

Louth County Council

County Development Plan 2003-2009

As amended July 2006

Contents

Chapter 1 - Introduction	11
1.1 Plan Title	11
1.2 Legal Status of the Plan	11
1.3 Vision and Strategic Objective	11
1.4 Requirements	12
1.5 Content and Format	13
1.6 Public Consultation	13
1.6.1 Formal Notification of the intention to prepare a draft plan	13
1.6.2 Stakeholders and Prescribed Bodies	14
1.6.3 Public Meetings	14
1.6.4 Managers Report	15
1.7 Local Area Plans	15
1.8 Development Plan Context	16
1.9 National Context	16
1.9.1 The National Development Plan	16
1.9.2 National Spatial Strategy	17
1.9.3 Sustainable Development	18
1.9.4 Agenda 21	19
1.9.5 Social Inclusion	19
1.9.6 Planning for Social Inclusion	21
1.10 Regional Context	22
1.10.1 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region	22
1.11 Local Context	23
1.11.1 County Development Boards	23
1.12 County Profile	24
1.13 Population - Impact of current trends on the future development of County Louth.	25
1.14 Population Growth	26
1.15 Implementation	27

Chapter 2 – Conservation and Heritage	28
2.1 Introduction	28
2.2 Heritage Protection	28
2.2.1 Strategic Objectives	29
2.3 County Louth- Landscape Character Assessment	29
2.4 The Natural Environment	31
2.4.1 Local Open Spaces	31
2.4.2 Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's)	31
2.4.3 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's)	32
2.4.4 Special Protection Areas (SPA's)	33
2.4.5 Sites of Geological Interest	33
2.4.6 Trees and Woodlands	34
2.4.7 The Water Framework Directive	35
2.5 The Built Environment	36
2.5.1 Archaeology	36
2.5.2 Protected Structures	36
2.5.3 Architectural Conservation Areas	37
2.5.4 Objectives	37
2.5.5 Policy	38
Chapter 3 - Rural Development, Natural Resources and Energy	40
3.1 Rural Development Context	40
3.2 Government Policy	40
3.2.1 The Rural White Paper	40
3.2.2 Clár Programme	41
3.2.3 REPs Scheme – Rural Environmental Protection Scheme	41
3.3 Rural Development Strategy	42
3.3.1 Strategic Objective	43
3.3.2 Development Control Zones	43
3.3.3 Development Control Zone 1	44
3.3.4 Development Control Zone 2	45
3.3.5 Development Control Zone 3	45
3.3.6 Development Control Zone 4	46
3.3.7 Development Control Zone 5	46
3.3.8 Development Control Zone 6	47
3.4 Agricultural Development	47
3.4.1 Strategic Objective	48
3.4.2 Policy	48
3.4.3 Agricultural Buildings	48
3.5 Coastal Areas	49

3.5.1	Strategic Objective	49
3.5.2	Coastal Policy	49
3.5.3	Integrated Coastal Zone Management	49
3.5.4	Development on the Foreshore	50
3.5.5	Coastline Protection	50
3.6	Afforestation	51
3.6.1	Strategic Objective	51
3.7	Extractive Industry and Building Materials Production	51
3.7.1	Strategic Objective	51
3.7.2	Extractive Industry Policies	52
3.8	Renewable Energy	53
3.8.1	Policies for wind energy	53
3.9	Cables, masts and pylons	54
3.9.1	Policy	54
3.10	Natural Gas	54
3.11	Residential Development in Rural Areas	54
3.11.1	Policy	55
Chapter Four – Settlement Strategy		56
4.1	Introduction	56
4.2	Settlement Hierarchy	56
4.3	Settlement Strategy	58
4.4	Settlement Policies	59
4.4.1	Dundalk	59
4.4.2	Drogheda	59
4.4.3	Ardee Town	60
4.4.4	Dunleer	61
4.4.5	Category 1 Development Centres	61
4.4.6	Category 11 Development Centres	62
4.4.7	Policy	63
4.5	Design consideration in settlements	64
4.6	'One-off' Rural Housing	65
4.7	Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005	66
4.8	Rural Housing Policy	67

4.9	Qualifying criteria for residential development in rural areas	70
4.9.1	Development Control Zone 1	70
4.9.2	Development Control Zone 2	71
4.9.3	Development Control Zone 3	72
4.9.4	Development Control Zone 4	73
4.9.5	Development Control Zone 5	74
4.9.6	Development Control Zone 6	76
4.10	Design Considerations for 'One-off' Housing in the countryside	77
4.11	Definitions	79
Chapter Five – Residential and Community Development		81
5.1	Introduction	81
5.2	Housing Strategy for County Louth	81
5.3	Strategic Objective	82
5.3.1	Specific Policies	82
5.4	Design Considerations for residential estate type developments	84
5.4.1	Density	84
5.4.2	Residential Mix	84
5.4.3	Master Plans	85
5.4.4	Infrastructure support	85
5.4.5	Open Space	86
5.4.6	Residential Car – Parking Standards	87
5.4.7	Privacy and Spacing between buildings	88
5.4.8	Internal Space Standards	88
5.4.9	Refuse Storage and Collection	88
5.4.10	Building Lines	88
5.4.11	Building Heights	88
5.4.12	Management	89
5.4.13	Naming of Estates	89
5.5	Community Facilities	89
5.5.1	Objectives	89
5.6	Childcare Facilities	89
5.6.1	Policy	89
5.7	Health care and nursing homes	90
5.7.1	Policy	90
5.8	Traveller accommodation	91
5.8.1	Policy	91
5.9	Accommodation for dependant relatives	91
5.9.1	Policy	92

5.10	Health facilities	92
	5.10.1 Policy	92
5.11	Community buildings/sports facilities	93
	5.11.1 Policy	93
5.12	Disabled Access	94
5.13	The Library Service	95
5.13	Schools and Education	95
 Chapter 6 Tourism, Recreation and Amenity		 97
6.1	Introduction	97
	6.1.1. Strategic Objectives	97
	6.1.2. Tourism Policy	97
	6.1.3. Recreation and Amenity Policies	98
6.2	Environment and Amenities	98
	6.2.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty(A.O.N.B)	99
	6.2.2 Areas of High Scenic Quality(A.H.S.Q)	99
	6.2.3 The Coastline	100
	6.2.4 Scenic Routes	100
	6.2.5 Views and Prospects of Special Amenity Value	101
	6.2.6 Pedestrian Links and Walkways	102
6.3	Tourist Accommodation	103
	6.3.1 Caravan and Camping Sites	103
	6.3.2 Holiday Homes	104
	6.3.3 Bed and Breakfast Accommodation	104
6.4	Agri- Tourism	104
6.5	Eco- Tourism	105
6.6	Amenity Schemes	105
6.7	Carlingford Lough	106
6.8	Tourism Related Signs	106
6.9	Hotels/ Guest Houses	107

Chapter 7 - Economic Development and Employment	108
7. Industrial Development	108
7.1 Introduction	108
7.2 Employment Trends and Opportunities	108
7.3 Locating Industry in County Louth 2001	109
7.4 Interchange Strategy in County Louth 2002	110
7.4.1 Strategic Objective	111
7.4.2 Policy	111
7.5 Strategic Development Zones	112
7.6 Development Control Standards for industrial/ commercial areas	112
7.6.1 Landscaping/Amenity	112
7.6.2 Car Parking/ Loading/ Unloading	113
7.6.3 Design	113
7.6.4 Site Coverage/ Plot Ratios	113
7.6.5 Open Storage	113
7.6.6 Roads and Footpaths	113
7.6.7 Nuisance	113
7.6.8 Foul Sewerage	113
7.6.9 Public Water Supplies	114
7.7 Retail and Commercial Facilities	114
7.7.1 Introduction	114
7.7.2 Retail Strategy for County Louth	114
7.7.3 Strategic Objectives	115
7.7.4 Policy	116
7.8 Town Centre Development Guidelines and Standards	117
7.8.1 Environmental Improvements to Shopping Areas	117
7.8.2 Shopfront Design	118
7.8.3 Advertisement/ Hoardings	118
7.8.4 Access to Upper Floors/servicing arrangements	118
7.8.5 Plot Ratios	118
7.8.6 Site Coverage	119
7.8.7 Height	119
7.8.8 Overshadowing/Overlooking	119
7.8.9 Car Parking	119
Chapter Eight – Transport and Communications	120
8.1 Transport	120

8.2	Rural Transport Service Audit and Needs Assessment County Louth 2001	120
8.3	Strategic Objectives	121
8.4	Policy	121
8.5	Visibility Standards	124
8.6	Motorway/ Dual Carriageway	124
8.7	Specific Road Improvement Objectives	124
8.8	Omeath - Warrenpoint Road Link	126
8.9	Parking Provision	126
8.10	Public Transport	127
	8.10.1 Rail	128
	8.10.2 Policy	128
	8.10.3 Bus Service	129
	8.10.4 Policy	129
8.11	Air and Sea Ports	129
8.12	Service Stations	130
8.13	Motorway Services	130
8.14	Telecommunications	131
	8.14.1 Land based telephony	131
	8.14.2 Broadband	131
	8.14.3 Mobile Telephony	132
	8.14.4 Strategic Objective	133
	8.14.5 Policy	133
	8.14.6 Obsolete Structures	134
	Chapter Nine - Environmental Services	135
9.1	Introduction	135
9.2	Context	135
9.3	European, National and Regional Policy	135
9.4	Strategic Objective	136
9.5	Strategic Environmental Policies	136
9.6	Waste Management	136

9.6.1	General Policy Statement	136
9.6.2	Waste Management Policies	137
9.6.3	Existing Waste Management Facilities in County Louth	138
9.7	Sludge Management	138
9.8	Illegal Dumping	139
9.9	Litter Management	139
9.10	Water and Sewerage	139
9.10.1	Natural Water Systems/ Groundwater	139
9.10.2	Nitrate Vulnerable Zones	140
9.10.3	Policies for Water Protection	141
9.10.4	Flooding and Surface Water	141
9.10.5	Strategic Objective	141
9.10.6	Policies for Flooding and Surface Water	141
9.11	Water Supply	142
9.11.1	Policy for Water Supply	144
9.12	On-site Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Facilities (Rural Housing)	145
9.12.1	Onsite Wastewater Treatment and Soil Percolation Systems	145
9.12.2	Certification of Wastewater Treatment System and Soil Percolation System installation works	145
9.13	Waste Water Treatment	145
9.13.1	Treatment Capacity	145
9.13.2	Policies for Wastewater Treatment	147
9.14	River Basin Management Plans	147
9.14.1	Policy for River Basin Management Plans	147
9.15	Seveso Sites	147
9.16	Obsolete and Derelict Areas	148
9.17	Veterinary Services	148
9.17.1	Animal Pound	148
9.17.2	Milk and Dairies	148
9.17.3	Abattoirs Act	148
9.17.4	Specified Risk	148
	Chapter Ten - Environmental Assessment	149
10.1	Introduction	149
10.2	Objectives of the Plan	149

10.3	Current State of the Environment in County Louth County	150
10.4	Characteristics of Areas likely to be significantly affected by development	150
10.5	Methodology	152
10.6	Monitoring	152
10.7	Appraisal Criteria Selected	153

List of Tables

1.1	Local Area Plans	15
1.2	Live register analysis January 2000 – 2001	25
1.3	Population	25
2.1	Proposed Landscape Area Classification	29
2.2	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas	31
2.3	Special Areas Of Conservation	32
2.4	Special Protection Areas	33
2.5	Candidate Sites of Geological Interest	33
2.6	Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value	34
2.7	Trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders	35
2.8	Areas of Special Archaeological Potential	36
3.1	Objectives for Development Control Zones	44
3.2	Programme of Works for Coastal Areas	50
4.1	Settlement Strategy	58
5.1	Residential Density Guidelines	84
5.2	Residential Mix	85
5.3	Private Open Space Standards	86
5.4	Quantitative Standards	87
5.5	Residential Car Parking Standards	87
5.6	Primary Schools in County Louth	95
5.7	Post Primary Schools in County Louth	95
6.1	Scenic Routes	100
6.2	Views and Prospects	101
6.3	Viewing Points	102
6.4	Amenity Schemes	105
7.1	Distribution of Labour Force	109
8.1	Restricted Routes	122
8.2	Visibility Standards for Single Dwellings	124
8.3	Road Improvement Programme 2002 – 2008	125
8.4	Car Parking Requirements	127
9.1	Water Supply – Work Proposals	143
9.2	Existing Waste Water Treatment Facilities and Current Spare Capacity	145
10.1	Environmental Assessment Matrix	154

List of Maps

- 1.1 Context Map
- 1.2 Population Change by DED from 1996 - 2002
- 2.1 Landscape Area Classification
- 2.2 Conservation Map
- 3.1 Development Control Zone Map
- 4.1 Settlement Hierarchy Map
- 6.1 Amenity Map

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Plan Title

This Development Plan shall be entitled Louth County Development Plan 2003- 2009.

1.2 Legal Status

This development plan is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Upon adoption it will supersede the existing Louth County Development Plan 1997- 2003.

In accordance with Section 9(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, every Planning Authority is required to produce a Development Plan every 6 years.

This plan covers the administrative area of County Louth, excluding the municipal areas of Dundalk Town Council, Drogheda Borough Council. In conjunction with Dundalk Town Council, the environs of Dundalk including Blackrock/Heynestown plan will form part of the Dundalk and Environs Joint Plan 2003.

1.3 Vision and Strategic Objectives

County Louth although the smallest county in Ireland, is one of the most populated and urbanised outside of Dublin. This is due to the presence within its borders of two of the largest provincial towns in the country, Dundalk and Drogheda. The 2002 Census of Population gives the population of the county at 101,802 as against 92,166 in 1996. This represents an increase of 10.5 % over the preceding six year period, reflecting the beneficial impact of the “celtic tiger” economy on the county.

By reason of its strategic location on the Dublin/Belfast economic corridor, accessibility to east coast ports and international airports and the rapidly improving road and rail infrastructure, the county is well placed to continue to grow in population and economic terms into the foreseeable future.

The challenge facing Louth County Council, in partnership with the other local authorities of Dundalk Town Council and Drogheda Borough Council and the private and voluntary sectors, is to promote and regulate the future development of the county in a manner that will improve living standards and enable the social and cultural development of its inhabitants without jeopardising the ability of future generations of Louth people to do likewise. This in essence is the fundamental principle of sustainable development that is a recurring theme throughout this development plan.

The vision for county Louth into the future, as enshrined in this development plan, is of a prosperous and thriving county where no individual or social group will be excluded from the benefits of development and where such development is soundly based on principles of sustainability, protection of the county's resources, heritage and the natural and built environments.

The realisation of this vision will be sought by seeking to secure the following overall strategic objectives of this development plan:

- to provide an overall development strategy for the sustainable development of the county for the period 2003 to 2009 and beyond
- to provide a framework for the control and regulation of development and use of land that will guide day to day planning decisions based on the principles of proper planning and sustainable development
- to give local communities the opportunity to participate in the planning process and have a say in development choices and decisions that affect their lives
- to protect the county's resources and heritage, natural and built environment and other amenities for the benefit of existing and future generations
- to protect the unspoiled rural character of Louth's countryside from urban generated and unsustainable "one off" housing so as to ensure that the county remains an attractive place to live in and visit
- to promote greater social inclusion and improve the quality of life for all the inhabitants of the county
- to protect rural communities by promoting the sustainable development of the county's small towns and villages and the retention of a range of social, commercial and community services therein
- to provide for the incorporation of central government policy and guidelines into the development plan
- to aspire to a situation where every person will have access to suitable and affordable housing within their own community insofar as it is possible
- To seek to provide for the employment needs of the inhabitants of the county at locations that are convenient to where they reside
- To seek to ensure that the educational, recreational, social and cultural needs of the community are provided for
- To secure the provision of essential physical infrastructure to facilitate the appropriate and sustainable development of the county.

1.4 Requirements

The Planning and Development Act 2000 sets out those matters that must be included in the scope of the development plan as well as recommendations and themes, which may be included. In this context those issues included must relate to the planning and sustainable development. These can be summarised as follows:

- zoning of land where required
- provision of infrastructure including transport, energy, communications, water, wastewater etc.
- conservation of the environment including the archaeological and natural heritage, the conservation and protection of European sites together with any additions, which may be so, prescribed
- integration of planning and sustainable development with social, community and cultural requirements
- preservation of the character of landscapes, where required
- protection of structures, which are of special architectural, historical or artistic interest.
- preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas

- development and renewal of areas in need of preservation
- provision of accommodation for travellers
- preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational facilities
- for the reduction of risk consequent upon the major accidents directive
- the provision of services for the community
- such other objectives, as specified in the Act , which may be considered appropriate.

1.5 Content and Format

The plan takes the form of a written statement and a series of supporting land use and specific objectives maps.

If any ambiguity arises between what appears in the written statement and what is contained in the map, the written statement will take precedence.

1.6 Public Consultation

Under the new planning and development act, there is an obligation on the planning authority to adopt a bottom up procedure. Under section 11(3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, a planning authority has an obligation to take whatever additional measures as it considers necessary to consult with the general public and other interested bodies. Louth County Council has endeavoured to encourage all members of the public to become involved in the preparation of this plan.

1.6.1 Formal Notification of the intention to prepare a Draft Plan

In accordance with section 11(1) of the Act, a Notice was published in the local circulating newspapers, The Argus, The Dundalk Democrat and the Drogheda Independent on the week of the 13th of December. The notice outlined the intention of the Council to review the Development Plan and invited comments, submissions and observations in writing from the general public to be made within a specified period of 12 weeks from the 17th December 2001 to 8th March 2002.

The background papers and draft proposals for the county were available for public inspection. The documents made available in the Council offices included the following:

- The County Louth Retail Study
- The Draft Retail Strategy
- The Childcare Strategy
- Building Sensitively and Sustainably in County Louth
- Housing Strategy for County Louth
- Policy for elderly accommodation
- Irish Landmark Restoration Survey, Cross Border Restoration Survey, March 1998
- List of Protected Structures
- An Integrated County Development Strategy
- Locating Industry in County Louth
- Traveller Accommodation Programme 2000 – 2004
- Town Renewal Schemes
- Litter Action Plan

- Waste Management Plan
- Sustainable Development Strategy for Ireland
- Local Agenda 21
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan
- Residential Density Guidelines
- Tourism Action Plan
- Rural Transport Study

1.6.2 Stakeholders and Prescribed Bodies

Letters were sent to all prescribed bodies, stakeholders and infrastructure providers. A list of the prescribed bodies notified and the letter sent to each are set out in appendix 7 of the plan.

Planners were available on a Wednesday morning by way of appointment in Louth County Council Offices to meet with stakeholders, the public, interested bodies and the elected representatives from Wednesday 30th January until Wednesday 8th March 2002. Notice of this opportunity was advertised by way of a press release statement issued by Mr. Joe Boland, Director of Services for Planning.

Meetings and discussions were held with a number of the prescribed bodies and the stakeholders. These included the following:

- The Irish Concrete Federation
- Forestry Service
- Newry and Mourne Council
- Dúchas
- An Taisce
- County Childcare Committee
- Iannóid Éireann
- Heritage Council

Submissions were received from a number of the large stakeholders and infrastructure providers including NRA, ESB, Telecommunication providers, Bord Gais and Teagasc. These submissions and others are listed in appendix 7 of the development plan.

1.6.3 Public Meetings

To facilitate public involvement, a number of consultation clinics were held in Dundalk, Drogheda, Ardee, Dunleer and Carlingford. Notices of these meetings were advertised on the local radio station and in locally circulating newspapers in the weeks coming up to the date of the meeting. Planners from the forward planning team attended to take notes of the comments and issues raised.

Questionnaires were available for the public to fill out; a copy of the questionnaire can be found in appendix 7 of the development plan.

A presentation was given to the public at 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. at each of the public consultations outlining the obligation, preparation, making and content of the Development Plan in accordance with the Planning and Development Act, 2000, Part II, Sections 9, 10, 11 and 12.

5 number consultation meetings were held from 3pm to 7pm in the following locations:

1. Drogheda Corporation 25th January 2002
2. Dundalk Museum 31st January 2002
3. Carlingford Heritage Centre 4th February 2002
4. Ardee Library 12th February 2002
5. Dunleer Parochial Hall 28th February 2002.

1.6.4 Managers Report

The Managers Report was prepared on the basis of the submissions both oral and written that had been submitted.

1.7 Local Area Plans

In accordance with Section (18), (19) and (20) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, provision is made for the making of local area plans for any area falling under the jurisdiction of a planning authority.

In the context of Louth, the need for the creation of a series of local area plans has grown out of the unprecedented levels of development demand over the last decade. The purpose of these plans is to provide a strategic framework for each of these areas in the context of the county development plan. An important feature of this process will be the level of opportunity for local communities to participate in the creation of their own plan. In this way, local people will have a greater say in the future planning choices in their locality in terms of where any future development should be accommodated. The plans also will contain more specific proposals in terms of the use of land and its zoning objectives.

To date, local area plans have been prepared for the settlements set out in table 1.2

Table 1.1 Local Area Plans

Annagassen
Ardee
Castlebellingham/Kilsaren
Carlingford,
Clogherhead
Collon
Drogheda Northern Environs
Dunleer
Louth
Knockbridge
Tallanstown
Termonfeckin/Baltray
Tinure
Tullyallen
Omeath

P 1.1

It is policy of the Council to review each of these local area plans within a period not greater than 6 years from their adoption or at such earlier time as deemed necessary.

Section 19(1)(b) imposes an obligation on a planning authority to prepare local area plans in respect of any area which is designated as a town in the most recent census of population, has a population in excess of 2000 and are situated within the functional area of a county council.

1.8 Development Plan Context

Policies and perspectives of international and national significance increasingly influence physical planning in Ireland and indeed at the local county level. At the international level, the global consensus on the need to promote sustainable development is the most overriding element in terms of this new approach to planning and as such will influence the policies and objectives contained in this Development Plan.

The European Union and the increasing requirements of its members exert a major influence on the county also. Policy developments such as Agenda 2000 and the European Spatial Development Perspective have been filtered down to the local level in terms of required actions by individual local authorities. Furthermore, Louth, which is classified as an Objective 1 area, benefits from a higher rate of structural funds, which have contributed to the provision of a range of transport, sanitary services, and socio-economic projects in the county.

National Policies and funding also influence planning in County Louth. In this respect the development plan has been prepared having regard to all relevant government policies, programmes and plans. Among these are:

- Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland, (1997)
- National Development Plan (2000)
- Coastal Zone Management – A Draft Policy for Ireland (1997)
- Retail Planning Guidelines (2001)
- Residential Density Guidelines (2000)
- Draft Guidelines on Landscape Character Assessments(2000)
- Childcare Facility Guidelines (2000).
- National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) 1997 - 2007National Context
- The National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020 (2002)

1.9 National Context

1.9.1 The National Development Plan

The National Development Plan focuses on creating and enhancing regional economies. It also recognises the need for planning authorities to take a more strategic view of settlement patterns, development needs and the provision of infrastructure. The NDP provides for a number of significant infrastructural projects in the future and these will impact on this county to a greater or lesser extent. Some of they key infrastructural projects in the pipeline/underway which may potentially impact on Louth include:

- Dublin Port Tunnel
- Cloghran Balbriggan Motorway
- Drogheda Bypass
- Dundalk Western Bypass
- Ardee Bypass
- M1 continuation to the Border
- Mid-Louth Dunleer Regional Water Scheme
- Ardee Sewerage Scheme Stage II
- Cooley Regional Water Scheme Stage II

The objectives of the National Development Plan are to:

- continue sustainable national economic and employment growth
- consolidate and improve Ireland's international competitiveness
- foster balanced regional development
- promote social inclusion

In terms of regional development, it has identified five key challenges:

- increase the potential of the regions to act as a counterbalance to the South and East Region, especially Dublin and pursue more balanced growth
- increase the presence of the regions of the key drivers of economic growth, notably in the productive sector
- improve the quality of the regions economic and social infrastructure and human resources
- build on the regions natural resource base especially in the areas of agriculture, tourism, the seafood sector and rural enterprise and promote social inclusion
- promote social inclusion by targeting resources at disadvantaged communities through measures such as childcare, equality, community/local development, family and youth services.

Louth County Council will seek to rise to these challenges in order to ensure adequate quality of life for all residents as well as to improve its competitiveness and attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit.

1.9.2 National Spatial Strategy

The National Spatial Strategy seeks to influence the relationship between the location of people and the provision of resources to deliver a sustainable economy, high environmental standards and a good quality of life. The NSS is concerned with ensuring that the utilisation of the territory of the country, its land and marine resources is included in the broader national context. It is hoped that by adding a spatial aspect to social and economic planning; a broader understanding of the implications of sectoral policies may emerge. The National Spatial Strategy sets out a clear framework for dealing with spatial issues. It is envisaged that this will contribute to national competitiveness and a high quality environment. Furthermore, it is hoped that it will deliver more balanced regional development and hence a reduction in disparities between and within regions. To achieve this, the strategy identifies a limited number of regional gateways and hubs.

Dundalk has been identified as a 'gateway' in the NSS and as such it is anticipated it will grow to a level where it can support a wider range of services and facilities which will provide higher levels of economic activity, growth and development. In this context, Dundalk will play a major role by delivering economic benefits to the surrounding hinterland through the creation of linkages with smaller towns and villages in terms of employment, services and settlement policies. Gateway status for Dundalk will secure to strengthen the rural areas of the county.

The vision of the National Spatial Strategy is as follows:

- consolidating peace on the island of Ireland by developing political, economic and social interaction
- continuing national economic and social interaction within the island;
- continuing national economic and employment growth
- continuing improvement of Ireland in international competitiveness
- fostering balanced regional development
- improving the quality of life for all sections of society
- maintaining and enhancing the quality and diversity of the natural environment
- promoting entrepreneurial spirit/enthusiasm of key economic, political and social interest groups working together in making progress
- facilitating ease and cost of access to domestic and foreign markets
- providing a modern telecommunications network at a level which has the capacity to support areas of likely development and high quality physical infrastructure
- providing back up of research and technology infrastructure accessible to enterprises in all sectors
- providing a high quality environment together with a highly qualified and skilled workforce with adequate supply of housing and good overall quality of life.

1.9.3 Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development now permeates every aspect of government policy. The most widely used and well known definition for the term is that set out by the Bruntland Commission; namely, *"that it involves meeting the needs of the present generation without prejudicing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."* The key to the concept is the need to achieve a balance between human activity, development and the protection of the environment.

The principles of sustainable development necessitate that planning authorities influence the use of land and development in ways that:

- minimise the environmental impact of development in terms of water quality pollution and visual amenities
- minimise the negative environmental impact of development on surface water and groundwater in terms of water quality, quantity of runoff generated and amenity degradation
- ensure equality of access to employment and other social infrastructure
- limit/ minimise the use of energy, particularly in terms of transport
- make the best use of existing/ proposed resources
- involve the local community in decision making on environmental issues.

Ireland's commitment entered into under the UN Rio Conference 1992, Agenda 21 and the Treaty of Amsterdam 1997 and the 2002 Johannesburg Summit commits the government, government agencies and the local authorities to the concept of sustainable development. This sustainability concept has been enshrined in the preparation of this development plan. Appendix 8 sets out sustainable development guidelines.

1.9.4 Agenda 21

The Earth Summit of 1997 in which the developing countries of the world agreed to co-operate in achieving a reduction in the amount of greenhouse emissions, endorsed the concept of Agenda 21. This provides a blueprint for how the world's nations can work individually and collectively to achieve sustainable development.

In this context every local authority was required to produce a Local Agenda 21 plan, which would set out a vision for their functional area and formulate targets and programmes to deliver sustainable development in the community.

The first Local Agenda 21 guidelines were published in 1995; a further document "Local Agenda 21 - *Toward Sustainable Communities*" in 2001 was recently launched. These were prepared against a backdrop of significant local government reform one which focus, inter alia, on more participatory bottom up approach to decision making. In this way local involvement in the democratic approach can be maximised in particular by creating new structures for community involvement such as; Strategic Policy Committees, Louth County Childcare Committee, Louth County Development Board, Community Area Fora.

The creation of these new structures including the setting up of Strategic Policy Committees, Community Fora has meant the local authorities are better equipped to take up the opportunities and challenges offered by the local agenda 21 process and, indeed, it enhances the local authorities role in promoting social inclusion.

The primary aims of Local Agenda 21 are to:

- reduce the amount of energy and raw materials society consumes as well as the pollution and the waste it produces.
- protect fragile eco-systems and environments
- bring about a fairer distribution of wealth both between counties and different social groups with particular emphasis on the socially excluded.

Agenda 21 is therefore a process of developing a strategy, which integrates environmental considerations into the centre of policy in all aspects of community development.

1.9.5 Social Inclusion

Despite the relative wealth of the country and rising standard of living many marginalized groups have been left behind. The wealth, which has been created, has not been distributed in a balanced way but rather has resulted in even higher levels of polarisation and inequalities. Hence the challenge to counteract this trend has been adopted by the government with renewed impetus and thus social inclusion has come to the forefront of policy.

Poverty maybe defined as:

“People are living in poverty, if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources, people may be excluded and marginalized from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people living in society”.

The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1997) – provides a framework for action to help alleviate poverty in Ireland. The principles, which inform the strategy, are as follows:

- ensuring equal access and encouraging participation for all;
- guaranteeing the rights of minorities, especially through anti-discrimination legislation;
- the reduction of inequalities and in particular addressing the gender dimension of poverty;
- the development of a partnership approach, building on national and local fora
- actively involving the community and voluntary sector;
- encouraging self-reliance through respecting individual dignity and promoting empowerment;
- engaging in consultation, especially with the users of services;
- significantly improve transport services in the regions (especially Border, Midlands and Western);
- provision of youth facilities particularly in disadvantaged areas;
- ensure implementation of homelessness strategies, traveller accommodation plans and remedial work schemes;
- implement a national children's strategy;
- ensure that all local authority housing developments of over 75 units have a dedicated childcare facility;
- complete consultations on the Disabilities Bill.

An inter-departmental policy committee produced a social inclusion strategy for Ireland. The strategy states that:

The future challenge is one of optimising the current employment and labour mix in Ireland consistent with maintaining sustainable rate of economic and employment growth combined with policies aimed at tackling social exclusion, poverty and inequality”

The National Development Plan also aims to promote social inclusion by:

- promoting measures for the re-integration of the socially excluded into the labour force and equal opportunities
- maintaining the effort to re-integrate those who are currently long-term unemployed into the labour force
- supporting an increase in female participation
- meeting the particular and diverse needs of specific groups in society including those experiencing disadvantage and with special needs, and providing opportunities so that every individual can attain an adequate level of literacy and numeracy skills.

Certain groups in society have been identified by the Government's Anti-Poverty Strategy as being at greatest risk of poverty/disadvantage:

1. The unemployed, and in particular the long-term unemployed,
2. Children, particularly children from large families
3. Single adult households
4. Lone parents
5. People with disabilities
6. Travellers
7. Refugees and Asylum Seekers
8. Homeless persons
9. Older Persons
10. Early School Leavers

1.9.6 Planning for Social Inclusion

In order to ensure that the council's policies and objectives are inclusionary the council proposes to:

- identify locations where a local action plan is required to tackle urban/ rural decline and adopting a community involvement approach
- ensure that as far as possible that access for the disabled is provided to all new developments
- identify and develop in areas of need, schemes for environmental improvement in co-operation with the local community in local authority housing estates.
- provide for the development of viable rural communities (refer to White Paper on Local Development)
- facilitate and promote parity of access to transport services in order that the socially excluded may gain access to employment and services
- facilitate the provision of small-scale enterprise start-up units throughout the county.
- monitor and Implement the Louth Housing Strategy
- increase access to suitable and appropriate accommodation for all in the county of a type suited to their requirements

- review planning policies periodically to minimise constraints and logjams
- ensuring that every new development will not decrease access to services to the local community through cost or location.

1.10 Regional Context

Section 21 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, empowers regional authorities, after consultation with planning authorities within its region, or at the direction of the minister, to make regional planning guidelines. At the time of preparation of this plan, the Border Region in which County Louth is located, does not have regional planning guidelines prepared under the provisions of this section. The planning authority will, however, co-operate fully with the Border Regional Authority in the making of such planning guidelines and will have due regard to any regional planning guidelines in force when making and adopting a development plan in the future.

1.10.1 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region

County Louth is located in the Border Region comprising the six border counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth. The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) for the Border Region were published in May 2005 and these set out the parameters for the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy at regional level. It is the objective of the RPG to provide a long term strategic planning framework for the development of the Border Region over the next 20 year period and that this policy framework be incorporated into policies of the county and other development plans of the region.

The RPG for the Border Region divides the region into 3 sub-regions. County Louth falls into sub-region 3 comprising the counties of Cavan and Monaghan, in addition to Louth, with hinterlands extending into the North of Ireland and the counties Meath, Longford and Westmeath. The settlement strategy for this sub-region emphasises the primary role of the Dundalk gateway as the driver of development in the sub-region, supported by strong linkages with the hubs of Cavan and Monaghan and the primary development centre of Drogheda, Newry in the North of Ireland and other smaller towns falling within the area, north and south.

The RPGs for the Border Region also recognise the special position of Drogheda within the Region and the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor and acknowledges the fact that, due to its proximity to Dublin and its excellent road and rail connections, the development of the town as a primary development centre will energise its entire catchment in South Louth and East Meath. While it will continue to be influenced by development pressures affecting the Greater Dublin Area, it is ideally located to act as a self containing sustainable development centre to counter act the continued growth of the capital in the manner that is described in the strategic planning guidelines for the greater Dublin area.

The Louth County Development Plan 2003 – 2009 and the policies and objectives contained herein is fully informed by the RPGs for the Border Region.

The Council, through the Development Plan, will work to implement the development framework set down in the RPGs for the Border Region in so far as this framework applies to County Louth and, furthermore, to work in partnership with the Regional

Authority, adjoining local authorities, public agencies, the private sector and community at large for the betterment of the region as a whole.

1.11 Local Context

At a more local level, this development plan incorporates the provisions of the following:

- Louth County Housing Strategy (2001)
- Locating Industry in County Louth
- Motorway Interchange Strategy for Louth 2002
- Retail Strategy for County Louth.
- County Development Board – An Integrated County Development Strategy.
- Waste Management Plan

The impact of these documents on future development plan policy will be dealt with more specifically in the relevant chapter headings. Regard has also been had to the development plans of adjoining local authorities both within and outside the county. These include the Draft Dundalk and Environs Development Plan 2003, the Drogheda Development Plan 1998, the Ardee Development Plan 2001, The Meath Development Plan 2001 and the Monaghan County Development Plan 1999.

1.11.1 County Development Boards

The Interdepartmental Task Force for the Integration of Local Government and Local Development recommended that City and County Development Boards be set up in all county and city authorities. These were established with an objective to improve the co-ordination at a local level. The Louth County Development Board was established in March 2000. The Board brings together various stakeholders involved in local government, local development, the state agencies at local level together with the social partners, which includes the community and voluntary sector. The CDB's main aim is to prepare and implement an Integrated Strategy for County Louth – this was prepared in conjunction with the office of community and enterprise.

The document provides an integrated strategy for social, economic and cultural development. It identifies the weaknesses, challenges and opportunities facing the county over the coming years. The ten-year strategy aims to provide a broad framework within which all stakeholders can operate to deliver an improvement in public service provision at local level. It covers areas such as the arts, heritage, sport and recreation and the Irish language; social inclusion and the quality of life issues such as childcare, healthy living, life-long learning, housing, homelessness, civic responsibility, community and voluntary sector development; economic development which addresses issues such as enterprise and investment, infrastructure, planning, agriculture, rural development and tourism.

Implementation and monitoring is an integral part of the strategy. The plan will continually be reviewed and monitored by the Board members so that it is responsive to circumstances as these change.

The council will work in partnership with the CBD in delivering the provisions of the strategy.

1.12. County Profile

County Louth has an area of 821 square kilometres and it is the smallest county in Ireland in geographical terms. It is located to the north east of Ireland, is bordered by counties Monaghan and Meath to the west and south respectively and Counties Armagh and Down to the north. The eastern boundary of the county comprises of the Irish Sea. The three main towns are Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee. Drogheda and Dundalk rank sixth and seventh nationally respectively in terms of size within the state. These have a population of 28,308 and 27,338 respectively (as recorded in the 2002 Census of population).

Louth occupies a strategic position on the east coast of Ireland midway between the two main urban centres on the island; Belfast and Dublin. The county is intersected by key transport links, the EO1 euro-route / M1, motorway, the N2 route from to Derry and Donegal and the Dublin/ Belfast rail line. The Euro-route connects the main ports on the Island, Larne and Rosslare, and these form the cornerstone of an efficient transport network between the island of Ireland and mainland Europe.

Louth also contain four ports. These include Dundalk, Drogheda, Greenore and the fishing port of Clogherhead. The county is also in close proximity to other major ports on the eastern coast including the ro-ro and lo-lo facilities at Larne and Dublin. This allows producers and industrialists to transport their products to the wider markets of mainland Europe and beyond. Louth also benefits from being in close proximity to the two major airports in Ireland, Belfast and Dublin International Airport. The latter is located on the north side of the city making it readily accessible to all parts of the county.

The county boasts an attractive natural environment. Two areas of the county are designated as being of outstanding natural beauty. These include the heritage town of Carlingford, the Cooley Peninsula and the area surrounding Clogherhead. The county also possess eight designated areas of high scenic quality.

County Louth also contains a wealth of natural and built assets that forms a rich and varied heritage for its people. The conservation of these assets forms a key objective of this plan. Full details are contained in Chapter 2, Conservation and Heritage. Indeed, the quality of cultural and recreational infrastructure plays a significant role in enhancing the attractiveness of the county as a place in which to live, visit, work or establish enterprise. Local activity is vibrant with some 880 community and voluntary groups that are linked to the county community and voluntary forum which, in turn, networks these groups and enables the sector to have an effective input into policy making.

High levels of deprivation are found within particular pockets. The RAPID programme (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) is being delivered in the towns of Dundalk and Drogheda, while the CLAR programme is also up and running in the Cooley area in recognition of the impact the 2001 outbreak of foot and mouth disease had on the area. There remains a need, however, to facilitate enhanced measures to combat deprivation in specific areas, and, in particular, to develop a response to deal with social exclusion in rural areas. The most recent deprivation figures available for each DED (1996) reinforce these issues particularly in the county registered in a higher index scope than the national average. Analysis of the live register reveals a stubbornly high unemployment rate for the county with 8,050 persons unemployed in July 2002 (refer to table 1.1).

Table 1.2 Live Register Analysis January 2000-July 2002

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2000	7,098	7,052	6,703	6,688	6,337	6,354	6,675	6,663	6,183	5,962	5,962	6,075
2001	6,252	6,108	6,114	6,398	6,209	6,442	6,755	6,986	6,762	6,767	6,920	7,189
2002	7,804	7,818	7,919	7,681	7,612	7,909	8,050	8,086	7,622	7,232	7,222	7,559

Source: CSO, 2003

1.13 Population - Impact of current trends for the future development of County Louth

Population statistics and objectives are vital for identifying the likely future requirements for the provision of social and physical infrastructure to serve the future needs of the county. Such projections are important in planning terms as they form the basis of any policy to provide for future housing, employment, shopping and community and recreational needs. The preliminary result of this years census has provided some interesting revelations.

Louth's population as a whole has increased by 10.5% since the last census in 1996. It is considered that much of this rise is as a result of net immigration (inward less outward)

Since 1951 the number of people who have immigrated into the county has been far outweighed by the number who left. This trend was reversed somewhat between 1961-1971 at + 0.9%, and in the following five years this figure rose to +2.8%. More recently this trend has changed significantly.

The figures reveal the inequalities in terms of population growth in the county. Many of the counties villages have grown considerably while others have experienced only slight growth and indeed some areas have experienced decline. Dromisken has seen the most significant growth – of almost 30% since the last census. Generally the hinterlands of the main urban areas have seen a rise in population. Of significant concern is the rise in population in the hinterland of Drogheda which has seen a rise of 44.3% over the past, in actual population terms it is a rise of 802 people.

Table 1.3 Population

District	1996 Persons	2002		Change in Population 1996-2002		
		Persons	Males	Females	Actual	Percentage
Louth County	92,166	101,802	50,438	51,364	9,636	10.5
Drogheda (Urban)	24,460	28,308	13,776	14,532	3,848	15.7
Dundalk (Urban)	25,762	27,339	13,253	14,146	1,637	6.4
Ardee (Rural Area)	15,145	16,139	8,223	7,916	994	6.6
Ardee (Rural)	2,390	2,503	1,276	1,227	113	4.7
Ardee (Urban)	3,440	3,568	1,774	1,824	128	3.7
Castlebellingham	1,391	1,339	664	675	- .52	3.7
Clonkeen	402	437	234	203	35	8.7

Collon	1,029	1,190	623	567	161	15.6
<u>Dromin</u>	429	462	239	223	33	7.7
Dromisken	1,561	2,013	988	1,025	452	29.0
<u>Drumcar</u>	1,404	1,371	805	566	-33	-2.4
<u>Dunleer</u>	1,677	1,802	902	900	125	7.5
<u>Stabannon</u>	535	529	264	265	-6	-1.1
<u>Tallanstown</u>	887	925	484	441	38	4.3
Dundalk rural area	19,104	20,488	10,378	10,110	1,384	7.2
Ballymacscanlon	1,927	2,070	1,008	1,062	143	7.4
Barronstown	547	618	315	303	71	13.0
Carlingford	1,282	1,329	634	695	47	3.7
Castlering	745	849	444	405	104	14.0
Castletown (part)	1,305	1,405	729	676	100	7.7
Creggan Upper	638	643	334	309	5	0.8
Darver	458	520	261	259	62	13.5
Drumullagh	815	902	483	419	87	10.7
Dundalk Rural (part of)	524	507	252	255	-17	- 3.2
Faughart	872	840	435	405	-32	-3.7
Greenore	905	894	452	442	-11	-1.2
Haggardstown	4,222	4,770	2,367	2,403	548	13.0
Jenskinstown	879	822	420	402	-48	-5.5
Killanny	563	593	328	265	30	5.3
Louth	1,010	1,206	633	573	196	19.4
Mansfieldstown	424	457	241	216	33	7.8
Rathcor	1,105	1,158	585	573	53	4.8
Ravensdale	892	905	457	448	13	1.5
Louth rural area	7,695	9,468	4,808	4,660	1,773	23.0
Clogher	1,548	1,814	897	917	266	17.2
Dysart	548	646	320	326	98	17.9
Monasterboice	1,017	1,127	590	537	110	10.8
Mullary	1,014	1,254	650	604	240	23.7
St Peter's (Part)	1,809	2,611	1,334	1,227	802	44.3
Termonfeckin	1,759	2,016	1,017	999	257	14.6

- The remainder of St Mary's is in Co. Meath

1.14 Population Growth

The RPGs, having regard to the population projections contained in the NSS, has estimated that the population for the Border Region will be approximately 529,000 by the year 2020. Of this, some 280,000 will be located in sub-region 3 (East).

In the Louth context, the population of Dundalk is expected to grow to 60,000 over this period while it is anticipated that Drogheda will reach a figure falling within the range 50,000 to 60,000. This will represent a very significant increase in both towns over this period of approximately 100%.

The population of County Louth as enumerated in the 2002 Census of Population is 101,802. This figure is broken down as follows:

- Drogheda (urban) 28, 308
- Dundalk (urban) 27,339
- Remainder of county 46,155

Having regard to the RPG's population estimates of 60,000 for Dundalk and 50,000 to 60,000 for Drogheda (say 55,000) and assuming a percentage increase of 25% for the remaining towns and rural areas of the county (i.e. from 46,155 to 57,000), the population of County Louth would be approximately 172,000 by the year 2020.

1.15 Implementation

Future demographic circumstances or national/local trends may impact on the policies and objectives in such a way that during the lifetime of this plan there is a shift of priorities. This might precipitate a need to re-evaluate some of the policies contained in this plan. Furthermore certain policies do not always deliver the intended outcome. In light of this it is important to continually monitor the implementation of the plan to ensure that it is succeeding in its objectives. Louth County Council will seek to continue to support national/regional policies and objectives that are relevant to Louth and especially those contained in the documents listed above.

A report on the achievements of the objectives of the plan will be prepared by the County Manager and presented to the members within 2 years from the adoption of the plan in accordance with the provisions of section 15(2) of the 2000 Planning Act.

Chapter 2 - Conservation and Heritage of the Natural and Built Environment.

2.1 Introduction

County Louth contains a wealth of natural assets including marine, coastal, wetland, woodland, river and upland habitats that support a variety of plant and animal species. The county also contains built heritage, a rich archaeological resource of monuments including megalithic tombs, souterrains, ringforts, mottes, ecclesiastical sites, an architectural heritage of town centre buildings, tower houses, churches, country houses, demesnes and vernacular buildings. It contains items of industrial heritage interest such as mills, road and rail bridges.

These resources define the county's character. In many cases these resources are finite and are becoming increasingly valuable due to infrastructure and development needs. Their unsustainable usage would cause irreparable damage to the county's economic prospects in the long term

The planning system has a fundamental role in facilitating development whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment.

2.2 Heritage Protection

The Natural Heritage Plan 2002 produced by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands sets out a comprehensive strategy and framework for the protection and management of heritage.

P 2.1

It is the policy of the council;

- to promote greater involvement by landowners in the conservation of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection areas;
- to ensure that conservation schemes which receive grant aid have appropriate professional supervision;
- to promote the designating of sites of geological interest as National Heritage Sites;
- to promote the protection of the landscape through the implementation of the Landscape Guidelines issued by the Minister for the Environment;
- to promote the designation of Landscape Conservation Areas to protect specific important landscapes.
- to cooperate with the Regional Planning Authority and adjoining local authorities, public agencies and community interests to protect regionally significant heritage assets, environmental quality and to identify threats to existing environmental quality in a transboundary context throughout the region.

2.2.1 Strategic Objectives

- to protect and enhance public and private open spaces within the built environment;
- to protect and maintain the open nature of the county's countryside with reference to the recommendations of *County Louth's – Landscape Character Assessment*;
- to protect, provide, enhance and promote Natural Heritage Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas;
- to protect and enhance the built environment from the adverse implications of development, particularly views and landmarks, architectural conservation areas and protected structures;
- to conserve, protect the integrity and setting and enhance the county's ancient monuments and archaeological heritage.

2.3 County Louth - Landscape Character Assessment

A landscape character assessment has been completed for the entire county outside the major towns. This assessment was prepared in accordance with draft guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government. The aim of these guidelines is to:

- heighten the awareness of the importance of landscape in all aspects of physical planning;
- provide guidance to planners and to others as to how landscape considerations should be dealt with;
- to indicate specific requirements for development plans and development centres.

Nine landscape character areas have been identified in county Louth. They are simply unique areas which are geographical areas with a particular landscape type or types.

Table 2.1 Proposed Landscape Area Classification

International	National	Regional	Local
1. Carlingford Lough and Mountains including West Feed Uplands	2. Boyne and Mattock Valley	3. Dundalk Bay Coast, 4. Dunany to Boyne Estuary Coast, 5. Uplands of Collon and Monasterboice	6. Cooley Lowlands and Coastal Area, 7. Lower Faughart. 8. Castletown and Flurry River Basins, 9. Lake Drumlin & Lake Area Muirhevna Plain

(These are not to be confused with and neither do they replace those areas described in the Development Plan as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Areas of High Scenic Quality or the Coastline Area identified in the 1997 County Development Plan.)

The classification of each landscape character area is based on a matrix of the following factors:

- landscape quality – the intactness of the landscape and the condition of features and elements.
- scenic quality – describes the landscapes that appeal primarily to the visual senses.
- rarity – the presence of rare features and elements in the landscape.
- conservation interests – the presence of features of particulars or wildlife, earth science, archaeological, historical and cultural interest which can add to the value of a landscape as well as having value in their own right.
- wildness – the presence of wild character in the landscape which makes a particular contribution to sense of place.
- *recreational opportunity – the degree of open-air recreation within the landscape in proximity to centres of population.*
- cultural association – with particular people, artists, writers, historical events, etc.
- tranquillity – relates to low levels of built environment, traffic, noise and
- representatives – whether the landscape contains a particular character and or features and elements which are felt by stakeholders to be worthy of representation (stakeholder describes the entire range of individuals and groups who have an interest in the landscape).

The study sets out the major forces for change perceived in these rural landscapes as being agriculture, population increases, forestry, rural housing, new roads, industrial and commercial development, overhead lines, telecommunication masts, wind farms and quarrying.

P 2.2

- It is the policy of the council to afford protection to the landscapes and natural environments of the county by permitting only those forms of development that are considered sustainable in rural areas and do not irreparably damage or unduly detract from the character of the landscape or natural environment.
- Louth County Council will cooperate with adjoining local authorities, both north and south of the border, including Newry and Mourne District Council, to ensure that the environment is maintained in a sustainable manner and will support the coordinated designation of sensitive landscapes and policy approach with adjoining areas.

2.4 The Natural Environment

2.4.1 Local open spaces

Local open spaces provide essential visual breaks in built up areas, contribute to local amenity, can assist nature conservation and are capable of meeting recreational and community needs. It is important not only to protect open space from inappropriate development, but also to ensure that opportunities are taken to improve their amenity value and increase public access and use.

Playing fields are assets to be protected for sports and recreation activities. Planning permission will not normally be granted for development that would result in the loss of playing fields, unless alternative, similar or enhanced playing/recreational facilities are being provided at a different location within the community.

2.4.2 Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA)

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas protect environmentally sensitive areas under European and national legislation.

Louth contains many areas of high amenity value because of their scientific interest. The National Parks and Wildlife Service have proposed 24 sites in the county as Natural Heritage Areas. These are listed below. The process of designation of these sites is ongoing, with new sites being added and boundaries of existing sites adjusted. It is anticipated that a number of proposed NHA's will be given full designated status later this year.

Table 2.2 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas

Ref.	Location
NH1454	Ardee cutaway bog
NH1801	Barmeath Woods
NH1293	Blackhall Woods
NH1957	Boyne coast and estuary
NH1862	Boyne river islands
NH452	Carlingford Lough
NH453	Carlingford Mountains
NH1458	Castlecoo Hill
NH1459	Clogherhead
NH1461	Darver Castle woods
NH1462	Loughs Drumcah, Torprass, Cortial
NH1856	Dunany Point
NH455	Dundalk Bay
NH1806	Kildemock Marsh
NH1804	King Williams Glen
NH1451	Liscarragh Marsh
NH1616	Lough Hall and Ardee Woods
NH1464	Mellifont Abbey Woods
NH1805	Ravensdale Plantation

NH1828	Reaghstown Marsh
NH456	Stabannan- Braganstown
NH1803	Stephenstown Pond
NH1468	Trumpet Hill
NH1465	Woodland at Omeath Park

P 2.3

It is the policy of the planning authority:

- to refer any application for development to the National Parks and Wildlife Service where there is a possibility that the proposed development may have an impact on proposed or designated Natural Heritage Areas.
- to prohibit development that would have an adverse impact on these areas.
- to retain Natural Heritage Areas in their natural and unmodified state.
- to promote areas for appropriate development, primarily for recreational or educational purposes, that would not conflict with the preservation of these sites in their natural state.
- to seek the preservation of important features of geological interest in the county.

2.4.3 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's)

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) have been established under the Habitat Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EC 21/5/1992), the purpose of which is to conserve habitats and species of European significance.

Table 2.3 Special Areas of Conservation

Carlingford Lough
Carlingford Mountain
Boyne Coast and Estuary
Boyne River Islands
Dundalk Bay
Clogherhead

P 2.4

It is the policy of the planning authority:

- to ensure that an appropriate assessment of the implications of any proposed development on these sites (or any other SAC identified during the period of this plan) is undertaken in view of the sites conservation objectives.

- prohibit any development that would be harmful or that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats and/ or disturbance of species.

2.4.4 Special Protection Areas (SPA's)

The European Community Birds Directive requires member states to preserve a sufficient diversity of habitats for wild birds to maintain populations which are listed as rare, vulnerable or migratory species. This is to be achieved through the designation of Special Protection Areas.

Table 2.4 Special Protection Areas

Ref. No.	Location
1957	Boyne Estuary
452	Carlingford Lough
455	Dundalk Bay
456	Stabannan / Braganstown

P 2.5

It is the policy of the planning authority that development shall only be permitted on the above sites or any others identified over the period of this plan, where an assessment carried out to the satisfaction of the planning authority, indicates that it will have no significant adverse effect (such as disturbance, pollution or deterioration of the quality) on the protected area.

2.4.5 Sites of Geological Interest

In partnership, Duchas and the Geological Heritage Programme are currently selecting the most important geological sites for designation by Duchas as Natural Heritage Areas. To date a number of 'candidate sites' have been selected. These are listed below.

Table 2.5 Candidate sites of Geological Interest

Ref.	Location
G1	Oriel Brook, Collon
G2	Clogherhead
G3	Collon Quarry
G4	Tullyallen Quarry
G5	Mapastown
G6	Dunany Point
G7	Cooley Point
G8	Cloghmore
G9	Carlingford
G10	Port
G11	Lins Moraine, Dundalk Bay
G12	Rathmore Complex
G13	Drakestown
G14	Tullyallen

P 2.6

It is the policy of the planning authority to promote awareness and protect, where appropriate, areas of geological interest.

2.4.6 Trees and woodlands

Trees are important aesthetically as part of the landscape and for their value as screening.

P 2.7

It is the policy of the planning authority:

- to protect from damage all trees and significant hedgerows and streams located on lands that are being considered for development. Survey and protection procedures detailed by appendix 4 will normally be required by the planning authority.
- to increase deciduous, native tree coverage in the county by planting suitable trees along public roads, residential streets, parks and other areas of open space.
- continue to review and make tree preservation orders (T.P.Os) to protect trees of public amenity and landscape value where the planning authority considers that such trees are at risk.
- promote such initiatives as private and community driven tree planting schemes.

Table 2.6 Trees and woodlands of Special Amenity Value

Ref.	Location
TP1	Townley / King Williams Glen
TP2	Termonfeckin Village
TP3	N1 at Aghnaskeagh
TP4	N1 north of Greenore junction
TP5	Trumpet Hill
TP6	Monvallet east of ESB station
TP7	Red House, Ardee
TP8	Fox Covert, Ardee
TP9	St. Joseph, Ardee
TP10	Mullaghesh, Collon
TP11	Barmeath Woods
TP12	Blackhall Woods
TP13	Darver Castle Woods
TP14	Louth Hall
TP15	Mellifont Abbey Woods
TP16	Ravensdale Plantation
TP17	Woodlands at Omeath Park

TP18	Salterstown
TP19	Drumcar
TP20	Beaulieu
TP21	Drogheda – Baltray Road
TP22	Newtown House
TP23	Church at Milltown
TP24	Lisrenny House, Tallanstown
TP25	Rathbrist House, Tallanstown
TP26	Corderry House, Readypenny
TP27	Stephenstown Pond
TP28	Ballymakenny Church
TP29	South of Killineer
TP30	Piperstown House
TP31	North of Mount Oriel
TP32	The Rectory, Ardee

Table 2.7 **Trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders**

Ref.	Location
TPO1	Fox Covert, Ardee
TPO2	Ardee Golf Club

2.4.7 The Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive sets an agenda for the protection and improvement of water bodies such as rivers, lakes and streams, groundwater resources and coastal/estuarine waters. In particular it requires the development of River Basin Management Plans which will incorporate best practices in terms of managing water resources to preserve and enhance their ecological and chemical status. Much of the deterioration of these resources is related to development activities.

It is desirable to prevent further deterioration of our streams, rivers, groundwater and coastal waters through the control of both the quantity and quality of discharges to these waters in order to maximise their amenity value.

P 2.8

It is the policy of the planning authority:

- To ensure that developers submit sustainable solutions for dealing with surface water runoff incorporating source control techniques where possible.
- To minimise the number of additional piped discharge points to streams, rivers and coastal waters.
- Prohibit development within flood plains.
- To control through licensing all discharges of trade effluents to waters.

2.5 The Built Environment

2.5.1 Archaeology

Archaeological remains constitute important evidence of Louth's past and are a finite and fragile resource, very vulnerable to modern development and land use changes. The planning authority considers that the archaeology of the county is an important asset and that its preservation is a legitimate objective against which the needs of development must be carefully balanced and assessed. The archaeological heritage consists of known and as yet unidentified sites, monuments, objects and environmental evidence and includes round towers, high crosses, burial sites, ringforts, tower houses and souterraines. The Record of Monuments and Places of County Louth show the location of all National Monuments which are protected under the National Monuments Act 1994.

A zone of archaeological potential surrounds each monument. In some cases the sites are extensive and cover, for example, the historic core of the town. These are identified as Areas of Special Archaeological Interest, the locations of which are listed below.

Table 2.8 Areas of Special Archaeological Potential

Ref.	Location
AR1	Ardee
AR2	Collon
AR3	Carlingford
AR4	Dunleer
AR5	Louth Village
AR6	Termonfeckin
AR7	Dromiskin
AR8	Grange
AR9	Castlering
AR10	Castleroche

2.5.2 Protected structures

The planning authority recognises the importance of protecting historic buildings which are a unique and special resource. The Planning and Development Act, 2000 has redefined ' listed buildings ' as 'protected structures'. The Planning and Development Act 2000, requires every development plan to include a record of protected structures or parts of structures which are part of the architectural heritage and which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

County Louth is fortunate in having a large number of structures that are considered to be of special interest. A number of these, including Townley Hall, Rokeby Hall, Barmeach Castle and Beaulieu House are of national importance. Protected structures are listed in Appendix 3. This record should not be considered finite as a full inventory of the county is not yet complete.

2.5.3 Architectural Conservation Areas

The Planning and Development Act 2000 empowers the planning authority to designate architectural conservation areas (ACA's). The criteria for designation to which the planning authority has regard are (i) to preserve the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscape, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest or value or (ii) contributes to the appreciation of protected structures.

This plan proposes that the following settlements/areas are designated architectural conservation areas:

- Salterstown
- Milltown
- Whitestown
- Newtown Monasterboice
- Collon
- Ardee
- Monasterboice – Monastic site
- Carlingford
- Termonfeckin
- Castlebellingham

The boundaries of these architectural conservation areas are defined on maps in Appendix 2.

2.5.4 Objectives

- to protect and/or conserve, as may be appropriate, all identified structures of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, buildings and structures. Such structures are identified and included in the list of protected structures contained in appendix 3.
- to secure the preservation (i.e.: preservation in situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological interest and settings and all previously unknown archaeology that becomes known (example through ground disturbance or the discovery of sites underwater.)
- to designate Salterstown, Milltown, Whitestown, Newtown Monasterboice, Collon, Ardee, Carlingford and Monasterboice as Monastic Site Architectural Conservation Areas

2.5.5 Policy

P 2.9

It is the policy of the planning authority:

- to ensure that, where relevant, all planning applications for new development or refurbishment /restoration works within Zones of Archaeological Potential and recorded monuments as listed in appendix 3, and developments in proximity to riverine, lacustine, intertidal and subtidal which fall above the high water mark are referred to Duchas and have regard to its observations regarding same;
- to ensure that any development, both above and below ground, adjacent to a site of archaeological interest shall not be detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting and be sited and designed with care to protect the character and/or the setting of the site;
- to prohibit any development, alterations, modifications, or new development adjacent to or at a distance away from the protected structures listed in appendix 3 that would detract from it or its setting in terms of its design, scale, height, massing, alignment or use of materials;
- to require that all planning applications for development that would impinge upon any building, structure, monument or architectural site listed in appendix 3 to be accompanied by an Historical, Architectural or Archaeological Assessment Report, together with a list of mitigating measures to protect the items so listed;
- to implement the Conservation Guidelines (Volume 1-16) issued by the Department of the Environment with regard to conservation;
- to require that any development within or affecting an architectural conservation area preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the architectural conservation areas. All development should respect the character of the existing architecture in scale, design and materials.
- To ensure that the redevelopment of the towns of historic interest listed in table 2.8 includes the retention of existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional plot widths where these derive from medieval or earlier origins.
- to apply a presumption in favour of retaining any building in an architectural conservation area that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area.
- to require that any development proposal takes account of the council's specific architectural conservation area development guidelines, in Appendix 2.
- not to grant planning permission for the total or substantial demolition of any protected structure or proposed protected structure, save in exceptional circumstances. In such circumstances it would be necessary for the applicant demonstrates and produce evidence that the condition of the building, the cost

of repairing and maintaining it, in relation to its importance and value outweighs the loss resulting from demolition.

Chapter 3 - Rural Development, Natural Resources and Energy

3.1 Rural Development Context

The rural areas of the county are changing rapidly as a result of the changing nature of farming and the demands of modern agricultural practices, the impact of the growing demand for urban generated "one-off" houses in the countryside and the recreational needs of urban based populations.

This chapter deals with the manner in which this change can be managed in order to provide for sustainable rural communities while protecting rural areas from excessive, inappropriate and unsustainable development.

3.2 Government Policy

3.2.1 The Rural White Paper

The White Paper sets out a vision and a framework for the development of rural communities in Ireland into the next millennium and marks a new approach and commitment by government to rural development.

The key challenges facing rural communities identified in the White Paper include:

- population: there is an increasing trend towards urbanisation through the growth of small urban centres and a continuing decline in the remote rural areas.
- agriculture: the number of farms and agricultural employment is declining; the age structure of farms is unbalanced, many farms are non-viable and direct payments from the EU account for an increasing proportion of farm incomes.
- employment: job creation and employment have increased but rural areas are still at a disadvantage compared with major urban centres in attracting new investment, particularly in the service sector.
- social deprivation: poverty and social exclusion remain significant problems in rural areas.
- environment: there is a growing concern for the protection of the environment.

Key strategic objectives of the White Paper relevant to the development of Louth's rural communities are:

- the regeneration of rural communities by providing alternative sources of income for farmers, rural dwellers, the underemployed and those engaged in marginal economic activity through farm diversification measures, area based rural development initiatives and by moving production up the value chain;
- ensuring that there is sufficient income and employment opportunities to allow families and individuals to have an adequate standard of living;

- providing access to education, training, and lifelong learning and to an adequate level of social and other services and infrastructure;
- maintaining the cultural identity of rural communities, in particular the language, traditions, heritage and sense of community;
- the development of rural areas in a sustainable manner.

The overall strategy for rural development in the White Paper endorses and supports the objectives contained in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and is committed to ensuring that rural development is underpinned by a socially inclusive element.

3.2.2 Clár Programme - (*Ceantair Laga Ard – Riachtanais*)

The Clár programme, launched in October 2001 as part of the National Development Plan, sets out a programme specifically designed for rural areas. Its approach is significantly different from Rapid (the urban model) owing to the differing nature of rural problems. The Clár programme is co-ordinated by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in association with the County Development Board.

It is the aim of Clár to fast-track NDP spending in the designated regions. Priorities for investment (as identified by local communities) will be eligible for funding to cover infrastructure, social and community services.

Areas selected by Clár have been on the basis of those regions that have suffered consistent population decline since 1926. However, the Cooley peninsula in Co. Louth was included due to the serious difficulties caused by the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001 that resulted in the total de-stocking of the area.

The reprioritisation of spending relates to anything covered under NDP, including physical and community infrastructure. Special consideration will also be given to economic infrastructure such as enterprise centres, small broadband projects and other basic infrastructure, that would have a clear benefit in terms of employment creation, thus providing opportunities for local people who otherwise would have limited employment opportunities.

P 3.1

It is the policy of the council to co-operate with the County Development Board to implement the Clár Programme in the Cooley Area.

3.2.3 REPS Scheme – Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS)

The REPS scheme was introduced by the Department of Agriculture in 1994 as a response to the EU's CAP reform programme. It was designed to reward farmers for carrying out their farming activities in an environmentally friendly manner and to bring about environmental improvements on existing farms.

A new REPS programme (2000- 2006) was introduced with the aim to further protect the rural environment through sensitive farm management. Farmers receive a fixed payment for each

hectare of land in compliance with the farm plan. This will usually demand modification of existing farm practices. Participating farmers are required to:

- carry out their farming activities for a five year period in accordance with an agri-environmental plan prepared in accordance with the scheme document and agri-environmental specification;
- have a plan specific to their own farm, prepared by a planning agency approved by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development;
- comply with eleven basic measures as follows:
 - (a) follow a farm nutrient management plan;
 - (b) adopt an appropriate grassland management plan;
 - (c) protect and maintain all watercourses and wells;
 - (d) retain wildlife habitats;
 - (e) maintain farm and field boundaries;
 - (f) cease using herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers in and around hedgerows, lakes, ponds, rivers and streams, except with the consent of the Minister;
 - (g) protect features of historical and/or archaeological interest;
 - (h) maintain and improve the visual appearance of the farm and farmyard;
 - (i) produce tillage crops;
 - (j) maintaining field and farm boundaries i.e. stone wall repair and hedge trimming

The take up of the scheme has increased year on year and will soon reach 70,000 farms nation wide. The REPS scheme has resulted in a significant improvement in farm practices. Sustainable agriculture provides high quality food from a high quality environment. It maintains the character of the countryside while securing an acceptable quality of life for the rural community.

P 3.2

The council welcomes the introduction of REPS and will encourage farmers in the county to participate in the scheme in the interests of environmental protection and the safeguarding of sensitive and vulnerable rural landscapes.

3.3. Rural Development Strategy.

The council's rural development strategy is based on promoting sustainable rural development aimed at maintaining vibrant and viable rural communities, while also seeking to protect the amenity, recreational and heritage value of the rural landscapes and countryside of the county. The implementation of the settlement strategy as set out in chapter 4 and the conservation and protection measures in chapter 2 are considered as essential towards achieving this aim.

The designation of development centres with agreed development boundaries enables the council to promote the strengthening of villages and settlements and provide for the development of rural communities.

Agriculture, natural resources and rural enterprises make a major contribution to the economic and social stability of county Louth and as such should be maintained and promoted in the interest of the economic, social and environmental sustainability of rural communities.

3.3.1 Strategic Objective

To secure vibrant and viable rural communities by promoting sustainable development and settlement patterns in rural areas, environmentally friendly agricultural practices and the protection of the natural resources, environment and landscapes of the countryside.

P 3.3

It is the policy of the planning authority to:

- promote sustainable residential, social and economic development in the countryside;
- ensure that the new developments do not impinge on areas of special amenity value or on areas designated as sensitive landscapes;
- recognise and support those important development sectors that are intrinsically part of development in rural areas (such as agriculture, forestry, extractive industries and rural industry) and to ensure that certain forms of incompatible development are not located in such areas so as to undermine long term viability damage rural environments.
- reinforce the role of category I and II development centres for rural housing as the key to sustainable rural housing in the long term.
- protect the visual quality of the rural areas by ensuring quality design in a sensitive and sustainable manner.

3.3.2 Development Control Zones

In order to ensure development in the rural countryside takes place in a sustainable and appropriate manner the county area has been divided into 6 development control zones. The six development control zones have been delineated on the development control zoning map, map 3.1. The purpose of development control zones is to conserve and protect the amenities of rural areas and to promote development in a sustainable manner in the rural areas of the county. The development control zones will also assist in the operation of the development control function of the council with regard to planning applications for developments in rural areas.

In exercising control over development, the council will have regard to development control zones, specific aspects of siting and design and specific policies in relation to development control standards, roads, sanitary services and environmental constraints. In relation to rural

housing the council will be guided by design and siting criteria as set out in the document “Building Sensitively and Sustainably in County Louth”.

Table 3.1: Objectives for Development Control Zones

Development Control Zone	Objective
Control Zone 1 (Z1)	To preserve and protect the natural unspoilt physical landscapes.
Control Zone 2 (Z2)	To protect the scenic quality of the landscape and facilitate development required to sustain the existing rural community.
Control Zone 3 (Z3)	To protect the recreational and amenity value of the coast.
Control Zone 4 (Z4)	To provide for a greenbelt area around the urban centres of Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee.
Control Zone 5 (Z5)	To protect and provide for the development of agriculture and sustainable rural communities and to facilitate sustainable local development or developments of strategic, regional or national importance.
Control Zone 6 (Z6)	To protect and provide for the development of agriculture and sustainable rural communities.

3.3.3 Development Control Zone 1

Objective: To preserve and protect the natural unspoilt physical landscape.

Development control 1 zone relates principally to the high mountainous areas of Cooley, Feede, and Ravensdale and a small area adjacent to Clogherhead port.

Due to the extremely sensitive landscapes of this zone which include Natural Heritage Areas, Special Conservation Areas, Special Protection Areas (refer to chapter 2 - Conservation and Heritage), this unspoilt landscape must be protected from harmful development. As such, only very limited development appropriate to these sensitive landscapes will be considered. This would include limited broadleaved forestry, active recreational amenities such as pedestrian and cycle paths, equestrian trails, ecological corridors, small scale ancillary recreational facilities, agriculture and related activities, certain unique location tied or resource based developments will be open to consideration and/or other uses which by their nature and scale are considered appropriate to this unspoilt landscape.

Development of a residential, commercial, industrial or other similar nature would not be considered appropriate within control zone 1. **(Where limited one-off rural housing is permitted, the qualifying criteria in respect of such development are set out in Chapter 4).**

3.3.4 Development Control Zone 2

Objective: To protect the scenic quality of the landscape and facilitate development required to sustain the existing local rural community.

Development Control Zone 2 relates to areas that are to be found in the lower regions of the Cooley Mountains, in Upper Faughart, around Clogherhead, Hamilstown, Fieldstown, Monasterboice, Mount Oriel and the Boyne Valley. The area covered by this control zone contains landscapes of high scenic quality that the planning authority considers should be protected. There is, however, a substantial existing rural population within these areas and the continued vibrancy and vitality of these communities is an objective of this development plan.

Therefore, only essential resource/infrastructure based developments and developments necessary to sustain the existing local rural community will be considered within control zone 2. Such development would include limited "one-off" housing, **(the qualifying criteria in respect of such development are set out in chapter 4)**, farm developments, extensions to existing authorised uses, tourism related projects (excluding holiday homes) and other uses which by their nature and scale are considered necessary to sustain the existing rural local community appropriate within this control zone.

Multi-unit residential, large scale industrial, agricultural and commercial developments or other developments of a similar scale or nature would not be considered appropriate within this zone.

3.3.5 Development Control Zone 3

Objective: To protect the recreational and amenity value of the coast.

The coastline of County Louth stretches from the County Down border, along Carlingford Lough, Dundalk Bay as far south as Drogheda and is of considerable intrinsic and special amenity and recreational value. Furthermore, the coastline is home to a variety of natural habitats and there are several species of flora and fauna. The Special areas of Conservation (SAC), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) and Special Protection Area (SPA) designations cover much of the coastline. For the purposes of this development plan, the coastline is defined as a 200 metres strip extending inland from the high water mark, excluding areas falling within existing coastal settlements.

It is the objective of the planning authority to protect and improve the amenity value of the coast. Therefore, only development that would not be detrimental to its visual and recreational amenities will be permitted. Such development would include limited "one-off" housing, **(the qualifying criteria in respect of such development are set out in chapter 4)**, extensions to existing authorised uses and farmyards, tourism, (excluding holiday homes) leisure and

recreation related projects and other uses which by their nature and scale are considered appropriate within this control zone.

Multi-unit residential developments, large-scale agricultural, industrial, and commercial developments or other developments of similar scale or nature would not be considered appropriate within this zone.

3.3.6 Development Control Zone 4

Objective: To provide for a greenbelt area around the urban centres of Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee.

It is an objective of the council to preserve a clear distinction between built up areas of settlements and the surrounding countryside. In this regard it is proposed to introduce greenbelt areas surrounding the main urban settlements of Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee.

The types and scale of development considered appropriate within development control zone 4 includes limited "one-off" housing, **(the qualifying criteria in respect of such development are set out in chapter 4)**, extensions to existing authorised uses and farmyards, institutional/educational, tourism, (excluding holiday homes) leisure and recreation related projects and other uses which by their nature and scale are considered appropriate within this control zone.

Multi-unit residential, industrial, and commercial developments, or other developments of similar scale or nature, would not be considered appropriate within this zone.

3.3.7 Development Control Zone 5

Objective: To protect and provide for the development of agriculture and sustainable rural communities and to facilitate sustainable local development and or developments of strategic regional or national importance.

Development control zone 5 encompasses an extensive area of land outside the greenbelts and extending from eastern section of the Cooley peninsula in the north, Ardee in the west, Drogheda in the south and the Irish Sea in the east. Over the past number of years, this area has been subject to increasing pressure for development of 'one-off' rural housing and other commercial and industrial type developments due to proximity to Dublin and access to the Euro Route 1 motorway. This area is extensively farmed and contains some of the finest agricultural land in the country. It is an objective of this development plan, from both social and economic perspectives, that agricultural activities and local communities should be protected and permitted to develop and prosper in this area. However, this area also affords opportunities for certain strategic developments of local, regional or national importance that by reason of their

scale and site requirements can not locate within or adjoining settlements, subject to adequate environmental/landscapes protection and the provisions of the Interchanges' Strategy.

Developments falling within the following categories will be considered within control zone 5; limited "one-off" housing (**the qualifying criteria in respect of such development is set out in chapter 4**); agricultural developments; developments to be used for leisure, recreation and tourism; holiday accommodation including cottages and lodges, where these are part of an existing integrated tourism complex; hotels/ guest houses/ B & B's; extensions to existing authorised commercial and industrial developments; diversified agricultural activity/farm enterprises; public utility infrastructure and natural resource based developments. In addition, developments of strategic local, regional or national importance that, by reason of their scale and site requirements, can not locate within or adjoining existing settlements and any other uses/developments which by their nature and scale are appropriate to the rural character of the area will also be considered.

Multi-unit residential, conventional industrial and commercial development appropriate to existing settlements, developments directly adjacent to rural motorway interchanges would not be considered appropriate within this control zone.

3.3.8 Development Control Zone 6

Objective: To protect and provide for the development of agriculture and sustainable rural communities.

Development control zone 6 is an area toward the west of the county that extends from Smarmore in the south to Inniskeen in the north. The area is dominated by agriculture and is currently experiencing little pressure for development. The council will seek to protect agricultural activities in this area and promote development that will sustain rural communities and protect the quality of the rural environment and landscape.

Development falling within the following categories will be considered within this zone: "one-off" housing, (**the qualifying criteria in respect of such development are set out in chapter 4**), farm developments, small scale industries, resource based developments and activities, public utility infrastructure, extensions to existing authorised uses, tourism, leisure and recreation related projects and other uses which by their nature and scale are considered appropriate within this control zone.

Multi-unit residential, large scale industrial and commercial developments would not be considered appropriate within this zone.

3.4 Agricultural Development

Agriculture is an important source of employment in rural areas; the council recognises the high importance of the country's agricultural land bank. Not only is this a source of value in terms of food production, it is also a vital ingredient in the county's character. In light of this value, it is proposed to protect agricultural land as an important resource for all the inhabitants and visitors to, County Louth.

There are just over 2000 farms in County Louth (County Development Board Strategy, 2001). This corresponds to 1.3% of farms nationally. The average farm area is 28 hectares and this figure is higher than the national average of 26 hectares while the regional average is 19.7 hectares. Six percent of the population of County Louth is employed directly in the agricultural sector and this is low by national standards.

3.4.1 Strategic Objective

To maintain a vibrant and healthy agricultural sector based on the principles of sustainable agriculture and associated activities as the essential cornerstone of rural development within the county.

3.4.2 Policy

P 3.4

Having regard to the above strategic objective it is the policy of the planning authority to:

- facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.
- encourage and facilitate agricultural development whilst ensuring that such development does not result in a negative effect on the scenic amenity of the countryside and in particular, that it does not impinge on any views the protection of which is an objective of the development plan.
- encourage and facilitate agricultural diversification into related agri-businesses subject to the retention of the holding for primarily agricultural use and the proper planning and development of the area.
- encourage farmers to see themselves as custodians of the countryside and rural landscapes for the present and future generations

3.4.3 Agricultural Buildings

Agricultural buildings should be integrated into the countryside. In this respect the colour of materials used will be important. The maintenance of existing native hedgerows or the planting of new hedgerows will be important in terms of screening farm buildings and thus blending these into the landscape in the least obtrusive manner.

P 3.5

It is the policy of the council to ensure that:

- agricultural buildings are designed and appropriately positioned to integrate into the landscape
- agricultural buildings shall be generally be red, green or grey

- where new agricultural developments are proposed, it shall be a requirement that the development is well screened by trees and hedgerows
- adequate waste storage facilities, where appropriate, shall be provided.

3.5 Coastal areas

The coastline of County Louth stretches from the County Down border, through Carlingford Lough, Dundalk Bay as far south as Drogheda. It is of intrinsic and special amenity value. Much of the coastline is home to a variety of natural habitats and there are several species of flora and fauna. The Special areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SAC) designations cover much of the coastline.

The coastline is susceptible to pressure for development and encroachment, pollution, and increasing recreational and tourism use. The coastal waters off County Louth provide an important resource. It supports and generates a number of activities and is an important employment generator and a source of recreation.

3.5.1 Strategic Objective

To ensure the protection of the amenities of County Louth's coastline.

3.5.2 Coastal Policy

P 3.6

It is the policy of the council to:

- bring beaches in the county up to blue flag or equivalent standard
- improve sewage treatment facilities for coastal towns;
- conserve and protect all European sites
- facilitate the provision of a coastal zone management plan
- increase the quality of beaches in the County and in so doing contribute to the development of the tourism industry and to the enjoyment of the facilities by the people of the county.

3.5.3 Integrated Coastal Zone Management

It is an objective of the Council to prepare an integrated coastal management strategy in line with government policy for coastal zone management and having regard to Coastal Zone Management – A draft Policy for Ireland.

P 3.7

It will be policy of the council to:

- identify those areas at risk from flooding generated by sea level changes.
- identify those areas along the coastline that need to be protected from development in order to conserve sensitive ecosystems.
- provide for high quality levels of effluent disposal ensuring good quality bathing facilities and protection of fragile ecosystems.

3.5.4 Development on the Foreshore

The Foreshore Acts 1933 to 1998 require that a lease or licence must be obtained from the Minister of Communication, Marine and Natural Resources before undertaking any works or placing structures or materials thereon, or for the occupation of or removal of material from state owned foreshore which represents the greater part of the foreshore.

Any development on the foreshore (above the high water mark including land reclamation shall be subject to planning control in accordance with the provisions of section 224 and 225 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Consequently planning permission must be sought before the commencement of such works, except those works specifically exempted under section 225.

3.5.5 Coastline Protection

Table 3.2 Programmes of Work for Coastal Areas

Priority	Location	Project
1	Coastal Survey	To determine extent of the coastal erosion problem in Co. Louth and prepare a report itemising and prioritising proposed remedial work
2	Whitestown & Ballagan	Rock armour protection to county road
3	Blackrock	Sea wall protection (repairs as a result of storm damage Feb.2002)
4	Salterstown	Repair to road verge. Verge collapse due to coastal erosion.
5	Port/Cruisetown & Dunany	Repair sea wall and place rock armour. Reform road verge and protect same.
6	Shelling Hill	Rock armour remedial work and walkway.
7	Annagassan Phase III	Repair to county road.
8	Baltray Dune Stabilisation	Dune stabilisation
9	Port Beach	Protection of beach amenity
10	Seapoint II	Protection of amenity area and the stabilisation of sand dunes.
11	Baltray	Protection of amenity area.

The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources has provided grant aid to Louth County Council to carry out a number of the above projects under the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

3.6 Afforestation

Initial afforestation is exempt under the provisions of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. Replacement of broadleaf high forest by conifer species where the area involved is less than 10 hectares is also exempt under the provisions.

In assessing applications for extension of forestry development, the council will have due regard to the "Forestry and Landscape Guidelines" published by the Forest Service in July 2000. This document details the appropriate location, size, shape, pattern and colour of forest. In addition, due regard will be had to the landscape character and the landscape group in which the site is located together with the level of sensitivity to the proposed development.

3.6.1 Strategic Objective

It is an objective of the council to prepare an indicative Integrated Forestry Strategy.

The function of such a document will be to identify areas of opportunity for the creation of new woodland for environmental or recreational use as well as areas that would be sensitive to afforestation. There is a particular need for a higher level of broadleaf planting. Purely coniferous woodland creates a uniform appearance in the landscape and should be avoided.

Afforestation can have a significant effect on landscape character. Some areas are considered sensitive locations for afforestation on the grounds of the soil type. Other locations are unsuitable on the grounds that such developments would adversely effect visual amenity. The suitability of a site for forestry should be assessed in terms of the landscape character of the area, visual amenity and soil type.

3.7 Extractive Industry and Building Materials Production

The council is aware that while a high quality aggregate reserve exists, there will be multiple workings of gravel and quarry pits throughout the county. It is recognised that the processing of these materials is a key element to economic prosperity and that the planning authority faces a challenge in ensuring that these scarce natural resources are carefully managed. Planning applications for quarries/mineral extraction will be dealt with on their merits having regard, to the objectives for the area in which they are to be located, protection of the environment and normal planning considerations. Pre-planning discussions with potential applicants will be encouraged and where appropriate, environmental impact statements will be sought.

3.7.1 Strategic Objective

To achieve the development of the county's sand, gravel and stone reserves to facilitate the construction industry in a manner that is sustainable and least damaging to the environment of the county.

3.7.2 Extractive Industry Policies

P 3.8

In this regard it is the policy of the council to:

- seek to ensure that development, that would sterilise these resources or prevent efficient or effective recovery, is not permitted.
- facilitate the extraction of stone and mineral material having due regard to location in the landscape and environmental considerations.
- ensure that appropriate provision for the progressive restoration/re-instatement/re-use of the site is made.
- ensure that effects on residential amenity are minimised through the imposition of conditions regarding hours of operation, dust and noise emissions etc.
- ensure that public roads are not unduly damaged by quarry/pit related traffic
- ensure that Section 261 (Control of Quarries) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 is fully implemented.

In assessing such an application issues that will be considered include the following:

- extent of the land ownership
- nature of all deposits.
- methods of excavation and machinery use.
- measures to reduce any environmental impact
- traffic generated from the site and access to major traffic routes
- environmental impact study required by statute.
- proximity to other developments.
- effect on water supply and groundwater resources in the area.
- landscaping and restoration proposals.
- general visual amenity and landscape impact.

3.8 Renewable Energy

The council recognises that the county has significant potential for the development of renewable sources of energy such as wind, solar, wave and bio mass and the provision of such alternative energy will be encouraged on suitable sites throughout the county. The development of renewable energy as an alternative to fossil fuel will not only support the government's commitments entered into under the Kyoto Protocol but will also provide for additional means of sustaining rural based and farming communities within the county and throughout the Border Region, particularly where changes in the agricultural policy within the EU is leading to the decline in traditional farming activities.

P3.9

It is the policy of the Planning Authority to:

- promote and encourage the development of sustainable energy resources within the County;
- encourage the design of buildings that promote energy conservation;
- cooperate with Sustainable Energy Ireland in promoting greater energy efficiency and conservation;
- ensure applications for energy generating structures or other alternative energy facilities will be assessed on their merits having regard to considerations of visual and residential amenity;
- to co-operate with the appropriate authorities in the North of Ireland in the provision of renewable energy.

3.8.1 Policies for Wind Energy

P3.10

It is the policy of the planning authority to:

- **facilitate the development of wind energy sources where proposals are consistent with the landscape preservation objectives of this plan, the protection of the natural and built environment and the visual and residential amenities of the area.**

In assessing wind farms, the Council will have due regard to the guidelines produced by the Department of the Environment dated September 1996 and *to the Best Practice Guidelines For Wind Energy Development* as published by the European Wind Energy Association. The suitability of windfarm sites will be determined by a number of factors including the following.

- wind energy potential of the location.
- accessibility to the national grid.
- protection of visual and residential amenities.

- landscape character in which the site is located with due regard to the sensitivity of this landscape to the proposed development.

Should the windfarm become redundant, the plant shall be decommissioned and removed from the site with restoration works being put in place.

3.9 Cables, masts and pylons

3.9.1 Policy

P3.11

It is policy to secure the placing under ground of all electricity, telephone and TV cables in residential areas in the interest of visual amenity. It is the intention to co-operate with other agencies and to use its development control powers in the implementation of this policy.

In particular:

- transmission lines should be avoided in sensitive landscapes.
- new transmission lines masts and pylons should have regard to existing residential amenity and should avoid any views of scenic amenity value.
- the construction of electricity poles, masts, and pylons will be subject to the least harmful route.

3.10 Natural Gas

Bord Gáis has an extensive distribution network in the vast majority of the larger towns in County Louth. It is the intention of the company to extend high-pressure transmission mains from Dromiskin to the Kilsaran area over the coming years in order to supply the new housing market. It is also proposed to extend the network supply to new housing areas being identified and zoned in the development plan.

3.11 Residential Development in Rural Areas

Louth County Council has always recognised and accepted the importance of one-off housing in meeting local housing needs and in sustaining rural services such as primary schools, rural post offices and village shops. The council also accepts what it considers as the legitimate aspirations of people who are born and raised in the countryside wishing to reside within their own community.

In respect of one off dwelling houses there will be a presumption in favour of granting planning permission in circumstances where an applicant can demonstrate that they bought the site with a valid permission in good faith and for financial and other bona fide reasons was not in a position to carry out the development within the life of that permission.

3.11.1 Policy

P3.12

It is policy of the planning authority to encourage housing development in rural areas to locate within existing settlements in order to sustain rural based services and communities. "One-off" housing in the countryside will be controlled by ensuring that it is functionally or socially related to the rural community in which it is located. The policies pertaining to the relevant development control zones will guide the planning authority in assessing applications for one-off housing in the countryside. These policies are set out in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 - Settlement Strategy

4.1 Introduction

Louth has experienced considerable development pressures in recent years. The disparity between housing demand and supply together with sharp rises in house prices and the continual expansions of Dublin have had a particular effect. The availability of more affordable housing together with the improved accessibility in the form of improved transport infrastructure has resulted in Louth increasingly becoming part of the Dublin commuter belt.

Particular pressure has been exerted in the south of the county, especially in the hinterlands of Drogheda due to its proximity to Dublin. Furthermore the north of the county has experienced similar pressures from Northern Ireland, due to the strength of sterling in relation to the Euro.

The settlement strategy set out in this plan reflects the provisions of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region in that the positions of Dundalk as a gateway and Drogheda as a primary development centre are acknowledged and the policies contained in the Plan support both towns primacy at the top of the urban hierarchy within the county. The development plan seeks to control and regulate the demand for residential development within the county area in a fashion that will promote sustainable forms of development that is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the county and that is consistent with the RPG's.

The council's policy in relation to rural housing as contained in the 1997 County Development Plan was devised to address the joint problem of excessive demand for urban generated "one off" housing on the one hand and the decline of rural population and associated services on the other. The strategy was based on restricting 'one-off' housing development in certain pressure areas to local residents only while encouraging the concentration of rural housing into a total of 47 development centres. It is considered that this policy has been successful and will be continued in the new plan.

Trends in county Louth have mirrored national trends in that there has been a significant growth in the demand for 'one-off' housing in the countryside. It is considered that the level of 'one-off' housing permitted within the county in recent years is unsustainable and could have a potentially detrimental effect on the viability of existing settlements. This section sets out a settlement strategy based on sustaining a vibrant network of settlements across a range of urban and rural locations throughout the county.

4.2 Settlement Hierarchy

County Louth has a clearly identifiable settlement hierarchy. At level one, Dundalk and Drogheda are substantial towns with populations approaching the 30,000 figure. As such, they contain a wide variety of services and employment opportunities, not only for the people of County Louth but also for a wider regional population.

Ardee and Dunleer are at level two within the hierarchy. Ardee provides an extensive range of service and employment opportunities for its inhabitants and for its rural hinterland in the mid-Louth area.

Level three comprises a range of smaller settlements of various sizes where a good range of local services such as schools, churches, convenience shops etc. are available to meet local needs. Level 3 settlements comprise category I development centres as designated in the 1997 County Development Plan. In all a total of 13 such settlements have been identified as follows:

1. Annagassan
2. Carlingford
3. Castlebellingham/Kilsaran
4. Clogherhead
5. Collon
6. Dromiskin
7. Knockbridge
8. Louth Village
9. Omeath
10. Tallanstown
11. Termonfeckin/ Baltray
12. Tinure
13. Tullyallen

The fourth and bottom level within the settlement hierarchy consist of a number of small clustered developments spread widely throughout the county. Many of these are focused around a local community facility such as a church or a school, but others consist solely of a group or cluster of 'one-off' type houses on substantial sites. In all, a total of 32 such settlements have been identified and designated as category II development centres. These are:

1. Bellagan
2. Ballapousta
3. Bellurgan
4. Benagh
5. Dromin
6. Darver
7. Dillonstown
8. Faughart Lower
9. Fieldstown/Brownstown 1
10. Fieldstown/ Brownstown 2
11. Glenmore
12. Gyles Quay
13. Grange
14. Grangebellew
15. Greenore
16. Irish Grange
17. Kilcurry
18. Kilkerry
19. Lordship
20. Mansfieldstown
21. Mountbagnal
22. Muchgrange
23. Mucklagh

24. Philipstown (Collon)
25. Rathcor
26. Ravensdale
27. Reaghstown
28. Sandpit
29. Sheelagh
30. Smarmore
31. Stabannon
32. Willeville

Within the context of County Louth, levels one and two, namely Dundalk, Drogheda, Ardee and Dunleer may be described as urban settlements while level three and four may be described as rural settlements.

P 4.1

It is the policy of the council to promote and facilitate development within the settlements commensurate with their existing size and level of services available and to preserve their status within the settlement hierarchy.

4.3 Settlement Strategy

The strategic aims in respect of each level of settlement hierarchy are set out as follows:

Settlement Type	Level	Strategic Aims
Dundalk	1	To promote and facilitate the development of Dundalk as a Gateway town to deliver more spatially balanced national growth and to drive development in the east border sub-region including close co-operation with Newry in achieving strategic development objectives for the region.
Drogheda	1	To promote and facilitate the development of Drogheda as a self sustaining primary development centre that will energise development within its own catchment.
Ardee	2	To promote the development of Ardee as a medium sized town for urban strengthening in order to perform an important role in driving development within the locality
Dunleer	2	To promote the development of Dunleer as a town for urban support that will contribute to the critical mass of the Dundalk gateway and lessen the necessity for dispersed rural one-off housing development. The population shall fall within the range of 3,500 to 4,000.
Category I Development Centres	3	To promote and facilitate limited expansion of Category I Development Centres commensurate with the nature and extent of the existing settlement in order to support rural communities and to lessen the necessity for dispersed rural one-off housing development.

CategoryII Development Centres	4	To promote and facilitate primarily 'one-off' type housing to meet locally generated housing needs, reduce demand for 'one-off' housing in the open countryside and to sustain rural communities and services.
--------------------------------	---	--

4.4 Settlement Policies

4.4.1 Dundalk

Dundalk with a population of 27,399* occupies a strategic position approximately half way between Belfast and Dublin. It is the administrative capital of County Louth containing not only the offices of the County Council but also the regional offices of the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, FAS and the offices of the County Enterprise Board. The town contains a highly regarded third level educational institution, namely the Dundalk Institute of Technology. (* Census of Population 2002)

The Council sees significant potential for the growth of Dundalk and its environs and will cooperate with Dundalk Town Council to ensure that the town reaches its population target of 60,000 by the year 2020 and fulfils its role as designated gateway in the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines in the Border Region. The Council will also co-operate with Newry and Mourne District Council with a view to forging stronger links with that authority in the interest of promoting development in Dundalk and the north-east sub region, north and south.

P 4.2

It is policy of the council to work in close co-operation with Dundalk Town Council to promote the development of the town and its environs as a major regional gateway centre and seek to achieve city status. The Council will also encourage closer co-operation between Dundalk and Newry through the implementation of mutually beneficial projects and programmes as outlined in the document "NewryDundalk – a new perspective on the development of the region 2006"

4.4.2 Drogheda

The population of Drogheda as recorded in the 2002 Census of population is 28,308 and as such holds the position of the largest town within the county. The town has experienced significant growth in recent years primarily resulting from its location close to Dublin City along a major road and rail link. The completion of the motorway and improvements to the rail line will facilitate further commuter-based development. In particular, the new bridge and motorway linkage across the Boyne will provide opportunities for development in County Louth adjacent to the Borough Council's northern boundary.

In order to control and regulate this development in a manner that is sustainable and consistent with the orderly expansion of the town, the council is preparing a local area plan for the northern environs of Drogheda. This plan will provide for a range of developments comprising residential, employment, educational, recreational and tourism related uses over a 20-year horizon plan. It is anticipated that up to 20,000 additional population could be catered for within the plan area up to the year 2022.

Acknowledging Drogheda's role as a commuter town, the council is anxious that the town should develop as a self-sustaining settlement providing employment opportunities for its inhabitants. The council will work closely with Drogheda Borough Council to ensure that the expansion of the town takes place in an orderly and sustainable fashion and that its role as an important and primary development centre is enhanced. Louth County Council will give consideration to proposals for a boundary extension in to the Louth County area if such proposals are submitted to Louth County Council by Drogheda Borough Council.

P 4.3

It is the policy of the council to work in close co-operation with Drogheda Borough Council to promote development of the town and its environs as a major urban development centre.

4.4.3 Ardee Town

Ardee town with a population of 3,568* is substantially smaller than Dundalk and Drogheda. Nonetheless it is an important urban centre located in the mid-Louth area. Traditionally seen as a market town serving the wider rural hinterland, the role of the town has changed over recent years. While its function as a local service centre continues, recent developments have been driven by demand originating outside the traditional role of the town. Commuter based development has played a significant part in the recent expansion of the town.

Whilst the council acknowledges the fact that commuter based demand for residential development in the town is likely to continue, it considers that its traditional role as an employment and service centre within the mid-Louth area should be protected. Consequently, the growth of the town will be regulated in a manner that provides for gradual expansion in line with the provisions of additional employment opportunities and services.

The Council has prepared a local area plan for Ardee that seeks to promote consolidation of existing disparate areas and achieve a more balanced growth towards the northern end of the town. The council is satisfied that at this time and into the foreseeable future, there is more than sufficient land within the town boundary to accommodate the orderly and sustainable development of the town, consequently development particularly residential development, will be restricted outside the town boundary.

* Census of population 2002

P 4.4

It is the policy of the Council to promote the development of Ardee as a medium sized town for urban strengthening to serve the needs of the local community and drive development within the locality.

The local area plan for Ardee will be reviewed not later than 6 years after its adoption or at such earlier time as the council deems necessary to meet changing circumstances.

4.4.4 Dunleer

Dunleer Village with a population of 1100 is substantially smaller than that of Ardee. However Dunleer has experienced an unprecedented demand for commuter based housing, largely due to improved road infrastructure over the passed number of years.

The Council has prepared a local area plan for Dunleer that seeks to consolidate and strengthen Dunleer's role as an important economic, social, cultural, residential and service centre in the mid-Louth area for a population in the region of 3,500-4,000. The council acknowledge that given the extent of the lands zoned for residential purposes in the local plan, it is not reasonable to expect that the expansion of the village will be driven solely by demand originating from within the county. The increased population of Dunleer will however, contribute to the critical mass of the Dundalk gateway and will lessen the necessity for dispersed one-off rural housing development.

P 4.5

To facilitate the growth of Dunleer to a population of 3,500 – 4,000 with associated community, facilities, services and employment opportunities.

4.4.5 Category I Development Centres

As previously stated, category I settlements refer to the large rural settlements where there is a good range of services such as schools, churches and shops currently in place.

These have a high degree of self-sufficiency and the ability to cater for a significant amount of demand that exists for rural generated housing. The policy with regard to the role of category I development centres is focused on promoting and maintaining such settlements as local service centres and facilitating population growth.

P 4.6

It is therefore the policy of the planning authority to:

- **facilitate limited expansion of category I development centres that is consistent with the nature and extent of the existing settlement and the proper and sustainable development of the area**
- **encourage sustainable growth and enhancement of the settlements**
- **identify and zone appropriate new development areas commensurate with the size of the village**
- **seek to enhance the vitality and viability of the settlement through protecting and enhancing the commercial and social core;**
- **consolidate development on limited infill sites and backland areas within the defined boundary in order to strengthen the physical fabric of the settlement;**

- encourage the reuse and redevelopment of derelict and underused buildings and brownfield sites.
- increase the role of tourism and passive recreation and leisure and in particular to develop a heritage focus by:
 - safeguarding existing open space/ recreational areas, protected routes and the natural /historic heritage;
 - designating new recreational areas;
- seek to improve the category I settlements through strengthening the commercial core and putting in place environmental enhancement schemes.
- promote the development of category I development centres in order to lessen the necessity for dispersed one-off rural housing development.

In order to achieve the above, the planning authority has prepared individual local area plans for each category I settlement that set out clear development objectives and policies and make sustainable land use zoning provisions for each centre. This is considered necessary to ensure that development is carried out in an appropriate manner consistent with proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

4.4.6 Category II Development Centres

Category II development centres are relatively small settlements. In all, there are 32 such settlements. It is the view of the council that these centres are not capable of absorbing significant amounts of additional residential development in a manner that would result in proper and sustainable development.

The objectives of in respect of these settlements are to:

1. encourage development within existing settlements,
2. reduce the pressure for scattered 'one-off' houses in the countryside,
3. provide for people with locally generated housing needs to continue to reside within their own communities.

In determining what constitutes local housing need, the planning authority will take into consideration factors such as the applicants family, work, school or other ties with the county as well as his/her accommodation needs. Applications for planning permission for "one-off" type houses should normally be made in the name(s) of the person(s) who will occupy the dwelling. A planning condition restricting first time occupation to the applicant or a member of his/her immediate family for a minimum period of five years will be imposed in such circumstances.

Policy:

P 4.7

It is the policy of the planning authority to;

- restrict residential development within category II development centres to that required to satisfy locally generated housing needs;
- allow clustered development of up to six houses;
- promote a high standard of design within category II development centres that is consistent with the nature and extent of existing development and is in keeping with the surrounding natural environment;
- limit the floor area of all houses, whether by way of extension or otherwise, to not more than 220 sq. metres;
- protect existing trees, hedgerow and masonry walls and piers within development centres and to secure a uniformity of boundary treatments;
- identify and reserve land within category II development centres for the purposes of providing or extending community facilities where a demonstrated need exists;
- permit new residential developments within category II development centres only where it is satisfied that an adequate supply of potable water is available;
- ensure that the site area within category II development centres is of sufficient size to adequately provide for the safe disposal of domestic effluent generated; and
- ensure that methods of disposing of waste water within category II development centres, whether by means of individual or communal systems, is fully in compliance with the guidelines and requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency.

4.4.7 Policy

P 4.8

It is the policy of the planning authority to restrict development within category II development centres to that required to satisfy locally generated housing needs.

4.5 Design considerations in Settlements

Good quality design of houses is considered an essential ingredient to the creation of attractive and sustainable development.

In selecting a house design, applicants should have regard, inter alia, to the following guidelines:

1. The scale of the building should be appropriate to the setting and respect the form of other buildings in the vicinity and should have regard to the privacy and amenities of any adjacent properties.
2. Avoid the overuse of materials and 'add on' external finishes.
3. Avoid 'cosmetic' features such as mock classical columns, Spanish arches, verandas, balustrades etc.
4. Use simple form and roof designs with narrow spans and pitches in the region of 35 to 45 degrees.
5. Pay particular attention to fenestration details, particularly window openings and design. Very large windows tend to dominate the façade and weaken its appearance. Overly fussy window design adds confusion and a cluttered appearance.
6. The construction of dormer type dwellings, where the roof space is an integral part of the design of the house is acceptable as this type of design can help achieve a more modest scale.
7. Existing trees, hedgerows and masonry walls and piers within the development centres are to be protected and a uniform boundary treatment secured. Hedgerows, stone and masonry walls, ranch style fencing are considered suitable. However a mix and match approach, even involving the above should be avoided. Planting should comprise of native species. Landscaping proposal should be submitted with all planning applications for development.
8. The site area has to be of sufficient size to adequately provide for the safe disposal of domestic effluent generated. In the case of a conventional septic tank and percolation area, the site shall not be less than 0.2 hectares. Where other systems are used, an area of less than 0.2 hectares may be permitted at the discretion of the planning authority. Small communal wastewater treatment systems may also be permitted in certain circumstances.

*In addition to the above guidelines, prospective applicants for new houses within category II development centres should have recourse to the documents **Building Sensitively and Sustainably in County Louth and Design Guidelines for Single House in the Countryside** published by Louth County Council 1999.*

4.6 'One-off' Rural Housing

Background

The thorny issue of the extent to which 'one-off' housing should be permitted in the countryside has exercised the minds of planners, public representatives and members of the public for some considerable time. The issue has received greater prominence in more recent times due primarily to the significant increases in demand for this type of development and the stance taken by An Taisce of opposing decisions or policies of the planning authority.

'One-off' housing refers to individually designed detached housing, primarily located on large unserviced sites in the open countryside. The argument in favour of such development would suggest that people have a right to exercise their choice to build and live in the countryside and that such 'one-off' development is a vital component in sustaining rural communities and rural services.

The argument against 'one-off' rural development suggests that there is a high environmental and economic cost to such development that the community as a whole must carry in order that others can exercise their choice to live in the countryside. These costs include an unsustainable dependence on car transportation, the uneconomic provision of infrastructure, pollution of water resources and damage or unacceptable alterations of sensitive landscapes. It is also argued that by permitting development in the hinterlands of towns and villages, the planning authority is depriving these settlements of essential investment to offset dereliction, encourage renewal and the provision of additional and improved physical and social infrastructure.

Louth County Council has always recognised and accepted the importance of 'one-off' housing in meeting local housing needs and in sustaining rural services such as primary schools, rural post offices and village shops. The council also accepts what it considers as the legitimate aspirations of people who are born and raised in the countryside wishing to reside within their own community.

However, the council also recognises that uncontrolled and excessive 'one-off' urban generated housing in the countryside is not sustainable in the long-term and accepts that measures need to be put in place to regulate this form of development. A concern arises that if urban generated rural housing is permitted at the level it has taken place, particularly over the last decade, then irreparable damage will be done to the environment and the legitimate aspirations of those brought up in the countryside to continue to live within their own communities will be jeopardised.

The 1997 Louth County Development Plan sought to address the issue of excessive urban generated 'one-off' housing in the countryside by introducing a series of controls or qualifying criteria in those areas considered under most severe pressure. The basis of the policy was first of all, a recognition that the rural areas of the county are not homogeneous and that specific policies peculiar to different areas were required and secondly that the rights of the longstanding residents of the area to continue to live within their local area should be protected.

Rural housing policy was, therefore, formulated in respect of 4 distinct areas;

1. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, High Scenic Quality, and the Coastline

2. The hinterlands of Dundalk and Drogheda
3. The Remaining Rural Areas of the County
4. Development Centres

Specific guidelines in relation to siting, size of dwelling, materials used etc were also prepared.

By and large the policies in relation to 'one-off' rural housing in the 1997 plan have been successful in that they have protected the most vulnerable areas of the county from excessive development. A number of difficulties did arise, however, with regard to the qualifying criteria, the definition of the local area and the delay in adopting a policy for the designated development centres. This later has been resolved by the preparation of local area plans and policies for the smaller development centres (Category II).

The planning authority considers that it is necessary to continue to control and regulate the amount of 'one-off' housing permitted in the Louth countryside while at the time permitting the maintenance and renewal of rural communities.

4.7 Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005

After an extensive consultation period the Minister for the Environment Heritage and Local Government published the document Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines in May 2005. The document was issued as a ministerial guideline under the provision of section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, Local Authorities have been requested to carry out a review of their Development Plans for the purpose of incorporating the provisions of the guidelines.

The NSS recognised the long tradition of people living in rural parts of Ireland and promotes sustainable rural settlement as a means of delivering more balanced regional growth. The Sustainable Rural Policy Framework in the NSS has four broad objectives:

1. To sustain and renew established rural communities and the existing stock of investment in a way that responds to the various spatial, structural and economic changes taking place while protecting the important assets that rural areas possess.
2. To strengthen the established structure of villages and smaller settlements both to support local economies and to accommodate additional population in a way that supports the viability of local transport and local infrastructure and services such as schools and water services.
3. To ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality and the natural and cultural heritage are protected to support quality of life and economic vitality.
4. To ensure that rural settlement policies take account of and are appropriate to local circumstances.

The NSS makes a distinction between demand for:

- Rural generated housing – Housing needed in rural areas within the established rural community by people working in rural areas or in nearby urban areas.
- Urban generated housing – Housing in rural locations sought by people living and working in urban areas including second homes.

The NSS emphasises that in general and subject to good planning practice, rural generated housing needs should be accommodated where they arise. With regard to urban generated housing in the open countryside, the NSS identified four broad categories of rural areas that require more tailored settlement policies in the development plan process. The four areas identified were as follows:

1. rural areas under strong urban influence
2. areas with a traditionally strong agricultural base
3. structurally weak areas
4. areas in which there are distinctive settlement patterns.

In a national context, all of County Louth falls within category 1 by reason of its proximity to Dublin and its strong urban structure. This is supported by the 2002 census figures which, notwithstanding a slight decrease within a small number of DED's randomly located throughout the county, recorded an increase in population of 10.5 % throughout the county, namely from 92,166 in 1996 to 101,802 in 2002.

The challenge therefore facing the Planning Authority in terms of one off rural housing is to ensure that rural generated housing as defined in the NSS and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines is accommodated in rural areas while protecting such areas from the increasing demand for urban generated rural housing. This challenge is exacerbated by the pressures deriving from the county's close proximity to Dublin and the quality of both rail and road infrastructure.

The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines have been drafted in the context of the rural housing policy set out in the National Spatial Strategy 2002. Expanding on the rural policy framework, these Guidelines provide that:

- People who are part of the rural community should be facilitated by the planning system in all rural areas including those under strong urban based pressure.
- Anyone wishing to build a house in rural areas suffering persistent and substantial population decline should be facilitated.
- The development of the rural environs of the major urban areas, including the gateways and hubs as identified in the NSS and other larger towns over 5000 in population need to be carefully managed in order to ensure their orderly development and their successful functioning in the future.

4.8 Rural Housing Policy

The council's rural housing policy over the plan period is based on the following principles and objectives:

- ensuring the vitality and regeneration of rural communities by facilitating those born in rural areas continuing to live within their local community;
- promoting development within existing settlements in order to support and sustain local rural services;
- protecting the unspoilt scenic quality of the landscapes of the county particularly those areas considered most sensitive to development;

- preserving a clear distinction between built up areas of settlements and the surrounding countryside. In this regard it is proposed to introduce a greenbelt areas surrounding the main urban settlements of Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee;
- ensuring that, where housing development is permitted, strict siting and design principles and guidelines will be adhered to. The guidelines contained in the document "Building Sensitively and Sustainably in County Louth" will be strictly enforced;
- except where family members are concerned, not more than 2 dwellings up to 10 acres of land, 3 dwellings up to 20 acres and 4 dwellings for landholdings larger than 20 acres shall be permitted (subject to an overall maximum of 4 houses per landholding*) where the subject landholding* is registered in the current land owner's* name for a minimum period of 10 years. Land registry certificate(s) and the accompanying folio map(s) will only be accepted as verification and must be submitted as verification with all planning applications.
- preventing the creation of ribbon development by not permitting more than 4 houses in a row along any public road. A relaxation may be considered where permission is sought on grounds of meeting the housing needs of the owner of an adjoining landholding or a member of his/her immediate family, where no other suitable site is available on their landholding.
- the Planning Authority shall apply an occupancy condition of a minimum of 7 years. The condition shall require an agreement under Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and shall be entered as a burden against the title of the land.
- planning applications for a dwelling house in control zone 1-5 must be made in the name of the person who is the intended occupier of the dwelling house.
- each site shall have an area of not less than 0.2 hectare. Where houses in excess of 200 square metres are permitted, the site area shall be correspondingly increased in the ratio of 20 sqm additional site area for each 1 square metres additional floor area. In such circumstances also, the shape of the site should be such as to provide for a greater set back from the public road than normal, if required by the planning authority. (This does not apply in respect of Category II development centres, where the maximum permitted size of development is 220sq.mts. regardless of the size of the site).
- the onus is on the applicant when making a planning application for a one off rural house, to satisfy the qualifying criteria as set out in the development control zones.
- to permit clustered development where considered appropriate.

In the interest of reducing the visual impact of ribboning of residential development along the public road and to reduce the number of accesses onto the public road, the planning authority will consider where appropriate the provision of clustered development.

Clustered development is considered to be:

- (a) the provision of a group of four houses in a traditional informal, ad-hoc layout, accessed off a private lane or service road.
- (b) Such development should not normally require the provision of footpaths, public lighting or public open space.

Where clustered development is proposed, the following steps shall be taken;

- (1) An application for outline permission for clustered development shall be made. A condition shall be attached to the outline permission restricting occupancy in compliance with local housing need.
 - (2) An application for site development works to facilitate the construction of the service road (if required) and or any other services.
 - (3) An application consequent on outline permission for the development of the house shall be made on an individual house basis by the person who is the intended occupier.
- encouraging the sensitive restoration and reuse of substantially intact vernacular derelict dwellings or redundant traditional stone buildings to residential use in rural areas and settlements.

Where it is proposed to restore buildings, the planning authority will have to be satisfied that the:

- a) roof, external and internal walls are substantially intact,
 - b) the restoration is in keeping with the scale and architectural character of the existing building
 - c) an extension shall respect the character of the existing structure or dwelling in terms of scale, height, use of materials etc.
- permit replacement dwellings only where the:
 - a) roof, external and internal walls are substantially intact,
 - b) structure was last used as a dwelling,
 - c) where there is an application for a replacement dwelling, the qualifying criteria pertaining to the Development Control Zone to which it relates will apply,
 - d) the siting of a replacement dwelling shall occupy the same stand as the original house, unless a more unobtrusive location is available. The total or substantial demolition of any dwelling of which the planning authority considers to be of merit shall not be permitted, unless the applicant demonstrates that the condition of the building, the cost of repairing in relation to its importance outweighs the loss resulting from demolition. The planning authority considers that in such instances, it would be considered preferable for the dwelling to be restored or used for other suitable purposes,
 - e) a replacement dwelling will be considered where the existing site is on less than 0.2 hectares provided that no public nuisance occurs.

4.9 Qualifying criteria for Residential Development in Rural Areas

4.9.1 Development Control Zone 1

A grant of planning permission for a dwelling within control zone 1 will be favourably considered only where the following criteria apply:

- a) The proposed dwelling is located on a suitable site* and is required to meet the housing needs* of the son/daughter/foster child of a qualifying landowner* who resides on the landholding*. However, a dwelling will only be considered provided there is no suitable alternative site outside of Control Zone 1.
or
- b) Where one dwelling is required on the basis of providing care to an existing elderly or disabled person who resides on the landholding* and where there is no immediate family member residing in the proximity. In order to qualify, applications should be supported by relevant documentation from a registered medical consultant and a disability organisation and the proposed dwelling shall be located adjacent to the existing dwelling or as close as possible thereto. Normal planning requirements and an occupancy condition will apply.
- c) Preventing the creation of ribbon development* by not permitting more than 4 houses in a row along any public road. A relaxation may be considered where permission is sought on grounds of meeting the housing needs* of the owner of an adjoining landholding* or a member of his/her immediate family, where no other suitable site* is available on the landholding*.
- d) The Planning Authority shall apply an occupancy condition of a minimum of 7 years. The condition shall require an agreement under Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and shall be entered as a burden against the title of the land.
- e) Planning applications for a dwelling house in control zone 1 must be made in the name of the person who is the intended occupier of the dwelling house.
- f) Each site shall have an area of not less than 0.2 hectare. Where houses in excess of 200 square metres are permitted, the site area shall be correspondingly increased in the ratio of 20 sqm additional site area for each 1 square metres additional floor area. In such circumstances also, the shape of the site should be such as to provide for a greater set back from the public road than normal, if required by the planning authority. (This does not apply in respect of Category II development centres, where the maximum permitted size of development is 220sq.mts. regardless of the size of the site).
- g) The onus is on the applicant when making a planning application for a one off rural house*, to satisfy the qualifying criteria as set out in the development control zones.

(All definitions for words asterixed in the above criteria are provided for in 4.11 pg. 69/70)

4.9.2 Development Control Zone 2

A grant of planning permission for a dwelling in control zone 2 will be favourably considered only where the following criteria apply:

- (a) Dwellings required to serve the housing needs* of immediate family members (sons/daughters, nieces/nephews of childless couples or unmarried householders or foster children) of a qualifying land owner* and where the house is located on a suitable site* on the landholding*.
- (b) Dwellings required to serve the housing needs* of longstanding* residents of the area who have been born in the area and who have lived in the area for a period of 10 years.
- (c) The proposed dwelling is required to meet the housing needs of persons returning to the place of their birth provided that he/she has lived in the area for at least 10 years.
- (d) The proposed dwelling is required in connection with the applicant's work e.g. farm worker, business owner, who needs to reside beside his/her premises for security reasons.
- (e) The dwelling shall be located within a radius of 4kms from the qualifying family residence. Where the qualifying area is reduced by reason of its location the 4 km radius may be extended to include an area equivalent to the area lost.
- (f) The sensitive renovation and reuse of substantially intact vernacular derelict dwellings or redundant traditional stone buildings to residential use.
- (g) Except where family members are concerned, not more than 2 dwellings up to 10 acres of land, 3 dwellings up to 20 acres and 4 dwellings for landholdings larger than 20 acres shall be permitted (subject to an overall maximum of 4 houses per landholding*) where the subject landholding* is registered in the current land owner's* name for a minimum period of 10 years. Land registry certificate(s) and the accompanying folio map(s) will only be accepted as verification and must be submitted as verification with all planning applications.
- (h) Preventing the creation of ribbon development* by not permitting more than 4 houses in a row along any public road. A relaxation may be considered where permission is sought on grounds of meeting the housing needs* of the owner of an adjoining landholding* or a member of his/her immediate family, where no other suitable site* is available on the landholding*.
- (i) The Planning Authority shall apply an occupancy condition of a minimum of 7 years. The condition shall require an agreement under Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and shall be entered as a burden against the title of the land.

- (j) Planning applications for a dwelling house in control zone 2 must be made in the name of the person who is the intended occupier of the dwelling house.
- (k) Each site shall have an area of not less than 0.2 hectare. Where houses in excess of 200 square metres are permitted, the site area shall be correspondingly increased in the ratio of 20 sqm additional site area for each 1 square metres additional floor area. In such circumstances also, the shape of the site should be such as to provide for a greater set back from the public road than normal, if required by the planning authority. (This does not apply in respect of Category II development centres, where the maximum permitted size of development is 220sq.mts. regardless of the size of the site).
- (l) The onus is on the applicant when making a planning application for a one off rural house*, to satisfy the qualifying criteria as set out in the development control zones.

(All definitions for words asterixed in the above criteria are provided for in 4.11 pg. 69/70)

4.9.3 Development Control Zone 3

Open for consideration within 200 metre zone of the coastline except those areas designated as falling within Control Zone 1, will be individual houses for qualifying applicants. A grant of planning permission for residential development in development control 3 zones will only be favourably considered where the following criteria apply:

- (a) Dwellings required to serve the housing needs* of immediate family members (sons/daughters, nieces/nephews of childless couples or unmarried householders or foster children) of a qualifying land owner*, where the house is located on a suitable site* on the landholding* and where no other suitable site* acceptable to the planning authority is available outside the 200 metre zone.
- (b) The proposed dwelling is required to meet the housing needs* of longstanding residents* born in the area.
- (c) The dwelling shall be located within a radius of 4kms from the qualifying family residence. Where the qualifying area is reduced by reason of its location the 4 km radius may be extended to include an area equivalent to the area lost.
- (d) The sensitive restoration and reuse of substantially intact vernacular derelict dwellings or redundant traditional stone buildings converted to residential use.
- (e) Except where family members are concerned, not more than 2 dwellings up to 10 acres of land, 3 dwellings up to 20 acres and 4 dwellings for landholdings larger than 20 acres shall be permitted (subject to an overall maximum of 4 houses per landholding) where the subject landholding* is registered in the current land owner's* name for a minimum period of ten years. Land registry certificate(s) and the accompanying folio map(s) will only be accepted as verification and must be submitted as verification with all planning applications.
- (f) Preventing the creation of ribbon development* by not permitting more than 4 houses in a row along any public road. A relaxation may be considered where permission is sought on

grounds of meeting the housing needs* of the owner of an adjoining landholding* or a member of his/her immediate family, where no other suitable site* is available on the landholding*.

- (g) The Planning Authority shall apply an occupancy condition of a minimum of 7 years. The condition shall require an agreement under Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and shall be entered as a burden against the title of the land.
- (h) Planning applications for a dwelling house in control zone 3 must be made in the name of the person who is the intended occupier of the dwelling house.
- (i) Each site shall have an area of not less than 0.2 hectare. Where houses in excess of 200 square metres are permitted, the site area shall be correspondingly increased in the ratio of 20 sqm additional site area for each 1 square metres additional floor area. In such circumstances also, the shape of the site should be such as to provide for a greater set back from the public road than normal, if required by the planning authority. (This does not apply in respect of Category II development centres, where the maximum permitted size of development is 220sq.mts. regardless of the size of the site).
- (j) The onus is on the applicant when making a planning application for a one off rural house*, to satisfy the qualifying criteria as set out in the development control zones.

(All definitions of words asterixed in the above criteria are provided for in 4.11 pg. 69/70)

4.9.4 Development Control Zone 4

It is policy of the planning authority to protect areas falling within the green belts of Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee from urban generated and unsightly ribbon development and to maintain the identity of the town. A grant of planning permission for residential development in development control 4 zones will only be favourably considered where the following criteria apply:

- (a) Dwellings required to serve the housing needs* of a person working primarily in agriculture where the person derives his/her main income from the farm, where no other suitable site* acceptable to the planning authority is available outside the greenbelt. The applicant must demonstrate the area of land and farming activity being carried out forms a viable farm unit.
- (b) Except where family members are concerned, not more than 2 dwellings up to 10 acres of land, 3 dwellings up to 20 acres and 4 dwellings for landholdings larger than 20 acres shall be permitted (subject to an overall maximum of 4 houses per landholding) where the subject landholding* is registered in the current land owner's* name for a minimum period of ten years. Land registry certificate(s) and the accompanying folio map(s) will only be accepted as verification and must be submitted as verification with all planning applications.
- (c) Dwellings required to serve the housing needs* of longstanding residents* of the area and who have been born in the area and who have lived in the area for a period of 10 years.

- (d) The dwelling shall be located within a radius of 4kms from the qualifying family residence. Where the qualifying area is reduced by reason of its location the 4 km radius may be extended to include an area equivalent to the area lost.
- (e) The sensitive restoration and reuse of substantially intact vernacular derelict dwellings or redundant traditional stone buildings converted to residential use.
- (f) The applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the proposed development does not come within the definition of urban generated housing* as defined in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines
- (g) Preventing the creation of ribbon development* by not permitting more than 4 houses in a row along any public road. A relaxation may be considered where permission is sought on grounds of meeting the housing needs* of the owner of an adjoining landholding* or a member of his/her immediate family, where no other suitable site* is available on the landholding*.
- (h) The Planning Authority shall apply an occupancy condition of a minimum of 7 years. The condition shall require an agreement under Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and shall be entered as a burden against the title of the land.
- (i) Planning applications for a dwelling house in control zone 4 must be made in the name of the person who is the intended occupier of the dwelling house.
- (j) Each site shall have an area of not less than 0.2 hectare. Where houses in excess of 200 square metres are permitted, the site area shall be correspondingly increased in the ratio of 20 sqm additional site area for each 1 square metres additional floor area. In such circumstances also, the shape of the site should be such as to provide for a greater set back from the public road than normal, if required by the planning authority. (This does not apply in respect of Category II development centres, where the maximum permitted size of development is 220sq.mts. regardless of the size of the site).
- (k) The onus is on the applicant when making a planning application for a one off rural house*, to satisfy the qualifying criteria as set out in the development control zones.

(All definitions of words asterixed in the above criteria are provided for in 4.11 pg. 69/70)

4.9.5 Development Control Zone 5

Over the past number of years development control zone 5 areas have been subject to increasing pressure for development of one off rural housing*. This is particularly prevalent in the south Louth area, where not only the number of planning applications has increased but the scale and size of the dwellings being sought for planning permission has also increased.

A grant of planning permission for residential development in development control 5 zones will only be favourably considered where the following criteria apply:

- (a) The proposed dwelling is required to serve rural generated housing needs* where rural generated housing needs is defined as housing needed in rural areas within the

established rural community by people from rural areas who either work in rural areas or in nearby urban areas.

- (b) Except where family members are concerned, not more than 2 dwellings up to 10 acres of land, 3 dwellings up to 20 acres and 4 dwellings for landholdings larger than 20 acres shall be permitted (subject to an overall maximum of 4 houses per landholding) where the subject landholding* is registered in the current land owner's* name for a minimum period of ten years. Land registry certificate(s) and the accompanying folio map(s) will only be accepted as verification and must be submitted as verification with all planning applications.
- (c) The sensitive restoration and reuse of substantially intact vernacular derelict dwellings or redundant traditional stone buildings to residential use.
- (d) In response to exceptional health circumstances and where specific requirements are supported by relevant documentation from a registered medical consultant and a disability organisation, planning permission may be granted to a person required to live in a rural environment subject to normal planning requirements being met and the imposition of an occupancy condition.
- (e) Preventing the creation of ribbon development* by not permitting more than 4 houses in a row along any public road. A relaxation may be considered where permission is sought on grounds of meeting the housing needs* of the owner of an adjoining landholding* or a member of his/her immediate family, where no other suitable site* is available on the landholding*.
- (f) The Planning Authority shall apply an occupancy condition of a minimum of 7 years. The condition shall require an agreement under Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and shall be entered as a burden against the title of the land.
- (g) Planning applications for a dwelling house in control zone 5 must be made in the name of the person who is the intended occupier of the dwelling house.
- (h) Each site shall have an area of not less than 0.2 hectare. Where houses in excess of 200 square metres are permitted, the site area shall be correspondingly increased in the ratio of 20 sqm additional site area for each 1 square metres additional floor area. In such circumstances also, the shape of the site should be such as to provide for a greater set back from the public road than normal, if required by the planning authority. (This does not apply in respect of Category II development centres, where the maximum permitted size of development is 220sq.mts. regardless of the size of the site).
- (i) The onus is on the applicant when making a planning application for a one off rural house*, to satisfy the qualifying criteria as set out in the development control zones.

(All definitions of words asterixed in the above criteria are provided for in 4.11 pg. 69/70)

4.9.6 Development Control Zone 6

This development control zone has not been subject to excessive pressure for housing development in particular one-off rural housing* as encountered in other parts of the county.

A grant of planning permission for residential development in development control 6 zones will only be favourably considered where the following criteria apply:

- (a) Except where family members are concerned, not more than 2 dwellings up to 10 acres of land, 3 up to 20 acres and 4 dwellings for landholdings greater than 20 acres shall be permitted (subject to an overall maximum of 4 houses per landholding) where the subject landholding* is registered in the current land owner's* name for a minimum period of ten years. Land registry certificate(s) and the accompanying folio map(s) will only be accepted as verification and must be submitted as verification with all planning applications.
- (b) The applicant is a current resident of County Louth including all urban areas or previously resided for a minimum period of 10 years within the County.
- (c) The proposed dwelling is required on the basis of providing care to an existing elderly or disabled person who resides on the landholding*. In order to qualify, applications should be supported by relevant documentation from a registered medical consultant and a disability organisation and the proposed dwelling shall be located adjacent to the existing dwelling or as close as possible thereto. Normal planning requirements and an occupancy condition will apply.
- (d) Preventing the creation of ribbon development* by not permitting more than 4 houses in a row along any public road. A relaxation may be considered where permission is sought on grounds of meeting the housing needs* of the owner of an adjoining landholding* or a member of his/her immediate family, where no other suitable site* is available on the landholding.
- (e) The Planning Authority shall apply an occupancy condition of a minimum of 7 years. The condition shall require an agreement under Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and shall be entered as a burden against the title of the land.
- (f) Each site shall have an area of not less than 0.2 hectare. Where houses in excess of 200 square metres are permitted, the site area shall be correspondingly increased in the ratio of 20 sqm additional site area for each 1 square metres additional floor area. In such circumstances also, the shape of the site should be such as to provide for a greater set back from the public road than normal, if required by the planning authority. (This does not apply in respect of Category II development centres, where the maximum permitted size of development is 220sq.mts. regardless of the size of the site).
- (g) The onus is on the applicant when making a planning application for a one off rural house*, to satisfy the qualifying criteria as set out in the development control zones.
- (h) The sensitive restoration and reuse of substantially intact vernacular derelict dwellings or redundant traditional stone buildings to residential use.

(Definitions of all words asterixed in the above criteria are provided for in 4.11 pg. 69/70)

4.10 Design considerations for 'one-off' housing in the countryside

Having regard to the above principles and objectives, the planning authority will apply the following criteria in assessing all planning applications for one off houses in rural areas.

1. The development must be in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate rural development control zone. Further criteria, restrictions and guidelines in addition to those set out below, will apply in respect of each rural development zones. These will particularly apply to the areas of maximum vulnerability, namely the high amenity areas, greenbelts and highly sensitive landscapes.
2. In determining whether a particular location, siting and design is suitable the planning authority will have recourse to the documents Building Sensitively and Sustainably in County Louth and Design Guidelines for Single House in the Countryside published by Louth County Council 1999.
3. Applicants shall satisfy the planning authority that the method of disposing of waste water whether by means of a convention septic tank and percolation area or other waste water treatment system, is fully in compliance with the guidelines and requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The planning authority will insist that a thorough site analysis is carried out in accordance with the requirements contained in the document 'Waste Water Treatment Manuals, Treatment System for single Houses' published by the Environmental Protection Agency, 2000 and test results shall be submitted as part of all applications.

4. Safe access to any new housing development must be provided, not only in terms of the visibility from a proposed entrance but also in terms of the impact on existing road traffic through generation of stopping and turning movements.

Where a proposed development onto a protected regional route complies with the Road's policy, a condition confining occupancy to a family member for a minimum of 5 years shall be attached to any permission granted under this exemption.

All applications submitted shall show, at a minimum scale of 1:500 how the planning authority visibility standards appropriate to the class of road involved (Refer to Transport and Communications Chapter) can be met. Where compliance with these standards can only be met by removing large stretches of roadside hedgerow/ditches/ stone boundaries; an alternative site should be sought.

5. Entrances, driveways and surfaced areas should be located so as minimise visual impacts by following existing contour lines. Stonewalling executed in the traditional dry construction method; earthen banks and indigenous hedging are considered appropriate at entrances. Grandiose, flamboyant or castleated entrances shall not be permitted. All applications for rural housing should include drawings/specifications of entrance treatments.

6. Landscaping proposal should be submitted with all planning applications for development and should comprise of native species. Fast growing evergreens and coniferous shall not be permitted.
7. A landscaping plan for single houses must be provided and 75% of the landscaping shall be carried out within the first growing season.
8. Dwellings should have dark coloured roofs preferably with smooth plaster, natural stone or dashed finishes. Where finishes other than the above are proposed these will only be permitted where the planning authority is satisfied that such finishes are in harmony with the surrounding landscape and or other buildings in the area.
9. Avoid 'cosmetic' features such as mock classical columns, spanish arches, verandas, balustrades etc. Porches should be enclosed.
10. Use simple form and roof designs with narrow spans and pitches in the region of 35 to 45 degrees
11. Pay particular attention to fenestration details, particularly window openings and design. Windows should be in proportion with the dimensions of the development and complement the style of building. The planning authority will be mindful of developers to have good natural light in their homes.
12. Garage or other domestic structures should normally be separate from the house and sited in such a manner as to reduce visual impact. Garages integral to the dwelling will be subject to the following design criteria;
 - (a) Subject to a size restriction of a maximum of 25 square metres in respect of a garage
 - (b) Subject to a condition that the garage cannot be converted to habitable living accommodation without a further planning permission.
13. A minimum distance of 6 metres should be maintained between the dwelling and any site boundary with an adjoining site.
14. Existing hedgerows should be retained as far as is practical. Where removal is required in order to meet with visibility standards a new hedgerow consisting of species native to the area or other alternative species acceptable to the Planning Authority shall be planted inside the line of visibility. If in order to achieve the required visibility substantial removal of existing hedgerows would be required, the Planning Authority may require that an alternative site be sought. The Planning Authority may require that where the removal of hedgerows are required that these shall not be removed during the nesting period.
15. Existing dry stone walls should be retained as far as is practical. Where removal is required in order to meet with visibility standards or for the purposes of road widening, a new dry stone wall shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

P 4.9

It is policy of the council to ensure that a minimum site area of 0.2 hectares is available for 'one-off' rural houses. In areas where houses in excess of 200 square metres are

permitted, the site area shall be correspondingly increased in the ratio of 20 sqm additional site area for each 1 square metres additional floor area. In such circumstances also, the shape of the site should be such as to provide for a greater set back from the public road than normal, if required by the planning authority.

4.11 Definitions

For the purposes of this chapter, the following definitions shall apply:

Urban Settlement – Towns of Dundalk, Drogheda, Ardee and Dunleer

Rural Settlement – All category I and II development centres.

'One-off' house – A dwelling individually designed, normally located on an unserviced and substantial site.

Housing Need – Housing need shall be established where the applicant does not currently own a house or has not owned a house within the previous 5 years or where his/her current accommodation, as accepted by the Planning Authority, is insufficient to meet his/her accommodation needs. Where a new dwelling is required for acceptable reasons of downsizing, the requirement not to have owned a dwelling in the previous 5 years will not apply.

Ribbon development – More than 4 houses in a row along any public road on the fringes of settlements in the open countryside. Houses built prior to 1963 are excluded.

Clustered Development – A group of houses in a traditional informal, ad hoc layout, accessed off a private lane or service road.

Longstanding resident – A person who has resided for 10 years or more in an area.

Local Area – Within a radius of 4kms from the qualifying family residence. Where the qualifying area is reduced by reason of its location the 4 km radius may be extended to include an area equivalent to the area lost. (This applies to Control Zones 2, 3 and 4 only).

Rural Area of County Louth – All areas within the county falling outside the statutory boundaries of Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee and the immediate environs thereof where any recent in-depth suburban or satellite development has occurred.

Replacement Dwelling – Building last used as a dwelling house where the roof and walls are substantially intact.

Restoration – The restoring of a building to its original conditions where the wall and roof are substantially intact. The applicant will be required to provide evidence of its structural stability.

Landowner – A person who owns land for a period of ten years or more.

Viable Farm Unit – Where at least 40% of the household income is derived from farming.

Urban Generated Housing – Housing in rural locations sought by people living and working in urban areas including second homes.

Rural Generated Housing – Housing needed in rural areas by members of the established rural community by people working in rural areas or in nearby urban areas.

Landholding – All lands in an individual's ownership within the County. Proof of such ownership shall be submitted to the Planning Authority including land registry certificate(s) and folio map(s) for registered lands and deeds and deed maps for unregistered land.

Suitable Site – In assessing whether or not a site is suitable, the Planning Authority shall take into consideration, elements including site size and configuration, visibility standards, drainage, topography, existing vegetation and shelter landscaping, visual impact in addition to size, scale, form and external finishes proposed, ribbon development and compliance with the qualifying criteria for rural housing as specified in the County Development Plan.

Chapter 5 - Residential and Community Development

5.1 Introduction

County Louth is experiencing considerable pressure for residential development. It is strategically located equidistant between Belfast and Dublin and on the Euro-Route EO1. With its improved road and rail infrastructure, the increase in the population of Louth County by 10.5% between the period 1996 and 2002 reflects to some extent a widening of the Dublin commuter belt. The net migration during this period for the county was 9.6%, compared to minus 1.7% between 1991-1996 and minus 9.1% between 1986 and 1991.

This pressure will further increase with the imminent opening of the Drogheda by-pass and the development of the motorway/dual carriageway link with Northern Ireland.

The Housing Strategy for County Louth 2001 has indicated that a total of 7,400 new households will be formed in County Louth over the period from 2001 to 2007. The Housing Strategy has also identified that within County Louth sufficient lands have already been zoned for residential purposes to more than adequately accommodate this projected household formation.

An interim review of the strategy will be carried out in 2006. Given the amount of lands already zoned for residential development within the towns and villages of the county, it is not envisaged that there will be a need to zone any additional lands for residential development to accommodate additional residential development during the lifetime of this Plan.

The council maintains a rented stock of 498 units. The Housing Need Assessment completed in May 2002 has shown that there are currently 276 applicants in need of housing. A large number of these applications relate to single parent families, with the overall average family size being 2.5.

Building programmes by the local authority are based on an allocation of starts from the Department of the Environment on a four –year multi-annual system. The total allocation over the four-year period 2000 – 2003 was 240 units. Of these some 77 will be completed by the end of this year. It is the aim of the council that a similar number of ‘starts’ will be undertaken over the next four-year period. However it is anticipated that there would be a higher provision by the Voluntary Housing Associations and under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

5.2 Housing Strategy for County Louth (2001-2007)

The County Louth Housing Strategy has been put in place to ensure that:

- sufficient land is zoned and serviced to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the population, both existing and anticipated.

- housing development is designed and located so as to make full use of public transport and to give access to education, employment, health and other services and community facilities.
- specific objectives reflecting the needs of different areas assessed in the strategy are included to ensure that the necessary social and affordable housing will be fully provided for.

This strategy forms an integral part of the Development Plan and acts as a cornerstone for further housing policy.

5.3 Strategic Objective

It is the objective of the planning authority to ensure that there is sufficient housing development taking place in the county to meet the needs of the community at an affordable price and that the development within the county only takes place at a rate that is commensurate with that need, accords with the settlement policy of the county and the available level of supporting social and physical infrastructure.

5.3.1 Specific policies

P 5.1

It is the policy of the council to:

- apply sustainability principles to all residential developments;
- apply the provisions of the Louth Housing Strategy to all residential developments on sites in excess of 0.1 hectares or more than 4 houses where the lands are zoned residential or mixed use where residential is included. This will require the transfer to the council of completed houses, serviced sites, 20% of the site area or other land within the functional area of the planning authority or a payment of an amount of money for the purposes of social and affordable housing and in accordance with the terms of the agreement between the planning authority and developer under section 96 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002;
- continue the council's social housing programme in line with demand and the availability of land and finance;
- secure a high standard of residential layout and house design, including the use of high quality materials and finish and the provision of adequate public and private open space in accordance with the standards and guidelines set out in this plan;
- secure greater social integration and preservation of family and community ties through the provision of an appropriate mix of house type within residential areas and in accordance with the provision of the Louth Housing Strategy 2001;

- secure the satisfactory and speedy completion of housing estates, and where such estates have been so completed, to take them in charge;
- provide for increased residential densities on suitable sites in accordance with the Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government;
- ensure that new residential developments are consistent with the Housing Standards and Residential Density – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 1999 in order to protect the amenity of existing residential areas and to secure a satisfactory standard for new housing;
- protect the existing housing stock of the county. In the town and village centres particular regard should be had to residential use of upper floors above shops. Separate access to upper floors shall be retained or provided in the interest of personnel safety and security. Such accommodation is a useful source of additional housing due to its proximity to facilities in town and village centres and it contributes to the vitality of such area;
- require the submission of Master Plans in respect of larger residential schemes and for such to make provision for the phasing of the development and for the provision of retail and community facilities in order to create sustainable communities on a neighbourhood principal. The requirements of master plans are set out in appendix 1;
- require developers to provide childcare facilities in accordance with the provision of the County Childcare Strategy 2002 and the Housing Strategy 2001. A minimum requirement shall be the provision of a twenty children unit crèche/childcare facility for every seventy-five houses. A financial contribution by way of community charge will be applied in respect of the provision of childcare facilities on housing developments where the provision of childcare does not form part of the proposal, that is developments of less than 75 units;
- require developers to pay the full costs of infrastructure which facilitates all new residential developments including roads, footpaths, piped services and other facilities whether inside or outside site boundaries;
- impose development charges/levies and development bonds in respect of all residential developments in accordance with the councils approved development contributions scheme;
- require the preparation and implementation of estate management schemes as an integral part of any agreement negotiated between the developer and the planning authority, and to ensure that such management schemes are covered by a condition attached to the relevant planning permission;
- promote home ownership under the various schemes detailed by Social Housing - The Way Ahead, the provision of housing by the voluntary sector and under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000;

- developers shall adopt the principles of sustainable drainage systems in designing surface water management systems.

5.4 Design considerations for residential estate-type developments

In order to protect the amenity of existing residential areas and ensure a satisfactory standard for new residential housing estates, the planning authority will require that proposals be consistent with the following standards and guidelines.

5.4.1 Density

In accordance with various reports such as the National Sustainable Development Strategy, the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the greater Dublin area, the Bacon Report on house prices and Planning Guidelines on Residential Density, the planning authority recognises the benefits of increasing the density of residential development at appropriate locations.

The level of residential density appropriate to a given area cannot be considered in simple arithmetic terms for all development sites. The identification of a given density and its appropriateness should be determined by spatial planning and architectural design criteria determined by the context of a given site and its relationship to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

In the pursuit of higher densities, the planning authority will have consideration to the quality of the design of residential environment and its location; that is the town centre, within walking distance of the town centre or the edge of the urban area or proximity to a public transportation route (rail or bus).

Table 5.1 Residential Density Guidelines

Location	Densities per Hectare
Inner Urban/Infill	N/A Design approach should be based on recognition of the need to protect the amenities of adjoining neighbours and the general character of the area and its amenities.
Outer Urban/Greenfield	20 to 50
Institution Lands	35 to 50 However to retain the open character of the lands development should concentrate increased densities in select parts.

The Planning Authority emphasises the importance of qualitative standards in relation to design and layout in order to ensure that the highest quality of residential environment is achieved.

5.4.2 Residential Mix

The Planning Authority in considering residential schemes in excess of 0.1 hectare or in excess of 4 dwellings will have regard to whether the development incorporates a reasonable mix of housing types in order to match housing type supply to demographic trends. In particular the provision of increased numbers of units for one or two persons, starter homes, affordable housing and units designed or capable of easy adaptation for housing for people with disabilities, will be encouraged.

The Housing Strategy for County Louth recommends the following residential mix:

Table 5.2: Residential Mix

House type	Social Housing %	Private Housing %
1 bedroom& 2 bedroom	37&39 respectively	35 total
3 bedroom	14	35
4 bedroom plus	10	30

Where a mix of conventional housing and apartment developments is proposed, care should be taken to ensure that the houses and apartments are complimentary to each other in terms to the design, proportions and materials used.

5.4.3 Master Plans

The council will require the use of master plans in the development of new residential areas. The primary objectives of such plans are as follows:

- to provide for the implementation of the councils standards in relation to the provision of social and affordable housing as set out in Louth Housing Strategy and residential mix in line with the above table;
- provide a high standard of layout design which ensures an acceptable level of privacy is achieved;
- to provide for the implementation of the council's objectives in relation to open space and increasing the utility of open space;
- to provide for the development of land to be phased with the provision of infrastructure and social facilities;
- to provide detailed proposals for vehicular movements and parking demands.

Master plans will be prepared by the planning authority or in co-operation with private interests.

5.4.4 Infrastructure Support

The development of new housing requires the support of engineering infrastructure and services such as footpaths, cycleways, public lighting, surface and wastewater drainage and roads. New developments also require the support of sporting, amenity and social infrastructure; for example major areas of public open space, sports and community halls, schools and cultural centres.

The planning authority considers it reasonable that where such facilities are in need of enhancement and support to sustain increased demands from new development, that their provision or enhancement should be provided as part of new residential developments. This may be done by way of development contributions or direct provision by the developer under planning authority's supervision or as part of a Public Private Partnership(PPP).

5.4.5 Open Space

Private Open Space

Privacy is a basic qualitative aspect to residential design. All new houses shall have an area of private open space located behind the building line and, in apartments and duplexes style schemes, private open space may be provided in the form of landscaped areas, courtyards, terraces/patios and balconies or roof gardens.

Table 5.3 Private Open Space Standards

Dwelling Unit Type	Minimum Private Open Space Standard
Houses - 1 & 2 bedrooms (Greenfield/suburban)	60 m ²
Houses - 2 plus bedrooms (Greenfield/suburban)	80 m ²
Houses (Town Centre/Brown field)	50 m ²
Apartments/Duplexes (Greenfield/suburban) 1 bedroom unit 2/3 bedroom unit	20 m ² 40 m ²
Apartments/Duplexes (Town Centre/ Brownfield) 1 bedroom unit 2/3 bedroom unit	10 m ² 20 m ²

In innovative housing layouts, a combination of private and semi-private spaces as in courtyards layouts may be acceptable. This could be in the form of small private terraces for each dwelling opening directly onto a semi private enclosed landscaped space solely for residences that directly adjoin this space. It may be considered appropriate to accept the sum of both these spaces as satisfying the private open space requirement for these dwellings.

Where it is considered appropriate in the interests of protecting residential amenity, the planning authority may attach planning conditions requiring that certain categories of exempted development permissible within the curtilage shall not take place.

Public Open Space

The Planning Authority, in seeking to achieve higher densities will place greater emphasis on the provision of higher quality public and communal open space to ensure a high standard of residential environment. Detailed landscape proposals including specifications of the proposed landscaping, hard and soft, should be submitted with all planning applications. The incorporation of public open space in integrated designed sustainable drainage systems may be looked upon favourably.

Qualitative Standards

- visually well designed.
- provision on a hierarchical basis that is overlooked of formal play areas for smaller children's play, informal kickabouts and passive amenity.
- easily accessible to all dwellings within the residential area.
- overlooked and supervised by the maximum number of dwelling units.
- retention and preservation of existing natural landscape features; for example, trees, streams and hedgerows.
- areas to be suitably proportioned. Narrow tracts, backlands areas, steep gradients or peripheral areas will not be acceptable.
- hard landscape elements such as paving, cobbled areas should be incorporated into the design and presentation of open areas.

Table 5.4 – Quantitative Standards

	% of the site area
Standard Requirement*	10
Master Plans/Action Plans	15
Institutional Lands	20

*Where residential developments are in close proximity to public parks or other natural amenities or in the town centre, a relaxation of the above standards may be permitted. Where open space standards cannot be achieved, more intensive recreational facilities may be provided. A financial contribution towards public open space or recreational facilities in lieu of the provision of public open space may be acceptable in certain circumstances e.g. infill sites where the area is already served by adequate open space and recreational facilities. Any such contribution will be spent on the provision, upgrading or maintenance of facilities in the area.

5.4.6 Residential Car Parking Standards

Car parking spaces should be clearly delineated for each residential unit. Car parking areas should be designed to comply with the principles of passive surveillance.

Table 5.5 - Residential car parking standards

	Spaces per dwelling unit
Greenfield Sites/Suburban	2.0
Brownfield/Town Centre	1.0

The above standards are applicable in respect to both conventional housing and apartments/duplexes. However in the town centre where infill development is proposed, the above standards may be relaxed and a financial contribution towards the cost of providing additional public car parking in the area, in lieu of the provision of car parking by the developer, may be appropriate.

5.4.7 Privacy & Spacing between buildings

The design and layout of a development should ensure sufficient privacy for its intended residents both within the dwelling and within an area of garden close to each dwelling.

A distance of at least 22 metres is recommended between the windows of habitable rooms which face those of another habitable room. In the case of windows of non-habitable rooms, within 22 metres of another facing window, obscure glazing may be acceptable.

Roof terraces and balconies are not acceptable where they would directly overlook neighbouring habitable rooms or rear gardens.

Where new buildings are located very close to adjoining buildings, the planning authority may require that daylight and shadow projection diagrams be submitted. The recommendations of 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice' (B.R.E.1991) or B.S. 8206 'Lighting for Buildings, Part 2 1992: Code of Practice for Daylighting' should be followed.

5.4.8 Internal Space Standards

Market forces have been the main factor for the setting of internal space standards. Proper internal space planning which ensures adequate standards in relation to overall dwelling and individual room sizes is important to ensure that higher densities do not result in sub-standard residential accommodation.

In relation to internal space standards 'Guidelines on Residential Developments in Urban Renewal Designated Tax Incentive Areas' (DOE 1995) will be applied by the planning authority as an absolute minimum for apartment developments. With regard to social housing 'Social Housing Design Guidelines' (DOE 1991) is applicable.

5.4.9 Refuse Storage and Collection

Adequate provision should be made for the storage of refuse and for convenient access for its deposit and collection. In apartment/duplex developments, refuse enclosures should be designed so that they are integrated with the building or boundary enclosures and are well screened.

5.4.10 Building Lines

The desirability of creating different urban forms will require a more varied building line in order to reduce the often-regimented appearance of suburban layouts. However, where there are established building lines, particularly on infill development sites, these should be respected.

5.4.11 Building Heights

In general all new development should be consistent in height with adjoining structures. Except in very exceptional circumstances, the planning authority considers that residential buildings

should not exceed 4 storeys in height including roof space development, except where limited provision for buildings in excess of 4 storeys is provided for in any Local Area Plan.

5.4.12 Management

Where it is intended that roads, services or public spaces will be retained in private or communal ownership, estate management schemes should be prepared and implemented. These arrangements must be approved by the planning authority and covered by a condition attached to the relevant planning permission.

5.4.13 Naming of Estates

The planning authority will require the naming of residential development to reflect local place names or topographical features as appropriate and should incorporate old names from the locality as much as possible.

5.5 Community Facilities

This section sets out detailed development objectives for the provision of social infrastructure including childcare facilities, healthcare, nursing homes, community buildings, sports facilities, and traveller accommodation, granny flats and amenity schemes.

5.5.1 Objectives

- to ensure that the development opportunities for the county are pursued in such a manner as to provide for the provision of childcare facilities, healthcare, nursing homes, community buildings, sports facilities, traveller accommodation and amenity schemes.
- to identify and reserve land within settlements for the purposes of providing or extending community facilities where a demonstrated need exists.

5.6 Childcare facilities

It is recognised that the increased female participation in the labour force together with social change has resulted in a major increase in the demand for childcare. The Childcare Facility Guidelines which were published by the Department of the Environment and Local Government in June 2001 advocates a more pro-active role by the planning authority in the promotion of increased childcare provision while at the same time protecting amenities. This is the aim of the Louth County Childcare Strategy.

5.6.1 Policy

P 5.2

It is the policy of the planning authority to:

- **require developers to provide childcare facilities in accordance with the provision of the County Childcare Strategy 2002 and the Housing Strategy 2001.**

A minimum requirement will be the provision of a twenty children unit crèche/childcare facility for every seventy-five houses;

- operate a presumption in favour of sites within settlements and on sites dedicated for such uses in part of residential development proposals referred to above.
- permit childcare facilities in existing residential areas where the planning authority is satisfied that considerations regarding traffic safety, parking and residential amenities can be satisfactorily addressed. The full conversion of semi-detached or terraced type dwellings will not be permitted.
- facilitate the provision of childcare facilities on or adjacent to open space areas where it is in a central and accessible location and where no other suitable site can be identified.

The planning authority will have regard to the provision of a safe environment for children and visitors at drop off and pick up points at childcare facilities and the suitability of the location and premises for the provision of adequate outdoor space and play area

5.7 Health care and nursing homes

The demand for nursing homes has grown over the last number of decades. Advances in the field of medicine as well as improved nutrition and quality of life have increased average life expectancy. As this trend continues so will the demand for nursing and care facilities for the elderly. The planning authority has had considerable pressure for retirement homes and homes for the disabled and elderly in the rural areas of the county. There is a presumption against this type of development in the open countryside for reasons relating to un-sustainability, poor accessibility, social exclusion and visual intrusion. As a result a policy statement 'Guidelines for the location of Nursing Homes in County Louth' was produced and forms the basis of the council policy in respect of this matter. (See appendix 6)

The Housing Strategy for County Louth estimates that there is a requirement in the county for 50 beds in the north Louth area and an additional 200 in the south of the county.

5.7.1 Policy

P 5.3

It is the policy of the planning authority:

- that except in exceptional circumstance, nursing homes should be located within or adjacent to towns and villages for reason of sustainability, accessibility, social inclusion and availability of piped services;
- to ensure that all applications complies with the planning considerations as detailed in 'Guidelines for the Location of Nursing Homes in County Louth (see appendix 6)';

- to comply with recommendation of the Housing Strategy for County Louth that at least one home is located in a Category I development centre in the south of the county to cater for the needs of the rural population.

5.8. Traveller accommodation

At the beginning of 2000 the council adopted a 5 year Traveller Accommodation Programme in accordance with the requirements of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998. The number of roadside travellers requiring accommodation is small. The programme envisaged that needs could be met initially by the provision of a temporary halting site and in the longer terms by one or two small housing schemes.

5.8.1. Policy

P 5.4

It is the policy of the planning authority:

- To identify and provide a traveller halting site in County Louth (excluding the urban areas)
- to provide one/two traveller housing schemes.

Proposals to provide sites for travellers shall be considered in the light of the following criteria:

- the suitability of land for mixed residential, business and storage use;
- suitability of access to the site and satisfactory provision of turning and servicing areas;
- the satisfactory provision of drainage on site;
- acceptable provision for waste storage;
- the provision of landscaping, planting and designation of an amenity area within the site
- compatibility with the existing and proposed uses in the area, particularly in relation to environmental amenity.

5.9 Accommodation for dependent relatives

The demand for house extensions to provide partially self-contained accommodation for elderly or dependent relatives will inevitably increase due to the rise in average life expectancy.

Proposals must accord with normal planning considerations such as the ability of the site to accommodate the unit, compliance with environmental standards, septic tank requirements, drainage, water and amenity.

5.9.1 Policy

P 5.5

It is the policy of the planning authority to ensure that:

- all additional accommodation should normally be attached to the existing dwelling and be linked internally.
- where an extension to the existing house is not practicable and it is proposed to convert and extend an outbuilding, planning permission will normally depend on whether the development provides a modest scale of accommodation only so as to ensure the long term use of the building remains as part of, or ancillary, to the main dwelling.
- the construction of a separate dwelling unit as self contained accommodation within the curtilage of an existing dwelling will not be acceptable unless a separate dwelling would be granted permission in its own right on a site within the curtilage or abutting the site of the existing dwelling.
- any planning permission will be subject to conditions that the accommodation :
 - be occupied only by an immediate family member e.g. parent(s) of the owners and occupiers of the main dwelling,
 - the accommodation will not be leased, sold or otherwise disposed off other than as part of the residential unit on site
 - the elderly persons accommodation unit will not normally exceed gross floor areas of 50 square metres.
 - a separate access shall not be provided to the front elevation of the dwelling.

5.10 Health Facilities

Where new housing development is proposed, consideration should be given to the need to provide or extend the provision of health facilities; for example doctors and dentists surgeries and clinics.

5.10.1 Policy

P 5.6

It is the policy of the planning authority to ensure that:

- good quality, accessible health care is provided in the local community and that except in exceptional circumstance, health facilities should be located within or adjacent to towns and villages – Ardee, Dunleer, category I and category II development centres;
- the scale and design of any new building enhances the character of the existing area;
- the council's detailed standards for off street parking are met (see Table 8.4);
- the facility will be accessible by foot and public transport;
- the opening hours of the surgery are restricted to those recommended by the council;
- the surgery provides facilities which are accessible to people with disabilities;
- changes of use from residential will only be considered where the privacy and amenity of adjacent occupiers can be preserved and the proposal does not have a detrimental effect on local amenity by way of an increase in traffic, car parking or noise. The full conversion of semi-detached or terraced type dwellings will not be permitted.

5.11 Community Buildings/Sports facilities

Community facilities play a very important role in helping to develop a sense of community. So too do sports and physical recreation, in addition to being important components of life. With the substantial increase in population in the county and projected further growth, it is important that the necessary facilities are secured as part of all new developments.

5.11.1 Policy

P 5.7

It is the policy of the planning authority to:

- resist the loss of existing social and community facilities such as community centres and youth clubs or any sports facilities including playing fields;
- promote where possible, access by all members of the community to community building and sport facilities;

- ensure that sites are accessible by a range of travel modes, particularly by public transport, pedestrians and cyclists;
- ensure that the scale and design of any new building enhances the character of the area;
- ensure that the council's detailed standards for off street parking are met (see Table 8.4);
- ensure that proposals do not have a detrimental effect on local amenity by way of an increase in traffic, car parking or noise and loss of privacy, and;
- ensure that the amenity of adjacent occupiers is protected.

5.12 Disabled Access

The council recognises the right of disabled people to equal opportunities and recognises their contribution to society. In full recognition of this, the council has fully endorsed the provisions of the Barcelona Declaration and have voted to adopt the objectives of the project in July 2002. The Declaration advocates the right of the disabled people to equal opportunities and recognises their contribution to society and the environment they live in.

The terms of reference of the project are:

- Raising awareness and promoting the Barcelona Declaration among all local authorities in Ireland with a view to adoption and implementation by local authorities.
- Developing and delivering a programme to local authorities which will enable them to "disability proof" their decision making.
- Issuing guidelines which will facilitate local authorities in developing implementation plans which will include the identification of specific pilot actions.

Under the terms of the Barcelona Declaration it is an objective of the council to consult with people with disabilities and to devise a plan of action to design services and structures which can be used by everyone.

It is the policy of the Planning Authority that in all new developments that the developer shall ensure that all access for disabled is in accordance with Part M of the of the Building Regulations.

5.13 The Library Service

The council envisages a countywide network of library services serving individual communities and the county as a whole. There are five libraries in the county - Drogheda, Dundalk, Carlingford, Ardee and Dunleer, which are open to the public.

Dundalk and Drogheda provide a regional service. Both libraries have hosted numerous visits by school classes, adult students and other groups. There has been much work carried out in the expansion of IT facilities for the public. These include courses for public use on a number of terminals, public cards for use on public internet terminals and the provision of a wide selection of CD roms.

In meeting the needs of socially excluded people the library service has established links with the local office of the National Council for the Blind whereby blind and partially sighted people can borrow talking books from the library. The council will continue this policy of establishing links with socially excluded members of our society. The smaller libraries and mobile library service continues to improve library participation by reaching communities in the more local centres. The mobile library service has continued to extend its range of stops to suit the needs of the community, incorporating as many stops as possible both urban and rural.

5.13 Schools and Education

There are currently 73 primary and 17 post-primary schools and one third level institution - Dundalk Institute of Technology within County Louth.

Table 5.6 Primary Schools in Co. Louth

County	Ordinary	Special	Total
Louth	70	3	73

Source: Area Development Management, 2000

Table 5.7 Post - Primary Schools in Co. Louth

County	Secondary	Vocational	Community	Comprehensive	Total
Louth	11	5	1	-	17

Source: 1997/1998 Statistical Report, Department of Education & Science

The council will seek to ensure that school sites are made available to school authorities either by way of agreement or otherwise in phase with development. Reservation for individual sites for primary and secondary schools are identified in some of the local area plans.

Proposals for new educational facilities or extensions to existing facilities will normally be granted planning permission provided that:

the scale and design of any resulting building does not harm the character and visual amenity of the area;

- the proposals would not result in significant disturbance in terms of traffic, car parking and noise;
- the facilities are accessible by a choice modes of travel and that satisfactory provision is made for car parking.
- traffic safety considerations are met

Should a school become redundant, an appropriate change of use will be considered on its merits subject to development control standards.

Chapter 6 - Tourism, Recreation and Amenity

6.1 Introduction

County Louth's tourism and amenity assets include an unspoilt natural environment, a rich and varied heritage and culture with proximity to major national access points and arterial access routes. Louth's location in relation to the island's two largest commercial and population centres of Dublin and Belfast is one of key significance to the development of the tourism industry in the county.

6.1.1 Strategic Objectives

- promote Louth as a quality tourist destination themed on heritage, culture and an unspoilt natural environment
- secure the provision of a hierarchy of public open spaces and other recreational facilities including the development of parks, local public open spaces and play areas.
- protect from damage existing amenity features such as trees, hedgerows, streams and other natural features
- retain existing sports grounds in recreational and amenity use and promote the provision of additional facilities where necessary.
- develop a series of walks and pedestrian routes.
- protect established rights of access to the shore and other ancillary amenities, where necessary
- promote the provision of arts cultural and entertainment facilities.
- promote a vibrant and healthy society

6.1.2 Tourism Policy

P 6.1

Having regard to the above strategic objectives it is the policy of the planning authority to:

- maximise the potential of natural assets for the benefit of local people and visitors alike
- assist in the implementation of tourism related initiatives in conjunction with the other agencies, both in the Republic and in the North of Ireland
- promote and develop the Cooley peninsula as a quality tourism area on a national and international basis
- assist in the development of a tourism theme for the county based on heritage, culture and the unspoilt natural heritage
- assist in the development of tourism potential with particular regard to the county's position as a "gateway" from the North of Ireland, Scotland and England
- upgrade existing viewing points through the provision of facilities including, picnic facilities, seating and small scale information facilities. Refer to table 6.3

- promote and assist in the development of the tourism potential Drogheda as the gateway to the historic Boyne Valley and to promote and facilitate public access to view points, south of Tullyallen village of the Battle of the Boyne site.
- provide linkages with tourism agencies in the North of Ireland with a view to marketing Louth as part of the Mourne County / South Down region.

6.1.3 Recreation and Amenity Policies

P 6.2

It is the policy of the Council to:

- identify and zone lands for the purposes of public open space, where deemed necessary
- secure the provision of civic spaces and play areas in towns and villages and in all new residential areas.
- ensure new developments do not conflict with the amenity and recreational objectives of the Development Plan.
- impose a charge as a contribution towards the cost of the provision of additional amenity and recreational facilities which facilitate development.
- require developers as part of their proposed developments to retain and protect from damage during construction, existing shrubs, trees and hedges and other amenity features.
- require developers to provide public open space within residential areas in such a manner that would facilitate the assembly of significant tracts for the purpose of developing more substantial open space/parkland areas.
- improve and extend the opportunities for the public to enjoy the countryside.
- protect existing pedestrian links and walks. Where appropriate, to create new pedestrian access to public amenities and facilities, particularly to beach areas.
- ensure that new developments do not impact negatively on either existing or proposed amenity or recreational facilities and designations.
- improve the quality and capacity of existing sporting and recreational facilities through initiatives in the public and private sector and in co-operation with voluntary groups and bodies.

6.2 Environment and Amenities

In accordance with Part IV of the first schedule to the Planning and Development Act, 2000 it is an objective to preserve the character of landscapes including views and prospects and amenities of places and features of natural beauty and interest. In the interests of visual amenity, the protection of the natural environment, the development of the tourism industry and for the purposes of enhancing natural recreational / amenities facilities, previous development plans identified areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) and areas of high scenic quality (AHSQ) and the coastline (area of special scenic quality). These designations have been retained in this plan.

6.2.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (A.N.O.B.)

County Louth contains two distinct areas that have been designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty by reason of their unspoiled natural landscapes and spectacular scenic quality. The larger of the two areas is found in the north of the county and encompasses the Carlingford and Feede Mountains. Slieve Foye at 588 O.D and Black Mountain at 508 O.D are the highest points in the range. Much of the area remains in its natural state covered in gorse, bracken and heather and has been designated as a Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pN.H.A). Spectacular views are available from a number of vantage points over Carlingford Lough to the Mourne Mountains in Northern Ireland and over Dundalk Bay to central and south County Louth.

The second area designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located at Clogherhead and encompasses Port Oriel and the surrounding headland. Although less rugged and remote than the Carlingford/Feede Mountains, this area; nevertheless; contains equally spectacular views eastwards to the Irish Sea, southwards towards the Boyne Estuary and County Meath and northwards over Dundalk Bay to the Carlingford and Mourne Mountains.

Both these designated areas, which are shown coloured yellow on map 6.1, are considered to be extremely sensitive environments and are therefore afforded a high degree of protection in this development plan.

It the objective of the council to protect the unspoiled natural environment of areas of outstanding natural beauty for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

6.2.2 Areas of High Scenic Quality (A.H.S.Q.)

The areas of high scenic quality, whilst not quite possessing the exceptional natural beauty and landscape quality of A.N.O.Bs, nevertheless add significantly to the stock of natural scenic reserves within the county.

All of these areas are currently farmed although the quality of the land for farming purposes varies considerably from area to area. The council considers it important that 'Areas of High Scenic Quality' are protected from excessive development, particularly from inappropriate 'one-off' urban generated housing, in order to preserve their unspoiled rural landscapes. However the council also recognises the desirability of having longstanding residents of the area continuing to live within their own communities, if they so wish. Consequently, limited development in line with the rural development and control zone policies set out in chapter 3 will be permitted provided that it does not irreparably damage the scenic rural quality of the landscape. The areas so designated are shown coloured blue on map 6.1.

It is the objective of the council to protect the unspoiled rural landscapes of areas of high scenic quality by limiting development to that required to sustain the existing rural communities that currently reside there.

6.2.3 The Coastline

The coastline of County Louth stretches for more than 70 miles from north of Omeath in Carlingford Lough to Baltray in the Boyne Estuary. The coastline and the adjoining landscapes vary considerably in character from the steep mountainous slopes of Carlingford Lough to the flat and undulating landforms and sand dune systems of mid and south Louth. There are a number of attractive beaches that provide excellent recreational opportunities for local residents and 'day trippers' from the surrounding counties. However, apart from Omeath, Blackrock, Clogherhead and Gyles' Quay, all of which have declined in importance in recent years, there are no major or widely recognised seaside resorts within the county. The town of Carlingford, which is located on the shores of Carlingford Lough, has become popular as a holiday destination based on its historic heritage and marina facility. For the purpose of this development plan, the coastline is defined as a 200 metre wide strip extending inland from the high water mark.

It is the objective of the council to protect and develop, where appropriate, the amenity and recreational value of the coast including access thereto via existing routes or by the creation of new rights of way where considered necessary. In this regard, it is proposed to prepare a coastal zone management plan for the county and to implement this plan on a phased basis.

6.2.4 Scenic Routes

Successive development plans have identified a number of routes throughout the county that have been protected from adverse developments.

It is an objective of the development plan to continue to protect views and prospects of special and amenity value outlined in table 6.1. Consequently any development that would interfere with or adversely affect this objective shall not be permitted.

Table 6.1 Scenic Routes

Reference	Route
SR1	Clogherhead – Termonfeckin
SR2	Harbour Road, Clogherhead
SR3	Hamilstown – Fieldstown
SR4	Slane Road, Townley Hall
SR5	King Williams Glen
SR6	Mount Oriel
SR7	Coast Road, Blackrock Village
SR8	Seabank, Castlebellingham
SR9	Coast Road, Blackrock Village
SR10	Faughart Hill
SR11	Ravensdale Road
SR12	Deerpark
SR13	Brohatna
SR14	Drumnacarragh/Aghnaskeagh
SR15	Aghnaskeagh/Flurrybridge
SR16	Annaverna
SR17	Ballymackellet

SR18	Doolargy
SR19	Jeninstown(Minor and Hill)
SR20	Slievenaglough
SR21	Glenmore
SR22	Windy Gap- Omeath Village
SR23	Windy Gap- Cornamucklough
SR24	Clermount
SR25	Carlingford – Omeath
SR26	Carlingford – Greenore
SR27	Muchgrange
SR28	Grange to Greenore
SR29	Bush- Carlingford
SR30	Rooskey
SR31	Mountain Park
SR32	Spellickanee

6.2.5 Views & Prospects of Special Amenity Value

It is an objective of the plan to prevent development, that would block or otherwise interfere with a view or prospect, considered to be of special amenity value or interest and to preserve prominent landscapes of similar significance. Roads or other public areas from which there is a view worthy of protection are shown in the map 6.1.

It is an objective to preserve the views and prospect identified in table 6.2 as views of special amenity value or special interest.

Table 6.2 Views & Prospects

Reference	View/Prospect
VP 1	Mount Oriel
VP 2	Clogherhead-Termonfeekin
VP 3	Clogherhead, Harbour Road
VP 4	Walshestown
VP 5	Port
VP 6	Faughart Hill
VP 7	Viewing Points
VP 8	Red Gap
VP 9	Tullydonnell
VP 10	Monasterboice Tower from M1
VP 11	N2 North of Collon
VP 12	Roche Castle
VP 13	Clogherhead
VP 14	Millickstown
VP 15	Bogberry Hill from the school house
VP 16	Carlingford Village and Dundalk Bay
VP 17	Carlingford Lough
VP 18	Glenmore – Mountains and Valley

VP 19	Jeninstown Hill towards Dundalk Bay
VP 20	Drumullagh – View towards Narrow Water
VP 21	Feede Mountain
VP22	Views from Dungooley Crossroad
VP23	Hackballscross view towards the mountains
VP24	Killin Golf Club view towards the mountains
VP25	South of Tullyallen Village towards Boyne

Table 6.3 Viewing Points

Reference	Viewing Point
V 1	Old School, Annagassan
V 2	Clermont Cairn Road
V 3	Slievenaglough Road
V 4	Windy Gap
V 5	Hamlinstown
V 6	Mount Oriel
V 7	Hermitage
V 8	Faughart Hill
V 9	Seabank
V 10	Salterstown
V 11	Lurganboy
V 12	South of Tulluallen Village
V 13	South of Tullyallen Village
V 14	South of Tullyallen Village

6.2.6 Pedestrian Links and Walkways

P 6.3

It is the policy of the council to:

- maintain existing rights of way and investigate the creation of additional facilities either by agreement or by way of compulsory powers;
- Co-operate with Dundalk Town Council in the provision of pedestrian and cycle paths along both sides of the Castletown River and linking up with St. Louis and De La Salle Secondary schools.
- develop a series of walks and pedestrian routes. Included in this will be the following specific projects;
 - extension of shoreline walkway from Navy Bank,
 - Dundalk to the Loakers, Blackrock
 - shoreline walk from Carlingford Harbour to the marina
 - provision of pedestrian/cycle paths from the border with the North of Ireland to Dundalk along the line of the Dundalk/Newry link road and via the N52 and Tain Bridge.

- continue to promote the development of the original Tain trail over the period of the development plan. In particular it is intended to further develop the signposting of this and other trails;
- protect established access to the shore and other amenities. Where necessary to create new access to such amenities. In this regard the following shall be applicable;
 - to ensure that access reservation to the shore shall generally not be less than 3 metres in width with restrictions for motor vehicles,
 - to provide car parks and other associated facilities at the termination of county roads that provide is access to the shore,
- develop a series of long distance walksways/cycleways based in part on the utilisation of former transportation links such as disused railway lines.

6.3 Tourist Accommodation

It is an objective of the council to facilitate the provision of self-catering tourist accommodation within or adjacent to existing settlements including the conservation/restoration of stone farm buildings for tourist accommodation purposes with particular regard to cycling and walking routes, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, protection of the natural environment and scenic quality of the landscape.

It is also an objective to encourage the provision of tourist accommodation and facilities, together with ancillary uses, of significant regional or local importance subject to these same criteria. The provision of additional high quality hotel, guesthouse and B&B accommodation will be encouraged subject to normal planning criteria

6.3.1 Caravan and Camping Sites

The provision of new static caravan parks within the county will be discouraged. Where extensions to existing facilities are proposed regard will be had to the following:

- capacity of road access serving the proposed site
- visual amenity considerations
- any camping or caravan site adjacent to settlements shall, in terms of scale, layout and design, have regard to the existing character of the village and the residential amenity
- a high standard of layout shall be required
- a detailed hard and soft landscaping plan shall be submitted with a planning application including the use of heavy standard native tree species within the site and at boundaries
- satisfactory foul and surface water drainage provision
- in addition to meeting traffic safety requirements, entrances and exits shall be designed to allow for safe access and egress from the site
- on site car parking will be required in addition to visitor facilities (1 space per pitch)

- an on-site sanitary block shall be provided. This shall be designed, located and laid out so that there is an ease of access and use of the facilities for disabled persons
- waste disposal units and bin storage areas shall be provided on the site and the number of such units, shall be related to the number of caravans on the site.

6.3.2 Holiday Homes

Holiday homes are defined as purpose built self-contained residential units, which provide accommodation on a short term basis for visitors to the area. The planning authority will resist the proliferation of holiday home developments in areas of high amenity except where the development would result in the conversion/restoration of existing stone buildings of character or the restoration of derelict dwellings. In such circumstances the floor area/height and footprint of the existing structure should not be significantly increased and be subject to an overall floor area not exceeding 100m².

In considering proposals for holiday home developments, the following criteria shall apply.

- holiday home developments shall only be permitted in category 1 development centres
- conversion of existing stone farm buildings or derelict dwellings will normally be permitted
- in assessing proposals for holiday home developments, the council will be guided by standard planning requirements such as traffic safety, access, visual amenity, water and drainage and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- overall floor area of holiday homes shall not exceed 100sqm.

6.3.3 Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

The planning authority recognise the valuable contribution that small family run B&B's can make to the local economy and the promotion of tourism in the County. The council will therefore facilitate bona fide applications for B&B's throughout the county provided that all relevant planning criteria can be met and the character of the rural landscape is protected.

6.4 Agri-tourism

A feature of this development plan includes the active encouragement of diversification of the use of agricultural land. This may generate proposals for the change of use of open land to sports and leisure facilities. In certain cases these may be located on the urban edge – such areas can help to define the town and contribute to its setting.

The Planning Authority will support on-farm tourist accommodation and supplementary activities such as health farms, heritage and nature trails, pony trekking and bathing, having regard to the following:

- accommodation and supplementary businesses and the farm on which they are located should remain in the one ownership.
- proximity to the existing farmhouse.
- adequate effluent treatment facilities shall be installed.
- adequate on site parking shall be provided.

6.5 Eco-tourism

It is considered that the policies as outlined in this plan, particularly in so far as these relate to the positive promotion of environmental / recreational aspects and the preservation of sensitive landscapes will greatly assist in the development of eco and cultural tourism.

6.6 Amenity Schemes

In the past, the council has undertaken many amenity schemes. This process will continue during this development plan period. The implementation of the projects is not guaranteed and will depend on necessary funding and related matters. Subject to financial considerations and feasibility it is an objective of the council to complete the amenity schemes as set out in table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4 Amenity Schemes

AS 1	Annagassan	Shore Walk
AS 2	Ardee	Redevelopment of the Fair Green to include paved circulatory walk, children's play area, landscaping, and seating
AS 3	Baltray	Redevelopment of the promenade and greenspace at the entrance to the village to include new paving, landscaping and street furniture.
AS 4	Blackrock	Upgrade promenade and car park area to include additional shrubs and seating, stone facing of sea wall and street signs
AS 5	Carlingford	Additional Street lighting and undergrounding of overhead lines
AS 6	Carlingford	Introduction of landscaping and street furniture at the Village Green
AS 7	Castlebellingham	Upgrade the area around the village green to include landscaping, lighting, street furniture and some paving.
AS 8	Clogherhead	Renovation and refurbishment of the Old School House
AS 9	Dromiskin	Development of a selected site to include landscaping, planting and street furniture
AS 10	Dunleer	Provide a focal point to the village including the provision of new toilet block
AS 11	Greenore	Beach Amenity Area
AS 12	Kilkerley	Upgrading of village centre to include landscaping and street furniture
AS 13	Kilsaran	Upgrading of village centre to include soft landscaping, paving and street furniture
AS 14	Knockbridge	Redevelopment of village green to include landscaping, planting, street furniture and repaving
AS 15	Tallanstown	Renovation and refurbishment of the Old School House
AS 16	Omeath	Development of the Omeath Park to include landscaping, seating, perimeter fencing and playground
AS 17	Reaghstown/ Aclint	Refurbishment of the Old School House

In the above regard, the council will co-operate fully with the local development agencies with a view to ensuring a partnership approach toward the operation of relevant schemes including;

- Urban and village renewal
- Clar
- Rapid
- Peace II
- International Fund for Ireland
- Intereg
- Other new initiatives

Where relevant, such funding will be supplemented with levies raised through the planning system for amenity, community and recreational purposes.

6.7 Carlingford Lough

The council will explore in conjunction with the appropriate authorities in the North of Ireland the development of the recreational and tourist potential of Carlingford Lough including improved access by means of a bridge link at Narrow Water Omeath and or a ferry link between Greenore and Greencastle.

6.8 Tourism related signs

The council acknowledges the role of advertisements and sign posting in the promotion and identification of tourism facilities and accommodation. However, excessive numbers of advertisement signs and sign posting is often counter productive as it leads to clutter and confusion which detracts from the appearance of buildings and rural unspoilt landscapes.

P 6.4

In relation to the provision of tourist related advertisement signs and sign posting, it will be the policy of the council to:

- restrict advertisement signs to the entrance to, or within the site of the facility, service or attraction. Signs in the open countryside remote from the site shall not be permitted. The design of such signs shall not be obtrusive, shall relate exclusively to the facility, service or attraction and shall be sited in a manner that would not interfere with traffic movement and/or safety. Normally only one such sign will be permitted in relation to any such activity.
- standard finger sign posts with white lettering on a brown background may be permitted in certain circumstances and the number of such signs shall be restricted to one per establishment. It will be necessary for applicants to convince the planning authority that the provision of such a sign is necessary owing to the inadequacy of public sign posting in the area. Such signs shall not be permitted at locations where there is already an excessive concentration of road and other signs or where, in the opinion of the planning authority, the

location of the activity/enterprise is already adequately sign posted by public directional sign posting.

Where finger posts or other similar small scale signs are permitted on public roads and footpaths, these shall be subject to licence under section 254 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

6.9 Hotels/ Guest Houses

The council acknowledges the role of hotels, guest houses and related facilities in the promotion of the tourism industry in the county. The planning authority will resist the provision of guest houses and hotels in areas of high amenity except where the development will result in the conversion/ restoration of demesne type buildings and/or complexes.

In considering proposals for hotel and guesthouse facilities, the following criteria shall apply;

- the suitability of the site and the proposed structure in the context of environmental, visual and landscape protection. Mature landscaped sites in a demesne type setting will be given priority;
- the provision of car parking facilities in accordance with the council's standards set down in table 8.4 of this plan;
- provision being made for access/parking for the disabled;
- the proposal does not result in an over concentration of tourist accommodation in one locality;
- the proposal does not have an adverse impact on the amenity of adjoining residents or the immediate residential area;
- a phasing plan for the provision of the ancillary facilities associated with the hotel complex shall be submitted with the planning application;
- in assessing proposals for hotel or guest house developments, the council will be guided by standard planning requirements such as traffic safety, access, visual amenity, water and drainage and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Chapter 7 - Economic Development and Employment

7.0 Industrial Development

7.1 Introduction

Much of County Louth's strength as a source and provider of employment lies in its strategic location, the continued development of the M1 / EO1 Euro-route motorway, together with the up grading of the rail network. When completed, it will strategically link the key ports and airports of Larne, Belfast, Dublin and Rosslare.

Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee provide the main locations for employment uses in the county. The influence of the M1 /EO1 Euro route has the potential to transform the county of Louth as a whole and impact on the development of its towns, including settlements located some distance from the motorway.

The implementation of a sustainable economic development and employment strategy for the county can only be achieved by working in partnership with agencies that play a vital role in promoting economic activity in the county. The Newry-Dundalk Business Linkage Programme, the Louth County Enterprise Board, Enterprise Ireland, Fás, Chambers of Commerce and the Regional Development Centre have a vital role to play.

P 7.1

It is the policy of the council to work in partnership with other government agencies and the private sector to promote the sustainable economic development of the county and to provide employment opportunities for the county's inhabitants.

7.2 Employment Trends and Opportunities

Louth was established as a manufacturing centre in the 20th century for activities such as heavy engineering, the manufacturing of drink, tobacco, leather, clothing and textile goods. These traditional industries went into decline in the latter half of the 20th century; this had a considerable effect on the economy of the county.

Later in this period, with the assistance of the IDA, a number of overseas companies established themselves in County Louth; these were mainly in the electronics sector. This development helped to modernise Louth's industrial base and provided new employment opportunities.

The past decade has seen a further change in the employment and enterprise sector within the county. This is manifested in a growth of information, communications and technology(ICT) based industries. Specialised engineering and food processing.

The majority of employment in Louth is in the manufacturing sector (28%), professional services/commerce (19 %) electricity and gas sectors (0.8%). A relatively low proportion of the county is involved in farming or agricultural activities (5.9%), reflecting the highly urbanised

nature of the county and the general decline in agricultural employment in recent years. (Source 'Louth – an integrated County Development Strategy 2002')

Louth enjoyed almost full employment until twenty years ago. However since then, structural and cyclical unemployment resulting from the decline of the county's traditional industries eroded this situation. In recent years, Louth has consistently had an unemployment rate that is higher than the national average. For example, the 1996 Census revealed an unemployment rate of 22.3% for the county. This situation prompted the government, initially in Dundalk and then subsequently in Drogheda, to establish partnership companies to address issues of chronic unemployment and social exclusion in both towns. The council acknowledges the contribution that both companies have made in addressing both social and economic deprivation in certain areas of these towns.

Table 7.1 Distribution of Labour Force

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	<i>1,906</i>	<i>4.9%</i>
Industry	<i>11,665</i>	<i>30.3%</i>
Services	<i>17,980</i>	<i>46.6%</i>
Unemployed	<i>7,010</i>	<i>18.2%</i>

Source: CSO, 1996

7.3 Locating Industry in County Louth 2001

The strategy - *Locating Industry in County Louth*, adopted by the planning authority, aims to consolidate and provide economic growth through the identification of appropriate locations for industrial and commercial activities throughout the county. The provisions of this strategy were incorporated within the 1997 Louth County Development Plan by way of variation of the plan on 15th April 2002.

While acknowledging the role of the county's larger towns of Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee as the primary locations for employment generating activities within the county, the strategy identified the need for greater employment opportunities in smaller settlements and in rural areas. The spread of employment opportunities throughout the county was considered necessary in order to revitalise and sustain rural communities where traditional employment sources, such as agriculture, are in decline.

Outside of Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee, the strategy identified a number of strategic locations where provision for small scale business and enterprises should be made. These included the following:

Dunleer
 Clogherhead
 Castlebellingham / Kilsaran
 Greenore
 Louth Village
 Collon.

P 7.2

It is the policy of the Council to;

- secure a spread of employment opportunities at key strategic locations throughout the county in order to sustain and revitalise rural communities where traditional employment sources, such as agricultural, are in decline.
- protect and enhance the status of Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee as the principles centres of employment, industrial and commercial activity within the county as it is considered that these towns, by reason of their size, social and physical infrastructure, are best placed to accommodate such activity and to absorb significant increases in population.

Whilst these settlements were identified as strategic locations for employment generating activities thereby providing for the concentration of scarce resources on the provision of supporting infrastructure, the strategy does not preclude the location of industrial / commercial activity elsewhere in the county where consideration will be given on the merits of each individual proposal.

7.4 Interchange Strategy in County Louth 2002

The completion of the Euro Route 1 motorway linking Larne and Rosslare will have enormous benefit for the economic development of County Louth. This will result from the impetus given to, and stimulation of, economic activity where accessibility to major centres of population, sea and airports is essential. Motorway interchanges are the points where the existing road network feeds into the motorway network. As such they represent strategic locations much sought after by developments requiring speedy access to both national and international markets.

However, uncontrolled and poorly regulated development at interchanges can often be unsustainable due to dependency on roads transportation, traffic congestion on national routes, impact on rural landscapes and environments and the costs involved in the provision of other infrastructure such as piped services, electricity, gas etc. Such development can also detract investment from existing towns and settlements that are badly in need of renewal and development.

In order to maximise the benefits accruing to the county from the motorway and to regulate development in a sustainable and appropriate manner along its route, the council commissioned the consultants, Murray O'Laoire Architects and Planners, to examine the potential of motorway interchanges for development and to make recommendations with regard to the appropriate development thereof. The strategy recommends that the development be primarily located on urban-related interchanges only and that it be restricted at those interchanges located in the open countryside. In the case of those interchanges close to Dundalk, namely the Ballymascanlon, Castleblayney Road and the southern link Road, it is recommended in the strategy that development be permitted on the town side only of the interchange in accordance with the zoning provision of the Dundalk and Environs Development Plan. Similarly, in the case of the Tullyallen interchange north of Drogheda, it is recommended that development be in accordance with the zoning provision of the Northern Environs Local Area Plan.

Development at non-urban related interchanges, namely Drumleck, Charleville, Mooremount and Woodlands should be restricted. The restrictions on development at those non-urban related interchanges will have a significant benefit for development at other towns and settlements throughout the county and is consistent with the planning authority's expressed policy of encouraging a spread of economic/industrial activity throughout the towns and villages of the county. For example, the Ballymascanlon interchange will facilitate economic development throughout the Cooley Peninsula. The Drumleck interchange will bring benefits to settlements such as Castlebellingham, Annagassan and Louth Village. Charleville interchange, which is only some 7km from Ardee, will act as a catalyst for development of that town while Mooremount and Woodlands will stimulate growth in centres such as Dunleer and Clogherhead. The interchange at Tullyallen will provide Collon village with a direct link onto the motorway.

7.4.1 Strategic Objective

To ensure that there is sufficient serviced land available for industrial/commercial and associated uses in the county's main towns and at other smaller settlements throughout the county, to meet the economic development and employment needs of the county.

7.4.2 Policy

P 7.3

It is the policy of the planning authority:

- to encourage and facilitate development at the urban related interchanges adjacent to Dundalk and Drogheda in accordance with the zoning provision of the Dundalk and Environs Development Plan 2003 and the Drogheda Northern Environs Local Area Plan 2004
- to restrict development at the non-urban related interchanges in the interests of protecting the unspoilt rural landscapes of the county and encouraging economic activity and employment in Ardee and the other rural towns and settlements within the county
- to seek the implementation of the provisions contained in the documents – Locating Industry in County Louth and the Interchange Strategy in County Louth
- to restrict the development of lands at non urban associated interchanges in the interests of sustainable development and to protect the rural landscapes
- to identify land for commercial/industrial and related uses in the designated centres
- to ensure the provision of a 'buffer' zone of not less than 15 metres in width between industrial and other land uses
- to ensure adequate parking/loading and unloading facilities are provided within the site

- to ensure that adequate measures are taken by commercial/industrial users and developers in the treatment and disposal of effluent to prevent pollution.
- to encourage the provision of start-up workspace and small scale industrial projects on serviced sites
- to facilitate industrial and employment-generating uses within the areas designated for such uses. To this end the council will co-operate with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, the County Enterprise Board and other bodies to expand employment opportunities
- to secure an attractive environment within industrial estates by requiring a high standard of design, layout etc and to encourage the up-grading of existing estates where necessary.

7.5 Strategic Development Zones

The 2000 Planning and Development Act makes provision for the implementation of Strategic Development Zones in order to 'fast track' certain developments of significant economic or social importance.

The planning authority has not identified any strategic development zones to date. The council will however, either acting unilaterally or in partnership with other bodies, designate sites as Strategic Development Zones where it believes specified development on particular sites for the provision of industry or hi-tec business parks linked to existing industry in the county or higher educational establishments, is of significant social and economic importance.

Any proposal for the designation of Strategic Development Zones will be fully supported by the council having regard for the demonstrated need and individual merits of each proposal.

7.6 Development Controls standards for industrial/commercial areas.

The planning authority will require that industrial/commercial lands be developed to a very high standard.

7.6.1 Landscaping /Amenity

Commercial and industrial development should present a pleasant aspect aided by tree planting with particular attention to boundary treatment. A detailed landscape plan, planting schedule and planting programme will be required with all applications.

The provision of a buffer zone of not less than 15 metres in width will be required where industrial and other land uses adjoin to ensure amenities of adjacent properties are not adversely affected. There should be no significant amenity loss (by way of noise, smell or other nuisance) to immediate neighbours or the area in general resulting from the nature of the proposed business, the amount of traffic generated or the servicing arrangement. In particular, noise emissions shall comply with the provisions of Noise Regulations (S.I. No. 179 of 1994).

7.6.2 Car Parking/Loading/Unloading

Unobtrusive parking areas, preferably behind the building line, shall be provided within the curtilage in accordance with standards detailed in table 8.4. Areas between the building and road boundary may include car-parking spaces provided an acceptable landscaping scheme is incorporated to lessen visual impact and obtrusiveness. These areas should have a permanent hard surface with parking spaces of 5.0m X 2.5m clearly demarcated.

Sufficient loading and unloading bays shall be provided. These shall be of sufficient size to accommodate the loading/unloading operation without encroachment onto any public road, footpath or interfere with the safety and free flow of vehicular traffic or pedestrians.

7.6.3 Design

Where two or more commercial/industrial buildings are being developed, a uniform design for boundary treatments, roof profiles and building lines is essential. Scale and design of proposed development should be in keeping with the surrounding area and adjoining developments.

7.6.4 Site coverage/Plot Ratios

The maximum site coverage permitted in industrial areas shall be 75% and the maximum plot ratio 1.0.

7.6.5 Open Storage

Any open storage areas shall be located behind the building line and be adequately screened.

7.6.6 Roads and footpaths

The width of all internal industrial estate roads shall, generally, not be less than 7.3 metres with minimum radii of 10.5 metres at junctions.

Visibility splays shall not be less than 70m x 4.5m x 1.05m within speed control zones and 160m x 4.5m x 1.05m elsewhere.

Footpaths shall not be less than 1.8 metres in width.

7.6.7 Nuisance

The 'good neighbour' principal shall be applied in respect of all industrial/commercial developments where possible conflict could arise with other established uses. In particular, noise emissions, whether from plant, machinery or traffic, shall comply with the provisions of 1994 Noise Regulations (S.I. No. 179 of 1994).

7.6.8 Foul Sewerage

All discharges of trades effluents to sewerage networks or receiving waters shall be subject of a Water Pollution Act Discharge Licence. Where specified appropriate pre-treatment of trade effluents shall be required prior to discharge to council sewers.

7.6.9 Public Water Supplies

All supplies to industrial developments shall be metered and consumers shall be charged on basis of usage in accordance with guide-lines set out in National Water Services Pricing Policy.

7.7 Retail and Commercial Facilities

7.7.1 Introduction

Traditionally, the main destination for shopping has been town and village centres. These also acted as the focus for a variety of other activities including business, social, leisure and residential uses. At a more local level, shopping needs were met through a network of neighbourhood centres and individual shops. Recent trends have seen the decline of small independent grocers and the emergence of larger supermarkets and car based shopping at 'out-of-town' locations. These emerging trends in the retail sector have increasingly influenced shopping patterns and created a demand for large shopping centres at locations where extensive car parking facilities area available.

As required under the provisions of the Retail Planning Guidelines and as detailed in the Retail Strategy for County Louth, Dundalk and Drogheda are identified as being at the first tier in terms of retailing hierarchy in the county and Ardee as being at the second. The settlements of Dunleer, Blackrock, Castlebellingham, Carlingford, Clogherhead and Louth fit into the tier below this with facilities that provide only a limited range of retail services.

County Louth is strategically well placed to benefit from an increase inflow of retail trade. The aim of the retail strategy is to encourage and/or control retailing in such a manner as to best promote and safeguard the vitality and viability of town centres as the key locations for retailing in the county.

7.7.2 Retail Strategy for County Louth

The Retail Planning Guidelines for planning authorities were issued under the provisions of section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. As such, planning authorities are required to have regard to the guidelines and to prepare retail strategies for inclusion in their development plans prior to 30th June 2002.

The objectives of these guidelines were:

- to ensure that policies and proposals for retail development be incorporated into development plans
- to facilitate a healthy competitive environment for the retail industry
- to promote forms of retail development that are accessible, particularly by public transport
- to protect the role of town centres as principle shopping areas
- to resist large retail centres close to national roads or motorway interchanges

The Retail Study for County Louth, as required under the provisions of the Retail Planning Guideline, was produced in 2001. This study identified that in the county retail hierarchy

Dundalk and Drogheda were level 1 (which is the 3rd level nationally), Ardee level 2 with other towns and villages within the county falls into level 3.

This study concludes that Dundalk and Drogheda are well positioned to be the leading retail centres between Belfast and Dublin. It is considered that significant additional convenience and comparison floor space should be accommodated in both towns and additional bulky goods floor space in Drogheda over the next five years.

Ardee, although found to have a pleasant shopping environment, has relatively high vacancy rates and hence, in the short term (up to 2007) additional retail floor space can largely be accommodated in existing vacant premises.

This study recommended that:

- free standing regional shopping malls on green field sites should not be permitted in County Louth
- that there is no identified need for additional district shopping centres in County Louth
- strict assessment should be applied to discount food stores
- a factory outlet centre should be located in County Louth.
- town and village centres should continue to be the preferred location for convenience and limited comparison shopping
- the sequential test should be applied in respect of all planning applications for retail development
- retail development on petrol filling station forecourts should be restricted to 100m²

The retail objectives and policies as set out below are derived from those recommended in the retail study.

7.7.3 Strategic objectives

- to protect and enhance the role of all towns and villages within the county as the primary location for retailing activity with particular emphasis on maintaining the vitality and viability of town and village centres.
- to protect the role of Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee as the principle shopping towns in the county and to promote their roles as important county and regional retailing centres.
- to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of small towns and villages and maintain their role as local shopping and service centres.
- to ensure that adequate provision is made in new residential areas to meet the day to day shopping and service needs of residents.

7.7.4 Policy

P 7.4

Having regard to the above strategic objectives and the Louth Retail Strategy it will be policy of the council:

- to seek the implementation of the provisions contained in the document – *A Retail Strategy for County Louth*.
- to resist the provision of large scale retail developments outside town centres
- to facilitate and promote the provision of additional retail floor space within town centres.
- to resist large retail developments at motorway interchanges.
- to improve access to town centres, including public transport, car parking and traffic management
- to promote and facilitate the redevelopment/renewal of town centres
- to improve the appearance and environment of town centres
- to promote the provision of neighbourhood or local centres typically comprising a newsagent/small supermarket, post office and other small shops of a local nature serving a small, localised catchment population in residential areas commensurate with locally generated needs.
- to limit the net sales area on the forecourt of petrol filling stations to 100m².
- to limit the floor area of new convenience food stores to 3000 m².
- to discourage the location of discount food stores in out of town locations. The preferred location for such development is in vacant warehouse type buildings within the built up area.
- to facilitate the provision of a factory outlet centre in the county. The assessment of any application for a factory outlet centre will be carried out in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, the Retail Planning Guidelines 2000 and the Louth Retail Strategy 2002.
- to restrict retail, service, industrial, commercial developments such as banks and other professional services, restaurants, takeaways, office use, amusement arcades or other entertainment uses to ground floor unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - the proposal would not harm the viability of any shopping unit; and
 - separate and safe access to the upper floors is provided; and
 - there would be no loss of existing residential accommodation and no demonstrable harm to the living conditions of any neighbouring residents in terms of noise, cooking smells or general disturbance; (Where permission is

granted for such uses, conditions relating to hours of opening soundproofing and the dispersal of cooking odours will be imposed where necessary to ensure the protection of residential amenity.)

- to require that off-street car parking spaces be provided to cater for new retail and commercial developments, including expansion of existing premises in accordance with the council's parking standards set out in table 8.4 Chapter 8 Transport and Communications. Where off street parking cannot be provided in full within the curtilage of the development, a financial contribution in lieu of the car parking provision may be acceptable at the discretion of the planning authority;
- to carry out health checks to monitor the vitality and viability of town centres and require that all applications for major retail development be accompanied by an assessment of the likely impact of the development on the existing town centre;
- to apply sequential test to all applications for retail development wishing to locate outside defined town centres;
- to encourage retail development in Ardee and other towns and villages at a scale that is commensurate with the existing fabric and built form of the settlement;
- to encourage the redevelopment of non-conforming land uses in town / village centres, to uses permitted within that land use zone;
- to encourage development that is consistent with the vernacular architecture of the area, particularly buildings with immediate street frontages. The council however will encourage innovation with regard to the interpretation of the form of new developments so as to arrive at solutions that can be integrated with the existing physical characteristics of the area;
- to ensure that new developments have regard to views of existing landmark buildings.

7.8 Town Centre Development Guidelines and Standards

7.8.1 Environmental improvements to shopping areas

The planning authority will encourage the improvement of the environment of shopping areas through such means as:

- good design in new developments, refurbishments and conversions,
- landscaping, street furniture and public art works
- improved traffic management and parking
- improvements to pavements and access for the disabled
- improvements to public transport waiting facilities

7.8.2 Shopfront Design

The council will expect a high standard of design in proposals for all new shopfronts. Regard should be given to the following:

- the shopfront should respect the building's elevation and architectural details. Particularly, period shopfronts on protected structures and in conservation areas should be retained.
- the design should take into account adjacent shopfronts where they make a positive contribution to the streetscape;
- where a shopfront involves two or more units the shopfront should correspondingly be divided with separate fascias and columns used to divide the separate units;
- entrances should be fully accessible to all such as people with mobility difficulties, older people and carers with young children in pushchairs;
- solid roller shutters detract from the overall appearance of a building and will not normally be acceptable.
- Where possible, shutter boxes should be recessed behind the fascia. Chain link internal shutters behind glass are preferable to opaque external ones.

7.8.3 Advertisements/Hoardings

Advertisements form an integral part of most shop fronts and commercial areas. However the proliferation of insensitive displays of advertisements can seriously detract from the visual quality of the area and have implications for public safety. The following guidelines will apply:

- all advertisement should be of a size, design, scale and degree of illumination which is compatible with the surrounding area.
- advertisements above fascia level will normally be refused and only one projecting sign per unit will be allowed at fascia level.
- planning permission will not be granted if it would result in a proliferation of advertisements and signs or adversely affect the amenities of the area or if the advert would adversely affect the safety or free flow of traffic, including pedestrian traffic.
- where finger posts or other similar small scale signs are permitted on public roads and footpaths, these shall be subject to licence under section 254 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.
- free standing advertisements or advertisement hoardings will be discouraged.

7.8.4 Access to upper floors/servicing arrangements

New shopfronts, alteration and extensions should maintain or improve separate access to upper floors, preferably leading directly to the street

Extensions to premises will be resisted if this would result in an unacceptable loss of existing or potential access, parking or servicing facilities to the unit or any other unit on site.

7.8.5 Plot Ratios

The maximum plot ratio permitted is 2.0. Development to maximum plot ratio will be accepted only where it conforms to other criteria such as height, site coverage, necessary open space, refuse storage facilities, protection of the amenities of adjoining premises, etc.

7.8.6 Site Coverage

Site coverage shall not exceed 80%. A particular standard of site coverage may be accepted only where it is consistent with other factors such as necessary open space, car-parking provision, protection of amenities of adjoining premises, etc.

7.8.7 Height

The height of building should respect the height of adjoining structures on either side. Normally buildings in excess of 4 storeys in height will be resisted.

7.8.8 Overshadowing/Overlooking

Where 3 /4 storey buildings are proposed adjoining or adjacent to existing lower buildings, the planning authority will require that the developer submit daylight and shadow projection diagrams and demonstrate that the adjoining properties will not be unduly affected by the proposed development.

Windows/balconies of new building should avoid overlooking of adjoining property, particularly residential property.

7.8.9 Car Parking

Car parking shall be provided in accordance with the standards detailed in Table 8.4. In certain circumstances, the planning authority may accept a financial contribution in lieu of the provision of car parking.

Chapter 8 - Transport and Telecommunications

8.1 Transport

Louth occupies a strategic position on the east coast of Ireland mid-way between the two principal urban conurbations of Belfast and Dublin. The county is intersected by key transport links, the EO1 Euro route / M1 motorway, the national primary route (N2) to Dublin - Derry and the Dublin-Belfast rail line. The Euro-route connects key ports, including Larne, Dublin and Rosslare, which link Ireland with Europe. Sections of the EO1 route (Monasterboice to Dundalk) have already been completed whilst other sections are at an advanced planning stage. These sections include the Dundalk Western by-pass motorway between Haynestown and Ballymascanlon that is due to commence construction in 2003, and the A1/N1 Newry to Dundalk Link Road, where construction is expected to commence in 2004, subject to necessary approvals.

The national secondary routes, - N51 (Drogheda – Navan), N52 (Dundalk-Kells) and N53 (Dundalk – Castleblayney) provide important links to the remainder of the country. Regional and county routes distribute traffic throughout the county.

Within the county the car is by far the main form of transport. There are over 400 privately owned public service vehicles, which include taxis/hackneys and buses that operate in Louth in addition to the Department of Education licensed school transport. There are 27 bus routes servicing the county, two-third are operated by Bus Eireann and the remainder by private companies. There are two operating railway stations at Dundalk and Drogheda from which Iarnród Eireann runs 23 daily services. Dunleer station although closed in the 1970's, remains largely intact and it is the view of the planning authority that this station should be reopened as a sustainable form of transportation to serve the mid-Louth area.

(Source: Rural Transport: Service Audit and Needs Assessment)

Louth also contains a number of ports. These are located at Dundalk, Drogheda, Greenore and Clogherhead. The county is also in close proximity, having regard to improved transport links to other major ports on the east coast including facilities at Larne, Dublin and Rosslare. This allows for ease of transport to the wider markets of Europe and beyond. Louth also benefits from being close to the two major airports in Ireland – Belfast and Dublin international.

8.2 Rural Transport: Service Audit and Needs Assessment County Louth 2001.

This rural transportation study was conducted by an external consultant on behalf of the border counties, including Louth to ascertain the level of rural passenger transport services there is in the county and to identify inadequacies or gaps in provisions. This study revealed the following:

- 25% of people have a transport gap and these are mainly older people, people with disabilities, young people and people on low incomes,
- transport provision is poorly co-ordinated and integrated, resulting in uneconomic and inefficient use of existing resources and,

- main types of journey for which provision is required include work, shopping, education, health, access to personal services and social facilities.

8.3 Strategic Objectives

- to promote sustainable development within the county through the integration of transportation and land use policies in order to reduce the need to travel.
- to maintain road reservations and road improvement line free from development for those schemes that it is an objective of the planning authority to implement.
- to explore, in consultation with Iarnrod Eireann, Bus Eireann and any other interested parties, an expansion of the public transport system and improvement of facilities in the county.
- to ensure that all modes of transport are suitable for people with impaired mobility.
- to encourage pedestrian and cycling links in the county in order to increase the use of these modes of transport.

8.4 Policy

P 8.1

It is the policy of the planning authority:

- to prohibit any development if associate traffic movements would result in the creation of traffic hazard or traffic congestion.
- to seek to develop a more integrated policy on rural transport in order to address the needs gap identified in the rural transport audit.
- to apply the standards as set out in the *National Road's Authority – Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* and Louth County Councils' – *Guidelines for the Design and Construction of Housing Estates* and the Department of the Environment & Local Government's *Recommendations for site development works for housing areas..*
- to provide and maintain a road hierarchy based on motorway, national routes, regional routes and all county roads with the aim of maintaining the carrying capacity and lifespan of the road network, ensuring traffic safety and the avoidance of traffic hazards for motorists, pedestrians or other road users
- to require that a traffic assessment and safety audit be submitted with all permitted developments along national primary or secondary routes or where in the opinion of the planning authority is likely to have a significant affect on such a route.

Restrictions on development that would result in the creation of new entrances or the intensification of the use of existing entrances onto national and certain regional routes area set out in table 8.1 below

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
	Restrictions	Exemptions
National Routes		
Motorways	No direct access	
Dual carriageways	No direct access	
Single carriageways	No new dual access or intensification of existing access except in respect of exceptions outlined in column 3.	<p>a) Where the new access would eliminate a traffic hazard as determined by the planning authority.</p> <p>b) Where a new access is required for any major employment generating activity, including tourism or development of national or regional importance.</p> <p>c) Limited extensions to an authorised use</p> <p>d) Where a new access is to a fixed natural resource of national importance where, in the opinion of the planning authority, no other suitable vehicular access can be provided.</p> <p>e) Where a new access is required to serve the housing needs for a son/daughter of a landowner where no other site is available of a minor road and where the existing entrance servicing the family home is used.</p>
Regional Routes		
Protected regional routes	No new dual access or intensification of existing access except in respect of exceptions outlined in column 3.	<p>a) Where the new access would eliminate a traffic hazard as determined by the planning authority.</p> <p>(b) Where a new access is</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R173/R175 Dundalk – Greenore • R173/R176 Greenore–Carlingford–Omeath (Cornmucklagh) • R178-Dundalk – Carrickmacross 		

<p>(Essexford)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R171 Dundalk – Louth Village • R169 Dunleer – Collon • R168 Drogheda – Collon • R166 Drogheda – Termonfeckin • R132 Dundalk – Drogheda • R177 Dundalk - Armagh • Ballymakenny Cross Port Access • Dundalk Western Relief Road • R211 Monument to Capogue • N52 (old) to Ballybarrack 		<p>required for any major development, including tourism developments, of national, regional or local importance:-</p> <p>c) Where new access is to a fixed natural resource of national importance where, in the opinion of the planning authority, no other suitable vehicular access can be provided.</p> <p>d) Limited extensions to an authorised use</p> <p>e) Dwellings required to satisfy the housing needs of persons who have lived for not less than 10 years in the area, where no other site is available off a minor road, and where the existing entrance servicing the family home is used. A condition confining occupancy to a family member for a minimum of 7 years will be attached to any permission granted under this exemption.</p> <p>f) Where a new dwelling is required to meet the housing needs of a son/daughter of a landowner who has lived for period of not less than 10 years in the area, and where there is no access available onto a county road and where the entrance onto the existing family home cannot be used, consideration will be given for one new entrance only onto the adjoining protected regional route</p>
--	--	--

8.5 Visibility Standards

In respect of single dwellings, the minimum visibility standards as set out in table shall apply.

Table 8.2 Visibility Standard for Single Dwellings

Road Category	Sight distance (Y)	Height over ground	Distance back from edge of Carriageway (X)
Restricted National & Regional Routes	215m	1.05m	3m
Regional	125m	1.05m	3m
Local Class 1	75m	1.05m	3m
Local Class 2	50m	1.05m	3m
Local Class 3	50m	1.05m	3m
Local Class 3 (Cul de Sac)	35m	1.05m	3m

With regard to all other developments, whether a new or an intensification of use of an existing entrance is involved, the recommendations and standards contained in the document "*National Roads Authority – Design Manual for Roads and Bridges*" shall apply.

8.6 Motorway/Dual Carriageway

It is the policy of the planning authority to preserve free of development lands associated with construction of the motorway. Moreover, in relation to development of ~~the zoned~~ lands in the vicinity of the motorway, the restrictions outlined under the headings below shall be implemented:

1. building line: New 'one-off' dwellings shall be located a minimum of 100 metres from the fence line of the motorway.
2. lighting: external lighting of premises shall be oriented away from the motorway so as to ensure non-interference with or distraction of traffic using the route.
3. advertisement: advertisements oriented towards traffic on the motorway route shall not be permitted.

8.7 Specific Road Improvement Objectives

It is the objective of the planning authority to complete, over the course of this plan period, the road improvements programme set out in the table below.

Table 8.3 – Road Improvement Programme 2002 – 2008

(A) Motorways and National Primary Routes			
Ref.	Route	Location	Description
(i)	M1	Dundalk Western by-pass	Motorway Link
(ii)	M1	Drogheda By-pass	Motorway between Balbriggan By-pass and Dunleer By-pass
(iii)	N1	Ballymascanlon – Border	Realign and widen –dual carriageway
(iv)	N2	Ardee By-pass	New Road
(v)	N2	Ardee – Collon	General Improvements
(B) National Secondary Routes			
Ref.	Route	Location	Description
(i)	N52	Ardee – Co. Meath	New construction
(ii)	N51	Townley Hall to Co. Meath	Realign and Widen
(iii)	N52	Dunmahon – Ardee	General improvements
(iv)	N53	Dundalk – Rassan	Realignment and widening
(C) Regional Roads			
Ref.	Route	Location	Description
(i)	R166	Drogheda – Castlebellingham	General improvements
(ii)	R166	Castlebellingham – Tallanstown	General improvements
(iii)	R166	Drogheda – Termonfeckin	General improvements
(iv)	R168	Hill of Rath – Collon	General improvements
(v)	R169	Collon	Woodland Interchange – General improvements
(vi)	R171	Ardee - Louth Village	General improvements
(vii)	R171	Louth Village – Dundalk	General improvements
(viii)	R172	Greengates – Blackrock Village	General improvements
(ix)	R172	Blackrock Village – Dundalk	General improvements
(x)	R177	Kilcurry – Co. Armagh	General Improvements
(xi)	R178	Donaghmore – Co. Monaghan	Realignment and widening
(xii)	R173	Rockmarshall	Realignment and widening
(xiii)	R165	Shanlis – Lowtown	Realignment

It is a long term objective to undertake the necessary works to provide:

- Ballymakenny Cross Route Port Access
- Dundalk Western Relief Route

The council supports the provision of a grade separated interchange at the Dundalk Western Bypass (Armagh Road R177).

8.8 Omeath – Warrenpoint Road Link

Louth County Council appointed M.C.O'Sullivan & Co. Ltd., Consulting Engineer in 2000 to carry out a feasibility study of a bridge or a ferry crossing of the Newry River estuary between the Cooley Peninsula and South Down in the North of Ireland.

The conclusions of this study were that a fixed bridge link is a feasible proposal in preference to a ferry crossing and that a bridge could be justified on the basis of financial and traffic considerations. The study also highlighted that the design and operation of any crossing would have to meet most stringent environmental standards in order to be acceptable due to the NHA, SAC and the Northern Ireland AONB designation of this area.

It is an objective of the planning authority to seek the provision of a road link between Cooley and south County Down through the construction of a new bridge at Narrow Water.

8.9 Parking Provision

P 8.2

It is the policy of the planning authority:

- to ensure that adequate car parking facilities in accordance with the standards in table 8.4 below are provided for in respect of all new developments taking place in the area.
- to accept a financial contribution in lieu of the provision of car parking in limited circumstances, primarily in town centre locations, where the planning authority has provided or intends to provide additional public car parking spaces. The contribution shall be in accordance with the scheme of contributions approved by the planning authority.

Particular locations may dictate a variation in these standards. In the case of any uses not specified, the requirement will be determined on the basis of the likely demand for parking generated by that particular proposal. In parking areas, parking bays shall be at least 5 X 2.5 metres with circulation lanes at least 6 metres wide.

Parking bays for wheelchair and special need users shall be provided at a rate of 1 space per 10 spaces, and each space shall be a minimum of 3.5 metre wide.

In addition to the car parking standards, sufficient space will be required for all service vehicles involved in the operation of the business or building within the curtilage of the site.

Table 8.4

Car Parking Requirements

Land-use	Urban/Brownfield No. of Spaces per Unit	Sub-urban/Greenfield No. of Spaces per Unit
Dwellings	1 per dwelling	2 per dwelling
Apartments	1 per dwelling	2 per dwelling
Residential Institutions	1 per two units	1 per two units
Retail	1 per 20m ²	1 per 10m ²
Bar /Discos/Dancehalls	1 per 5 m ² public space	1 per 5 m ² public space
Restaurant/Function Room	1 per 10 m ² public space	1 per 5 m ² public space
Hotel/Guest House	1 per 2 bedrooms	1 per bedroom
Offices	1 per 40 m ²	1 per 30 m ²
Banks /Financial Inst.	1 per 30 m ²	1 per 25 m ²
Industrial	1 per 50 m ²	1 per 50 m ²
Warehousing	1 per 100 m ²	1 per 75 m ²
Retail Warehousing*	1 per 40 m ²	1 per 25 m ²
Cash & Carry	1 per 50 m ²	1 per 25 m ²
Showrooms	1 per 50 m ²	1 per 25 m ²
Cinemas/Theatres	1 per 10 seats	1 per 5 seats
Conference Halls/churches	1 per 10 seats	1 per 5 seats
Schools	1 per class room	1 per class room
Clinics/Doctor's Surgery	2 spaces per consulting room	2 spaces per consulting room
Leisure Centres/ Clubs	1 per 50 m ² public space	1 per 30 m ² public space
Nursing Homes	1 per employee & 0.5 per bed	1 per employee & 0.5 per bed

* Retail warehouses are purpose built warehouse buildings for the purpose of retailing bulky products such as furniture, white electrical goods, DIY and carpets which are difficult to retail in town centre locations.

8.10 Public Transport

Within the county the car is by far the main form of transport. Public transport is provided by way of taxis/hackneys, buses and the two railway stations in the county. However the Rural Transport Service Audit and Needs Assessment County Louth has identified that there are presently gaps and inadequacies in the transport system.

P 8.3

It is the policy of the planning authority:

- to seek to achieve a balance between the use of private transport with the need to promote alternative modes of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking.
- to explore in consultation with Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann and any other interested parties, an expansion of the public transport system and improvement of facilities in the area.
- to ensure that all modes of transport are suitable for people with impaired mobility including the provision of parking facilities that disabled access facilities are incorporated into existing /new development.
- to seek to develop an integrated policy on rural transport in order to address the need gaps identified in the rural transport audit.
- to seek to provide pedestrian and cyclist paths especially where they would provide shorter, safer or more pleasant routes, so as to encourage and facilitate walking and cycling.

8.10.1 Rail

The main Dublin/Belfast rail line passes through the county with two operating railway stations located in Dundalk and Drogheda. There is a good frequency of service to both Dublin and Belfast and the introduction of the Enterprise Inter-City service has reduced journey time to just under one hour in both directions. Other services from Dundalk and Drogheda have improved commuter traffic facilities as there has been significant increase in demand for this service in recent years. This includes the provision of additional parking facilities at both Dundalk and Drogheda stations. Iarnród Éireann has also invested in improvements to the line, rolling stock and signalling equipment.

The council welcomes the commitment of Iarnród Éireann to upgrading the rail line, service infrastructure and frequency and acknowledges the important role that improved rail infrastructure will have in the economic development of the county. In conjunction with the Euro Route 1 motorway, the rail service affords an exceptionally high standard and level of transportation for the county which is second to none elsewhere in the country.

8.10.2 Policy

P 8.4

Having regard to the above, it is the policy of the council to:

- support Iarnród Éireann's efforts to improve the quality of the rail infrastructure and service available within County Louth
- seek the re-opening of the Dunleer railway station
- seek the opening of a new rail station/halt north of the River Boyne in Drogheda.

8.10.3 Bus Service

The council acknowledges the fact that Bus Éireann provides an excellent service linking Dundalk and Drogheda with the capital and other larger centres of population throughout the country. The Bus Éireann Service is supplemented by a number of private operators and the level of competition offered is considered as beneficial to the county and its inhabitants. The council fully support the providers of such services in the expansion and further development of the bus service available within the county.

The results of the Rural Transportation Service Audit and needs assessment for County Louth (2001) revealed that there are significant gaps in the internal county public transportation system. These gaps affect mainly older people, people with disabilities, young people and people on low incomes.

8.10.4 Policy

P 8.5

The council will seek, in co-operation with other public bodies, agencies and community groups to secure improvements in public transportation within the county and greater co-ordination and integration of existing and any proposed new services.

8.11 Air and Sea Ports

County Louth has excellent accessibility to both air and sea ports located along the East Coast of Ireland. Belfast and Dublin International Airports are within 90 minutes drive time from most of the county area. The completion of the motorway will greatly reduce the travel time to Dublin Airport; for this reason, it is not considered as a priority that a regional airport be located within the county in order to promote continued economic growth and development. However the council will keep an open mind on the provision of such a facility and will view any such proposal on its merits based on consideration of the economic social and planning arguments presented.

Good access to seaports is of essential importance to economic development, particularly in an Island country such as Ireland. The Euro Route 1 motorway and Belfast/Dublin/Rosslare Rail Link affords excellent accessibility to all major ports on the east coast including Larne in the North of Ireland, Dublin Port and Rosslare.

In addition county Louth has three commercial ports and one fishing port located within its boundaries; Drogheda, Dundalk, Greenore and Clogherhead.

The council supports continued investment in the county's ports and will facilitate the continued development of each insofar as it is within its remit to do so. In this regard, the council

welcomes the fact the Greenore port has recently been purchased by the Dublin Port Authority and looks forward to co-operating with that body in the development of the port facility.

The council will also support the continued development of Dundalk Ports and Drogheda and the fishing port of Clogherhead. With regard to the latter the council has already carried out major improvements to the quay and land based facilities during the period of the previous plan and further improvements will be undertaken as funds become available.

P 8.6

It is the policy of the council to support continued expansion and development of the sea ports located within the county and to facilitate improved road access to thereto. The council will also seek to improve the national road network so that accessibility to sea and airports along the east coast is improved and travel time reduced.

8.12 Service Stations

Any new service stations should generally be located on the edge of the built areas of towns and villages within the speed limit areas. The planning authority will not permit any new service station that would access directly onto the motorway.

P 8.7

It is the policy of the planning authority that generally all new service stations, with the exception of motorway related services be located at the edge of towns and villages within speed limit areas.

When assessing the acceptability of a service station, the following factors shall be taken into consideration:

- safety at access and egress.
- effect on amenities of other adjoining uses, particularly residential.
- impact on built form and townscape.
- quality of design, layout and materials used.
- compliance with the requirements of Dangerous Substances regulations (1979).

All applications for service stations shall include proposals for advertisements, materials to be used in hard surface areas and boundaries, landscaping and screening.

8.13 Motorway Services

Planning applications for motorway related service station will be considered on their individual merits having regard to considerations of the need for such services, traffic safety and visual amenity grounds. Direct access onto the motorway will not be permitted.

An application for a motorway service station shall include proposals for advertisements, materials to be used in hard surface areas and boundaries, landscaping and screening, picnic area, toilets, restaurant facility.

8.14 Telecommunications

The government's telecommunication policy aims to place Ireland in the top quartile of OECD economics as regards the availability, price and quality of telecommunication services. Such a high quality and competitive telecommunications service is considered essential in order to promote industrial and commercial development, to improve personal and household security and to enhance social inclusion and mobility. The council fully accepts the importance of a high quality telecommunications service at national, regional and local level and will seek to promote and facilitate the provision and continued development of such a service within county Louth, insofar as is falls within its capacity to do so. In this regard, the council will seek to co-operate with the providers and operators of such services within county Louth in the national and county interests.

P 8.8

It is the policy of the council to promote and facilitate the continuous development of the telecommunications system within the county and to work in co-operation with the providers and operators of such services towards achieving a high quality and competitive service within the county.

8.14.1 Land based telephony

The importance of the traditional land based telephony has decreased over recent years due to the rapid upsurge in demand and developments in mobile telephony. Nevertheless, land based telephony remains as an essential part of the telecommunications networks.

The conventional land based telecommunications network is well developed and of a high standard throughout the county. The service is continually being upgraded by the service providers. New land based connections are currently available on demand subject to a maximum of a 4 weeks waiting period.

There are two major telephone exchanges located within the county located in Dundalk and Drogheda. These handle calls from a number of smaller exchanges located throughout the county. The system is fully automated since the 1980s.

8.14.2 Broadband

Because of rigidities in the market place, the government is increasingly encouraging local authorities to become directly involved in the provision of broadband and associated technologies. In this regard, Louth County Council is jointly involved in two initiatives as follows:

1. Dundalk Technology City Project:-

In conjunction with the other local agencies, the intention here is to provide the infrastructure to enable existing and new high technology/knowledge based enterprise to grow and develop by providing :

- education and training
- planning and amenities
- telecommunications
- public relations

- finance and incentives
- human resources services
- utilities and infrastructure

This will dovetail with the roll out of bandwidth as envisaged in the National Development Plan. Indeed, the town of Dundalk is already well served by national standards and may well become a test lab for the next generation technologies. The concentration to date has been on fixed bandwidth. However, the way forward is likely to involve the convergence of mobile technologies with fixed bandwidth in order that Dundalk can differentiate itself from other towns. The proposed establishment of a multi media lab by DKIT at the former Carrolls building will also be an integral part of this initiative. In turn, the project will serve as a test bed for new technologies while the result is likely to involve a seamless internet infrastructure and a better understanding of its potential uses and benefits – e.g. E/M Business, E/M-learning, E/M-health, E government etc. The next step will be to identify the most appropriate service and market segment for the purposes of establishing knowledge based clusters.

2. In a similar vein, the north east broad band proposal, encompassing Monaghan, Cavan and Louth County Councils, envisages the installation of metropolitan routes (metro rings) in the following six urban areas Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Kingscourt, Cavan, Dundalk and Drogheda. The total combined length of the network to be installed is approximately 50 kilometers. In the case of Dundalk, for example, the completion of the local loop is envisaged. Finally, Eircom have also submitted an application to the relevant government department for a project involving DSL provision in rural areas.

It is the objective of the planning authority to co-operate with initiatives such as the above.

8.14.3 Mobile Telephony

There has been considerable advances made in extending the mobile telephony network and service in the county in recent years. Notwithstanding the fact that there has been some local resistance to the erection of telecommunication masts and antennae, the number of such structures has increased considerably since the adoption of the 1997 Louth County Development Plan.

It remains the policy of the council to support the provision of such infrastructure within the county in the interests of economic, commercial, social and cultural development. In dealing with planning applications for masts and antennae, the council will be guided by the provisions of the document "Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structure – Guidelines for planning Authorities" issued by the Department of the Environment in July 1996.

The council proposes to write to all operators of mobile telephony to determine the number of masts and antennae and the extent of the coverage provided within the county and to investigate the feasibility of shared facilities.

8.14.4 Strategic objective

To secure the provision of a high quality competitive mobile telephony network throughout the county having regard to the principles of sustainable development, the protection of the environment and protection of amenities within residential areas.

8.14.5 Policy

P 8.9

With regard to the provisions of mobile telephony infrastructure, it is the policy of the council to:

- encourage and facilitate pre-planning discussions with service providers and operators prior to the submission of planning applications
- subject to radio and engineering parameters, secure a high quality of design of such infrastructure in the interests of visual amenity and the protection of sensitive landscapes
- encourage co-location of infrastructure where practical
- operate a presumption against the location of masts/towers where such structures would interfere with any view or prospect considered necessary to protect in the development plan, on exposed mountain tops or ridges, in areas of outstanding natural beauty, where such structures would interfere with or detract from any national monument, archaeological or historic site, sites of social, cultural or scientific interest or any protected structure architectural conservation area or designated national or European sites
- operate a presumption against the location of masts/towers in predominately residential areas or beside schools
- require that operators applying for planning permission for mobile telephony infrastructure furnish to the planning authority a statement of compliance with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Guidelines(Health Physics Vol.54 NO. 1(Jon)1988 or the equivalent European Pre-standard 50166-2 which has been conditioned with the licensing arrangements with the Department of Transport, Energy and Communications and to furnish evidence that an installation of the type applied for complies with the above guidelines
- ensure that all sites are fenced off and made secure with anti-climbing devices incorporated into design
- ensure that the colour and finish of masts, towers and antennae blend and harmonise with their surroundings, reflective grey (galvanised) is considered as the most appropriate colour for masts and antennae located in the open countryside. Such structure attached to buildings should harmonise with the colour of the building or structure to which it is attached
- not to permit mobile telephony stations within 1 km of a school.

8.14.6 Obsolete Structures

Obsolete mobile telecommunication structures must be removed by the operator and this will be a condition of any permission granted for such structures. It will also be a requirement that the site be re-instated at the operator's expense when such structures are removed. A bond or cash deposit will be sought to ensure compliance with any such condition imposed. Permission for such structures will normally be for a period of 5 years only. Any permission granted for a further period on the site will be conditional on the replacement of the obsolete technology with more modern and environmentally friendly designs where these have become available.

Chapter 9 – Environment and Services

9.1 Introduction

Environmental services incorporates sanitary, environment and veterinary departments. Our Environmental Services aim to ensure the highest possible standards in the provision of services relating to public health and in an ever changing environment. The council currently provides and maintains the infrastructure of water, sewerage and waste.

9.2 Context

The extent of investment in public infrastructure in County Louth has been very pronounced in recent years. This has been a major feature of the development of the county in terms of population increase, housing development, the provision of community/recreational facilities, and industrial/commercial development. The availability of such high quality infrastructure and the existence of a high quality environment cumulatively make Louth an attractive place in which to invest, reside, and work or to simply enjoy. However these factors also put additional pressures on our environment.

The council's response to these pressures has been proactive rather than reactive with a number of plans being prepared to deal with the demands of such marked growth. It is an objective that all environmental issues will be addressed in a fundamental way in order to ensure continued sustainable growth and to continue the impetus in favour of modern, state-of-the-art and high quality public infrastructural services and facilities.

The long-term economic social and environmental well being of Louth is dependant on maintaining the highest possible standards of environmental quality. This chapter outlines the policies and objectives of the Council in relation to the protection and management of these fundamental elements together with details on future programmes of investment in new infrastructure e.g. water, sewerage, waste disposal and any additional public utilities.

9.3 European, National and Regional Policy

A feature of environmental services is the impact of, not only national legislation, but also EU requirements which are translated into legally binding directives. Regionally, environmental matters have also become an issue because of the accepted principal that pollution has no borders and so cannot be dealt with by one body in isolation. A number of regional approaches have been published and forthcoming documents will be prepared to addresses this such as:

- North East Waste Management Plan
- River Basin Management Systems
- Nutrient Management Plans.

Government has also contributed with standards, publications and requirements becoming national policy and requiring local implementations. These include:

- Water Pricing Framework;
- Universal Commercial Water Metering;
- Public Private Partnership Initiatives;
- EPA Landfill Manuals;
- EPA Standards for Septic Tank Systems;
- Department of Agriculture Standards for Dairies;
- Food Safety Authority of Ireland Standards for Abattoirs and Stand Alone Cutting Plants.

9.4 Strategic Objective

It is the objective of the council to pursue the long-term economic, social and environmental prosperity of Louth by ensuring that the council leads by example in complying with EU, national and regional policy for the benefit of the residents of County Louth and its visitors and to ensure the highest possible environmental standards so that a high quality, sustainable environment can be bequeathed for the benefit of future generations.

9.5 Strategic Environmental Policies

P 9.1

In this regard it shall be the policy of the Council to:

- adhere to european national and regional policy in relation to the protection of the environment and the pursuance of sustainable development principles in respect of the council's policies and procedures
- provide modern, state of the art public infrastructure and utilities for the people of County Louth.
- pursue the precautionary principle and the polluter pays principle approach in relation to planning applications dealing with environmental matters.
- promote and maintain the highest standards of air and water quality achievable.

9.6 Waste Management

9.6.1 General Policy Statement

The neglect of the issue of waste and its disposal in the past has put increasing pressure on Ireland's environment. This is occurring at a time of unprecedented levels of waste generation. There is widespread controversy nationally on how we should deal with the waste issue and a growing backlash against existing waste management efforts involving landfill and incineration. The existing scenario, which is dominated by waste disposal, is financially onerous on industrial, commercial and domestic sectors. A proper system of waste management which places priority on waste minimisation, re-use and recycling, is a potential material resource that

can generate economic activity and employment. It will also reduce the unacceptable pollution and repercussions caused by landfill. Against this background, the challenge for Louth is to facilitate the development of new infrastructure to minimise and handle waste products.

The particular waste problems of Louth are confirmed by the closures of Dundalk and Drogheda Town landfill sites and the now total dependence on the county site at Whiteriver, Dunleer. Louth County Council has applied to An Bord Pleanála for planning approval for a substantial extension to the Whiteriver site and in association has applied to the Environmental Protection Agency for a licence to extend the site to 100,000 tonne capacity per year.

The Waste Management Act 1996 and subsequent Waste Management (Planning) Regulations 1997 require local authorities to prepare Waste Management Plans for their functional areas. Implicit in this is the integrated approach to resource management in which land-use planning will play a central role. The location and networking of waste facilities is an inherent spatial consideration requiring joint monitoring and review of waste management areas.

The Waste Management Strategy for the North East introduced for the first time a regional approach to the waste management issue. The document covers the counties: of Cavan, Louth, Meath and Monaghan. It sets out proposals for managing waste over the period 1999-2004, sets targets as far forward as 15 years which accords with national and EU policy.

9.6.2 Waste Management Policies

P 9.2

In light of this it is the policy of the council to:

- require that all new developments, where appropriate, comply with the recommendations of the Waste Management Plan for the North East Region with particular emphasis on the reduction of waste and the development of infrastructure for reuse, recycling and disposal in the most appropriate manner
- increase environmental awareness through education in relation to waste management
- expand the number of bring sites and civic amenity sites throughout the county
- require developers to provide the civil infrastructure for such sites at proposed and completion stations, over certain thresholds.
- facilitate the provision of separate collection systems for segregated domestic waste
- support the provision of facilities for the proper recovery and disposal of all wastes.
- identify and support the provision of an extension to Whiteriver Landfill Site

- prohibit development of the Boycetown Quarry lands until such a time as a full risk assessment has been carried out by competent professionals
- co-operate with private companies and not for profit companies for direct provision of such services and any other arrangement that can deliver the required infrastructure. Such facilities will be subject to the requirements of waste management licensing and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area
- fulfil all the objectives stated in the North East Waste Management Plan.

9.6.3 Existing Waste Management Facilities in County Louth

In Louth County Council's functional area there are at present twenty two bring centres located in:

- | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| - Blackrock | Clogherhead | Ardee | Kilsaran | Jeninstown |
| - Carlingford | Omeath | Dromiskin | Ballymakellet | Tullydonnell |
| - Dunleer | Bellurgan | Collon | Kilkerley | |
| - Walshestown | Monvallet | Louth Vill. | Kilcurry | |

There are currently 9 bring centres in Drogheda and these are;

- | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| - Bolton Square | Abbey car park | Mell | Platin Rd | King Street |
| - Wheaton Hall | North Rd (Mace) | Money more | | Millmount |

There are 8 bring centres in Dundalk located at the following:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|---------------|
| - Hoey's Lane | Barrack Street | Long Walk | Ecco Rd |
| - Meadow Grove | Ramparts/Grays Lane | | Castletown Rd |
| - Car park Harp Lager Brewery | | | |

Further bring bank facilities are planned for the county, their locations will be the subject of public consultation.

9.7 Sludge Management

Disposal of sludge from wastewater treatment plants is becoming an increasingly difficult and expensive process. Sludge is no longer acceptable at Whiteriver landfill site, operated by Louth County Council. Accordingly, options for disposal of sludges are as follows:

- Disposal at a facility authorised in accordance with the Waste Management Act, 1996;
- Disposal on lands in accordance with the Waste Management (use of sewage sludge in agriculture) Regulations, 1998 and Waste Management (Amendment of Waste Management Act, 1996) Regulations 1998.

Disposal of sludge on lands is becoming increasingly common and such disposal is specifically regulated in the Regulations identified at (2) above. It is encumbant on the owner of the wastewater treatment plant to ensure that sludges are properly disposed of.

9.8 Illegal Dumping

Illegal Dumping continues to be an unsettling trend in County Louth and a subject of serious concern to everyone. Under the provisions of the Waste Management Act, unauthorised disposal of waste in rural or urban areas can result in prosecutions whether private individuals or corporate bodies have committed the unauthorised dumping. Waste materials including soil, construction and demolition waste etc (as prescribed in the act) require authorisation in accordance with the Waste Management Act for recovery/disposal. The dispersal of waste material now requires appropriate authorisation in accordance with environmental and planning legislation. Those who intend to carry out such activity are advised to consult with the Environmental Protection Agency or the Council's Environment Department. The placing of 'fill' on low-lying or poorly drained sites requires authorisation in accordance with the Waste Management Act, in addition to authorisation in accordance with the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000.

9.9 Litter Management

Litter is a major environmental problem that significantly detracts from the visual appearance of both rural and urban areas. Furthermore, it poses a risk to human health and displays a negative image of the county, particularly from a tourist perspective. Under Section 10 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 each local authority was required to prepare a Litter Management Plan for their own functional area. This plan is reviewed every three years. An amended plan was prepared in July 2002 on behalf of Louth Local Authorities and was adopted in September 2002 for the period of 3 years.

In this regard it is the policy of the council to:

- **fully implement the provisions of the Litter Management Plan**
- **impose appropriate conditions on planning permission particularly where there is the potential for significant litter generation**

9.10 Water and Sewerage

A high standard of water and sewerage infrastructure is fundamental to achieving orderly sustainable development compatible with the requirements of the forthcoming National Spatial Strategy and the Louth Housing Strategy. Louth County Council currently operates and maintains 14 public water supply schemes that serve approximately 9,070 households (71% of rural population). Louth county council also operates and maintains 17 public sewerage schemes serving approximately 4,500 households (40% of the rural population).

9.10.1 Natural Water Systems/Groundwater

Groundwater is an important natural resource which has an inherent ecological and economic value; water sustains life, health, and agriculture and is vital to the survival of eco-systems.

Groundwater also contributes to rivers, lakes and sea and therefore influences its amenity and recreational value. However the quality of groundwater is being continually threatened by human activities that cause pollution of groundwater resources. Development pressures, increases in population and the intensification of agriculture, particularly the spreading of animal slurry and farmyard wastes such as silage effluent and soiled water, as well as septic tank effluent have all led to an increased risk of environmental pollution. These include groundwater and surface water systems; rivers and lakes, estuarine and coastal waters.

Poor agricultural management causes nutrients to be washed into ground and surface water. This results in contamination of water sources, making them unfit for human consumption. A more serious effect is eutrophication where the nutrients released into water causes new forms of algae and plant life to grow, thus leading to further contamination of drinking water supplies and a loss of biodiversity (see below). Once contamination has occurred it is costly and difficult to rectify.

The EU Water Framework Directive sets out a comprehensive and integrated approach to water management. The directive places an onus on local authorities to achieve 'good status' for all natural waters within the county within a 15-year timeframe. These include ground water, rivers, lakes and estuarine coastal waterways. The quality of water in Louth is monitored on a regular basis against a list of criteria, the results of which are made available to the public. Increased education and awareness of water quality is essential to the improvement of water quality standards.

9.10.2 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones

Protection of groundwaters and surface waters from pollution by nitrates is becoming an issue of increasing significance and an EU Directive requires remedial actions in this regard. The presence of high levels of nitrate in soil is a health hazard as sources of drinking water can be contaminated. Nitrate can also contribute to eutrophication and this is particularly harmful to coastal/ marine resources. Accordingly, areas of the county have been designated 'nitrate vulnerable' (i.e. groundwater contamination by nitrates outside the limits identified and a 'nitrates vulnerable' designation has been applied). Two areas of County Louth exhibit high nitrates in groundwater and these require further investigation. These areas are Sheepgrange and Tullyallen. Such further investigation is being conducted at present. In areas at risk from water pollution, further intensive farming activity may be restricted, a primary consideration being the management of manures and fertilisers. At present, the local authority requires a nutrient management plan for the spreading of animal slurries as part of a planning application involving storage of such material. Provision of such plans is likely to become a more frequent requirement.

9.10.3 Policies for Water Protection

P 9.3

In light of the above it is the policy of the council to:

- implement water protection measures to prevent any deterioration of 'good status' waters and to restore unsatisfactory waters to 'good status
- introduce a comprehensive and integrated approach to the management of our natural water resources
- ensure the provision of modern sewerage treatment systems in towns and villages that have insufficient capacity to meet current and future needs where they do not meet modern standards and where they represent a pollution risk to local watercourses.
- raise public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect it by providing useable and accessible information to the public on water quality in the county.
- require developers to submit sustainable urban drainage systems (S.U.D.S.) based designs for the management of surface water from new developments. Such designs shall endeavour to maintain runoff from developed site at pre development "greenfield" levels.

9.10.4 Flooding and Surface Water

Flooding is a natural event that can be exacerbated by natural and manmade occurrences. The council supports the precautionary principle whereby action is taken now to avoid possible environmental degradation in the future. The council will restrict development locating in areas that function as local floodplains. Floodplains and bogland will be actively protected to ensure that the flood regime of the area is properly maintained.

9.10.5 Strategic Objective

To adhere to the principles of sustainable development, utilising the precautionary principle as a basis for decision-making in respect of developments that may impact on, or be impacted upon, by flooding and/or surface water considerations.

9.10.6 Policies for Flooding and Surface water:

P 9.4

It shall be a policy of the Council to:

- prepare an appraisal of the likely flood risk areas in the county and subsequently prepare a 'flood risk strategy' to identify the most vulnerable areas and set out mitigating measures to address them
- minimise the negative impact of new development on existing watercourses and groundwater sources from a flooding and environmental degradation perspective by integration of 'best management practice' in the control and regulation of surface water runoff from new developments.
- prohibit development on or adjacent to flood plains where such development may have a negative impact on flood control, access for channel maintenance or future flood control works or might contribute to environmental degradation were flooding were to occur.
- restrict new development that would unacceptably increase the risk of flooding of existing developments and lands.
- retain and protect existing morphological features which contribute to the attenuation of surface water runoff.
- discourage the culverting of watercourses unless a developer can demonstrate that other alternatives are disproportionately expensive or impractical.
- prevent the discharge of surface water onto public roadway from adjacent lands and developments

Applicants may be required to submit hydrological surveys and assessment information in support of their proposals where they are within a known flood risk area and may be required to make a contribution to flood defences.

9.11 Water Supply

Table 9.1 below summarises the existing water supply facilities in the county and development proposals in respect of same.

The County Louth Rural Water Strategic Plan addresses both the short-term objectives for the upgrading of existing supplies and distribution networks as well as the strategic direction the council aims to pursue. Costs associated with implementation of this strategy will, to a large extent have to be funded by developers.

Significant supply constraints currently exist in Dunleer, Tullyallan, Clogherhead /Termonfeckin and Omeath and these have been prioritised for attention. The existing distribution network is adequate in most areas with upgrading of older pipe assets in Clogherhead and parts of Blackrock and the provision of additional storage capacity in the Smarmore/Blakestown, Clogherhead and Omeath area, also being prioritised.

Table 9.1 : Water Supply – Work Proposals

Scheme	Spare Capacity	Proposals
Ardee	Limited	Increase in capacity of treatment works and or development of additional Groundwater resources required.
Greenmount	Limited	Proposal to upgrade Mid-Louth and Dunleer Water supplies at Preliminary Report Stage. Part of current NDP proposals.
Dundalk South	Adequate	Adequate capacity available from Cavan Hill Source
Cooley	Adequate	Proposals for upgrading of network/storage and extension to Faughart, Ravensdale, Killcurry being prepared.
Tallanstown	Adequate	Plant upgrade required
Dunleer	N/a	Existing source to be abandoned. Proposal to upgrade Mid-Louth and Dunleer Water supplies at Preliminary Report Stage will address long term supply. Interim solution with limited capacity to cater for new development will be in place shortly
Collon	Very Limited	Limited supply will be a constraint on development. New supply being sourced to serve Tullyallan.
Clogherhead/ Termonfeckin	Limited	Limited additional supplies available from Drogheda. Network upgrade and increased reservoir capacity required. Groundwater potential being investigated.
Jeninstown	Adequate	Supplied from Cooley
Dunbin	Adequate	Supplied from Cavan Hill
Carlingford	Limited	Augmentation of spring supplies from Cooley scheme will be required on an ongoing basis in the not to distant future. Source protection issues.
Greenore	Adequate	Existing source unreliable and is currently being integrated into Cooley network.
Omeath	Very Limited	Development will be constrained by supply. Connection to Cooley scheme envisaged in medium term
Sheelagh	Adequate	Supplied from well/Northern Ireland.
Rathmore	Adequate	Proposals to integrate into Dunbin scheme.
Dundalk North	Adequate	Supplied from Dundalk UDC.

9.11.1 Policy for Water Supply

P 9.5

It is the policy of the council to:

- implement the Louth County Council Rural Water Strategic Plan on a phased basis, initially focusing on areas where water quality issues arise.
- implement Capital Program as set out in NDP 2002-2006. In particular to complete the Mid-Louth Dunleer Regional Water Scheme and to progress the Cooley Regional Water Scheme Stage II.
- upgrade and develop new sources, storage facilities and networks for Tullyallan, Clogherhead /Termonfeckin and Omeath Areas.
- co-operate and assist the existing group schemes in the County to meet their capacity and quality requirements.
- protect and develop, in a sustainable manner, existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the county and to restrict and control development in a manner consistent with the proper management of these resources. In particular to protect identified aquifers at Painstown, Milltown, Commons, Dromiskin, Collon, Togher and potentially significant aquifers in North Drogheda and Cooley areas.
- upgrade treatment facilities at Ardee, Tallanstown, Carlingford, Greenore, Omeath
- implement the Water Services Pricing Policy in respect of all non-domestic consumers and to recover all attributable costs associated with maintenance and upgrading of supplies and networks through implementation of the above policy apportioned on the basis of usage of the services. Universal metering of all non-domestic water service connections to be implemented by 2005.
- Develop, in association with the private sector, additional treatment and distribution capacity, where required to facilitate new developments. The cost of development of such infrastructure shall be borne in full by developers.
- develop and pursue effective water conservation strategies focusing on control of leakage and wastage in both distribution system and on individual consumer connections.
- expand networks, where possible, through Group Schemes to service areas currently without piped supplies.

9.12 On-site wastewater treatment & disposal facilities (Rural Housing)

9.12.1 Onsite Wastewater Treatment and Soil Percolation Systems

Applications for individual dwellings that require the provision of onsite-waste water treatment and soil percolation systems shall be required to:

satisfy the planning authority that domestic wastewater generated by the development can be adequately treated and safely disposed of within the boundaries of the site in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency's "Wastewater Treatment Manual Treatment Systems for Single Houses" (2000)

All sites that require the provision of an onsite wastewater treatment system or the upgrading of an existing system shall be subjected to the site characterisation process described in the publication. Site characterisation procedures should be carried out by competent professionally indemnified and suitably qualified persons approved by the planning authority and should be submitted on a detailed report form prepared in accordance with the standardised form described in the publication. The cumulative impact of such facilities will also be considered in the assessment of such proposals.

9.12.2 Certification of Wastewater Treatment System and Soil Percolation System installation works

In order to provide a satisfactory standard of development and avoid injury to any persons, property, services, groundwater and surface water resources in the adjacent and surrounding areas it will a requirement that the construction and installation of all wastewater treatment and drainage structures shall be supervised and certified fit for its intended purpose and in compliance with the planning authority requirements by an appropriately qualified competent chartered engineer. The developer shall submit such a certificate to the planning authority before use of an onsite wastewater treatment system commences.

9.13 Waste Water Treatment

9.13.1 Treatment Capacity

Table 9.2 summarises the existing wastewater treatment facilities in the county and indicates design capacity and current estimates of spare capacity

Table: 9.2: Existing waste water treatment facilities and current spare capacity

Scheme	Nominal Capacity(PE)	Current Load(PE)	Proposals
Anagassan	500	270	None
Ardee	5000	4800	Expansion of capacity (7,500) and network upgrade proposed as part on NDP. Capacity is a short term constraint on future development
Baltray/Termonfeckin	5000	800	
Blackrock	6000	5000	Medium Term proposal to pump to

			Dundalk STW. Capacity is currently a development constraint.
Carlingford	1500	750	None
Castlebellingham	1700	1100	Installation of Surface water drainage system
Collon	500	520	Plant upgrade proposed to 750PE
Clogherhead	2000	1400	Upgrade of network proposed
Dunleer	4300	1400	None
Dromiskin	1000	1200	Plant upgrade required, long-term proposal to pump to Dundalk. Capacity is constraint on development.
Greenore		200	No treatment. Treatment plant will be required.
Knockbridge	500	380	None.
Gyles Quay	50	50	Upgrade to secondary treatment dependent on development.
Louth	500	570	Additional capacity to be provided.(250PE). Dependent on development demands.
Omeath			No treatment. Treatment plant will be required.
Tallanstown	400		Additional capacity to be provided.(200PE). Dependent on development demands.
Tinure	380	390	No further capacity to be provided
Tullyallan	500	480	Additional capacity to be provided. (500PE). Upgrade of pump station.

As is evident, many plants are at or near full design capacity. In some instances, it is neither technically possible nor desirable to increase treatment capacity due to environmental constraints. Although there has been considerable investment in wastewater treatment facilities over the previous plan period, many small towns and villages still await facilities. The lack of such facilities will inhibit the implementation of the settlement strategy proposed for the county and the provision of such to cater for local demands must be addressed.

In line with the 'polluter pays principle' all cost associated with programmed upgrading and expansion of these plants to cater for proposed developments will be recouped from developers. Investment priority will be determined by requirements to meet specific discharge quality requirements.

Additional treatment capacity will be provided on foot of developments having been granted planning permission and progressing to construction stage. The additional increment of capacity provided will be determined on the basis of the unit economic increment of capacity that is practicable to add to the plant. The council will consider joint ventures and public private partnership arrangements in respect of providing additional treatment capacity

9.13.2 Policies for Wastewater Treatment

P 9.6

It is the policy of the council to:

- develop, in association with the private sector, additional treatment capacity at existing plants where required to facilitate new developments. The cost of development of such infrastructure shall be borne by developers.
- develop, in association with the private sector, network capacity and extensions, where required to facilitate new developments. The cost of development of such infrastructure shall be borne by developers.
- ensure that industrial facilities and commercial premises producing a wastewater are operating within the parameters of an IPC license or a wastewater discharge licence

9.14 River Basin Management Plans

The EU Water Framework Directive signalled a new approach to water quality management based on river basin management. River basin management assesses water quality and associated ecological factors (including land-use) within the basins and formulates integrated and coherent policies based on these.

9.14.1 Policy for River Basin Management Plans

Louth County Council, in partnership with Dundalk Town Council, Drogheda Borough Council, Meath County Council, Monaghan County Council as well as the authorities in the North of Ireland and other relevant bodies will prepare river basin management plans in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive. The three rivers project has recently been completed in this regard. This project has identified areas of improvement in terms of water quality and improved measures to control effluent discharge to surface and/or groundwaters. The Eastern River Basin District Management System involves local authorities from Dublin, Meath, Westmeath, Cavan, Kildare and Louth. This study will shortly be commenced. Recommendations from these studies are likely to give rise to specific measures to continue the improvement in surface and groundwater quality. Such measures will be introduced by Louth County Council on an ongoing basis.

9.15 Seveso Sites

The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2000 (S.I. No.476 of 2000) gives affect to the European Directive 96/82/EC on the control of major accidents involving dangerous substances. The legislation is more commonly known as Seveso 11 Directive. It will be an objective of the planning authority to impose restrictions on developments abutting or within close proximity of a Seveso site. The extent of restrictions on development is dependant on the type of risk present and the quantity and form of the dangerous substance present.

9.16 Obsolete and Derelict Areas

It will be an objective of the planning authority to ensure the improvement of neglected sites, the renewal of structures, the removal of unsightly vehicle parts and general refuse in line with the powers contained in the 1990 Derelict Sites Act and the Litter Pollution Act, 1997. The planning authority will also work directly with local communities in this regard. In addition, it will actively encourage development in areas, which fall within the scope of the relevant town renewal scheme. Parts of the following towns have also been designated:

- Carlingford
- Ardee
- Dunleer
- Castlebellingham/ Kilsaran

9.17 Veterinary Services

Louth County Council's veterinary department will impact development proposals in a number of ways through local National and EU requirements.

9.17.1 Animal Pound

A new animal pound is planned for Whiterath, Dromiskin that will address the issue of both the Control of Dogs and Control of Horses legislation. The site will provide a modern facility for dealing with the estimated total stray dog population of 1,000 and fluctuating wandering horse and other large animal population of 20.

9.17.2 Milk and Dairies

The County Veterinary Officer certifies dairies under the European Communities (Hygiene Production and Placing on the Market of Raw Meat and Heat Treated and Milk Based Products) Regulations 1996 Directive 92/46/EEC and these standards set by EU Directive should be incorporated into any dairy development proposed. This standard must be maintained and is verified by annual and periodic inspection.

9.17.3 Abattoirs Act

Louth currently has 2 abattoirs and 8 cutting plants under the responsibility of the County Veterinary Officer. Standards at national level are set by the Food Safety Authority Programme which must be incorporated into any development proposed and will be subject to daily inspection. This inspection programme is continually being developed.

9.17.4 Specified Risk

The risk of Zoonosis (spread or disease from animal to person) means that specific measures are continually sought to dispose of certain fallen animals and certain body parts to safe disposal channels. The accepted channel in such cases is rendering in order to protect groundwater.

Chapter 10 - Environmental Assessment

10.1 Introduction

Section 10 (5) (a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that a development plan "shall contain information on the likely significant effects on the environment of the implementation of the plan". The Act also provides for the making of regulations by the Minister in relation to the manner in which this requirement may be complied with. The absence of such regulations and guidelines makes the task of carrying out an appropriate environmental assessment difficult to prepare.

The European Directive 2001/42/EC issued in June 2001 requires that an assessment of the effects of certain plans and programs on the environment be carried out. Article 3 (2) (a) includes plans prepared in respect of town and country planning under the provisions of the directive. The assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment of the implementation of the Louth County Development Plan 2003 to 2009 contained in the following pages is based on the assessment parameters set down in the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC, the UN Rio Conference 1992, Agenda 21, the Treaty of Amsterdam and the 2002 Johannesburg Summit.

10.2 Objectives of the Plan

This county development plan sets out a strategic framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Louth for the period 2003 to 2009. The preparation of the plan is a legal requirement imposed on the council by the provisions of Part II of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The relevant sections of the act came into operation on January 1st 2001.

In the preparation of the plan, regard was had to relevant European Union and national policies including commitments entered into by the government with respect to protection of the environment. Details of the relevant considerations are contained in chapter one of the plan. These include the National Development Plan 2000 to 2006, Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland, 1997 and Local Agenda 21 - Towards Sustainable Communities, 2001

The main objectives of the plan are to:

- provide an overall development strategy for the sustainable development of the county for the period 2003 to 2009 and beyond,
- provide a framework for the control and regulation of development and use of land that will guide day to day planning decisions based on the principles of proper planning and sustainable development,
- give local communities the opportunity to participate in the planning process and have a say in development choices and decisions that affect their lives,
- protect the county's resources and heritage, natural and built environment and other amenities for the benefit of existing and future generations,
- protect the unspoiled rural character of Louth's countryside from urban generated and unsustainable "one off" housing so as to ensure that the county remains an attractive place to live in and visit,

- promote greater social inclusion and improve the quality of life for all the inhabitants of the county,
- protect rural communities by promoting the sustainable development of the county's small towns and villages and the retention of a range of social, commercial and community services therein,
- provide for the incorporation of central government policy and guidelines into the development plan,
- aspire to a situation where every person will have access to suitable and affordable housing within their own community insofar as it is possible,
- seek to provide for the employment needs of the inhabitants of the county at locations that are convenient to where they reside,
- seek to ensure that the educational, recreational, social and cultural needs of the community are provided for,
- secure the provision of essential physical infrastructure to facilitate the appropriate and sustainable development of the county.

10.3 Current state of the environment in County Louth

County Louth currently enjoys a high quality environment with unpolluted waterways and beaches, clean air, unspoiled diverse rural landscapes, a wide variety of flora and fauna and good quality of life for its inhabitants. The policies contained in this plan have been devised with the purpose in mind of providing for the development needs of the county while maintaining a high quality environment for the enjoyment of the existing and future inhabitants of the county. Without the implementation of this plan, there would be a serious risk that inappropriate and unsustainable development would take place. Such development would be wasteful of finite natural resources and energy, damage wildlife habitats, landscapes, the natural and built environment, pose a risk of air and water pollution and have a general negative impact on the inhabitants of the county.

10.4 Characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected by development.

County Louth contains an area of 821 square kilometres that, apart from the towns of Dundalk and Drogheda, is predominately rural in character and dominated by farming and other rural based activities. The largest town in the plan area, which comprises the functional area of Louth County Council, is Ardee, a settlement of some 3,500 inhabitants. There are a number of other smaller settlements throughout the county, the largest of which are Dunleer, Carlingford, Clogherhead and Louth Village.

The county contains a wide variety of landscapes ranging from the rugged hill and mountainous regions of Faughart and Cooley in the north through the central plain extending south to the Boyne Valley. In all, a total of 9 landscape types have been identified within the county:

- Carlingford Lough and Mountains including West Feed Uplands,
- Boyne and Mattock Valley
- Dundalk Bay Coast
- Dunany to Boyne Estuary Coast
- Uplands of Collon and Monasterboice
- Cooley Lowlands and Coastal Area

- Lower Faughart
- Castletown and Flurry River Basins,
- Lake Drumlin & Lake Area and Muirhevna Plain

All of these landscape types are essentially rural in character and, apart from the relatively untouched upper reaches of the Cooley Mountains, have been largely shaped by the activities of man throughout the ages. This includes not only field pattern and vegetation cover, but also social, cultural, historic and religious influences.

The pace of development within the county has accelerated greatly in recent years where proximity to Dublin, improvements in transport infrastructure and employment opportunities have all contributed. This is reflected in a 10.5% increase in population from 92,166 in 1996 to 101,802 in 2002. This growth is placing pressure on existing infrastructure and will generate a demand for the provision of new facilities in the future.

The continued development of the county, while welcomed by the council, could have a significant detrimental impact on the environment unless it is properly regulated and carried out in a sustainable manner. All forms of development, including the provision of physical infrastructure, has the potential to harm the environment in terms of landscape impact, energy use, discharges to the atmosphere, water and land. Flooding of existing developed areas and adjoining lands can also occur as a direct result of development. By appropriate design and siting, reducing dependence on fossil fuels and strictly controlling discharges to the environment, the damage can be minimised. Through the objectives and policies outlined in this plan and the operation of the development control process, the planning authority will seek to prevent any possible significant damage to the environment. Where any unacceptable risks are identified and such risks can not be dealt with by means of appropriate modifications and mitigation measures, the development will not be permitted.

The growing demand for urban generated "one-off" housing in the countryside poses a particular threat. This threat results from dependence on car based transport, the reduction in agricultural land, the visual impact on the landscape, the draw on resources away from existing settlements and the risk of water pollution from domestic effluent. All of county Louth, particularly those areas in the south of the county closest to Dublin City and within easy reach of the new motorway, is at risk. This development plan seeks to minimise the impact of such development on the environment by limiting "one-off" housing in the countryside to that required to meet local housing needs and to sustain existing rural communities and services.

There is a total of six Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) in the county established under the Habitats Directive 92/43/ECC and four Special Protection Areas (SPA's) under the Birds Directive 79/409/EEC. In addition, there are also 24 proposed Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's) under national direction. These areas are particularly vulnerable and must be afforded the highest degree of protection. The largest areas covered by these designations are located in the Cooley Mountains, in and adjoining Dundalk Bay, at Stabannon/Braganstown and the Boyne Estuary.

10.5 Methodology

The environmental assessment of the policies contained in this development plan is carried out on a chapter by chapter basis. The strategic objectives contained in each chapter are outlined and the policies contained in the plan to achieve these objectives are assessed to determine their likely impact on the environment. This is done by way of an environmental assessment matrix whereby each policy is measured against a set of criteria and given a positive, negative or neutral rating. The set of criteria used is based on the requirements set out in paragraph (f), Annex I, European Union Directive 2001/42/EC. The cumulative rating in respect each policy is taken to establish its overall impact. A short evaluation is included in respect of the policies contained in each chapter.

10.6 Monitoring

All planning applications received and works proposed to be carried out by the planning authority itself will be carefully assessed with regard to possible impacts on the environment. Any proposed developments that, in the opinion of the planning authority, would have a significant impact on the environment will not be permitted unless appropriate modifications or mitigation measures are included. Notwithstanding the inclusion of any modification or mitigation measures, where the planning authority is not satisfied that the proposed development can be carried out without significant negative impacts on the environment, such development will be refused planning permission

Section 15 (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that the manager of the planning authority shall, not more than two years after the making of a development plan, give a report to the members of the authority of the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the plan. In the preparation of this report, the manager will carry out an assessment of the environmental impact of the operation of the policies contained in the development plan. Where any policies contained in the plan are found to have had a significant negative impact on the environment, the manager will recommend to the members that such policies be amended or removed.

Appraisal Criteria Selected

1. Human Beings / Social Needs

- Access to employment
- Access to social, health, education and amenity facilities
- Housing availability and affordability
- Alternative transport modes
- Affordable health, education and social facilities
- Access to all facilities/services by the disabled
- Balance between population, services, employment opportunities and housing

2. Flora and Fauna

- International / national / local and non –designation areas
- Habitats
- Species

3. Natural Environment

- Air quality
- Ground and surface water quality

4. Landscape and Visual

- Landscape Quality
- Seascapes
- Views and prospects
- Streetscapes

5. Material Assets / Resource Consumption

- Infrastructure
- Consumption of renewable resources – wind, solar, hydro, biomass, forest, animal, water etc.
- Consumption of non-renewable resources – energy, land, materials, wildlife, landscapes, seascapes etc.

6. Cultural Heritage

- Natural Heritage
- Conservation Areas and Protected Structures
- Archaeological sites and Structures

Environmental Assessment Matrix

Positive rating 4 Negative rating 6 Neutral rating --

Ref.	Policy/ Objective	Human Beings	Flora and Fauna	Natural Environment	Landscape & Visual	Material Assets / Resource Consumption	Cultural Heritage
	Introduction						
P1.1	Plan review	4	4	4	4	4	4
	<p>Evaluation</p> <p>The policy contained within the introduction has scored positively with respect to all of the criteria, as the strategic objectives in relation to employment and social needs, the natural environment, the landscape and visual amenities, resources consumption and the protection of cultural heritage are based on sustainability principles.</p>						

Ref.	Policy/ Objective	Human Beings	Flora and Fauna	Natural Environment	Landscape & Visual	Material Assets / Resource Consumption	Cultural Heritage
	Conservation and Heritage						
P2.1	Heritage Protection	4	4	4	4	4	4
P2.2	Landscape Protection	4	4	4	4	4	4
P2.3	Natural Heritage Areas	--	4	4	4	--	4
P2.4	Special Areas of Conservation	--	4	4	4	4	4
P2.5	Special Protection Areas	--	4	4	4	4	4
P2.6	Sites of Geological interest	--	4	4	4	--	4
P2.7	Trees and woodlands	4	4	4	4	4	4
P2.8	Water resources protection	4	4	4	4	4	4
P2.9	Conservation –built environment	4	--	4	4	4	4
	<p>Evaluation</p> <p>The policies contained within this chapter have scored positively as they support the protection of EU and national designated sites and the protection of the built environment, which includes protected structures and architectural conservation areas. The protection of trees and woodlands in the county and water resources also score positively overall.</p>						

Ref.	Policy/ Objective	Human Beings	Flora and Fauna	Natural Environment	Landscape & Visual	Material Assets / Resource Consumption	Cultural Heritage
	Rural Development, Natural Resources and Energy						
P3.1	Rural Development	4	4	4	4	--	4
P3.2	Rural Environment Protection	4	4	4	4	--	4
P3.3	Rural Development Strategy	4	4	4	4	--	4
P3.4	Agricultural Development	4	--	--	--	4/--	4
P3.5	Agricultural Buildings	4	--	--	--	--	--
P3.6	Coastal Policy	4	4	4	4	4	4
P3.7	Coastal Protection	--	4	4	4	4	4
P3.8	Extractive Industry	4	--	--	6	--	--
P3.9	Renewable Energy	4	6	--	6	4	--
P3.10	Renewable Energy	4	6	--	6	4	--
P3.11	Electricity/Transmission lines	4	--	--	6	--	--
P3.12	Residential Policy	4	--	--	--	4	--
	<p>Evaluation</p> <p>These policies, on balance, have scored positively though there are some negative scores especially in relation to the impact on the landscape. The coastal policy is positive as it seeks to protect the coast as an amenity resource.</p>						

Ref.	Policy/ Objective	Human Beings	Flora and Fauna	Natural Environment	Landscape & Visual	Material Assets / Resource Consumption	Cultural Heritage
	Settlement Strategy						
P4.1	Settlement Hierarchy	4	--	4	4	4	4
P4.2	Dundalk	4	--	4	4	4	4
P4.3	Drogheda	4	--	4	4	4	4
P4.4	Ardee	4	--	4	4	4	4
P4.5	Dunleer	4	--	6	4	6	4
P4.6	Category I Development Centres	4	--	--	4	4	4
P4.7	Category II Development Centres	4	--	--	4	--	--
P4.8	Restriction of development in Category II Development Centres to that required to satisfy locally generated housing needs	4	--	--	4	--	--
P4.9	Site area	--	--	--	--	6	--
	<p>Evaluation</p> <p>These policies have scored positively in that they promote housing availability and affordability and direct such development into identified settlements, thereby maximising the use of services. However with respect to Dunleer, the effect on material assets/resource consumption and natural environment scored negatively, as additional development will result in increased car based commuting and may overload the sewage treatment capacity. Low-density development is permitted which does have a negative effect on finite land resources.</p>						

Ref.	Policy/ Objective	Human Beings	Flora and Fauna	Natural Environment	Landscape & Visual	Material Assets / Resource Consumption	Cultural Heritage
	Residential and Community Development						
P5.1	Residential Development	4	--	4	--	4	--
P5.2	Childcare facilities	4	--	4	--	4	--
P5.3	Healthcare and nursing homes	4	--	4	--	4	--
P5.4	Traveller accommodation	4	--	--	--	4	--
P5.5	Accommodation for dependent relatives	4	--	--	--	4	--
P5.6	Health facilities	4	--	4	--	4	--
P5.7	Community Buildings/Sports facilities	4	--	--	--	4	--
	<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Overall, the policies contained within this chapter score positively with respect to human beings in that they promote the provision of housing and access to social, health, childcare, community and sports facilities and in that development is directed into existing settlements. This also results in a positive rating in terms of resource consumption. The effect on flora and fauna, the landscape and cultural heritage is considered to be neutral.</p>						

Ref.	Policy/ Objective	Human Beings	Flora and Fauna	Natural Environment	Landscape & Visual	Material Assets / Resource Consumption	Cultural Heritage
	Tourism, Recreation and Amenity						
P6.1	Tourism	4	--	--	--	4	4
P6.2	Great Recreation and Amenity Policies	4	4	4	4	4	4
P6.3	Pedestrian Links and Walkways	4	--	--	--	4	4
P6.4	Tourism related signs	4	--	--	--	4	4
	Evaluation The policies contained within this chapter have, overall, scored positively as they support local economic development, they maximise the potential of natural assets and cultural heritage. Most of these policies have a neutral rating in respect of flora and fauna, the environment and the landscape.						
	Economic Development and Employment						
P7.1	Sustainable economic development	4	4	4	4	4	4
P7.2	Industrial location	4	--	--	6	--	--
P7.3	Interchange Strategy	4	--	--	6	--	--
P7.4	Louth Retail Strategy	4	--	--	--	4	--
	Evaluation These policies have, overall, scored positively as they promote sustainable employment opportunities and services. In relation to flora and fauna, the natural environment, landscape and resource						

	consumption, they have a neutral score in that while they promote the provision of lands for industrial and retail uses within existing settlements.						
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Ref.	Policy/ Objective	Human Beings	Flora and Fauna	Natural Environment	Landscape & Visual	Material Assets / Resource Consumption	Cultural Heritage
	Transport and Telecommunications						
P8.1	Transport	4	--	6	--	6	--
P8.2	Parking Provision	4	--	--	--	--	--
P8.3	Public Transport	4	--	4	--	4	--
P8.4	Rail	4	--	4	--	4	--
P8.5	Bus Service	4	--	4	--	4	--
P8.6	Air and Sea Ports	4	--	--	--	4	--
P8.7	Service Stations	4	--	--	--	--	--
P8.8	Telecommunications	4	--	--	6	4	--
P8.9	Mobile Telephony Infrastructure	4	--	--	6	4	--
	<p>Evaluation</p> <p>These policies have an overall positive rating. In relation to human beings they promote sustainable modes of transport and communications, through support for public transport, rail and bus services. Many of the policies have a neutral rating in relation to their impact on the landscape, natural environment and resource consumption.</p>						

Ref.	Policy/ Objective	Human Beings	Flora and Fauna	Natural Environment	Landscape & Visual	Material Assets / Resource Consumption	Cultural Heritage
	Environment and Services						
P9.1	Environmental Strategy	4	4	4	4	4	4
P9.2	Waste Management	4	4	4	4	4	--
P9.3	Water Protection	4	4	4	4	4	--
P9.4	Flooding and Surface water	4	4	4	4	4	--
P9.5	Water Supply	4	4	4	4	4	--
P9.6	Wastewater Treatment	4	4	4	--	--	--
	<p><i>Evaluation</i></p> <p>These policies have an overall positive score as they promote environmental protection, sustainable waste management and protection of water resources.</p>						