

Social and Community Facilities

For the purposes of the plan community facilities include the following: childcare facilities, education, further education and training, arts and culture, sports and leisure facilities, health and social facilities and uses associated with public worship plus other related facilities which the Planning Authority considers to be of benefit to the wider community.

Strategic planning for social and community facilities is generally dependent upon population projections. Population projections and future demographic profiles should always be treated with caution since actual population growth does not always match projections. In particular, it should be noted that demand for childcare facilities and school places may be less than expected given national trends. Similarly, employment and recreation patterns are constantly evolving and cannot be treated as static factors.

The key to the cost effective and sustainable delivery of social and community services is flexibility. Buildings and other facilities must be designed to be adaptable and flexible. The multiple use of facilities will enhance their economic viability. It is also important that management regimes are capable of responding to the changing needs of the community.

Schools

The heart of the new community will be its educational facilities. The Planning Authority has consulted with the Department of Education and the need for three new primary schools has been identified within the plan area.



New School Facility.

This plan makes provision for school sites in the environs of the Civic and Commercial Centres at Priorland, Crumlin and Mounthamilton. Each 1.22 hectare site is capable of accommodating a 24 classroom school building together with ancillary facilities including open play areas. The schools should be designed and managed in such a way as to cater for the after school care needs of local children. Management of such needs will be the responsibility of local Boards of Governors. Recreational space facilities have been located so as to be available for use by the wider community after school hours and out of term without compromising the operation of the schools. This is in accordance with Department of Education and Science Circular (Circ Letter Post Primary M18/05 & Prim 16/05) “The Sharing of School Facilities with the Community” and in line with the national play policy “Ready, Steady, Play”

The DSWLAP has identified three primary school sites within the plan area adjacent to the three civic and commercial centres. Provision has also been made for a post primary school adjoining the primary school site within the Fairhill Sector.

Consideration will be given to the zoning of one additional site respectively for both a primary school and a post primary school, if required, at the review of the Dundalk and Environs Development Plan which is due to commence in 2007.

Preference will be given, in all cases, to schools, both primary and post primary, which are non fee paying.

Pre-school childcare facilities/ Crèches

The requirements for pre-school children are different to those of school age children. Generally the planning authority will require a crèche or other pre-school facility to be provided at a ratio of 20 childspaces per 75 dwellings occupied. Childcare facilities can be located in residential areas, workplaces, large retail outlets, educational facilities and health / social outlets subject to compatibility with the Dundalk and Environs Development Plan 2003 – 2009 and the Development Control policies contained within the Louth County Childcare Strategy 2002. As



Purpose Built Crèche.

demand for pre-school facilities in residential areas tends to subside in time, these facilities should be capable of being converted into other uses in time. Childcare facilities must be included as integral features of the civic and commercial centres. the development control policies contained within the Louth County Childcare Strategy 2002. Pending the provision of after-school care facilities in the schools, the planning authority may also require provision for appropriate after-school childcare as part of residential development proposals.

All developers must demonstrate the availability of a pre-school facility within a reasonable walking distance (typically no greater than 500 metres) of each dwelling (taking into account existing facilities within the area), and adequate after-school care facilities, as part of their planning application for residential development. This walk must be designed so as to be safe and comfortable for parents with young children.

Third Level Education

The DSWLAP area lies in close proximity to the Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT) located on the Dublin Road. The DKIT performs a key sub-regional function within the Border Region (as defined in the NSS) in providing third level education opportunities for much of the area. The institute is located at the pivotal point of the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor - an area where exciting new industrial developments, economic activities and infrastructure enhancements are expected in line with both the NSS and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland.



Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT).

The DKIT has emerged as one of the leading Institutes of Technology in Ireland through its top quality teaching and innovative programmes. The DKIT provides courses in Business, Engineering, Humanities and Life Sciences to certificate, diploma, degree and post graduate level. Its student population is 5,000(3,500 full time). It is currently building a niche expertise in the area of digital media The DSWLAP area can draw upon the DKIT as a generator of employment and provider of social and recreational infrastructure. In particular the Priorland sector should benefit from the close proximity of the DKIT. The DSWLAP seeks to capitalise on the presence of the DKIT in terms of the generation of critical mass for new housing, retail facilities and enhanced transportation links in particular.

Hospital Facilities

Louth County Hospital is situated along the Dublin Road adjacent to the Priorland Sector. Louth County Hospital site is part of the Louth/Meath Hospital Group and provides a general acute hospital service to the catchment area of Louth and surrounding area. The range of acute services includes, general medicine, general surgery, and a range of other medical services which are mainly based on out patient and day care procedures.

Additional services located in the grounds of Louth County Hospital include, a 16 Bed High Support Mental Health Unit, a 150 Bed Geriatric Unit, a Psychiatric Day Service and an Alzheimers Day Unit. The primary responsibility for the provision of health care rests with the Health Executive. Dundalk Town Council and Louth County Council will work in partnership with the Health Executive in the provision of health care facilities and in ensuring adequate health care facilities are in place to meet the needs of the local population. The DSWLAP is supportive of the provision of residential care and day care facilities in residential areas. In particular the DSWLAP places an emphasis on the inclusion of “Lifetime Housing” Further details of the concept of Lifetime Housing is contained within the Urban Design section of the local area plan.



Homes for Life.

Health Facilities

It is envisaged that a primary health care centre will be required as the plan area is developed. This may take the form of a “Health Village” providing a “one-stop-shop” approach to all aspects of general health care including general practice and dentistry. Such a facility should be located in either the Priorland or Fairhill Civic and Commercial Centres.

Barrier Free Living

The concept of creating a barrier free living environment runs throughout the DSWLAP. Physical barriers in the everyday built environment affect not only people with disabilities but also range of other people including older persons, children and parents with dependent babies / toddlers. Collectively, these groups form a significant proportion of the overall population. As the population ages the proportion of persons with restricted mobility is likely to increase. The DSWLAP will require that all public areas be designed with the needs of persons with restricted mobility and / or other sensory restrictions, in mind. Developers will be expected to adhere to standards outlined in the Disability Bill 2004 (as amended) Developers are also reminded of their obligations under Part M of the building regulations.

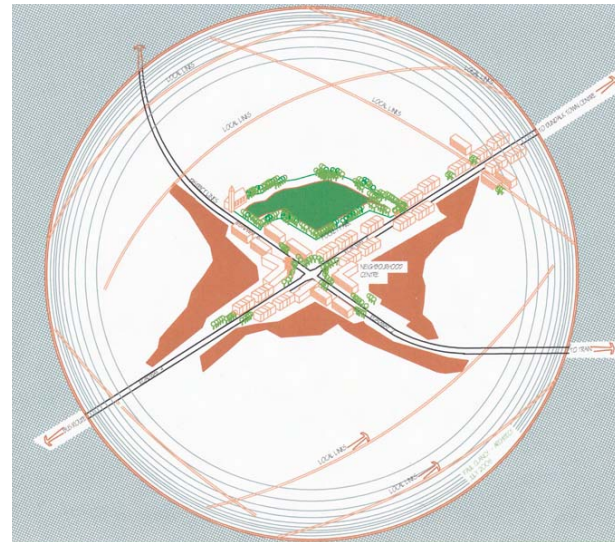
Civic and Commercial Centre Strategy

It is proposed that there be three Civic and Commercial Centres and a local centre provided within the DSWLAP area. Each Civic and Commercial Centre will comprise a number of elements appropriate to the needs of the surrounding residential areas. These may include retail provision, commercial services (banks, credit unions, post offices, creches etc), community, leisure and educational facilities. The underlying principle behind the permitted uses within the Civic and Commercial Centres is to generate an appropriate level of employment in order to maintain social and environmental sustainability. All of the Civic and Commercial Centres will have residential elements with the exception of the Crumlin Local Centre.

The Crumlin Local Centre has primarily been designed to function as a service centre for the surrounding employment generating enterprises. It will also act as a retail and service hub for the adjacent Park and Ride transportation facility and as such may include retail, transportation and commercial services. Offices which are normally found in town centre areas, such as professional services and practices will not normally be permitted in Crumlin Local Centre.

The Civic and Commercial Centres must be developed on a basis commensurate with a demonstrated need within their respective catchments. These catchments lie largely within the DSWLAP boundary and as such, will require the building of a sufficient critical mass of population in order to support the Civic and Commercial Centres.

The Civic and Commercial Centres will function as multi-purpose destinations in that housing, schools, employment and leisure destinations will all be in close proximity to each centre. Thus each centre will be locations for developments which attract multi-trips. All of the centres have a strong employment generating function in the form of service based employment including office accommodation.



DSWLAP Generic Civic and Commercial Centre.



Purpose Built Civic and Commercial Centre.

Employment

The DSWLAP plan area may ultimately accommodate in the region of 20,000 residents. In the interests of sustainable development, it is considered appropriate that a substantial portion of the overall plan area should be reserved for the purposes of large scale employment generation. The DSWLAP area contains a number of key “Employment Mixed Use Zones” as defined by the Dundalk and Environs Plan 2003 – 2009. These include the entire Crumlin sector and two areas of the Mounthamilton sector, namely, lands parallel to the railway in the northern portion of the sector and lands adjacent to the Hill Street road junction.

Additional employment generating opportunities will be available within the three Civic and Commercial Centres and one Local Centre.

Housing

The primary use of land in the plan area will be residential. A range of different house types should be provided in any development. While conventional three and four bedroom family homes will continue to be in demand, developers should be conscious that, as household sizes decline, a larger number of one and two person households will emerge. The number of elderly in the community, with their own particular housing requirements, will also increase.



Housing Mix.



Variety in Housing Design.

Potential housing developments must accord with the principles of the County Louth Housing Strategy. It is recommended that where possible, the following breakdown of housing be achieved:

Housing Mix

35% should be one / two bedroom units

35% should be three bedroom units

30% should be four or more bedrooms

The Planning Authority will normally look for a range of two, three and four bedroom housing units in every scheme. (Larger and smaller units will also be permitted). The Planning Authority will consider the appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes on an individual site by site basis as and when planning applications are received and will use conditions and agreements as appropriate to secure the preferred housing mix.

Social and Affordable Housing

The Planning Authority will require the provision of 20 % of zoned residential lands to be reserved for the provision of social and affordable housing, in all housing developments of four or more units where the site area is in excess of 0.1 hectares. The preferred method of meeting this requirement will be the provision of dwellings rather than land or a financial contribution. Developers are encouraged to discuss and reach an agreement with Dundalk Town Council or Louth County Council, as applicable, with regard to Part V provision.



Social and Affordable Housing.

Community and Civic Buildings

The proposed Civic and Commercial Centres may incorporate a civic building to act as a focal point for the community. This building will be located in an appropriately prominent location in the Fairhill Civic and Commercial Centre and may accommodate a public library or similar function. Other local authority and state services may also be provided in this building.