	5.6%
Drogheda & Surroundings		8.3%
Co. Louth total		9.0%
Co. Meath total		4.5%
State		5.7%

* Contains most of Mornington, Bettystown and Laytown.Source: CSO,Census of Population, 2002.

Unemployment is higher in the town centre than in the suburbs, particularly in the Fair Gate and West Gate areas. This is not too surprising, given that a higher proportion of new homeowners would live in the suburbs, and they almost by definition would have a low rate of unemployment.

Unfortunately, comprehensive data on the level of employment in Drogheda as such is not available. However, some points can be made about it. Despite the loss of a number of industries in recent years, there remain some significant employers in the town, including Coca-Cola, Premier Periclaze, Irish Cement Platin Works, and Boyne Valley Foods. Other local businesses, notably the port, hotels, retail, etc. would also be significant employers.

Of particular note is Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, the largest single employer in the town, employing in the region of 1,200. At the time of writing a feasibility study is being carried out on expansion at the Lourdes hospital site, and this is hoped to be complete by end 2004. Whether expansion actually occurs depends not only on this report but the availability of funding from the Department of Health and developments with re-structuring of the Health Service.

Table 6.4: Travel to Work or Full-Time Education, Population 15+, 2002

		less than 3 miles	3-14 Miles	at least 15 miles
001	Fair Gate	52.5%	26.6%	20.9%
002	St. Laurence Gate	49.5%	23.0%	27.5%
003	West Gate	50.8%	26.6%	22.6%
041	St. Peter's	35.9%	36.5%	27.6%
047	St. Mary's (part in Drogheda MB)	44.1%	28.7%	27.3%
047	St. Mary's (part in Co. Meath)	25.9%	35.6%	38.5%
Drogheda & Surroundings		43.8%	29.6%	26.6%
Co. Louth total		34.2%	42.0%	23.8%
Co. Meath total		18.7%	42.4%	38.9%
State		26.9%	55.6%	17.5%

Source: CSO, Census of Population, 2002.

A large proportion of people living in the study area work outside it, mostly in Dublin. While direct information on this is not available, Travel to Work data from the 2002 Census provide an indirect indication.Table 6.4 (below) summarises the position.

Two interesting patterns emerge:

- 1) A higher than average proportion of the population of the study area travels less than 3 miles to work/college, but this varies from half the population in the town centre to a quarter in the southern suburbs and the coastal villages.
- 2) Paradoxically, a higher than average proportion also travel at least 15 miles to work/college. This time, the town centre areas have a lower proportion (though still higher than the State average) while the southern suburbs and coastal villages have higher proportions.

While it is difficult to be too prescriptive, the data indicate that perhaps as many as one quarter of the working/studying population commute to Dublin.

The 2002 Census indicates that the at work population in the study area was roughly 16,400. If roughly 27% of these worked outside Drogheda (based on Travel to Work data), then the number of residents at work in Drogheda would be roughly 12,300. Of course there would also be some people from outside Drogheda who work in Drogheda, but we have no data on this. In any event, it can be concluded from the above numbers that a large majority of people working in Drogheda work in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Looking forward, a number of important potential employment areas for Drogheda are likely to emerge in the future, including new industry tourism and retail. Each of these is now dealt with. We also briefly discuss the position of SMEs.

6.2.3 New Industry

There has clearly been a lack of new industries in the Drogheda area in recent years, and the town appears to have lost out on the major employment boom that occurred in the “Celtic Tiger” years. While the reasons for this are probably manifold, access is likely to have been an issue. Prior to the opening of the motorway by-pass, access to Dublin was made difficult by a poor quality congested road link. The new By-Pass will have improved Drogheda's prospects, although future employment expansion potential is unlikely to match the situation in the late Nineties.

The IDA are currently developing a Business Park on the Donore Road, adjacent to the By-Pass. Discussions with IDA personnel indicate the following:

- The IDA see the park being developed as an office park, aimed at mid-office and back-office operations for large companies, notably in financial services;
- The companies in the IFSC would in particular be seen as potential clients; the IDA are aware that many Drogheda residents commute to work in the IFSC, and they see the possibility of tapping into this existing labour pool;
- The first office space is expected to be in place by Autumn 2005. While no definite clients have been earmarked yet, a number in the financial services sector have expressed interest;

6.2.4 Tourism

The 2002 Census indicated that just under 5% of the workforce in the study area, over 700 people, worked in hotels and restaurants. This is marginally less than the average for the State. It is reasonable to assume that most of these jobs are local.

Tourism Assets

The study area clearly has significant tourism potential, though to date much of it has not been realised.This can be seen under a number of headings:

- 1) The area is endowed with a large number of important historic sites. Notable among these is Brú na Bóinne, one of only three World Heritage Sites on the island of Ireland. This and a number of other sites are already major tourist attractions, though they are mainly being accessed from Dublin. Others, such as the site of the Battle of the Boyne, remain under-developed.

- 2) The area is endowed with a high quality coastline, and has a large population within striking distance, mainly probably for localised day-trips. There is also some longer stay tourism along the coast. Many areas remain undeveloped, and for the most part remain attractive, and sensitive development should have potential. Where development has occurred (notably Bettystown) the quality has been mixed, and residential development has not been well-integrated. This needs to be addressed for the long term sustainability of seaside tourism.
- 3) Drogheda town has considerable potential. It is a historic town, though the marketing has not yet been maximised. Road access has been problematic, but this has now been remedied.
- 4) Another asset is the proximity of some high quality golf courses, notably Baltray. There may be potential for promoting the area as a base for golfing holidays, in combination with high quality hotel and retail amenities, and this would be a lucrative sector of the market to attract.

Influence of Dublin

Proximity to Dublin has been a double-edged sword for Drogheda tourism. Dublin is the biggest tourist attraction in the country, and with its airport and seaports, acts as the tourist gateway for the entire country. So there is a large tourist market on Drogheda's doorstep, but they have many competing attractions, and it is easy to be overlooked. Newgrange has benefited greatly from proximity to Dublin, but Drogheda town probably less so. That said, the town is currently serving a function as overflow accommodation for Dublin, for example for international matches (Lansdowne Road is accessible by rail), and this could be the basis for further development.

Dublin is also the biggest source of domestic tourists in Ireland, and Drogheda town could try to emulate the success of the likes of Kilkenny in attracting them. Adequate accommodation and amenity are important issues for this sector. The by-pass of the town gives a new opportunity in this regard, as will improvements in the retail and hotel sectors, and the improvement in the general appearance of the town. The increase in hotel supply may result in more active marketing of packages such as mid-week and weekend breaks.



above
Battle of the Boyne Site

6.2.5 Retail

In the 2002 Census retail and wholesale combined accounted for roughly 15% of employment among the study area residents, or roughly 2,300 jobs. It is reasonable to assume that most of these jobs are local.

To date, Drogheda's retail profile has been poor, with a largely out-of-date and unattractive offering. Given the rapid increase in population the result has been a significant leakage of retail spend to other urban areas, mainly Dublin, Dundalk and Navan, particularly among new residents of the town.

This of course is due to change considerably in the near future, with the opening of the Scotch Hall and Grammar School developments. These should transform the retail offering in the town, and Drogheda is unusual in having these developments effectively in the town centre. Their presence should also incentivise existing retailers to improve their offering, as well as increasing competition, leading to a better range of goods and lower prices for customers.

A number of changes have already occurred, notably that retail warehousing is effectively being developed on the Donore Road and in the existing industrial estate. A new retail park on the north side of the town has also recently received planning permission, and is to be anchored by Woodies DIY. These developments should reverse the leakage of retail spend out of Drogheda, and should see the town becoming an attractor of retail spend from elsewhere.

6.2.6 Drogheda Port

The Irish port sector is dominated by a small number of ports, namely Dublin, Cork, and Shannon/Foynes. Belfast, Larne and Warrenpoint ports also carry significant business from the Republic. Drogheda is one of a number of smaller ports around the country. Table 6.5 sets out volumes in 2003, compared with previous years and the State total:

Table 6.5: Tonnage by Category handled at Drogheda Port, 2003				
	000 Tonnes	% compared with 2002	% compared with 2000	% age of State Total in 2003*
Lo-Lo	464	-4.1	346.2	7.1
Liquid Bulk	175	-7.4	-25.5	1.3
Dry Bulk	250	0.4	-42.7	1.7
Break Bulk and others	366	-18.3	52.5	21.0
Total	1,255	-8.4%	23.6%	

* Percentage of total cargo handled in ports in the Republic.
Source: CSO, Statistics of Port Traffic, various years.

In 2003 the port handled one million tonnes, representing a reduction on 2002 volumes, but a significant increase over 2000. Types of cargo are changing, with a very large increase in Lo-Lo cargo and significant increases in Break Bulk over the last three years, but significant reductions in dry and liquid bulk. In the context of the State as a whole, Drogheda is now a significant handler of Lo-Lo and Break Bulk. The pattern of growth reflects the opening of the Tom Roe's Point Terminal in 2000, and its approaching capacity in the last couple of years.

This situation, along with access, is a driver for relocation plans at the port (see section 6.3.5 below).

6.3 Economic Issues Associated with the Development of the Strategy

6.3.1 Introduction

Economic Development is clearly a crucial element in the future development of Drogheda. This is particularly important in view of the projected population growth in the area. In order to develop Drogheda into a self-sustaining town, employment in the area needs to grow in tandem with the overall population.

The following sets out some of the main challenges for the economic development of Drogheda that need to be addressed.

below
Premier Periclase Factory

right
Irish Cement Platin Works



6.3.2 New Industry

As part of the stakeholder consultation, the IDA were asked what they saw as issues in terms of attracting clients to Drogheda, and they made the following points:

Broadband

The biggest issue for the type of clients the IDA are targeting is "telecoms resilience", i.e. the availability, quality and reliability of Broadband. Telecoms are now "mission critical" to inward investment in the way that electricity would have been a decade ago. The target firms have a heavy information flow requirement, and need not only the presence of broadband but also a high level of back-up to avoid downtime.

The situation at the moment is that Eircom are in a position to provide broadband to the IDA park, while ESAT have a presence in Drogheda only up to the railway station. The situation would be helped if ESAT could be persuaded to bring their service to the park, as this would improve the reliability of services. The IDA are in negotiations with the two providers at the moment in relation to this. There is something of a "chicken and egg" situation, with the broadband providers wanting to see sufficient clients in the park before putting in the required investment.

The provision of the carrier-neutral broadband "metro-link" will also help to improve reliability. This is due to be provided in Drogheda as part of the national rollout of broadband, during 2005. There is also the possibility that the ESB will supply broadband services to the area in the future.

Level of Amenity

This is an issue for all inward investment, with the existence of a high quality hotel, among other things, being important. This would have been problematic in Drogheda in the past, but it is now being addressed, with the new retail facilities, hotels, and the general improvement in appearance of the town. The removal of through traffic has also improved the town from this viewpoint.



Water Supply

Although not a major issue for the services-type industry now being targeted, water supply has been a constraint with attracting processing industry to Drogheda in the past. (See chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of the water supply situation in the study area). We understand issues with water supply and treatment will be addressed over the next three years.

Toll Roads

The IDA indicate that the presence of the tolls on the M1 was not raised as an issue by the firms they have dealt with in regard to Drogheda. That is not to say that they would not be an issue with potential employees. However, Drogheda residents working at the IDA park would in most cases be able to avoid the tolls.

6.3.3 Tourism

The following are seen as useful steps in advancing tourism in the study area. The area would benefit from a more substantial and integrated approach to tourism marketing. This should seek to strengthen the link in the public's mind between Drogheda and the surrounding attractions, particularly the World Heritage Site at Brú na Bóinne. It should also emphasise ease of access by road, rail and air. Both the domestic and overseas markets need to be targeted.

- The physical appearance of Drogheda town and level of public amenity need to be addressed. The town's many historical buildings are under-marketed and remain "hidden" to a large degree. High quality signage and the development of walking routes around the town would help.
- An important issue appears to be the availability of coach parking within easy walking distance of the urban core of the town. This seems to be a significant difficulty with bringing day tourists to the town. The new retail developments (see below) may be able to contribute to solving this issue.
- Once in-town access has been resolved and the new Scotch Hall and Grammar School developments are in place, a concerted effort should be made to have the town included in day tours of the nearby attractions, Brú na Bóinne, Slane, Tara, etc.
- In the medium term, it should be possible to organise such tours from a Drogheda base, and generally to develop a role as a tourist base, which over time could extend to cover areas as distant as Carlingford and possibly the Mourne's.

6.3.4 Retail

The new retail developments coming on stream in the town centre and suburbs will represent a challenge to existing retailers, and could potentially lead to a loss of retail space on West Street and some of the smaller streets leading off it. It will be up to these retailers to respond to the challenge, but the Local Authorities will also have a role in improving the physical appearance and accessibility of these streets.

Retailing is labour intensive, and a significant increase in employment in this sector over the coming years is seen as likely.

6.3.5 Drogheda Port Employment

The port would have an employment impact, both directly and indirectly in related businesses in the town and surrounding area. We would investigate this further in the course of the study.

Access

The port's future faces a number of issues regarding access:

- With the upgrading of the Dublin-Belfast road, access to the biggest ports on the island – Dublin and Belfast - is much improved. Drogheda cannot compete with these ports at the moment for range of services.
- The Dublin Port Tunnel, due for completion in 2005, will further improve access to Dublin Port.
- Drogheda port itself suffers from poor access.

The first two of these are unavoidable, while the last is not easily solved, without new access connecting the port with the motorway. However, access roads on both the northern and southern banks would also open up significant land for other development, and it is understood that funds would be available from private developers towards sections of the roads.

Location

Another important issue for the future of the port is location. A study has been recently completed by Baxter Eadie et al. on the future of the port, which dealt with this issue among other things. In early December, Drogheda Port Company made public its medium-term plans, stating that it intended to:

- 1) Expand its existing facilities in Drogheda, including expansion at Tom Roe's Point (during 2005), and of facilities on the South Bank of the river;
- 2) Redevelop the existing North Quays land-bank for town-centre related uses;
- 3) Develop a new deep water port at Bremore, near Balbriggan in north Dublin, by 2008.

Local Authority Role

The port is somewhat different from other businesses in Drogheda, in that it is a transport infrastructure provider as well as a generator of infrastructure usage. It currently operates in the areas of Drogheda Municipal Borough and Co. Louth, and is planning to operate in Co. Meath (as well as Fingal) in the future. An integrated approach from the local authorities in dealing with the port will be important in ensuring the optimal access and location decisions are made.

The redevelopment of the North Quays represents a substantial urban renewal opportunity for the town, as identified in the Drogheda Draft Development Plan 2005-2011. An integrated plan for the redevelopment of the quays and surrounding areas would be appropriate. Similar plans have been generated in Waterford and Cork in recent years. Consideration should be given to including the entire riverfront, which is being redeveloped rapidly, in the plan.

6.3.6 Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

As stated already, the Census data indicate that the majority of Drogheda residents work in SMEs, which would include retail and wholesale outlets, offices, workshops and small-scale manufacturing and light engineering. There is a natural level of turnover in these enterprises which is unavoidable. Small-scale manufacturing is worthy of separate mention, as it can be vulnerable in the context of increasing costs (particularly accommodation) and competition (which is unavoidable). The adequacy of accommodation (quality and cost) is an area where the Local Authorities have a role, via the planning system, and we will investigate this issue as part of the study.



6.3.7 Third Level Education

Third level colleges have a number of potential economic benefits for their host towns, including:

- They are major employers in their own right, and can give a boost to the local economy through the spend of employees and students;
- They give the opportunity to at least some local students to study locally, and perhaps increase the likelihood that these people will remain in the locale after they graduate;
- More dynamically, their graduates represent a pool of highly qualified labour for local businesses, and can attract firms with particular skill requirements to the area;
- They can act as incubator for new businesses, particularly in high technology areas, and can provide research facilities and collaboration opportunities for local business. This is also attractive to firms with high skill requirements.

Whether it is realistic for Drogheda to try to have a third level education facility established in the town raises a number of issues, including:

- One college cannot provide all the 3rd level education requirements of Drogheda, so if one was established, it would have to attract students from around the country. By the same token, a high proportion (probably a majority) of Drogheda students will continue to travel elsewhere for 3rd level education.

- Drogheda is very close to the nexus of third level education in Ireland, i.e. Dublin. With improved transport infrastructure Dublin colleges are more accessible, and graduates of Dublin colleges can access opportunities in Drogheda. On what basis would a newly established college in Drogheda compete?
- The well-established Dundalk Institute of Technology is also accessible for Drogheda students. We understand the Regional Development Centre of DKIT is planning an off-campus pilot incubator facility in Drogheda. This represents a positive asset for Drogheda. In addition there are training links between the institute and Our lady of Lourdes Hospital.
- Ireland's demographic structure means that the number of young people in the college-going ages will be in decline over the coming decades, so competition for students will intensify over time. This would represent a particular challenge for a start-up college in a smaller location such as Drogheda.
- A new college would have to be funded by the national Government. It would be more likely to gain funding if it could argue that it would generate some benefit for the nation as a whole, by filling some gap in the existing 3rd level education "market". It is not clear what this gap might be, or that a new college in Drogheda would be placed to fill.

Between the Dublin colleges and DKIT programmes, students from Drogheda are well-served with 3rd level educational facilities. The lack of a fully constituted 3rd level institute based in Drogheda itself should not represent a disadvantage to the social and economic development of the town.

6.3.8 Dublin-Belfast Corridor

While the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor has been a much-vaunted development of the Peace Process in Northern Ireland, it is probably fair to say that, to date, it has had little practical impact on the ground. That is not to say that it will not have in the future, and the improvement in the Dublin-Belfast road will help matters. To what degree the benefits will accrue to the intermediate points along the corridor is another question. In any event, Drogheda’s location means that it will be influenced to a greater degree by Dublin than by Belfast.

Functionally, Drogheda now exhibits many of the characteristics of an outer suburb of Dublin:

- It is a major station on the Northern suburban rail line;
- Population growth and housing is being driven by new arrivals, many of whom commute to Dublin to work/college.
- The By-pass means that the northern suburbs of Dublin are within an hour of Drogheda by car.
- Dublin’s infrastructure also serves Drogheda – airport, seaport, 3rd level colleges, specialist expertise (legal, financial, technical), social infrastructure, etc.

While the proximity of Dublin causes difficulties for Drogheda in some areas, it can be said that on balance the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, particularly since access has improved. In fact, with the new By-Pass and the Dublin Port Tunnel, Dublin airport and Seaport will be more accessible from Drogheda than from many parts of Dublin. This should help significantly with attracting new economic activity to the town.



above Boyne Cable Bridge
Dublin-Belfast -Motorway

Section II

7.0 Urban Design Issues

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 The Urban Design Baseline
- 7.3 Urban Design Objectives
- 7.4 Urban Design Issues for Strategy Development



7.0 Urban Design

7.1 Introduction

In historical and architectural terms Drogheda is a town with a resonance and quality equal to say Kilkenny, though this may not be the current perception. There is plenty to occupy oneself with, both in the town itself and the surrounding area. It has a vast range of urban and rural opportunities with Newgrange, Knowth, Dowth, Slane (site of the Battle of the Boyne) at close proximity to the town. It is a place that one can do a day trip to or stay a weekend and be entertained. It is also a town that has an historic legacy along with strong recent building growth. In this regard a key issue for urban design is how to accommodate the new forms of development, such that they catalyse use, mix and vibrancy within the town and also complement the historic townscape (and its associated environmental resources such as the riverside).

7.2 The Urban Design Baseline

The key aspects of urban design upon which the Greater Drogheda Area Planning Strategy is intended to be based, are set out below. These guiding principles have been developed with specific reference to regeneration and development issues within the town centre core, but also reflect the needs for a design audit of outer areas and also for new development zones.

Create places for people

To ensure vibrancy within the town centre core, any redevelopment proposals for this area should seek to create places for people which will be well-used and well-loved by the local community. The design response in this regard, should ensure that places are safe, comfortable, varied and attractive.

Enhance the existing character of the town

Any development proposals for the town centre core should seek to enrich the qualities of the existing area by encouraging a distinctive design response, which complements the setting, scale, character and use of that place.



Establish/Enhance connections

The redevelopment of the town centre core should seek to integrate individual places/nodes both physically and visually with their surroundings to facilitate movement throughout the central area.

Incorporate intrinsic features

Any development proposals for the town centre core should seek to strike a balance between the natural and man made environment and incorporate the intrinsic resources of a place.

Meet the demands of the widest possible range of users

Any development proposals for the town centre core should seek to create stimulating, enjoyable and convenient places that meet a variety of demands from the widest possible range of users, amenities and social groups. This can be achieved by ensuring a mix of uses, building forms, tenures and densities.

Design to facilitate change

New development needs to be flexible enough to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle and demography. This means designing for energy and resource efficiency; creating flexibility in the use of property, public spaces and the service infrastructure; and introducing new approaches to transportation, traffic management and parking.

7.3 Urban Design Objectives

- Give locals pride in Drogheda history and architecture comparable to Kilkenny;
- Move port down the river;
- Improve relationship of the railway station to the town for pedestrian access;
- Build new hotels in town and conference facility for 800 to 1000 delegates;
- Create linear park from Slane to Mornington;
- Build new bridge from Dublin Road to North Bank to open up town centre;
- Car parking around the perimeter of the town centre.
- Allow high-rise on South Bank along the river because of topography;

- Drogheda requires a National attraction similar to the Tate Galley in Liverpool. Perhaps a location for development of an aspect of the National Museum, e.g. Oliver Cromwell and that period of history;
- Create the "leisure destination" of Ireland in old quarry site;
- Improve signage in town to maximised pedestrian penetration;
- New Court House;
- Weir to control tidal level;
- Possible pedestrian link across viaduct.

These all serve as catalysts to sustainable and exciting change within Drogheda. Good quality urban design can follow on from these and can also contribute to their delivery.

01 Scotch Hall Development
ModelWorks Architectural Presentation

02 New Plaza
ModelWorks Architectural Presentation

03 Scotch Hall Pedestrian Bridge
ModelWorks Architectural Presentation

7.4 Urban Design Issues for Strategy Development

7.4.1 Movement/Linkages Framework

The creation of a viable and vibrant town centre is very much dependent on facilitating good access and connections.

Pedestrian Movement

The success of any development proposals for the town centre core will be dependent on strong pedestrian links to the existing town centre and public transport nodes.

The needs of pedestrians requires careful analysis and should be paramount in any development proposal for the town centre core.

- connect the places where people want to go;
- should be direct with easy crossing facilities;
- should be attractive, well lit and safe with variety along the street;
- ensure that the width and quality of the footway is appropriate;
- minimise obstruction;
- ensure the route is easy to find and follow.

Cycling Movements

Cycling should be promoted within the town centre core by:-

- Providing secure cycle parking facilities at major destinations including public transport nodes, open spaces, schools and other community facilities;
- Providing communal bicycle storage areas within residential schemes.

Public Transport

The provision of local public transport pools at the edges of the core town centre could help to underpin the viability of the town centre by significantly increasing potential custom while also protecting the integrity of the town centre core.

7.4.2 Design

Good design is essential to ensure that high density mixed use developments relate well to one another and do not negatively impact on the amenity of existing residential communities. All buildings and spaces proposed should be of a scale appropriate to their function and to the extent of the spaces that they frame.

In general, any development proposals should seek to reinforce the mass of the built form around the town centre, public transport access points, parks, the riverfront in particular and the valley. The shape of the mass of the built form should frame positive public spaces within the scheme.

Design within higher density areas proposed in the study area should see to ensure continuity of street frontages and the height relationship of buildings to roads and open spaces. Issues of privacy, overlooking and overshadowing and open space should be of paramount considerations within higher density areas.

Development in low-density areas, should aim to provide identity and avoid the monotony of suburban sprawl by placing buildings within a landscape setting.

Mixed-use schemes provide opportunities to create elements for visual interest and originality, particularly in town centres. Any development proposal for the study area should seek to incorporate landmark buildings and features to improve the legibility of urban landscape and the existing town centre.

Solar Design

Development proposals both within the town centre core and beyond in the outlying parts of the Study Area should seek to optimise their solar potential by orientating buildings and open spaces broadly to the south.

7.4.3 Landscaping

A quality landscape and a sense of urbanism should go hand in hand with any development proposal for the town centre and suburbs and should seek to incorporate:

- the intrinsic landscape character of a site (e.g. water features, tree stands, historical character);
- the proposed building blocks of a scheme;
- the proposed movement framework (including roads, streets and amenity pedestrian walks) of a scheme.

Open space planning should be based on a typology hierarchy, determined by the proposed function of the open space, its scale, locational suitability, frequency of use and the buildings which define it.

It is important to bear in mind that open space networks are often more useful for visual amenity, recreational use and wildlife corridors than isolated and unrelated landscape elements. In this regard, any development proposal should seek to integrate the open space elements of a site through the provision of green corridors (see below).

Appearance: Details and Materials

The urban design strategy for the town centre core should promote the creation of a complex mix of use typologies, scale of buildings and spaces as well as a mix of density and urban grain. This strategy of variety should promote the use of materials and other architectural elements that are characteristic of Drogheda for the purpose of reinforcing continuity between new development and the existing town centre.

7.4.4 The Issue of Open Space

To provide a usable commentary within the Planning Strategy, on the issue of open space, we suggest that it is important to examine three core open space categories. These are:

Space for routine use

i.e. a direct routing to shops/community facilities/ transport nodes. This space should be readily visible from neighbouring buildings and be close to the road network. The imperative is to ensure the functional quality of this type of open space in new districts.

Space for active uses

This space should be close to the centre of the community and be linked to institutional uses such as schools. It should also provide a feeder into routine passive use areas. For example, a person with a dog or pram will feel safer using open space if it passes and close to more active areas where there is human presence/bustle. We intend to give an account of the quality and quantity of this open space resource as it exists for the town at present.

Destination space

This is space to which people come on an occasional basis as a clear decision, e.g. use of the Phoenix Park in Dublin. The creation of such space must be carefully assessed to ensure that it has sufficient amenity merit to attract this form of person. Otherwise, it will not be used enough to give a sense of security and from then on it will fall into disrepute. Securing public ownership, maximising points of access and implementing development uses in the immediate vicinity of the riverside area to ensure usage thresholds, are key objectives for inclusion in the development plan. While this may be outside the direct influence of the Planning Strategy, the report intends to provide an assessment of any such spaces at present and the rational locations for expansion of this format. Obviously, the areas to the east of the town proper as well as the Boyne Valley area merit full examination under this category.

There are overlapping areas, such as the quays along the river front in the town centre. These operate as important routine use corridors for many employees, residents etc. However when allied to successful townscape intervention and lively uses, these areas become destinations in themselves.

The strategic issues on open space planning appear to be to account for sufficient active open space areas, to propose criteria both for implementing routine use space within new development districts, to assist improvements to established area and to deliver criteria which ensure access and usage to destination spaces, as these form a large part of a population's perception of a town.



above
St Laurence's Gate

Section III

Appendix I	Population Data from the Census 2002
Appendix II	Details of Local Area Plans
Appendix III	Population Estimates and Projections
Appendix IV	Summary of Development Activity
Appendix V	List of Key Stakeholders

Population of Drogheda and Electoral Districts within a 15km radius

Electoral District	1991 Persons	1996 Persons	2002 Persons	Percent. Change 1991-1996	Percent. Change 1996-2002	Actual Change 1991-1996	Actual Change 1996-2002
Drogheda Borough	23,848	24,460	28,333	2.6	15.8	612	3,873
Collon	1,000	1,029	1,188	2.9	15.5	29	159
Dunleer	1,779	1,677	1,787	-5.7	6.6	-102	110
Clogher	1,476	1,548	1,814	4.9	17.2	72	266
Dysart	543	548	649	0.9	18.4	5	101
Monasterboice	895	1,017	1,130	13.6	11.1	122	113
Mullary	934	1,014	1,248	8.6	23.1	80	234
St Peters (part)*	1,758	1,809	2,641	2.9	46.0	51	832
Termonfeckin	1,610	1,759	2,033	9.3	15.6	149	274
Grangegeeth	460	457	465	-0.7	1.8	-3	8
Ardcath	1,895	1,945	1,907	2.6	-2.0	50	-38
Duleek	2,496	2,434	2,941	-2.5	20.8	-62	507
Julianstown	3,966	3,999	5,806	0.8	45.2	33	1,807
Mellifont	523	488	599	-6.7	22.7	-35	111
St Marys (part)*	3,267	3,529	5,457	8.0	54.6	262	1,928
Stamullen	2,248	1,901	2,329	-15.4	22.5	-347	428
Painestown	1,040	1,005	1,083	-3.4	7.8	-35	78
Slane	1,226	1,186	1,336	-3.3	12.6	-40	150
Total	50,964	51,805	62,746	1.7	21.1	841	10,941

Source: CSO, Census of Population 2002: Population and Area of each Province, County, City, urban area, rural area and Electoral Division, 1996 and 2002 (Table 6)

*Note: The remainder of St. Peter's and St. Mary's EDs are part of Drogheda Borough.

Note:

The above table gives the population of all Electoral Districts within Drogheda Borough and for all Electoral Districts within a 15 km radius around the town. It differs therefore from the population tables in Chapter 3 in that it includes all population (i.e. also including population in rural areas) within a 15 km radius of Drogheda.



County	Village	Distance from Drogheda	Public Transport Link with Drogheda	Local Community Facilities	Local Employment	Current Population	Projected Population (short term)	Projected Population (Long term)
Louth	Dunleer	17 km	Bus service limited to early morning and evening, policy of LAP to push for re-opening of train station.	Wide range of facilities in town centre, including good range of shops, hotel, pubs restaurant, bank, etc.	Some existing,additional lands zoned for employment in line with ‘Locating Industry in Co. Louth Strategy’	1,014 (CSO 2002)	Approx. 2,000 (270 houses granted)	4,000
	Clogherhead	13 km	Bus service four times a day.	Primary School, Health Care Unit, Credit Union, Garda Station, Post Office, Mini Market.	Some Industrial, traditionally fishing industry.	906 (CSO 2002)	Approx. 1,400 (my estimate based on 180 houses granted)	1,725 by 2020
	Termonfeckin / Baltray	7 km (from T.feckin) 4 km (from Baltray)	None	1 Service Station / Shop, Post Office, 1 Butchers/Grocer, 2 Pubs, Credit Union, Restaurant (overall limited)	Limited, but lands zoned for ‘Enterprise Park’	530 (T.feckin) 130 (Baltray) 126 (on link road -my estimate) 786 Total	1,161 (my estimate based on 134 dwellings granted)	Target for 2020: 2,130 (T.feckin) 500 (Baltray) 288 (on link road) 2,918 Total
	Collon	9 km	Four National Bus routes pass through village, one links to Drogheda.	Wide range of facilities in village centre, including shops, pubs, restaurant, Credit Union, Post, Garda Station	No Specific	424 (CSO 2002)	Projection for 750 total population by 2007	Range of projections for 2011 from 1,329 (low) to 2115 (high)
	Tinure	10 km	None	School, Church, shop	Small industrial estate (8 small scale units)	277 (estimate made by LAP for 2003)	336 (LAP estimate based on houses granted)	Very moderate population increase
	Tullyallen	3 km	None	Two shops, School, Church, Credit Union, Pub, Community Hall, Petrol station, Playing field.	None	617 (CSO 2002)	1,310 (based on 247 dwellings granted)	No major increase
Meath	Donore	6 km	None	Church,Primary School	None	334 (CSO 2002)	64 acres zoned under 2001 Development Plan were not developed in 2001 when population was 293 persons	
	Duleek	8 km	Served by Provincial Bus service linking Navan and Drogheda	Primary School,Church,Court House, Library,Community Information Point	Nearby Cement Works is the main employer, lands zoned for industrial purposes in DP	2,173 (CSO 2002)	5,000 (no time frame given)Ample amount of land zoned for low density housing under 2001 DP	
East Meath	Bettystown Area Action Plan		Bus route to Drogheda,train station in Laytown; long term obj. of train station for Bettystown and more frequent Bus services	Some	very limited	No population data for Bettystown AAP area, however for overall area see below		6,000 additional population in Bettystown as part of overall population of area of 20,000 to 23,000
	Laytown Bettystown Mornington					5,597 (CSO 2002)		
	Stamullen					779 (CSO 2002)		
	Gormanstown Julianstown Donacarney					504 (CSO 2002) 422 (CSO 2002)		

Note: The East Meath Development Plan provides very little detail in reaction to the East Meath Villages, details of the future development strategy will be set out in the 2 forthcoming Local Area Plans for the Area

Appendix III Population Estimates and Projections

The following represents an approximate estimation of current population levels and future population projections in the core study area and the surrounding villages based on the CSO 2002 census data, information obtained directly from the three Local Authorities and from statutory instruments, such as Development Plans and Local Area Plans.All figures should be treated with caution. Inaccuracies might occur as some data was not available and other data might be incomplete.

However, the figures should give a good estimation of existing and projected population of the study area. All estimations are conservative estimations and the actual projected population that could be accommodated on zoned and committed lands might actually outstrip the estimates given below. Please note also, that one-off housing has not been taken into account in the estimations.This accounts for a further substantial population in and around the study area.

Estimates for core study area:	
Current population for Drogheda Borough Council CSO, 2002):	28,333
Land Banks for housing within the Borough (taken from 2004 Draft Development Plan):	
80.42 ha zoned new residential @ 35 per ha = 2,800 dwellings	
Mixed development areas (e.g. Inner Quays) = 250 dwellings	
Total of 3050 dwelling units (@2.29 occupancy rate)	7,000
17.4 ha Council owned landbanks = over 600 houses (@2.29 occupancy rate)	1,400
Northern Drogheda Environs Plan Area, Co. Louth:	
Lands already developed, 683 units @ 3 people per household	2,049
190 ha zoned residential in Northern Drogheda Environs Plan,provisions in plan for 35 units per ha and occupancy rate of 3 per household	20,000
Southern Environs Areas in Co. Meath:	
(all following information obtained from Meath County Council)	
92.8 ha zoned residential, available for development (@35 p. ha & 2.7 occupancy)	8,769
93.7 ha already developed, 422 units built (@35 p. ha & 2.7 occupancy)	1,140
(this figure is higher because not all lands developed are taken into account)	
22.7 ha planning granted, 287 units granted (@35 p. ha & 2.7 occupancy)	775
142 ha hatched area subject to LAP (Draft LAP provides for 4360 units) @2.7	11,772
Total Existing (estimated)	32,297
Total New Population (that could be accommodated on already zoned lands)	48,941
TOTAL OVERALL POPULATION PROJECTED	81,238
(If all lands were developed to their full potential)	

Notes:

Occupancy rates are calculated as follows:

- Drogheda Borough Council at 2.29 persons per household. This is in line with the Draft Development Plan occupancy rates.
- Northern Environs at 3.0 per household. This is in line with the Northern Environs Plan.
- Southern Environs at 2.7 persons per household. This is in line with the estimates obtained from Meath County Council who use the projected occupancy rate for County Meath contained in the Strategic Planning Guidelines

Residential Density Guidelines recommend net densities for Outer Suburban / 'Greenfield sites' of 35-50 units per ha. Net Densities in above calculations generally base the projections on the minimum of 35 units. An even higher population could therefore potentially be accommodated on the zoned lands.

°For definition of 'core study area' and 'surrounding area of influence' see Chapter 2 of the Issues Paper.

°The LAP is unpublished and confidential.

Population Projections for surrounding villages:			
All population projections are taken from the relevant Action Area and Local Area Plans			
Village	Current Population	Projected Population (short term)	Projected Population (long term)
Dunleer	1,014 (CSO 2002)	Approx. 2,000	4,000
Clogherhead	906 (CSO 2002)	Approx. 1,400	1,725 by 2020
Termonfeckin/ Baltray	786 TOTAL approx.	Approx. 1161	2,918 by 2020
Collon	424 (CSO 2002)	750 by 2007	Range of 1,329 (low) to 2,115 (high) by 2011
Tinure	296 (CSO 2002)	336 (LAP) estimate	Very moderate population increase
Tullyallen	617 (CSO 2002)	1,310 (based on 247 dwellings granted)	No major increase
Donore	334 (CSO 2002)	Very moderate	Very moderate
Duleek	2,173 (CSO 2002)		5,000 (no time frame)
Bettystown Area Action Plan	No population data for Bettystown AAP area, however for overall area see below		6,000 additional population in Bettystown as part of overall population of area of 20,000 to 23,000
Laytown-Bettystown Mornington	5,597 (CSO 2002)		
Stamullen	779 (CSO 2002)		
Gormanstown	504 (CSO 2002)		
Julianstown	422 (CSO 2002)		
Donacarney	Not available		
Total East Meath	7302		20,000
TOTAL	13,852		36,618

Population Projections for core study area and surrounding Villages:		
Area	Current Population (estimated)	Projected Population (approximate figures)
Core Study Area	32,297	80,000
East Meath Villages	7,302	20,000
All other villages	6,550	16,500
Total	46,149	116,500

Note:

The current population figure of 46,149 persons in Drogheda and the villages surrounding the town is significantly less than the population estimated for all DEDs within a 15km radius which was 62,746 (see Appendix I). This points to the fact that significant levels of population live outside the towns and villages defined by Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

Appendix IV-Summary of Development Activity

Drogheda Borough Council- Summary of Developments

Town Centre - Mixed Use Developments Scotch Hall Development - 125 residential units - recreational/entertainment uses along waterfront: 7 screen cinema, cafes, restaurant - hotel fronting river on north-east of site (80 beds) - pontoon for berthing of pleasure cruisers - pedestrian bridge (connecting Graves Lane and Mayoralty St) - parking at surface level, in a multi-storey car park and basement car parking. Paulson Investments Ltd. Development, Dyer Street - Retail/Banking Hall/Offices and restaurant at ground floor (1856m2), - 190 sqm offices at first floor - 4 floors of apts (86 in total) - car parking (128 spaces) at 1st and 2nd floor.	Grammar School Development,Laurence Street - supermarket, 25 retail units, - community hall, - health centre, - credit union, - restaurant, - 15 Apts., - office space, - basement car park Linen Hall Pub,Dyer Street - pub. - retail (137m2), - restaurant, The Old Mart Site, Magdalene Street/ Green Lanes - 84 Apts., - offices, - restaurant, Brian Browning Development,Fair Street - 24 Apartments - 340 m2 office space.	Major Residential Developments Southside. - Bryanstown Manor: 40 duplex, 56 houses - ‘Roskil Development’, Stameen:146 dwellings - Marleys Lane: 183 dwellings - Five Oaks: 44 dwellings (additional to existing estate) - Silk park: 52 houses, 9 Apartments, 9 Duplex Apartments - ‘Rivercourt’, Rathmullen Road: 48 Apartments - Marsh Road: 5 houses, 6 duplex apartments, 6 apts. - Donore Road: 23 apartments Northside. - Cluid Housing Association (St. Laurence’s Park): 32 dwellings - Bog Lane/ Cross Lane: 71 dwellings	The Mart-Gerry Brady Development, Bredin St. Newfoundwell Rd. - 58 Apartments in separate blocks. Merchant’s Quay, North Strand - 24 Apartments - 906 m2 office space. Commercial/Industrial Development -Mellview (Appeal withdrawn): Retail warehouse park (13,846m2), garage (3,258m2), garden centre (1,154m2), car park (647 spaces) -East Coast Business Park (02/63):15 industrial warehouse units (11,523 sqm) -Boyne Business Park (03/116) -Donore Industrial Estate (01/148): Mixed dev., light industrial, offices, retail (10,388m2) -Newgrange Business Park (01/176): 3 light
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Louth & Meath County Councils- Summary of Development Activity

Louth County Council Development in Drogheda Environs. - Manor Park Homes Development: Total: 683 homes and neighbourhood centre Detail: File Refs. 97/1042: 363 units 99/492: amendments to 97/1042 99/973: 100 units 02/1626: 220 units - In accordance with the Northern Environs Plan, 3 Masterplans are going to tender in near future for the 3 identified neighbourhood areas (see Northern Environs Plan map) - A number of planning applications have been refused pending the implementation of the 3 masterplans.	Meath County Council Residential Developments Grange Rath/ Colpe Cross Area (various developments, Ref Nos.sa20273, sa20009, sa30444, sa30445, sa30446, sa40327, sa40328, sa30236, 991929): - 422 no. of Residential units built, - 287 no. of residential units granted but construction not commenced (sa40328, sa991929) - 60 units on FI request (sa40196) - overall development includes: - Nursing Home (60 bedrooms) - Crèche (523m2) (not yet granted, on FI)	Commercial/Industrial Development IDA Drogheda Business Park - 3 number 4 storey office buildings - development includes internal roads, access junction Drogheda Retail Park - Anchor DIY store (4,266 m2) - 5 retail warehouse units (5,358 m2 total floorspace) - garden centre (1,115 m2) - associated roads, parking <i>Undeveloped lands</i> <i>1. Residential zoning: 92.8 ha (estimated population of 8767 @ 2.7 occupancy rate and 35 dwellings to the ha)</i> <i>2. Industrial Zoning: 75.6 ha</i> <i>3. Bryanstown LAP area: 142 ha (the unpublished/confidential draft LAP provides for approx. 4360 housing units to be constructed in 2 phases)</i>
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Strategic Interest	Organisation	Contact	Interviewer Date
Transport	Bus Eireann	Robert O'Mahony, Network Manager for Greater Dublin Area	20/10/04
	Dublin Transportation Office	Mick MacAree & Eoin Farrell	26/10/04
	Drogheda Port Authority	Paul Fleming	27/10/04
	Irish Road Haulage Association.	Jimmy Quinn, Communication Director	27/10/04
	National Roads Authority	Geraldine Fitzpatrick, Engineer Drogheda Area	emailed submission
	Irish Rail	Tom Finn, Manager Strategic Planning	no comment for Issues Paper at this stage.
	National Safety Council	Alan Richardson, Acting CEO	19/10/04
	Department of Communications Marine & Natural Resources.	Fintan O'Brien Principal Officer	20/10/04
Tourism	Drogheda Tourist Office	Liam O'Reilly Manager	27/10/04
	East Coast & Midlands Tourism	Martina O'Dwyer, Regional Tourism Officer	28/10/04
	The Arts Council	Antoinette O'Neill Architecture Advisor	19/10/04
Environment	An Taisce	Ian Lumley, Heritage Officer	20/10/04
	Spatial Planning Unit, DOEHLG	Niall Cussen, Spatial Planning Unit	Interview conducted by Chris McGarry
	Health & Safety Authority	John Colreavy, Inspector	01/11/04
Land Use & Spatial Planning	Border Regional Authority	Matt Donnelly, Director and Vivienne Egan, Project Director	19/10/04
	Mid East Regional Authority	John Byrne,Director	22/10/04
	IBEC	Turlough O'Sullivan, Director General	Invitation to their Regional Executive Commitee Meeting
Economic	IDA-North East	Pat Loftus, Area Director Border	19/10/04
	Louth County Enterprise Board	Ronan Kennedy,CEO	21/10/04
	Enterprise Ireland, North East	Rosemary Sexton, Regional Director	28/10/04
	An Post North East Area Office	Dan Egan	28/10/04
Social Infrastructure	Department of Defence	Tony O'Reilly	28/10/04

Written Submissions

Strategic Interest	Organisation	Author of Submission	Date of Submission
Transport	Department of Transport	Paul Hannon	29/10/04
	National Roads Authority	Geraldine Fitzpatrick Engineer Drogheda Area	21/10/04
Environment	Bird Watch Ireland	Olivia Crowe Conservation Officers	28/10/04
Economic	Bord Gais Eireann	Donncha O Sullivan Development Liaison Engineer	27/10/04
	Irish Farmers Association	Seamus Lambe Chair Person,Louth County Executive	21/10/04
	Drogheda Port Authority	Paul Flemming Chief Executive	15/10/04
Land Use & Spatial Planning	Eastern Regional Fisheries Board	Noel McGloin Senior Fisheries Environmental Officer	22/10/04
Social Infrastructure	SIPTU	Michael Walsh Branch Secretary	22/10/04

