



# Louth 2007

## Local Authorities Annual Report

*"To provide leadership and to deliver an efficient quality service to the people of Louth"*

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## MISSION STATEMENT

*“To provide leadership and to deliver an efficient quality service to the people of Louth.”*



## A few words from the County Manager

Conn Murray, County Manager



I am delighted, as County Manager, to introduce on behalf of Louth Local Authorities, the Annual Report for 2007.

In 2007 we have continued to develop our infrastructure, which included the opening of the A1/N1 Newry to Dundalk Link Road which completes the Co. Louth section of the Dublin-Belfast corridor, the completion of the new pier at Port Oriel, the extension to Drogheda's Waste Water Treatment Plant and a number of new housing schemes. This continued improvement in our infrastructure, combined with Dundalk's Gateway status and a quality environment makes Louth a prime investment and tourist location.

Providing a good quality service to our customers has always been the main priority for Louth Local Authorities and I am delighted that our efforts have been recognised with the receipt of a number of awards, which included the Q-Mark award in our Motor Tax and Planning sections, the ISO14001 Environment Management award received by our Infrastructure Directorate, the Repak Local Authority of the Year Award and the Irish Business Against Litter award received by Dundalk Town Council.

I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work and dedication of the staff and elected members of Louth Local Authorities together with the members of the various Strategic Policy Committees and the County Development Board over the past twelve months. We look forward to continued progress in 2008 working in conjunction with the various state agencies, the private sector and our local communities.

In particular, I would like to thank my predecessor Ms Martina Moloney who left Louth in June to take up a position in Galway, and contributed so much to County Louth during her term of office. I also want to pay tribute to Ms Joan Martin, Director of Service, who carried out the role of County Manager during the summer of 2007.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Conn Murray', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Conn Murray**  
County Manager

Jimmy Mulroy



Anthony Donohoe



Jim D'Arcy



Fintan Malone



We are happy to present the 2007 annual report which gives us a snapshot of the many activities that Louth Local Authorities have been engaged in during the last 12 months.

Continued progress in a wide range of infrastructural works all have contributed to improve the quality of life for the people of Louth and those who visit our county each year.

2007 has also seen a number of developments in the area of Sports and Recreation with the appointment of a Soccer Development Officer and a GAA Club Support Officer in association with the FAI and the GAA. These appointments, together with the establishment of Louth Local Authorities Sports Partnership will encourage a higher level of participation in sport.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of our voluntary and community organisations for the hard work and dedication given by them in their communities which has led to Louth's continued improvement in the Tidy Towns awards.

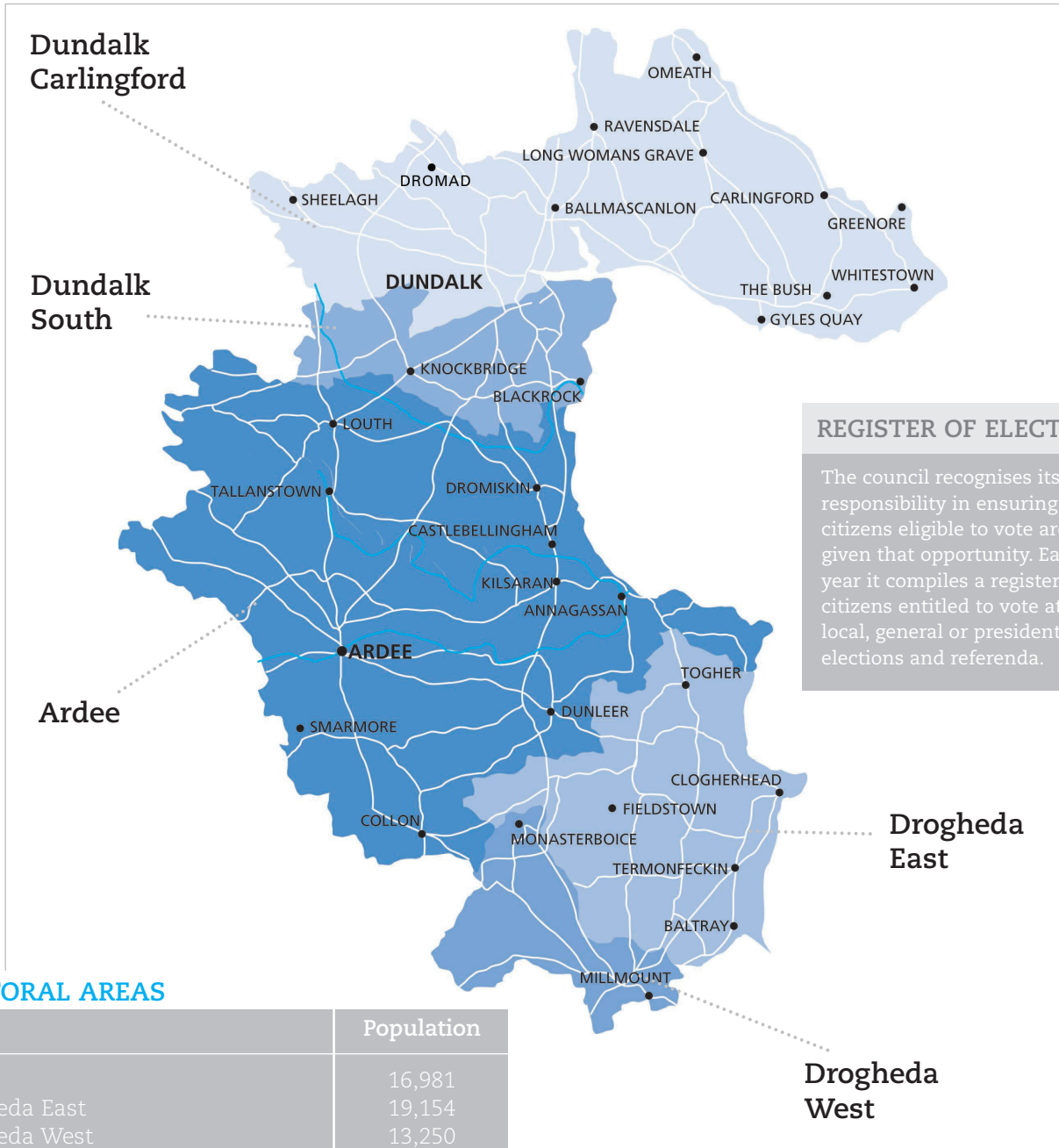
There were a number of other achievements which are detailed throughout the report which would not have been possible without the dedication of staff and members of Louth Local Authorities, to whom we extend our appreciation.

**Jimmy Mulroy**  
Cathaoirleach  
Louth County Council

**Anthony Donohoe**  
Mayor  
Drogheda Borough Council

**Jim D'Arcy**  
Chairman  
Dundalk Town Council

**Fintan Malone**  
Cathaoirleach  
Ardee Town Council



**REGISTER OF ELECTORS**

The council recognises its responsibility in ensuring that citizens eligible to vote are given that opportunity. Each year it compiles a register of all citizens entitled to vote at local, general or presidential elections and referenda.

**ELECTORAL AREAS**

Area	Population
Ardee	16,981
Drogheda East	19,154
Drogheda West	13,250
Dundalk Carlingford	19,023
Dundalk South	18,780



Drogheda Borough Council



County Hall, Millennium Centre, Dundalk



Town Hall, Dundalk

Dundalk/Carlingford

**Fine Gael**  
Terry Brennan



**Fianna Fáil**  
Seamus Keelan



**Sinn Féin**  
Jim Loughran



**Non Party**  
Jim Ryan



**Fianna Fáil**  
Peter Savage



**Sinn Féin**  
Tomás Sharkey



Dundalk South

**Non Party**  
Martin Bellew



**Fianna Fáil**  
Declan Breathnach



**Fine Gael**  
Jim D'Arcy



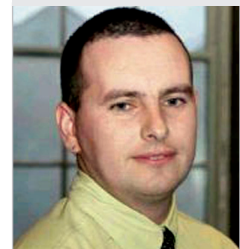
**Non Party**  
Mary Grehan



**Fianna Fáil**  
Donal Lynch



**Sinn Féin**  
Kevin Meenan



Ardee

**Fine Gael**  
Finnan McCoy



**Fianna Fáil**  
Thomas Clare



**Fine Gael**  
Jim Lennon



**Sinn Féin**  
Pearse McGeough



**Fianna Fáil**  
Tommy Reilly



Drogheda East

**Fianna Fáil**  
Jacqui McConville



**Fianna Fáil**  
Jimmy Mulroy



**Sinn Féin**  
Imelda Munster



**Fine Gael**  
Michael O'Dowd



**Fine Gael**  
Oliver Tully



Drogheda West

**Fine Gael**  
Anthony Donohoe



**Fianna Fáil**  
Frank Maher



**Labour**  
Gerald Nash



**Non Party**  
Ken O'Heiligh



## Staff Louth County Council

CONN MURRAY – County Manager

M CURRAN – Director of Service

J MARTIN – Director of Service

J MCGUINNESS – Director of Service

R KENNY – Director of Service

A DAVIS – Head of Finance

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### SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

---

C MOSS (Corporate Services)

M MURTAGH (Environment)

P FITZSIMONS (Housing & Emergency Services)

P DONNELLY (Roads & Marine)

W WALSH (Planning and Development)

E MULHOLLAND (Information Technology)

B LYNCH (Financial Accountant)

R MCAULEY (Financial Accountant)

A WARD (County Librarian)

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### SENIOR ENGINEERS

---

R MCKENNA (Housing)

G KELLY (Roads & Marine)

D O'NEILL (Environmental Services)

M O'CALLAGHAN (Sanitary Services)

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### SENIOR PLANNER

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G DUFFY (Planning)

Dundalk Town Council Members

**Non Party**  
Martin Bellew



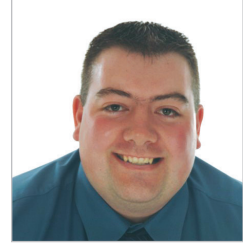
**Fianna Fáil**  
Seamus Keelan



**Green Party**  
Mark Dearey



**Sinn Féin**  
Ian Dooley



**Non Party**  
Mary Grehan



**Fianna Fáil**  
Seamus Byrne



**Sinn Féin**  
Harry Todd



**Fianna Fáil**  
Noel Lennon



**Sinn Féin**  
Kevin Meenan



**Fine Gael**  
Jim D'Arcy



**Fine Gael**  
Eamonn O'Boyle



**Non Party**  
Jim Ryan



STAFF DUNDALK COUNTY COUNCIL

**Conn Murray** County Manager

**F Pentony** Town Clerk

**David Storey** Senior Executive Officer

**Catherine Duff** Town Engineer

Drogheda Borough Council Members

**Fianna Fáil**  
Tommy Murphy



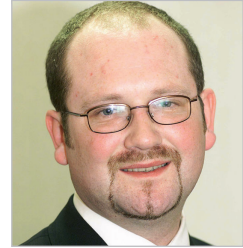
**Fine Gael**  
Michael O'Dowd



**Sinn Féin**  
Dom Wilton



**Labour**  
Gerald Nash



**Non Party**  
Malachy Godfrey



**Fianna Fáil**  
Jimmy Mulroy



**Fine Gael**  
Anthony Donohoe



**Non Party**  
Tommy Byrne



**Labour**  
Paul Bell



**Sinn Féin**  
Mathew Coogan



**Fianna Fáil**  
Frank Maher



**Non Party**  
Ken O'Heiligh



STAFF DROGHEDA BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Conn Murray** County Manager

**D Foley** Town Clerk

**Mary T Daly** Senior Executive Officer

**Dermot Agnew** Borough Engineer

Ardee Town Council Members

**Fine Gael**  
Niall Carberry



**Sinn Féin**  
Seamus Gaffney



**PDs**  
Leonard Hatrick



**Fianna Fáil**  
Padraig McKenny



**Fianna Fáil**  
Fintan Malone



**Non Party**  
Jim Tenanty



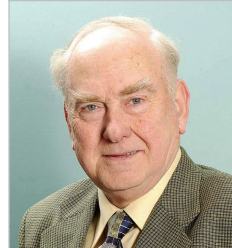
**Fine Gael**  
Finnan McCoy



**Fine Gael**  
Fionnán McCoy



**Labour**  
Tom Minogue



STAFF ARDEE TOWN COUNCIL

**Conn Murray** County Manager

**Mairead Duffy** Town Clerk

# GOAL 1

To deliver the best possible service to our customers and clients

Monitoring the needs of our customers and clients and improving access and availability to all of our services

Cllr Jim D'Arcy, Cathaoirleach, with members, officials and staff of Dundalk Town Council following Dundalk's Success in the IBAL League



## AWARDS RECEIVED BY LOUTH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The delivery of a high quality service is a theme that cuts across all of the Louth Local Authorities' activities and all of our objectives. Since the introduction of Better Local Government, Louth Local Authorities have placed the needs of our customers and clients at the centre of our service delivery. In the pursuit of this goal Louth Local Authorities have endeavoured to improve performance across their entire range of services. In recognition of this, various sections have received many different awards of which we are proud to announce the following:

### IBAL LEAGUE RESULTS – DUNDALK TOWN COUNCIL

Dundalk was announced as the 'cleanest town in Ireland' in the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) League in 2007. This proud new title was testament to the consistent work that has gone into keeping the town and its approach roads litter free. A massive, extra effort went into keeping the town clean and tidy and that work paid off in abundance. It was a huge

accomplishment for Dundalk Town and it is a victory that has helped to further boost the town's image as a progressive, inclusive and forward-looking town at a time when it is undergoing unprecedented change and development. Competition for the IBAL League is intense and Dundalk will be anxious to emulate its previous performance in 2008.

### – DROGHEDA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Drogheda also achieved litter-free status for the first time in the IBAL League 2007, in addition to achieving an increased mark in the Tidy Towns competition.

### EIQA Q-MARK AWARD

#### – MOTOR TAX OFFICE

Louth County Council Motor Tax Office is continuously striving to achieve excellence and deliver a high quality service to our customers. With this in mind, the Motor Tax team applied for the Q-Mark in 2006. This prestigious award is managed by the Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA) and is a framework through which an organisation can design, maintain and improve itself so that it can constantly create quality output and respond effectively to changing or uncertain conditions.

Once the decision was made to apply, a twelve month preparatory period was initiated by the Motor Tax team. This hard work, dedication and overall drive towards continuous improvement in customer service culminated in a one-day, independent EIQA Audit in October 2006. We are very proud to have been awarded the prestigious Q-Mark in recognition of our endeavours.

The achievement of the Q-Mark award in 2006 was just the beginning. It means a commitment to an ongoing improvement in the quality of our services. This commitment was reinforced by the retention of the Q-Mark in 2007.

### – PLANNING SECTION

Following an independent audit of our policies, processes and procedures in December 2007, Louth County Council Planning Section became the first Planning Section in the northeast to achieve Quality Mark accreditation. Staff in the section deserve credit for their enthusiasm and the effort they put into the preparations made in the weeks prior to the assessment. The efforts made by both professional planners and administrators in preparing for the audit are what led to our success. We look forward to similar success in the coming years.

Staff of the Louth County Council Motor Tax Office who received the Q-Mark Award 2007



Staff of the Louth County Council Planning Section who received the Q-Mark Award 2007



**ISO 14001 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT – INFRASTRUCTURE DIRECTORATE**

The Infrastructure Directorate was party to a cross-border initiative intended to see seven local authorities in Northern Ireland and two in the Republic achieve the ISO 14001 standard for Environmental Management Systems. The Directorate was successful in achieving the accreditation for both the Water Services Department and Roads function making Louth Local Authorities the first to achieve the standard in the Republic.

The certification was achieved following an independent audit of workplaces, systems of work and work practices. The staff strove to achieve best practice in environmental awareness and practice in all activities from storage of materials to the disposal of spoil and other waste generated in the delivery of the Infrastructure Services. The key to the successful achievement of the standard was due to the commitment of each and every member of staff who amended work practices and also achieved a change in mindset, not only in the workplace, but from contractors and suppliers alike.

The success of the Infrastructure Directorate has resulted in all of the Offices in County Hall now seeking to achieve the accreditation.

**REPAK AWARDS 2007**

**– ENVIRONMENT**

The Comprehensive Recycling Programme together with the council's successful participation in the Green School Programme, National Tidy Towns Competition and waste minimisation activities within communities, businesses and schools saw Louth County Council scoop the Overall Local Authority of the Year in the 2007 Repak Awards.

**LOUTH CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AWARDS**

**– ARTS**

CreateLouth is the name given to the suite of awards, bursaries and grants made available to individuals and organisations throughout the county through the Arts Service of Louth Local

Louth Local Authorities celebrating their success at the Repak Recycling Awards Ceremony 2007



Brian Harten, County Arts Officer, receiving the Training & Development Award at the Louth Corporate Social Responsibility presentation night



Authorities. As part of CreateLouth, the Schools Musical Instrument Purchase Scheme has allowed a large number of schools to buy musical instruments on behalf of their students. This initiative was nominated for, and succeeded in winning, the Training & Development Award at the Louth Corporate Social Responsibility Awards.

### MID-LOUTH CIVIC SERVICES CENTRE

Works are nearing completion on the Civic Services Centre at the Fair Green, Ardee. As well as housing the new mid-Louth area offices, this new facility will incorporate the Office of Public Works' Regional Drainage operations and administration plus a new court services facility. The building has also been designed to accommodate the monthly meeting requirements of the Ardee Town Council.

Plans are to occupy the new facility early in 2008 with it opening to the public shortly thereafter. These new premises will improve the delivery of service to the mid-Louth area and enhance the already very popular public park in Ardee.

Mid-Louth Civic Services Centre, Ardee



Mary Capplis, Social Inclusion Officer, gives a presentation on the Louth ARD plan at a seminar in Dungannon on UN International Migrants Day, December 2007



### SOCIAL INCLUSION

#### CHALLENGE OF CHANGE PROJECT

Louth County Council, in conjunction with Newry & Mourne District Council, commenced roll out of the Challenge of Change Project, focusing on servicing the needs of ethnic minorities. A Challenge of Change Project Officer was employed in both councils to ensure delivery of the project. Translations of Local Authority information were carried out to improve customer service and events were held to mark Intercultural Week in March and Anti-Racism in the Workplace Week in November.

The adoption of the 'Whole System Approach' to mainstreaming diversity in Louth Local Authorities' policies and practices was undertaken by management.

#### NATIONAL DISABILITY FUNDING

Louth Local Authorities received €400,000 on their National Disability funding to implement the National Disability Strategy. Work carried out across the county includes staff training, accessibility audits, upgrading of footpaths and junctions and the installation of assistive technology, automated doors, ramps, and evacuation chairs.

### ACCESS TO PLANNING OFFICE STAFF AND DOCUMENTS

The system of ensuring maximum availability of planners to deal with general planning queries by telephone continued in 2007. A Duty Planner is available for general planning queries on Tuesdays and Thursdays in addition to the standard availability by appointment on Wednesdays for pre-planning clinics.

In addition, during 2007, documents on current and historic planning files were made available over the internet to members of the public for the first time.

### CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS SYSTEM

Complaint/comment forms are available on every public desk and all complaints and comments received are dealt with as speedily as possible. In 2007:

- 3 customer complaints were made through our formal system.
- 6 matters were raised with the Ombudsman.
- 16 applications were made under the Freedom of Information Act 1997.

### Implementing consistent corporate standards throughout the organisation

### HEALTH & SAFETY

#### DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR ROAD WORKS

The main focus of the Health & Safety team for the first part of 2007 was in the development of a Document Management

System for road works that would allow for full compliance with the Construction Regulations 2006. This tabular system was developed specifically for Louth in conjunction with the Health & Safety Authority (HSA) and comprised a series of forms that document the life of the project and provide prompts for those involved in any road works scheme. Once approval was received from the HSA, the system was implemented throughout Louth on a pilot basis. It is anticipated that the scheme will be further rolled out to the urban authorities in 2008.

**LOCAL AUTHORITY SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK PLAN**

During 2007 the Health & Safety Officer and Advisor was actively involved with the HSA and the LGMSB on a working group to develop the first specific Local Authority Safe System of Work Plan (SSWP) for 'Working on Roads'. It is expected that the completed document will be launched and rolled out in early 2008.

**NOISE AND VIBRATION ASSESSMENTS**

Louth Local Authorities also commenced noise and vibration assessments across a range of local authority activities to identify areas of concern for rectification under the General Applications Regulations 2007. These assessments will continue in 2008 and health surveillance will be provided to staff where required.

**RISK ASSESSMENTS**

Throughout 2007, the management team championed the production of risk assessments for all local authority activities with a target of 50% completion before year end. This set the standard for local authority management of Health & Safety from the top down, which will be a continuing trend as we move forward. Louth Local Authorities also rolled out the nationally developed 'Employee Safety Handbook' to all staff and ratified a Lone Worker Policy to assist vulnerable staff in securing their safety at work.

**AUTOMATIC METER READING FOR NON-DOMESTIC WATER SUPPLY**

The Infrastructure Directorate completed the installation of water meters for all non-domestic customers in 2006. This was followed up in the past year with the commissioning of Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) equipment. This equipment improves the meter's reading efficiency and provides an expanded profile of the water use of each customer.

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT 2003**

2007 saw Louth Local Authorities prepare and adopt a scheme for implementation under the Official Languages Act 2003. This document sets out the actions to be undertaken to support the use of Irish within the councils.

Following a process which included a call for submissions from the general public, a draft of the proposal was amended at SPC level. It was then individually adopted by all Louth Local Authorities.

**Health & Safety**



The scheme sets out our language commitments in areas such as training, public interaction, council meetings, the media, information systems and more. It will be followed by subsequent schemes, enhancing our services for those who wish to carry out their business with Louth Local Authorities through Irish.

**ENERGY COMMITTEE**

The Energy Committee in Louth was set up by the County Manager and has membership drawn from the three authorities in Louth. It can be described as a cross-authority group that has developed an expertise in energy management and is available to inform decision-makers on such matters as required. The group takes a proactive approach to increasing energy awareness among staff as well as facilitating projects that will reduce the organisation's overall energy consumption.

**DUNDALK 2020**

In conjunction with SEI and its Dundalk 2020 Project ([www.sei.ie](http://www.sei.ie)) the group has been trained by a group of specialist energy management engineers supplied by SEI and now has a reasonable working knowledge of energy management. Louth has acted as a pilot for SEI's Energy Map ([www.sei.ie/energymap](http://www.sei.ie/energymap)), an energy management tool developed by SEI and based on ISO 393.

**FUTURE PROJECTS**

The Energy Committee will soon be involved in an Energy Bureau as part of the Dundalk 2020 Project. The Energy Bureau will consist of both private and public organisations located within the Dundalk 2020 Project area, and this collaboration of organisations will collectively retain and direct a firm of specialists to manage all aspects of their energy use. This should prove to be a valuable learning experience for all involved. This model has already been successfully run by SEI in Dublin, where it involves the four main colleges (UCD, TCD, DCU and DIT) working together as the e3 Energy Management Bureau ([www.e3.ie](http://www.e3.ie)).

**WORKPLACE PARTNERSHIP**

Workplace Partnership continued to make steady progress in Louth Local Authorities in 2007. Through Workplace Partnership significant progress is being made in the development of a modern, efficient and more effective Local Authority System for Louth Local Authorities.

Workplace Partnership provides an effective forum in which management and trade unions can have non-adversarial discussions about planned changes. It also provides a problem-solving approach in handling conflicts that can arise in the face of significant organisational change. Experience shows that a stable industrial relations climate coupled with effective and regular management-staff communications can foster an environment in which it is possible to express differences openly and to address them in a problem solving way.

The various Workplace Partnership Committees of the Louth Local Authorities are:

- Louth Local Authorities Partnership Committee
- Dundalk Town Council Partnership Committee
- Louth County Council Partnership Committee
- Louth Local Authorities Fire Services Partnership Committee
- Drogheda Works Committee

All of these committees met regularly throughout 2007.

**MEMBERS OF LOUTH LOCAL AUTHORITIES WORKPLACE PARTNERSHIP 2007**

- Mary Murtagh, Joint Chairperson, Management
- Isabell Murphy, Joint Chairperson, Impact
- Joe McGuinness, Director of Service, Management
- Danny Churchill, Drogheda Works Committee / UCAT
- Joan Martin, Director of Service, Management
- Paul Owens, UCAT
- Kieran Lawless, Administrative Officer, Management
- Pat Casey, ATGWU
- John Lawrence, Administrative Officer, Management
- Pat Harrison, SIPTU
- Michael McCabe, Workplace Partnership Facilitator

*Integrating Information Systems and implementing the eGovernment agenda*

An ICT strategy for the 2007-2010 period was completed. This involved integration with the objectives of the Corporate Plan and consultation with stakeholders from the LGCSB, council directorates and town councils.

eDirect is a customer service database provided by the LGCSB that enables the local authority to respond effectively to customer queries. The roll out of this application has been difficult. The difficulties encountered in 2007 relate to the resources allocated and the limitations of the product in a diverse council environment

In the area of online services there was success in providing access to planning documentation online for Louth County Council and this will now be extended to Dundalk Town Council

*Civic Reception in Belfast City Hall celebrating a cross-border inter-council GAA tournament hosted by Belfast City Council*



and Drogheda Borough Council. The move towards eGovernment was supported further by the extension of document image processing in both town councils. Also, ePayments have been extended to deal with parking fines.

In order to meet requirements under the Barcelona Declaration, Web Accessibility Initiative Compliance was achieved on the websites, public counters were equipped with technology for hearing impaired customers and ICT facilities in the Libraries were extended.

The Louth Local Authorities website ([www.louthcoco.ie](http://www.louthcoco.ie)) was renewed in 2007 with more work planned for 2008. Overall, the ICT Team is looking forward to 2008 and to providing continuous support while ongoing changes and improvements are being undertaken in Louth Local Authorities.

*Training & Development of Staff*

Louth Local Authorities are committed to the provision of the best possible service to our customers. Ongoing training and development of staff plays an important part in influencing the level of performance and efficiency within the organisation. Staff Training & Development is responsible for providing training to all employees of Louth Local Authorities on an equal basis in an effort to develop and enhance their knowledge, skill and competencies. This ensures that we continue to meet our goals and objectives.

A number of key training activities were delivered to staff in 2007 to enable them to deliver a high quality service to customers and clients alike including:

Training Activity	No. of Staff Trained
Disability Equality & Diversity Training	62
Customer Care	32
Dealing with Challenging Behaviour	42
STEM Awareness Training	157

## INDUCTION TRAINING

Induction training was introduced for new staff of Louth Local Authorities in 2007. A number of sessions have since taken place to ensure that all new members of staff receive suitable training. Induction training primarily deals with the structure, policies and services of Louth Local Authorities but also covers areas as diverse as Customer Service and Health & Safety and takes place as a combination of 'on-the-job' and programmed training.

## HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING

Louth Local Authorities recognise that Health & Safety Training has a vital role to play in raising awareness of Health & Safety matters and reducing accidents in the workplace. During the year a number of staff members commenced the Certificate in Health & Safety at Work in DKIT, with others progressing to the Diploma level. This course, which is accredited by UCD, is recognised by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (UK).

Other Health & Safety Programmes included the following training:

- Safe use of equipment such as chainsaws, cutting equipment and site dumpers.
- Location of underground services.
- Driving skills training.
- School Warden training.
- First Aid.
- VDU Assessors.
- Manual Handling.

## TRAINING ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Louth Local Authorities wish to promote the concept of life-long learning among staff. During 2007 funding was allocated for a number of staff members to pursue third level courses in various colleges. Under the Training Assistance Scheme, 49 courses were availed of, with the most popular being courses in Local Government Studies. Several staff members have also successfully completed the DCU Masters in Business Administration.

## FURTHER TRAINING COMPLETED IN 2007

The Cross-Border Management Training Programme came to a conclusion at the end of 2007. A total of six Louth Local Authorities staff participated in this Interreg sponsored management training programme. The programme offered local authority staff from authorities on both sides of the border the

Participants of the Cross-Border Management Training Programme in the Ballymascanlon Hotel



opportunity to share their knowledge, experiences and best practice.

Safepass Training focused on the renewal of certification for staff whose cards were due to expire, with 84 staff members receiving training in 2007.

Expenditure on training and development for 2007 was in accordance with the targets set under Sustaining Progress.

## Continuing the development of the Agresso Financial Management System

Louth Local Authorities amalgamated the three individual Agresso Databases located in Drogheda Borough Council, Dundalk Town Council and Louth County Council onto a single central database located in County Hall. Ongoing training has been provided on the Agresso system, with every section of the organisation now using Agresso. An updated financial procedures manual is now available for all staff to consult on the Intranet that sets out best practice from a financial perspective.

Louth Local Authorities have also introduced the new costing system which in time will lead to benchmarking of services across authorities and the exchange of best working practices across organisations.

# GOAL 2

*To facilitate economic development and maximise our strategic border location midway between Dublin and Belfast*

## *Develop Dundalk as a Gateway for the northeast region*

*Minister Dermot Ahern together with Cllr Jim D'Arcy, Cllr Jimmy Mulroy, Mr Conn Murray, officials of Dundalk Town Council and Mr Andrew Griffin of Parma Developments Ltd at the launch of Dundalk's GIF bid*



### GATEWAY INNOVATION FUND PROPOSAL

This proposal was submitted by Dundalk Town Council in response to the call for proposals under the Gateway Innovation Fund (GIF) issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The proposal is based on an integrated strategy which aims to accelerate development in Dundalk through investment in key local infrastructure, access infrastructure and quality of life, supported by innovative planning. It will also ensure sustainable population growth and represent an excellent opportunity to achieve the objectives of the fund. The investments are consistent with the recently prepared Dundalk Economic Development Plan 2005-2010 which has been supported by both private sector and statutory agencies and the main projects will leverage a very high level of private sector investment.

#### DUNDALK'S GATEWAY VISION

Further expansion of Dundalk is necessary for the region and for the all island economy. Dundalk's location in the middle of the Dublin-Belfast corridor is uniquely placed to look north towards Newry and Belfast as well as south towards Dublin. With the proposed GIF investments, this infrastructure will help Dundalk to secure key conditions for economic progress. The resultant critical mass increase in population combined with

our current proximity to two international airports and five key university level establishments will facilitate an effective development of the Gateway. The bid has support from all key private and public sector stakeholders in Ireland and very strong support from stakeholders in Northern Ireland.

A unique feature of this bid is the degree of stakeholder consultation and agreement. Dundalk is committed to the further growth that is required of a Gateway and is determined that its economic development should proceed in a sustainable manner. Dundalk will take all aspects of sustainability into account in its development and has agreed to an innovative focus on sustainable energy and the reduction of greenhouse gases. With the support of the GIF, Dundalk will aspire to be an exemplar for all of Ireland.

Our vision for the Dundalk Gateway development is: 'To achieve an expansion of the town to 60,000 inhabitants with provision of the necessary infrastructure and services to ensure a high quality of life for all in a manner that incorporates a demonstrably more sustainable approach to energy use and which provides an exemplar for the development of sustainable energy communities throughout Ireland.'

This innovative vision ties in with, and builds on, the objective of the Dundalk and Environs Development Plan 2003-2009 to capitalise on Dundalk's strategic advantages, such as its north-south location and its existing assets. With support from the GIF, Dundalk will become a vibrant, high quality and sustainable Gateway and a hub of activity. This in turn will create a positive, lasting image of Dundalk to the visitor, to the investor, and – equally as important – to those who live there.

### FORWARD PLANNING

#### URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR THE MULLAGHARLIN AREA OF DUNDALK

The preparation of a Framework Plan for the Mullagharlin area of Dundalk was completed in 2007 by Colin Buchanan Planning Consultants. In January 2008, the plan was given legal effect through its adoption by the Dundalk Town Council and the Louth County Council as a variation to the Dundalk and Environs Development Plan.

### PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE

#### DUBLIN-BELFAST ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

The construction of the Newry-Dundalk Link Road has completed the County Louth section of the Dublin-Belfast

Corridor. The A1/N1 Newry to Dundalk Link Road was finished almost five months ahead of schedule at a cost of €128 million. The new road will considerably reduce the travel time between Dublin and Belfast and provide a safer road system for the estimated 20,000 vehicles that cross the Armagh/Louth border each day.

The 14km development links Ballymascanlon, outside Dundalk at the end of the M1, to the Cloghogue roundabout on the outskirts of Newry. A further 12km section of roadway from Cloghogue to the Sheepbridge area of Co. Down will eventually lead to a complete dual carriageway running all the way between Dublin and Belfast.

The A1/N1 Newry to Dundalk Link Road was opened to traffic on August 2, 2007. Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern officiated at the opening with Stormont Executive Minister Conor Murphy, the Westminster MP for Armagh, and Stormont Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness.

**SOUTH AND EAST**

Works on access to the IDA's strategic site at Mullagharlin progressed well in 2007. A new roundabout on the Southern Link Road together with a section of the Western Infrastructure Road will be in service early in 2008. Works also progressed on providing additional water service capacity for future industrial users.

Agreement with the major housing developer at Haggardstown was reached and delivery of key roads and water infrastructure is currently under way including a major waste water pumping station due to be commissioned in 2008.

A joint venture project with IDA and a number of developers is progressing to provide for the drainage of a large tract of zoned lands in the Blackrock area. This work also incorporates elements of the mid-Louth Dunleer Regional Water Supply Scheme.

**NORTH AND WEST**

We have appointed consultants to design a section of the Dundalk Western Infrastructure Road between the Armagh Road and the Newry Road which also forms part of the Gateway GIF application. Discussions with developers regarding the provision

of this road are ongoing. A framework of consultants is now in place to progress the design works on other aspects of roads and water services infrastructure for Dundalk Gateway.

**LINKS TO GATEWAY**

Discussions with Cavan and Monaghan are ongoing to try and progress the Dundalk-Cavan section of the east-west route to Sligo. CPO for the Red Bog section of the Dundalk to Carrickmacross Road has been served and detailed design is now with the Department for approval. Construction is intended to commence in 2008, subject to funding under the Non-National Strategic Route Fund.

Work is continuing on design of Phase 1 of the N53 upgrade and we hope to move to land acquisition and appointment of a contractor by the end of 2008, subject to funding.

**CAVANHILL UPGRADE**

In conjunction with IDA, the capacity of Cavanhill Water Treatment Plant is being increased to facilitate servicing of Mullagharlin industrial lands. Major refurbishment works will also be carried out and it is expected that contracts for this project will proceed in 2008.

**DUNDALK WATER STRATEGIC STUDY**

A strategic water study is being undertaken for Dundalk which will examine demands, supplies and distribution options over a period of 30 years. A final report is expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2008.

*Developing Drogheda as a Primary Development Centre*

**DROGHEDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Drogheda Economic Development Group Action Plan 2004-2007 was launched in November 2004 and identifies a set of actions designed to contribute to the improved quality of life and economic development of Drogheda.

The Drogheda Economic Development Group was formed in March 2004 in order to prepare the Economic Development Action Plan and monitor its progress. The group, which is chaired by the County Manager, consists of representatives of Louth County Council, Drogheda Borough Council, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Drogheda Chamber of Commerce, Drogheda Chamber of Trade, Louth County Enterprise Board, FÁS and Drogheda Council of Trade Unions.

Since the plan's inception, a wide range of actions have been completed while many other actions are ongoing. The following projects have seen completion in 2007:

1. Improvement of approach roads.
2. Redevelopment of the town centre into a pedestrianised zone.
3. Upgrade of Waste Water Treatment Plant.
4. Development of Highlanes Gallery.
5. Establishment of an annual Arts Festival.
6. Provision of a swimming pool and ancillary leisure facilities.

Officials unveil the commemorative plaque at the opening of the A1/N1 Newry-Dundalk Link Road



### 7. Development of Civic Amenity Site

The Economic Development Group is currently reviewing the Plan and a new Economic Development Plan will be launched in 2008.

*View of Drogheda from Millmount*



## PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN DROGHEDA

### DROGHEDA WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT

The extension to Drogheda Waste Water Treatment Plant, which will deliver 101,000 population equivalent (pe) capacity, was completed during 2007 and we are currently looking to Phase 3 which will increase capacity to 125,000pe during 2008. Options for increasing beyond this are also being examined.

### DROGHEDA SEWER NETWORK IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Stage 1 of this scheme is due to commence in 2008 and will entail a comprehensive assessment of the existing network. The aim of this survey is to identify opportunities to eliminate surface water infiltration, thus reducing impact on water quality in the Boyne, lowering treatment costs and free up capacity to facilitate development.

### DROGHEDA WATER SUPPLY

This project is being led by County Meath. It is not expected that this project will yield any substantial additional water supply through development of groundwater sources until at least 2009. An upgrade of Staleen Water Treatment Plant is scheduled for 2012, however, the council intend to carry out refurbishment works at Staleen in 2008, in advance of the main contract. The focus of this work will be to modernise the control systems and the treatment and pumping facilities.

### INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS

To compliment the range of objectives in the Drogheda Economic Development Plan, Drogheda Borough Council has also completed the following infrastructural projects:

1. Completion of the construction of the Drogheda Waste Water Treatment Plant extension to increase capacity to 101,000pe.
2. Donore Road upgrade – an upgrade of traffic lights, public lighting and storm water drainage from the R132 to the IDA junction, including the Bottle Lane junction.

3. Special roadworks carried out at various locations, including the following:
  - a. Crosslane – new boundary wall and footpaths.
  - b. Flaxmill Lane – new surfacing, road markings and road signs.
4. Pedestrian crossing provided at Greenhills and Bolton Street as part of the European Road Safety Charter.
5. New signal controlled pedestrian crossings provided at Dublin Road (South).
6. Improvement at Fair Street/Duke Street and at Shop Street/North Quay – low cost upgrades for safety (the improvement of public lighting) and accessibility (the construction of a dished footpath for wheel chair access).
7. Road and footpath repairs carried out at various locations throughout the Borough and dished kerbs were provided for disabled access.
8. Provision and maintenance of Phase 1 of public light upgrading on major arterial routes throughout the borough.
9. West Street Environmental Improvement Scheme – works commenced on remaining phases and were completed at the end of 2007. Snagging is planned for 2008.
10. Upgrading of the traffic signals at the Mary Street/R132 intersection.
11. Pay & Display car park opened in O'Reilly's Yard, off Fair Street.
12. Upgrading of steps from Dublin Road to Marsh Road.
13. Road gully cleaning and maintenance undertaken throughout the borough area.
14. Substantial road markings programme undertaken at various locations.
15. Continuation of the Water Conservation Project in Drogheda in conjunction with Louth County Council.
16. Continuation of the installation of water metre boundary boxes/water metres for non-domestic customers in line with government policy.
17. Appointment of consultants for the Drogheda Sewerage Network Improvement Assessment Scheme Phase 1.
18. Improvements to the Staleen & Rosehall Water Treatment Plants and Roughgrange Pumping Station:
  - a. The installation of upgraded sludge treatment facilities (Staleen WTP).
  - b. Provision of new filter media (Rosehall WTP).
  - c. Provision of a new pump (Roughgrange).
19. Official opening of Newtown Cross Cemetery on Newtown Road.
20. Completion of Ramparts River Walk – Battle of the Boyne Way.
21. Bring Centres installed in Ballsgrove.
22. West Street Environmental Improvement Scheme.

## FORWARD PLANNING

### MASTERPLAN FOR THE NORTHERN ENVIRONS OF DROGHEDA

A Local Area Plan for the Northern Drogheda Environs was adopted by the County Council in July 2004 to provide for a range of development uses in this area, with a population of

West Street Environmental Improvement Scheme



20,000 within the next 20 years. The masterplan for the area covers the residential zoned lands within the Local Area Plan and was adopted as a variation of the Local Area Plan by the County Council at its meeting on May 15, 2006.

The North Drogheda Development Group, comprising developers and landowners in the area, engaged in extensive pre-planning consultations with the Planning Authority during 2007. Currently, the group is in the process of submitting planning applications for the development of the area.

#### DOCKLANDS AREA PLAN

The Drogheda Borough Council adopted the Docklands Area Plan in February 2007 and this has been incorporated into the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2005-2011. This Plan provides a strategy to guide the future development of the Docklands area and provides for a mix of commercial, residential, social and cultural developments.

#### PLANNING STRATEGY FOR THE GREATER DROGHEDA AREA

This study – a joint venture by Louth County Council, Drogheda Borough Council and Meath County Council – was adopted by the three Local Authorities during the first half of 2007. It provides a strategic framework for the development of Drogheda from 2004 to 2024, and will provide for a population of approximately 65,000 within Drogheda and its northern and southern environs by 2024.

#### URBAN AND TOWN RENEWAL SCHEMES

The current scheme under which the integrated Area Plans for Dundalk and Drogheda have been prepared came into operation in 1999. It was originally intended to run until the end of 2002 but was extended (with eligibility for full tax relief) to July 2006, for those projects for which 15% of the total project cost had been spent by June 2003.

The Town Renewal Scheme under which plans for Ardee, Dunleer, Carlingford and Castlebellingham were prepared, was also extended (with eligibility for full tax relief) to July 2006, providing full planning applications were received by the end of 2004. This extension also applies to exempted developments which had incurred a minimum expenditure of 5% of project costs and had contracts signed by the end of 2004.

The 2006 Finance Bill allows for the further extension of these schemes on the basis of a minimum expenditure (set at 15% of the project cost, excluding the cost of the purchase of the site) having been made on the project by the end of 2006 and certified by the local authority. A sliding scale of tax relief for qualifying expenditure up to July 2008 is as follows:

- Full relief will be available up to the end of December 2006.
- 75% of the normal relief will apply from January to the end of December 2007.
- 50% of the normal relief will apply in the period from January to the end of July 2008.

#### Economic Development

#### DUNDALK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Dundalk is one of the fastest growing towns in Ireland and if the high potential of the Dundalk region is to be fully realised, there is a need for a high level of commitment and a multi-agency approach, with the private sector, the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations to work together to achieve this aim.

The Dundalk Economic Development Group (DEDG), a three year partnership project which we are very proud of, was established in March 2005 under the chairmanship of Peter Malone. This is a public and private sector taskforce which demonstrates the successful collaboration of the enterprise sector, social development agencies and businesses based in Dundalk.

Dundalk has all the key ingredients for economic success and the DEDG are on track to reposition Dundalk as the prime location to invest, work, study, live and visit. Louth Local Authorities in partnership with the DEDG are committed to working with developers, investors and businesses to ensure that all the essential features are in place to encourage investment to Dundalk.

Some of the major highlights are:

- Launching of a new logo and brand for Dundalk.
- Creation of a Dundalk 'Life and Leisure' DVD to promote the town as a place to live, work and visit.
- Access programme in DKIT for students from disadvantaged areas.
- Schools completion programme operational in most secondary schools.
- A co-ordinated entrepreneurship programme for Dundalk has been developed known as the Green Technology Fund.
- Planning has begun for a major redevelopment of the town centre.
- Launching of a promotional DVD to attract investment into Dundalk in November 2007.

New logo for Dundalk launched by Minister Dermot Ahern



- Promotion of a Business Ambassadors Programme for Dundalk.
- Winning of the Silver Medal at the National Tidy Towns Awards.

### LOUTH HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

Louth Hospitality, the tourism marketing company, originated from a County Development Board initiative with the specific aim of maximising the economic spin-off generated by tourism in the county.

Due to its excellent location, scenic coastline, Blue Flag beaches and wealth of heritage and mythical legends, Louth has the potential to be a premier tourist destination.

2007 tourism development highlights included the Táin Walking Festival, €400 million grant aid from Fáilte Ireland for the Battle of the Boyne Ramparts Walk and completion of the Interreg East Border Tourism Programme which delivered over €600,000 to aid tourism product development in many of Louth's smaller towns and villages. This investment was channelled into festivals, visitor attractions and services.

Marketing activities have been funded by the Louth County Council Peace II Task Force in addition to trade membership funds. Marketing activities included:

- Production of the Dundalk promotional DVD.
- Production and distribution of the 'Louth – Land of Legends' County guide.
- Inception of the Louth Value Golf Pass and promotion of this in the UK.
- Upgrade of [www.louthholidays.com](http://www.louthholidays.com).

- Attendance at national and overseas tradeshows.
- Advertising in Fáilte Ireland publications and activity guides.

### LOUTH, NEWRY & MOURNE FILM COMMISSION

The Louth, Newry & Mourne Film Commission is a cross-border project designed to stimulate economic development in the region through enticing film productions to the area and creating link-ups between productions and local SMEs, hospitality providers and crew.

Táin Walking Festival March 2007



During 2007:

- Paisean Faisean filmed for 2 days in Dundalk in February, using local shops, restaurants and the Park Inn Hotel. The Film Commission earned a screen credit for its assistance with this production.
- RTÉ's 'I'm An Adult Get Me Out Of Here' filmed for one day in Dundalk in March.
- The BBC filmed in Clogherhead in March for a new factual series called 'Blueprints'.
- Granada / ITV shot a section of 'Britain's Favourite View' in the Mourne Region.
- The Calipo Theatre and Picture Company are producing a short film called 'Frankie', written by Darren Thornton. Filming took place in Cox's Demesne, Dundalk during a week in March. The film has since won the UIP Prix Award for Best Short Film at this year's Berlin Film Festival. It has already picked up Best First Irish Short at the Galway Film Fleadh and Best Irish Short Film at the Corona Cork Film Festival last year.
- The Cinergy DIY Film Festival took place at the Táin Theatre on February 15, 16 and 17. John Moore sponsored a short film competition, donating a prize of €1,000 and a locally hand-crafted trophy. The panel selected a winner from over 30 entries and the unanimous choice was Gareth Chambers from Meigh, Co. Armagh.
- Mairtin De Barra, Director of the Film Commission, attended the prestigious EAVE workshops in Luxembourg along with 54 producers from around Europe. He has also managed to bring a module of this course to Drogheda for July 2008.
- The Film Commission sourced a number of Irish language films for the County Museum to screen as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge.
- The New Media Factory, a joint venture of Dundalk Institute of Technology, the University of Ulster and The Louth, Newry & Mourne Film Commission, offered free media training to over 150 East Border Region residents. This training set out to increase the skill base of local crew and the business skills of companies in the region.

*Improve all infrastructure in the county and facilitate and assist Government Departments in the development of other elements of the National Development Plan*

**IMPROVING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE**

**ARDEE BY-PASS**

Approval was received from the National Roads Authority (NRA) to serve notice to treat in respect of the N52 section of the Ardee Bypass. We are at the early stages of negotiations with land owners with regard to acquisitions. This is expected to continue into 2008. Further progress on the scheme will be totally dependent on funding being made available by the NRA.

*Railway Yard – shooting for the multi-award winning short film 'Frankie' takes place in Dundalk*



**R177 KILCURRY**

Works on this scheme are progressing well and are expected to be substantially completed by the end of the year.

**DEVELOPMENT CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS  
ROCK ROAD, BLACKROCK**

Compulsory Purchase Order has been served in respect of Phase 1 of the scheme. Subject to the completion of the statutory procedures and confirmation of the order by An Bord Pleanála we would expect to seek and award tenders early in 2008.

**TULLYALLEN**

Following the successful execution of the Part 8 process we are intending to advertise the tender for the works by year end with the appointment of a contractor expected early in 2008.

**STATION ROAD CASTLEBELLINGHAM (VILLAGE SECTION)**

We have progressed the acquisition of lands by agreement and we are hopeful of finalising same by year end. Plans for 2008 are to advertise the tender for the village section with a view to works commencing and being complete by the end of 2008.

**PORT ORIEL, CLOGHERHEAD: HARBOUR  
UPGRADING AND EXTENSION**

The new pier at Port Oriel, Clogherhead opened on 18th May 2007. The local fishing fleet have returned to the harbour and there is increased fishing activity since its re-opening. We have been in discussions with a number of state agencies who have a sea/fisheries brief and who have expressed an interest in establishing an operational base at Port Oriel. We will progress this potential development in 2008.

**BROADBAND**

Work was completed on installation of a Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) in Ardee Town. Marketing of the service in Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee is ongoing.

R177 Kilcurry: Before



R177 Kilcurry: After



### URBAN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL PROGRAMME 2006

The Urban and Village Renewal Programme has now ended however, there was some residual funding available for 2007. This funding was directed towards two projects in Dundalk – the riverside walkway and cycle path and the Sensory Garden at St. Leonard's Park. Funding for the undergrounding of overhead cables and the erection of new lighting columns in Main Street, Blackrock was also provided for in 2007.

### DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION SCHEME

A contributions scheme under the provision of Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 was adopted by the Council

on February 16, 2004, and has since been in operation. The scheme clearly sets out for developers the level of contribution required for each type of development, as well as the basis for levying the contribution. Contributions from the scheme will fund the provision of the necessary infrastructure to sustain future development and growth in the County.

A special contribution may also be levied in respect of a particular development where specific exceptional costs not covered by the general scheme pertain in respect of public infrastructure and facilities which benefit the proposed development.

Receipts from the present scheme amounted to some €4,657,350 during 2007. In addition, a further €4,659,090 was owing under both this and the previous scheme for developments actually built or under construction by December 31, 2007.

# GOAL 3

*To improve the quality of life for residents, now and for future generations*

*Promoting plan-led high quality varied and sustainable residential development*

New housing development, Newtown Meadows



## ACTION PLAN FOR SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING 2004-2008

The Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing 2004-2008 continued to be the platform from which all of our main housing programmes and outputs were driven throughout 2007. It was subject to further review throughout the year and in conjunction with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government was adjusted as necessary to take account of changing needs and resources.

## DELIVERING HOMES, SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

In February 2007 the government launched a major new housing policy document – Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities. This policy redirected and refocused attention on delivering an even higher quality of sustainable housing to all of our citizens in a climate of unprecedented population growth and household formation. It restated the long-standing core objective of the overall housing policy, namely ‘to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality suited to its needs in a good environment and as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice’.

The policy will guide and influence all our housing activity

The official opening of the new housing scheme in Blackrock: Gort na Glaise



over the coming years as we strive to cater for the needs of all our citizens, particularly for the more vulnerable members of our population.

## HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Regular monitoring and updating of our waiting lists for both social and affordable housing enables us to properly plan our new building programmes and to tailor our new schemes to match the various categories and family sizes on our waiting lists.

At the end of 2007 we had a total of 3,311 families on our social waiting list while the number of applicants on our affordable waiting list, had risen to 526. On March 31, 2008 preparations were under way for carrying out the three-yearly statutory assessment of social housing needs to establish the overall need pertaining and we would expect to see a considerable reduction in the above figure.

## SOCIAL HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND ACQUISITION PROGRAMME

During the year new schemes were completed at Mayfield (6), Blackrock (25), Termonfeckin (30), Clogherhead (27), and Lios Dubh, Dundalk (68), while additional schemes commenced at Carlingford (2), Collon (19), and Glenwood (12).

Planning and design work was advanced on further schemes at Cappocksgate, Ardee (23), Blackrock (1) and Dunleer in the county area; at Mell, Moneymore and Laurence's Park in the Drogheda borough; and at Mount Avenue and Barrack St. in Dundalk.

Our ongoing construction programmes are often supplemented by the purchase of one off single houses in existing estates, which is a useful option in helping to meet our action plan targets and contributes significantly to our policy of social integration. In 2007 we purchased a total of 70 dwellings under this heading.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING, PART V AND THE HOUSING STRATEGY

The continuing role of local authorities in the provision of affordable housing is recognised in Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities. For some years now local authorities have been directly involved in the building of affordable housing units on their own land, usually in conjunction with the building of integrated social housing on the same site, under what is known as the 1999 Scheme.

The alternative method of securing delivery of affordable homes is through the implementation of Part V of the Planning and Development Act whereby private housing developers must set aside 20% of all new developments for a combination of social and affordable housing. During the year the 1999 Scheme delivered a total of 41 affordable housing units at Blackrock (6), Clogherhead (15) and Lios Dubh, Dundalk (20).

#### HOUSING STRATEGY

The Housing Strategy which forms the basis for the delivery of social and affordable housing under Part V was due for review in 2007 and a revised strategy was adopted by the local authorities towards the end of the year. Output under Part V has been somewhat less than anticipated over the past few years due to a number of factors and will be influenced further by a general downturn in the overall housing market throughout 2007. Nevertheless, under Part V, a total of 26 affordable housing units were delivered at a number of locations throughout the county and output under this heading is still expected to increase substantially over the coming years. To a lesser extent we have included a number of private affordable building sites in some of our new developments with six such sites being provided at Clogherhead and further sites under development at Carlingford (5), Collon (4), and a further three about to start in Ardee.

### VOLUNTARY HOUSING

Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities recognises an expanding role for approved voluntary housing associations in implementing the efforts of local authorities to provide additional housing, particularly social housing. In addition to the various groups already operating in our area, we have many new voluntary associations anxious to get involved, including a number of local community-based groups in

smaller towns and villages. Louth Local Authorities will give every encouragement to such initiatives.

During 2007 voluntary schemes were completed in Dundalk at Lios Dubh (50) and Saltown (16), while additional schemes commenced at Collon (19) and Tullyallen (11). Further schemes are about to get under way – such as that in Ardee (39) – and a site was purchased at Kilkierley with a view to promoting a local community-based voluntary scheme.

### SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Louth Local Authorities are fully committed to meeting the housing needs of people with disabilities who may require specially adapted accommodation, either in their existing homes or in newly built accommodation. We can assist these people in a number of ways, including:

- design and construction of specially adapted housing units in our new estates.
- modification / adaptation of our existing rented housing stock.
- work with voluntary housing associations to provide specially adapted housing for elderly and disabled people.
- providing grant aid for private house owners to adapt their dwellings.

Two new schemes were introduced in 2007. The first, the means tested Housing Adaptation and Mobility Aids Grants for Disabled Persons, replaced the existing grant scheme for disabled persons. The second, Housing Aid for Older People, was designed to amalgamate the former Essential Repairs Grant Scheme with the HSE operated Special Aid for the Elderly.

Activity under the old schemes continued at a high level in 2007. 186 Disabled Persons Grants worth €2.2 million and 69 Essential Repairs Grants worth €364,144 were paid out. At the end of the year there were 110 applications awaiting completion of works and payment, 98 applications with provisional approval and a further 128 applications at various stages of processing.

### HOUSING STOCK MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENT

Maintenance and repair of our rented housing stock (3,000 dwellings) requires a considerable investment of resources. This involves ordinary routine maintenance in response to tenants' requests together with planned maintenance and improvement works, particularly the installation of central heating in dwellings lacking this facility. A total of 175 of our rented dwellings had central heating installed in 2007 and 2008 will see the completion of this programme with all of our rented stock equipped with central heating.

While central heating systems were being installed, we took the opportunity to carry out any major refurbishment work to doors, windows, soffits, fascias, insulation and electrical fixtures, as was required in many of these dwellings.

Work continued on plans for major regeneration programmes at Muirhevnamor and Cox's Demesne, Dundalk but no firm government commitment on funding was available by the end of the year.

### TENANT PARTICIPATION AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Greater tenant participation in the running of estates and the elimination of anti-social behaviour are two very important objectives in ensuring good quality of life for our residents. Our tenant participation programmes were boosted by the recruitment of an additional Tenant Liaison Officer and pre-tenancy training is now a standard feature of all of our new housing allocations.

Our Anti-Social Behaviour Officer dealt with 362 complaints throughout the year with issues ranging from disputes between neighbours, threats and intimidation, to youth problems, noise and parties. In most of these cases the matter was resolved through verbal or written warnings without the need to resort to more serious action such as eviction.

### RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME (RAS)

We continued to promote and implement the Rental Accommodation Scheme aimed at transferring tenants receiving rent allowance in private rented accommodation over to tenure where the property is leased to the local authority by the landlord. At present this applies to tenants who have been in receipt of supplementary rent allowance for 18 months or more. Although progress is somewhat slower than hoped for, by the end of 2007 almost 100 properties had been transferred under this scheme.

### TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005-2008 was reviewed towards the end of the year. No amendments were made as a more comprehensive review and new programme will be prepared in 2008. It is anticipated that, by and large, the overall targets in the programme will be met at the end of the scheduled four years. In 2007 traveller families acquired accommodation in standard housing (9), in halting sites (2) and through single instance purchase (1). The Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee met on four occasions during the year.

Roadside traveller encampments continue to be a problem and a number of such instances were dealt with in co-operation with the Gardaí.

### HOMELESSNESS

The County Louth Forum on Homelessness met on five occasions during the year, each time with very good attendance and excellent co-operation between the statutory bodies and voluntary organisations. The main focus of the Forum throughout the year centered on a review of the Homelessness Action Plan 2004-2006, pending publication of a new government strategy following publication of the Fitzpatrick Report. A matter of ongoing concern was the curtailment of government and HSE funding for many of the vital services being provided in the county.

Towards the end of 2007 work commenced on a new hostel in Drogheda for Drogheda Women's Refuge.

### FORWARD PLANNING

#### CARLINGFORD SPATIAL PLANNING STRATEGY

A spatial planning strategy for Carlingford commenced during 2007 to provide guidance for the future sustainable development of the town. This study will focus on Carlingford's scenic location and the need to preserve and take advantage of its unique heritage, both medieval and other, and will be complete in early 2008.

### Arts, Museums, Libraries, and Amenity Areas

#### ARTS

##### MUSIC

2007 marked the halfway point of the County Arts Plan, and saw music of all types take centre stage throughout the county: Drogheda hosted its now well-established International Music Series; a series of classical concerts took place in Carlingford Heritage Centre; and Dundalk welcomed the Ulster Orchestra, Camerata Ireland, Ensemble Avalon and the Locrian Ensemble.

For many, the highlight was when Californian composer Terry Riley visited Ireland for the first time for the Drogheda Arts Festival. A unique collaboration between Louth Contemporary Music Society, Louth Local Authorities, and the Arts Council saw Riley, listed in the Sunday Times as 'one of the 1,000 makers of the 20th century', perform with Arte Saxophone Quartet, his son Gyan Reilly, and the Crash Ensemble. Entitled 'Spirals of Ragtime and Raga', the concerts and accompanying events celebrated the life and work of this seminal composer.

Later in the year, Monica Huggett led the Irish Baroque Orchestra in a series of critically-acclaimed concerts as part of the Ardee Baroque Festival.

##### VISUAL ARTS

Louth Local Authorities support two dedicated visual arts exhibition spaces: the Basement Gallery in Dundalk and the Highlanes Gallery in Drogheda. In different ways, these galleries programme exhibitions representing the best in curatorial and contemporary arts practice in Ireland today.

Last year saw a number of gallery-specific shows in the Basement, one of which was Rigor Mort. This exhibition was guest-curated by Sally Timmons and was accompanied by a publication which allowed for a greater exploration of the theme of loss, with contributions from 12 artists and writers.

The Highlanes Gallery, situated in what was once the Franciscan Church in Drogheda, hosted a number of challenging exhibitions throughout the year. 'Interchanges', an exhibition of work by Irish artists who benefited from Fulbright scholarships, was displayed as part of the Drogheda Arts Festival. Later in the year, Ms Aoife Ruane was appointed

Director of the Highlanes, and a full programme of exhibitions is in place for 2008.

### SUPPORTING ARTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Supporting youth and young people's arts was one of the themes throughout the year. The following initiatives raised the profile and awareness of the calibre of arts activities for and by young people, while highlighting the needs of this vital part of local arts provision:

- Visits by TEAM, the Dublin String Trio and the National Chamber Choir to schools across the county.
- Film-making workshops.
- Film summer school.
- The continuing development of Drogheda Youth Dance Company and the Droichead Youth Theatre.
- The commissioning of a report into the future of youth theatre in the county.

### MUSEUM

For those at the Museum, 2007 will linger long in the mind due to two seminal events: the Museum's involvement in the Heritage Council's Museum Standards Programme for Ireland; and the opening of the exhibition 'On the Trail of the Arctic Fox' by the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, His Excellency Mr Patrick Binns.

The Museum Standards Programme for Ireland may best be described as the museum version of the ISO 9000. An institution is assessed and ultimately recognised as providing a consistently high standard of service over 35 criteria covering all aspects of the museum function, such as collection and storage, visitor services, education, labelling and conservation. Ultimately, this will be the benchmark by which a museum is assessed with respect to the provision and discharge of its core competencies. Given that this is the first year of this programme, we believe that our involvement in the scheme will be of critical importance as the Museum is seeking to enhance the range of services that it already offers to its stakeholders, with particular regard to developing the collection. It is envisaged that the journey to realise full accreditation will take approximately three to four years. However, as the Chinese proverb says, 'a journey of 1,000 miles begins with one step'.

On Saturday November 17, 2007, Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, Mr Patrick Binns, opened 'On the Trail of the Arctic Fox', an exhibition that was almost two and a half years in the making. Born in Seatown Place, Francis Leopold McClintock was one of the Arctic's greatest figures, but his contribution to exploration has fallen through the cracks of history. The exhibition itself was arguably the most complicated ever undertaken by the Museum as it features artifacts on loan from several different quarters including the National Museum of Ireland, the Natural History Museum and Cambridge's Scott Polar Research Institute, as well as several objects taken on loan from private individuals throughout Ireland.

The collection chronicles McClintock's early years growing up in Dundalk, his career in the Navy and his candidature as an

Irish Baroque Orchestra performing in St Mary's during the Ardee Baroque Festival 2007



Circus Bone Idle perform 'Otherworlds' at the Samhradh Festival



Independent in Drogheda. Perhaps the most interesting artefact on view is the satellite sledge – symbolic of the area in which he made his name.

A number of other activities have been organised to complement the exhibition including a winter school where various aspects of polar exploration will be examined, as well as a series of historical re-enactment workshops featuring McClintock discussing his Arctic career.

Apart from the set pieces described above, the Museum has also continued to develop its collection with donations made throughout the year. Several interesting additions were made, including several sets of photographic equipment, as well as a range of computers and games dating from the mid 1980s.

### LOUTH COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE

The aim of Louth County Library Service is to enhance and

enrich the lives of those in the community by:

- meeting their informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs.
- providing access to life-long learning in a welcoming environment.
- maximising the use of Information Communications Technology.

#### LIBRARY SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

Several primary schools were visited by library staff to demonstrate the library website and catalogue. The newly opened St Francis National School in Blackrock was added to those primary schools visited by the schools' library service.

A new 'Children's Guide to the Library' was produced by library staff and will be distributed to all national schools in the county. It will also be available in all branches.

#### THE BIG WILD READ

The 'Big Wild Read' reading Challenge was launched in all libraries during the summer months to encourage reading among children and to nurture a love of reading for the future. When the challenge was completed at the end of August, celebratory events were arranged in each library and children were presented with certificates to mark their achievement.

#### ICT ACTIVITIES

Information Technology developments throughout the year included:

- Digital Subscriber Line and Communications upgrades
- New Ordnance Survey Ireland machines for online access to Ordnance Survey map, installed in Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee libraries.
- Remote access for the Newspapers Online service from any internet connection through the library webpage.

#### SILVER SURFERS

'Silver Surfers' weekly computer classes were held in Dundalk and Drogheda libraries to give retired persons an opportunity to learn basic computer and internet skills. These classes were conducted by Paul Smith, IT Development Officer in the Community & Enterprise Office. In May and December a number of the 'Silver Surfers' joined with their peers from Monaghan, Banbridge and Craigavon and were treated to a day of Information Communication Technology training, sightseeing and shopping by the Discover ICT Project. This initiative provides a relaxed learning environment where first time ICT users can learn about aspects of ICT which are relevant to them.

#### OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Our biggest ever number of Outreach activities took place in all branches to coincide with events such as the Children's Book Festival, Science Week, Seachtaine Na Gaeilge and Bealtaine.

Activities included:

- Visits and storytelling from internationally acclaimed children's authors.
- Storytime music sessions.

- Magic shows.
- Colouring competitions.
- Short story competitions.
- Rhyme Time sessions.
- Mother and Toddler Storytime.
- Illustration session.
- Bi-lingual storytelling.
- Little Music Makers.
- Animates Roadshow
- Informative workshop on nature and animals with live owls, snakes and tortoises.
- Children's Voices Youth Choir.
- Table quizzes.

#### EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions held in the various libraries included:

- Women for Action on Disability and Equality.
- Dundalk Media Centre exhibition.
- St. Patrick's Day Postcard exhibit.
- ICA Arts & Crafts exhibition.
- Drogheda in Old Photographs.
- 'Lord of the Land, Heart of the Home', an exhibition of arts and crafts from Finland.
- Drogheda Photo Club exhibit.
- Norma Jean Finnegan art exhibit.
- The Professional Photographers.

#### OTHER LIBRARY SERVICES

##### – LEARNING CENTRE

Groups using the Learning Centre on a regular basis included FÁS, Rehab, VEC, Slán Abhaile, Hilltop Services and the National Learning Network. A creative writing group set up in conjunction with the Arts Office also uses the Learning Centre as its venue.

##### – MOBILE LIBRARY

A new stop was added to the Mobile Library route at Moorehall Retirement Village in Ardee.

##### – TOURS

Tours were organised in all libraries for groups such as national schools, play groups, secondary school history students, and groups from various organisations in the towns.

## Sports and Recreation Strategy

During 2007 Louth County Council continued to develop links with a growing number of national governing bodies for sports including the FAI, GAA, Athletic Association of Ireland, Community Games, Badminton Ireland and Leinster Rugby. Partnerships with HSE Dublin-Northeast, Irish Heart Foundation, DKIT, Coillte and others have resulted in development of some of the aforementioned projects.

The Council has also supported the Outreach summer activities programme operated by Dundalk Sports Centre,

assisted in the re-establishment of the Collon Tennis Club and continued to provide relevant information on general sporting, recreational and play issues to clubs and community groups.

## SPORTS AND RECREATION STRATEGY

The Louth Local Authorities County Sports and Recreation Strategy, published last year, aims to increase the level of general participation in sport and physical activity over the period 2007-2012. A number of the actions outlined by this strategy were initiated in 2007, the most notable of which are summarised below.

### SPORTS DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

Mick Neville, Louth Community Soccer Development Officer and Donal McNally, Louth GAA Club Support Officer commenced work in Louth in the second half of 2007 following agreements between Louth County Council and the FAI and Leinster Council and the GAA respectively to co-fund their appointments. These development officers will deliver programmes agreed between the Council and their associations, aimed at increasing participation in sport amongst specific target groups while also promoting the specific sports.

### GRANTS FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH SPORTS

A sum of €52,000 was secured by Louth County Council through Pobal from Dormant Accounts Funds under a once-off scheme. From these funds a total of 26 grants, ranging from €1,000 to €5,000, were allocated by the Council to a variety of sporting clubs and organisations across Louth to provide assistance in promoting sport to disadvantaged young people, a target group in the Sports and Recreation Strategy.

### LOUTH LOCAL SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

The Louth Local Sports Partnership (LSP) was formally established in the autumn of 2007. This Partnership comprises representation from lead agencies and sports bodies in Louth and will operate under the auspices of Louth County Development Board. David Cranny, lecturer at DKIT, is Chairman of the Interim Board, and a co-ordinating officer will be appointed early in 2008 to oversee operations. Louth LSP will work in line with the Sports and Recreation Strategies of both the Irish Sports Council and Louth Local Authorities to increase the level of participation in sports throughout the county.

### SPORTS INCLUSION DISABILITIES OFFICER

Louth County Council has also been allocated funding of €170,200 for the employment of a Sports Inclusion Disabilities Officer (SIDO). 21 SIDOs are being appointed across the country to work on a two year pilot project with LSPs aimed at increasing opportunities for disabled people in sport. The Louth SIDO will be appointed early in 2008 and will work under the Louth LSP.

### AUDIT OF SPORTS FACILITIES IN COUNTY

Work on the Directory of Sports Clubs & Organisations and the

audit of sports facilities in County Louth continued during 2007. It is intended to complete the audit in 2008 and have the updated directory available on the Louth Local Authorities website.

### COACH TRAINING GRANTS SCHEME

This scheme was introduced on a pilot basis by Louth County Council during 2006 to encourage the provision and development of coaches across all sporting codes in Louth. In 2007, grant assistance was provided to 103 people to participate in accredited coaching and mentoring courses for athletics, badminton, soccer and rugby. The scheme will be continued in 2008.

Leinster GAA Louth County Council Initiative



## CROSS-BORDER INITIATIVES

### ORIEL 2012 PROJECT

The Oriel 2012 Project was formally launched in Newry in June 2007. Developed as an initiative under the Border Visions Programme, a cross-border programme facilitated by Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency and Louth County Enterprise Board, the project aims to capitalise on the potential opportunities for the region which will arise from the London Olympic and Paralympic games in 2012. The project will promote the region to participating countries as a base for pre-Olympic training camps, adopting the collaborative 'clustering approach' already used for business interests.

### CROSS-BORDER MINORITY SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

This project was funded through SEUPB under Peace 11. Skateboarding sessions were held in Drogheda and Dundalk in late August 2007 as part of a Mobile Skatepark Tour organised by Ms Nicola McAlinden, the Cross-Border Minority Sports Development Officer. Both venues attracted approximately 100 skateboarders who met with Councillors and parents and they showed them the sport in action.

## WALKING DEVELOPMENTS

### SLÍ NA SLÁINTE

During 2007, a new Slí na Sláinte route was provided at Blackrock and in conjunction with the GAA County Board a 'virtual' Slí na Sláinte was incorporated into the new GAA training complex at Darver. Also, signage was upgraded on existing Slí routes in Drogheda and Dundalk.

### TÁIN WALKING FESTIVAL

The first Táin Walking Festival, organised by Louth Hospitality and Carlingford Tourism and supported by Louth County Council, was held in the Cooley Mountain/Carlingford area during early March 2007. It is intended to develop this as an annual walking festival for this area.

Works to enhance the Táin Way and develop further Loop walks in the Cooley Mountain area commenced in late 2007 and were funded by grant assistance received from Fáilte Ireland.

A Walking Strategy for the general Cooley peninsula area will be developed by the Council in 2008.

### BATTLE OF THE BOYNE WAY

Drogheda Borough Council commenced enhancement works on the Battle of the Boyne riverside walkway. Assisted by a Fáilte Ireland grant of €301,853 and Mellon O'Reilly, this walk, when completed, will link Drogheda to the new Oldbridge Estate (Battle of the Boyne site).

### CASTLETOWN RIVER WALK

A new stretch of riverside walk was opened on the northern bank of the Castletown river. Developed by Dundalk Town Council, this walkway links the old Newry Road and the new Táin Bridges. The walk incorporates cycle lanes and will form part of the proposed Castletown riverside pathway for pedestrians and cyclists.

## SPORTS FACILITIES

### MINI SOCCER PITCHES

Grant assistance was secured under the FAI Mini Pitch Scheme for the provision of four mini soccer pitches in Louth. With further financial assistance from the respective Local Authorities these pitches will be constructed in Drogheda (2), Dundalk (1) and Ardee (1).

### MUIRHEVNAMOR DISTRICT PARK

Following redevelopment by Dundalk Town Council with assistance from Sports Capital funding, Muirhevnamor District Park was officially opened in June 2007. It includes cycle paths, a grass soccer pitch surrounded by a 400m running track, a public basketball court and three games areas with markings for tennis, five-a-side soccer and basketball.

### DUNDALK SPORTS CENTRE

Improvement works carried out in Dundalk Sports Centre

Oriel 2012 Project launch, Newry, June 2007



included provision of a new HARO sprung timber floor, new basketball units and emergency doors. This work was funded with the help of a €65,000 grant from Department of Arts Sport and Tourism 2006 Sports Capital Programme. Further grant aid has been allocated through the DAST 2007 Sports Capital Programme and the Social & Community Capital Grant Scheme for lift installation and for redevelopment works on the changing rooms, toilets and offices.

### DUNDALK LEISURE CENTRE

Dundalk Town Council and Aura Leisure Management Company have agreed in principle on proposed improvements at the Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre. The proposed on-site outdoor children's playground and flume are to be provided in 2008.

### DROGHEDA SWIMMING POOL/LEISURE CENTRE

Funding was secured from the DAST Sports Capital Programme towards the extension of changing and fitness facilities at the centre.

Skateboarders prepare for a session in a mobile skatepark at County Hall, Dundalk, August 2007



**LOURDES STADIUM**

Clearance works on the Lourdes Stadium site were carried out to prepare the facility for future redevelopment.

**MONEYMORE PITCH FACILITIES**

Enhancement works to the grass pitch at Moneymore were completed and a new all-weather five-a-side pitch has been provided (adjacent to Drogheda Boxing Club) by Drogheda Borough Council. Preliminary design and planning has commenced for a playground and multi-use games area (MUGA), with the assistance of RAPID.

**PLAYGROUNDS**

Tenders for the provision of a playground at Callystown, Clogherhead were received in late 2007. It is intended to complete this playground early in 2008.

During the year a preliminary investigation was carried out across the county into other potential sites for playgrounds. A number of definite sites were identified and this work will be progressed in 2008.

**Environmental Protection and Pollution Control****PLANNING**

Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 provides:

- the publication of notice of quarry registration.
- the opportunity for concerned parties to make submissions or observations.
- the imposition of conditions on the operation of the quarry by the Council within 2 years of the registration, or the modification of previously imposed conditions.
- an appeal process for quarry operators.

All quarries in the county (except those that were granted planning permission since April 28, 1999) were obliged to register with Louth County Council by April 27, 2005. The Council received 12 applications for registration. Decisions were made in 2006 in the cases of the first two quarries which were registered. During 2007, the Council completed the process of making decisions in the remaining ten cases.

**DROGHEDA BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- Completion of gas extraction works at the Old Landfill Site on the Collon Road.
- Restoration work on DBC Old Landfill Site completed.
- Landfill EPA licence review ongoing.

**WATER QUALITY**

Work in this area continued during the year and involved, among other activities, farm surveys, a river water monitoring programme, licensing of trade effluent discharges and the

*The formal presentation of the two flags to Louth at the National Ceremony by the then Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dick Roche*



inspection/conditioning of planning applications. Louth fully participated in the two River Basins District Programmes in the Neagh Bann and the eastern region. Both were the subject of presentations at SPC meetings and both elected members and officials fully participated in the development of the SWMI Reports for each district.

**BLUE FLAG SCHEME**

Louth retained the prestigious Blue Flag for its beaches at Port and Templetown and two high profile flag raising ceremonies were held in June 2007, together with a series of educational activities on the beaches.

**Providing High Quality Water and Waste Water Services****WATER SERVICES****WATER CONSERVATION PROJECT**

Phase 1 of the county-wide Water Conservation Project is substantially complete with 89 District Meter Areas (DMAs) established. This, together with emergency remedial works, has resulted in the saving of four million litres of water a day.

Phase 2 of the scheme is already under way and this will gather pace in 2008 when active leak detection will be rolled out across all 89 DMAs. Subject to funding approval, the rehabilitation of a number of mains and the refurbishment of piped networks will be undertaken in 2008.

Improved management of individual water supplies as a result of the improved metering project is also likely to contribute to the water conservation efforts in 2008.

### NON-DOMESTIC WATER METERING

All non-domestic meters can now be read electronically. This will provide more accurate reading and a quicker turnaround time for billing and dealing with queries. In addition, the facility allows us to analyse water usage trends which facilitates both water planning and resolution of issues arising from customer side leakage. Monthly usage profiles are now provided to customers. A query management system is being rolled out which will track issues, thus facilitating better customer service.

### IMPROVING WATER AND WASTE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

#### COLLON, TALLANSTOWN, LOUTH AND KNOCKBRIDGE WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS

A preliminary report was approved in the current year and the award of contract is expected by year end. The project will be a design-build contract with a completion date expected to be in early 2009.

#### COOLEY REGIONAL WATER SCHEME STAGE 2

The scheme is currently at preliminary report stage. Works on a main trunk supply from Carlingford to Omeath will be investigated in 2008.

#### ARDEE SEWERAGE SCHEME

The preliminary report has been agreed by the Department. The preparation of an EIS will be an objective in 2008 together with improvements to the piped network. Subject to statutory procedures and the availability of funding, construction of the plant will commence late 2008 or early 2009. This scheme will address effluent quality issues as well as current and future demands in Ardee.

Drogheda Waste Water Plant



### MID-LOUTH REGIONAL WATER SCHEME

This scheme will deal with future demands for water in the mid-Louth area. The immediate water quality issues in Dunleer were addressed through an advance contract in 2007. A new rising main and reservoir is proposed to be constructed in Dunleer in 2009. The next phase will see the construction of a water main from Dundalk to Drogheda followed by the construction of a treatment plant, subject to the approval of the Abstraction Order.

### RURAL WATER PROGRAMME

Grants totalling €980,000 were received from the Department during 2007 under the Small Water/Sewerage Scheme Programme. Works carried out under this programme included:

- Hale Street – Watermain Replacement Scheme, Phase 1 and Phase 2.
- An Riann, Annagassan – storm drainage improvement works.
- Greengates, Fane Bridge – Watermain Replacement Scheme, Phase 2.
- Greengates, Haggardstown Cross – Watermain Replacement Scheme, Phase 3.
- Main Street, Blackrock – improvements to water network, Phase 2.
- Telemetry Installation Project, Stage 2 (Water Works).
- Bog Road, Townparks, Ardee – watermain extension.
- Tullyallen Water Supply – new reservoir and rising main, Phase 2.
- Tullyallen Village – watermain extension.
- Upper Main Street, Dunleer installation of rising / distribution main.
- Crossabeigh Lane, Dunbin watermain upgrade.
- Marlbog Road – transfer of existing services and connections on to new watermain.
- Greengates – Clermont watermain link.
- Health & Safety improvement works at water treatment plants, Phase 2.
- Clogherhead WWTW – new aeration system.

The important role that local Group Water Schemes (GWSs) play as part of the overall county water services infrastructure is evident in that a sum of €193,000 was made available by way of grant assistance. Schemes that availed of the funding for upgrading and provision of new mains included:

- Gibstown GWS (new – extension of public mains).
- Townparks GWS (new – extension of public mains).
- Ballymakenny GWS – Phase 2 (upgrading works).
- Ardagh GWS (upgrading works).
- Sheepgrange GWS – Phase 1 and 2 (upgrading works).
- Tullyallen GWS – Phase 6 (upgrading works).
- Drybridge GWS (upgrading works).

During 2007, five GWSs received group water subsidies towards the cost of running their schemes, totalling €119,283.36. Under the scheme, 44 applicants were paid grants totalling €100,007 for the provision or necessary improvement of an individual water supply to a house.

## Waste Management

### WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Regional Steering Committee continued to meet on a regular basis throughout the year to co-ordinate delivery of actions in accordance with the Northeast Waste Management Plan. Key actions during the year included the commencement of a review of Presentation of Waste By-laws for the region and awareness of the kerbside waste collection to include a brown bin service.

In Louth, three areas – Dundalk, Blackrock and Ardee – were selected for a pilot brown bin service and the Local Authority worked closely with service provider Oxigen to ensure a comprehensive education and awareness programme was implemented in these areas.

### WEEE

Implementation of the WEEE Directive continued in 2007 with 915 tonnes of WEEE recycled. A total of 133 producers were registered at year end.

### END OF LIFE VEHICLES DIRECTIVE

Work on implementation of the End of Life Vehicles Directive continued during the year with 25 applications received from producers processed at year end.

### ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement activity during the year included 25 packaging inspections and 20 awareness letters issued.

### RECYCLING

The Dundalk and Drogheda Recycling Centres continued to excel during the year with recycling, in terms of quantity and variety of waste streams, at an all time high. These state of the art facilities, together with the Bring Bank network in the county, provided an excellent opportunity for householders to recycle as much waste as possible. During 2007, 14,581 tonnes of household waste were recycled using these facilities and this, together with waste recycled through the kerbside collection, yielded a 37% recycling rate for household waste in the county.

Louth County Council were named Overall Local Authority of the Year in the 2007 Repak Awards for its participation in initiatives such as the comprehensive recycling programme, the Green School Programme, National Tidy Towns Competition and waste minimisation activities within the community. Further evidence of the success of the county's recycling programme was highlighted by the fact that the Drogheda Recycling Centre was one of only three facilities short-listed for the Local Authority Initiative of the Year Award.

### LANDFILL

The Whiteriver Landfill site, which has a licensed capacity of 96,000 tonnes, was the subject of significant works during the

Waste Awareness Morning to celebrate National Recycling Week in the Marshes Shopping Centre, Dundalk



year including final capping and restoration of completed cells and the provision of the new gas collection and flaring system. This resulted in improved landfill gas collection and odour control. Construction of the next phase of the landfill commenced in November and will continue throughout 2008 in order to provide landfill capacity for the next five years.

### WASTE ENFORCEMENT

Waste enforcement continued to receive significant attention during the year. Inter-agency road checkpoints continued to be a feature of the work programme as did the auditing of permitted facilities. 17 Waste Permits were granted in the course of the year with a total of 40 Permits in force at year end. 188 businesses in the county were registered with Repak at the end of December. A total of 223 waste complaints were received in 2007, 39% of which were closed at year end, 33 were the subject of enforcement action and the balance were being progressed to regularise matters.

### LITTER MANAGEMENT

Louth's position as one of the leading enforcers of the Litter Pollution Act was sustained in 2007 with a total of 1,207 fines issued by the seven man litter warden team. Litter awareness programmes continued with school visits, cinema advertising and a very successful Litter League being just a sample of the comprehensive range of activities undertaken.

There were great celebrations in September when Dundalk emerged victorious in the IBAL League, receiving the accolade of Cleanest Town in Ireland 2007.

The revised Litter Management Plan for the county, containing 28 clear objectives as adopted by all three Local Authorities in the county during the year, is due for formal launch early in 2008.

Family Recycling Day held in the Drogheda Recycling Centre



## Road Safety

### SEAT BELT SHERIFFS

Louth County Council continues to deliver the Seat Belt Sheriff programme promoting seat belt wearing. A record 26 primary schools, mainly located in south and mid-Louth, received the programme in 2007.

### ROADSAFE ROADSHOW AND DRIVE FOR LIFE

The Road Safety Officer arranged for students from DKIT, Drogheda and Dundalk Youthreach centres and a number of secondary schools to attend the Roadsafe Roadshow in Banbridge, Northern Ireland in February 2007. The Roadshow was developed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and its objective is to encourage young drivers, and those about to commence their driving career, to adopt a safer and more responsible attitude towards driving. Also, Louth County Council sponsored the successful 'Drive for Life' Programme in five post-primary schools in the towns of Dundalk and Drogheda.

### GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK

By way of highlighting the first ever UN Global Road Safety Week, which ran from April 23-29, Louth County Council, in co-operation with local garage owners, arranged for the display of crashed cars bearing the slogan 'Slow Down – It Could Be You' in seven strategically located garage forecourts. These displays provided a last minute warning to motorists as they took to the roads.

### BE SAFE, BE SEEN

In November, the Council ran a 'Be Safe, Be Seen' promotion in which we engaged the co-operation of An Garda Síochána in distributing 1,200 high visibility vests to pedestrians and cyclists, and of our own adult and junior school wardens in distributing arm bands to school children.

## COLLISION PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

2007 saw the re-establishment of the mid and south Louth Collision Prevention Programme Committee (CPP). Meetings of the north Louth CPP were held quarterly throughout the year.

## CROSS-BORDER ROAD SAFETY

A working group made up of Road Safety Officers from counties Louth, Meath, Monaghan and Cavan was established in November 2007 with a view to developing a regional road safety promotional programme.

## SAFETY IMPROVEMENT WORKS

Low cost safety improvement grants were obtained from the NRA and the Department of Transport. Works undertaken included anti-skid surfacing on N53 Castleblayney Road, traffic calming and improved pedestrian crossing facilities on the R934 (formerly N53 Castleblayney Road) main link from M1 and town, and construction of a barrier along carriageway edge on Toberona Road along Castletown River. Design works for N53 Walterstown Cross were also undertaken.

## Supporting Disadvantaged Communities

### SOCIAL INCLUSION

The Social Inclusion Unit led the development of the Anti-Racism and Diversity (ARD) Plan for Louth that was launched in November 2007. The Louth ARD plan is an inter-agency county-wide three year action plan to provide strategic direction and leadership in countering racism and in developing a more inclusive, intercultural society in Louth.

Other Social Inclusion Unit activities in 2007 included assisting in the establishment of an inclusive children's choir in Dundalk – the Children's Voices of Ireland. Awareness raising sessions on the Social Inclusion and the Louth ARD Plan took place in Drogheda Borough Council in 2007. A review of the Louth Local Authorities Education Bursary scheme was also carried out. Presentations were given to the various bodies and organisations including DEJLR.

The Social Inclusion Unit continued to provide statistics and information to groups and individuals on Social Inclusion issues and undertook research and analysis, including surveys on service provision to the homeless and disability access to Local Authority service delivery in Louth.

## Heritage

The first ever Louth Heritage Plan was launched in May 2007. This was the first year of the implementation of the plan, with

Carlingford Castle with new gate



generous funding from the Heritage Council, as well as from Louth Local Authorities' own funds.

In addition to the Heritage Plan implementation programme, the Carlingford and Drogheda Town Walls Conservation and Management Plans were also undertaken, again with Heritage Council funding.

Also launched in 2007 was the Ecological Survey of Blackrock, produced by Blackrock Tidy Towns group, with assistance from the Heritage Council and Louth County Council. Assistance was also provided for the erection of information panels in Blackrock.

Development work was undertaken for projects to be run in future years, including the major cross-border Geopark proposal

## EVENTS

A comprehensive programme of events was organised for Heritage Week 2007, including a tour of cross-border sites. King John's Castle, Carlingford was opened for the first time in several years. A replica town gate was erected beside Taaffe's Castle. Fáilte Ireland awarded us a Certificate of Excellence for Carlingford's Walled Towns Day.

Laurence's Gate in Drogheda was open to the public for the first time in decades on the October bank holiday weekend.

## FIELD MONUMENTS ADVISOR

The Field Monuments Advisor visited more than 80 monument sites (including 25 old graveyards). She worked with four schools and obtained excellent media coverage. She also ran public events on graveyard management, including a talk from the Cathaoirleach of Louth County Council, Eanna Ní Lamhna and speakers from the National Monuments Service.

## CONSERVATION

The Planning & Development Act 2000 restated the provisions for the protection of architectural heritage which came into force in January 2000 under the provisions of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act 1999. The Conservation officer, jointly employed with Meath County Council, continued her work in this area during 2007. A total of 18 grants for repairs to roofs, stonework, windows and thatching were approved and paid during 2007 at a total cost of €138,960.

Geophysical survey work was carried out at Monasterboice, in liaison with the National Monuments Service, to inform the future development of a conservation plan for the wider site.

## Emergency Services

### CIVIL DEFENCE

2007 saw the launch of new, practical, high visibility work wear for members of Civil Defence in Louth and throughout the country. This has had the effect of improving the image of the organisation and brings us into line with other similar organisations around the world. The Civil Defence Board also provided the members of Louth Civil Defence with a new Ford Transit minibus and a new Grand Raid inflatable boat for river and lake search and recovery.

Members continued training in the various disciplines in the county and regional training days were organised in the areas of technical rescue, fire fighting, boating and first aid. In May, members from Louth performed extremely well at the National Exercise in Arklow, which concentrated on technical rescue skills.

Volunteers from Louth Civil Defence provided first aid cover at many community events in Louth and in the region. Large numbers attended the summer festivals Oxegen, Slane, and Electric Picnic where lessons learned in the classroom were put into practice in stressful real-life situations. Our members performed very well and were complimented on their professionalism and enthusiasm.

### LOUTH FIRE SERVICES

Louth Fire Services is made up of Dundalk Fire Service, Drogheda Fire Service and Louth County Fire Service, all working together to provide operational fire cover for the people of Louth. Fire Prevention and Building Control, based in Louth County Council, deliver a wide range of services which include processing of fire safety certificate applications, fire safety building inspections and a Building Control Inspection and Enforcement Programme.

### TRAINING CENTRE

In 2007 Dundalk Fire Service made an application for funding to

New issued work wear for Civil Defence



the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to provide a significant extension to Dundalk Training Centre. The Centre is used to provide a wide range of training to fire-fighters from all over the country. Two additional fire appliances were provided for the Centre and a Pod Carrier/prime mover has been delivered which is capable of carrying a range of demountable units for Dundalk Fire Service to major incidents as and when required.

**NEW FIRE STATION FOR DROGHEDA**

A new fire station for Drogheda Fire Service was substantially complete by the end of 2007. The station was designed by Grafton Architects of Dublin and constructed by Brendan Duffy Construction, Dundalk. The new station replaces the long standing facility on Scarlet Street and vastly improves the working conditions of the fire-fighters working there. New facilities include a locker room, showers, a gym and a purpose built training room. The facility also accommodates upgraded equipment, maintenance facilities and a two-bay mechanical workshop. Diesel exhaust extraction systems are fitted throughout the station. A four storey training tower has also been constructed to further enhance the training facilities of the station.

The new, seven-bay station takes account of current environmental concerns. Energy is supplemented by both solar and wind technologies with rain water harvesting techniques also used. The building is designed to make the most use out of natural light thus reducing energy consumption. A new combined appliance is being assembled for delivery to Drogheda Fire Service in 2008. It will combine a standard water tender with a hydraulic platform replacing ladders on the roof, thus being very suitable for access to high rise buildings in Drogheda.

Visit by Omeath and Carlingford Scouts to Carlingford Fire Station



**EMERGENCY PLANNING**

With the appointment of a new Assistant Chief Fire Officer for Major Emergency Planning, a new major emergency programme was implemented in 2007. This included significant review and adoption of a new Major Emergency Plan, drawing up external emergency plans for two industrial Seveso sites in Drogheda where dangerous substances are present and the running of an emergency exercise in December 2007 at Flogas in Drogheda.

**NEW FIRE EQUIPMENT**

Dunleer Fire Service received a new Mercedes van to enhance the operational response in the Dunleer area. Carlingford Fire Service received a new Class B fire appliance complete with a state of the art compressed air foam system (CAFS). This system allows for greater efficiency in the use of water, reduced environmental damage and provides fire fighting foam of exceptional quality. This, along with the provision of new Holmatro hydraulic rescue tools, is a significant enhancement of the service provided to the people of the Cooley Peninsula.

**FIRE SERVICE PARTNERSHIP**

The Fire Service Partnership group continues to meet and facilitate progress on a wide range of fire service matters and is a credit to the commitment of those involved. Louth Fire Services look forward to improving customer service and contributing to enhance the quality of life for Louth citizens in 2008.

**WATER SAFETY**

Risk assessment was carried out at Curly Hole on the River Boyne. Recommended works have commenced and are expected to be complete in Spring 2008. Lifeguards were provided on Blue Flag beaches during the bathing season.

# GOAL 4

*To harness community participation, provide civic leadership and encourage civic pride*

## *Administering the County Council led PEACE II Task Force Funding*

### LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL LED PEACE II TASK FORCE

In 2007 the Louth County Council led Peace II Task Force continued to support the 25 projects which were granted funding under the Peace II Extension Programme 2005-2006. A total amount of €1,449,000 in funding was granted by the programme to assist the promoters in the development of their projects.

By the end of 2007, a total of €522,326.38 of the total Peace II Extension budget had been spent in assisting these projects and many projects funded by the programme had already reached completion.

The N+2 target for 2007, set at over €700,000, was reached by June of the same year.

The Task Force was also audited by the European Court of Auditors, on June 28, 2007, and by the Special EU Programmes Body in October 2007.

### *Encouraging greater pride in our environment*

#### TIDY TOWNS

2007 was the most successful year to date in the county's Tidy Towns campaign with Tallanstown and Knockbridge both being awarded gold medals and Dundalk retaining its silver medal. Louth was the most successful county in the east midlands judging region. In addition to the medals awarded: Blackrock won the Regional Biodiversity Award; Clogherhead beat national competition to be named Best New Entry in its population category; the Remnant Basket in Dundalk won the Regional Shop Front Award; and Annagassan received an Endeavour Award for significantly improved performance.

The success of the county's campaign was further highlighted when Tallanstown was nominated by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to represent its population category in the All Ireland Best Kept Towns Awards and emerged as the overall winner in that category.

At a county level, each of the three local authorities organised very successful local campaigns. Tallanstown emerged as the overall winner in Louth County Council's Tidy Estates/Districts competition. Dundalk's Improve Our Town

Clarke's Station, Dundalk



competition, achieved an exceptionally high standard of entrants in all categories. Drogheda Borough Council launched its environmental awards scheme, Drogheda On The Boyne, with excellent participation in its first year.

#### IMPROVE OUR TOWN AWARDS 2007

Dundalk Town Council hosted the sponsored annual Improve Our Town competition in September. 53 prizes were awarded on the night to residents associations, community groups, individual householders and members of the business community in recognition of their efforts to improve the appearance of the town.

##### Overall winners:

Best Estate	- Category A:	Priorland Grove
	- Category B:	Willow Grove
	- Category C:	Ard Easmuinn
Best Local Authority & Voluntary Housing:		An Chearnóg
Best Individual Garden:		Paddy Myers, 8 Castletown Cottages
Best Public House:		The Jockeys, Anne Street
Most Improved Premises:		Luzzious, The Longwalk
Best Public Building:		Clarke's Railway Station
Litter Awareness Award:		Diageo, Carrick Road

## SCHOOLS ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME

Locally, the Primary Schools Environmental Awards Scheme enjoyed its most successful year to date with 41 entries all competing to a very high standard. Awards ranging from bronze to platinum were awarded to schools depending on the percentage of overall marks achieved and it was obvious that environmental awareness and commitment had reached an all time high.

Louth's participation in the Green Flag scheme received a further boost with the award of seven additional flags during the year bringing the total number of Green Flag schools in the county to 24. A very successful Greenschool Workshop held in March served as an encouragement and support for other schools to become involved in the initiative and this resulted in 16 further schools submitting for the Green Flag in December, with awards to be made early in 2008.

Louth County Council also launched its Great Debate, an environmental debate for secondary schools, which enjoyed great success. St Vincent's Secondary School in Dundalk emerged victorious following a narrow defeat of St Joseph's CBS in Drogheda.

*Pupils from Scoil Mhuire na Trocaire in Ardee receiving their prizes for the Christmas Decoration Recycling Competition*



## NATIONAL SPRING CLEAN

In excess of 4,000 volunteers took to the highways and byways of County Louth during the month of April to participate in Ireland's biggest anti-litter initiative: the National Spring Clean. Louth registered its greatest participation ever with over 200 clean-ups organised by schools, residents associations, community groups, businesses and sporting organisations with the support of each of the three local authorities.

## GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNS

The Environment Department of the Council worked with residents associations, Tidy Towns groups and schools on a

number of other operations during the year including National Tree Week, the St Patrick's Day Parade and the Christmas Decoration Recycling Competition, all of which received much public acclaim.

## Junior County Council and Comhairle na nÓg

### JUNIOR COUNCIL 2007

Louth Junior Council met five times throughout 2007, including a very successful visit to Dáil Eireann in March. The Junior Councillors were welcomed by the four Louth TDs and were given a very informative tour of the Dáil and Seanad.

Topics discussed at Junior Council Meetings in 2007 included:

- Fundraising initiatives for Malawi, Africa
- CAMARA computers for schools project.
- Road safety.
- Youth exclusion.
- Hospital services in the northeast.
- Recreational facilities for young people.
- Student discount cards.
- Positive youth education.

Louth Junior Councillors also worked closely with the National Young Social Innovators Programme throughout 2007.

*Junior Council visit to Dáil Eireann, March 2007*



## COMHAIRLE NA nÓG

Louth Comhairle na nÓg continued to liaise closely with the National Children's Office in the Department of Health and Children, particularly in relation to the development of a five year strategic plan for Comhairle na nÓg.

Local events took place in early 2007 and five delegates from Louth, including two from Youth Work Ireland (NE), attended the Dáil na nÓg event in Croke Park in February.

## Participative Democracy

### STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES (SPC)

#### HOUSING, COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE SPC

The Housing, Community and Enterprise SPC met on five occasions throughout the year. In May, the first of these meetings involved a complete overview of all of the main housing functions. Other issues examined in 2007 included: the new government policy document Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities; a research study on volunteering; the Anti-Racism and Diversity Plan; the Carlingford Conservation Plan, Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000; the Anti-Poverty Strategy; the Community Safety Policy; a policy on naming new housing estates; a scheme for the allocation of affordable housing; and new grant schemes for the adaptation of dwellings, mobility aids for disabled persons and housing aid for older people.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE SPC

This committee, made up of representatives from local authority, business, community and voluntary sectors, met on three occasions during 2007. The main policies dealt with during the year included:

- Traffic calming measures.
- Speed limit review.
- Water services bye-laws.
- Visibility requirements on regional roads.

During the year, presentations were made to the committee on road safety and updating broadband within the county.

#### PLANNING SPC

During the course of 2007, the Planning SPC considered the main policy areas of the County Development Plan with a view to preparing positions in advance of a review of the plan commencing in 2008. The areas considered were The Built and Natural Environment (Chapter 2), The Settlement Strategy and One-off Rural Houses (Chapter 4), and Transport (Chapter 8). In addition, the Committee received briefs on: the progress with the Dundalk Western Infrastructure; the proposal submitted by Dundalk Town Council for funding under the Gateway Innovation Fund; and the publication of the study 'The Ecology of Blackrock' by the Blackrock Tidy Towns Committee. The committee also discussed the operation of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 in the county, following a referral of the issue from the June meeting of the County Council.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL AND EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC

The Environmental Services SPC met eight times in 2007. The main policy issues progressed include:

- Sustainable Environmental Management.
- Litter Management Plan.
- Biodiversity Plan.
- Recycling/management of waste streams.
- Significant water management issues.

#### CORPORATE, RECREATION AND AMENITY SPC

The Corporate, Recreation and Amenity SPC held four meetings in 2007. Main policy issues progressed include:

- County Recreation and Sports Strategy.
- Official Languages Scheme.
- Provision of playgrounds.

### MUNICIPAL POLICY COMMITTEES (MPC)

#### DTC ENVIRONMENT MPC

This committee met four times in 2007. The main issues dealt with included:

- County Sports and Recreation Strategy.
- Policy on vending machines in buildings controlled by local authorities.
- National Tidy Towns Awards 2007.

#### DTC PLANNING MPC

The Planning and Development MPC held four meetings during the year. The main policy issues dealt with included:

- Revision of HP7 Policy – Infill housing development, development of backland sites and redevelopment of housing.
- Development Strategy and Urban Design Framework Plan for Dundalk Town Centre – pre-draft consultation with consultants.
- Review of the Dundalk and Environs Development Plan.
- Unauthorised Development/Enforcement.

#### DTC HOUSING MPC

The Housing MPC held four meetings during the year. The main policy issues dealt with included:

- Anti-social behaviour policy.
- Re-let policy.
- Self help scheme.
- Operation of management companies in private estates.

#### DTC INFRASTRUCTURE MPC

The Infrastructure MPC held four meetings during the year. The main policy issues dealt with included:

- Gateway Innovation Fund.
- Municipal Area Network.

### COUNTY COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY FORUM

The Louth County Community and Voluntary Forum was established in 2000 to provide for the representation and participation of the community and voluntary sector. Since its inception, the structure of the forum has included three area fora, which correspond to electoral divisions in the county, and one county forum, which is made up of representatives from these three.

This structure of representation can be broken down as follows:

1. Community and voluntary groups are represented at the three area forums.
2. Area forums are represented at the county forum.

Louth County Community and Voluntary Forum at the Open Space event, April 2007



3. The County Community and Voluntary Forum and the area fora are represented on various groups and committees that seek representation from the community.
4. Area forums represent the community and voluntary sector at expanded area committees.

Bodies which Community and Voluntary Forum representatives sit on include:

- Louth CDB.
- Peace II Task Force.
- Regional Drugs Task Force.
- Joint Policing Committee, Drogheda.
- Louth County Council SPCs.
- Town Council MPCs.
- Louth County Childcare Committee.
- National Community Forum.
- Louth Leader Company Border Forum.

Work continued during 2007 to promote the work of the forum and to attract new members. This was primarily done through the work of the Community Forum Development Officer in targeting new groups and revisiting previous members. Current members are encouraged to attend conferences and training seminars organised by other agencies that are of relevance to their representational roles within the forum.

The forum participated in the consultation process for a number of county-wide plans that were being formulated by Louth County Council including the Traveller Strategy, Volunteerism and the Anti Racism and Diversity Plan.

A focus of the forum during 2007 was on assessing its current position after six to seven years in existence and its future direction. A number of actions were undertaken regarding this.

The constitution of the forum was reviewed, with a draft document compiled, providing the basis for the adoption of a new constitution during 2008.

An Open Space event – an approach to consultation with communities – was held in April 2007. The main topic addressed was how to better address the needs, views and opinions of the community and voluntary sector in County Louth.

Scoil Mhuire na nGael, winners of the Seatbelt Poster Competition



## Civic receptions

### LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Feb 22, 2007 | Centenary celebrations for the 1957 football team. |
| May 29, 2007 | Karate; Seatbelt Poster Campaign                   |

### DROGHEDA

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| March 30, 2007 | Civic reception for the Highlanes Gallery Committee.<br>Mayoral Awards. |
|----------------|---|

#### Winners of Mayoral Awards:

- *Jimmy Weldon*  
In recognition of his work as a photographer in reflecting and recording the changing nature of Drogheda and its people.
- *David Clarke*  
For his achievements as a swimmer in the World Down's Syndrome Championships.
- *Kelly Fincham*  
For her work on behalf of the undocumented Irish in the USA.
- *Fr Iggy O'Donovan*  
In recognition of his ministry as a priest in the Augustinian Church which has placed religion at centre stage for all the right reasons at a time of falling church attendances.

### DUNDALK

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| April 17, 2007 | Teams of the Ice Hockey World Championships. |
| June 12, 2007  | Harold O'Sullivan, local historian.          |

**OFFICIAL OPENINGS**

Dundalk Town Council also officially opened the following:  
 June 5, 2007 Muirhevnamor District Park.  
 November 24, 2007 Castletown River walkway and cycle lane.  
 December 19, 2007 Dundalk Bomb Victims Memorial  
 December 20, 2007 St. Leonard's Gardens.

**COUNTY LOUTH BIDS FAREWELL TO COUNTY MANAGER**

Louth County Council said farewell to the County Manager Ms Martina Moloney at a function in County Hall on June 1, 2007. Ms Moloney left Louth after a very successful three years at the helm to take up the position of County Manager in Galway. Elected representatives, management and staff of Louth Local Authorities wish Martina Moloney all the best in her future career.

*Elected representatives, management and staff of Louth Local Authorities wish Martina Moloney all the best in her future career*



*Facilitating community groups to develop cross-border partnerships and access cross-border funding opportunities*

**CROSS-BORDER FUNDING**

As a border local authority, Louth has continued to benefit from close synergy with its northern council neighbours including Newry and Mourne District Council, Banbridge District Council, Craigavon Borough Council and member councils of the East Border Region Committee. These close working relationships have yielded substantial cross-border funding for the councils on both sides of the border, resulting in the successful implementation of innovative projects examining racism, interculturalism, the social economy and the media.

*Civic reception in honour of Harold O'Sullivan, local historian. L-R: Ms Joan Martin, Deputy County Manager; Cllr Noel Lennon, Cathaoirleach; Mrs Lily O'Sullivan; Mr Harold O'Sullivan*



**TOTAL CROSS-BORDER FUNDING 2007**

Challenge of Change Project	€218,951
Social Economy Budgeting Programme	€30,435.26
Peace II Extension Programme	€548,341.10
Louth Film Commission	€97,500

**HERITAGE**

Borderlands is a cross-border heritage based tourism project funded by Interreg III, with Banbridge District Council as the lead authority. The project focuses on using the archaeological heritage of the east border region to attract tourists to the area, especially where this reflects ancient and past borders. A project launch will take place at the Navan Fort Centre in County Armagh in May 2008.

**DISCOVER-ICT PROJECT**

The Discover-ICT Project is targeted at small businesses, community groups and domestic users. The project aims to remove the fear of using new technologies from those who are ICT illiterate or those who have had no prior contact with technology and to improve accessibility to those who have no access to ICT.

Some of the services provided by Discover-ICT are:

- Introduction to the most basic elements of ICT (e.g. an explanation of the technical jargon encountered when buying a PC or digital camera).
- Advice and guidance on all ICT related matters.
- Sourcing of additional help (e.g. hardware requirements, installation etc.).
- Free basic ICT training.
- Suggesting suitable courses for staff or for personal development.

Cross-border Silver Surfers Day with the Northern Group, Everybody Online and Discover-ICT



- Conducting audits of ICT requirements.
- Promote awareness of new technology through outreach.
- Increasing the uptake of cross-sector and cross-regional ICT training.
- Promote the use of e-commerce and e-business.

Roughly 120 people in Louth have been trained in basic IT skills by Discover-ICT. Library facilities were used to conduct the courses. Training was rolled out to ten different community groups and 20 businesses in the Louth region have used the ICT consultant service. One team spent three days in the Motor Tax Office showing people how easy it is to tax a car online. A number of cross-border Silver Surfers events have also taken place.

A comprehensive broadband survey for the county will establish all black spots. Every primary school in the county received forms asking families to take part in this survey and a good response was received.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The Infrastructure Section has been in partnership with colleagues in Newry & Mourne District Council and other Local Authorities in Northern Ireland involved in delivering a number of projects funded under the Interreg IIIA Programme.

In 2007, improved marine facilities were completed at Carlingford, Omeath, and Greers Pier and the 'Vision for Our Coastline' project commenced, which provided additional public lights and refurbished public toilets at Blackrock and a viewing area at Port Oriel. In 2008 this project will see works carried out at Annagassan to improve the amenity facilities at the harbour. The Directorate staff also delivered road and village improvement schemes funded by Clár and LEADER.

We have established the basis upon which two harbour users groups will be set up in Port Oriel and Annagassan. These consultative groups will be rolled out in 2008.

## Supporting initiatives to increase awareness of local history and heritage

### LOUTH COUNTY ARCHIVES SERVICE

#### CROSS-BORDER ARCHIVE PROJECT

The main development in the Archives Service in 2007 was the commencement of its Cross-Border Archive Project with Newry & Mourne Museum. The project received €140,146 of EU funding through the Interreg IIIA Programme which is managed by the East Border Region Interreg IIIA Partnership for the Special EU Programmes Body.

The aim of this project is to make archives and information on the historical development of the region accessible via a linked website, with this information taken from the collections of both services. Two archivists commenced cataloguing the collections in 2007. To date, the 'Roden Collection' and the 'Paddy Mallon – GNR(I) Collection' have been processed in Louth, while work is progressing well on the 'Macardle Moore' collection. former Louth County Manager Martina Moloney commented: "Linking both regions in a knowledge web will place the archives at the heart of a 21st century learning agenda. The project will optimise public accessibility to the archival collections on a cross-border perspective. Facilitating access to the archival collections will help promote economic regeneration. Local businesses will have a greater knowledge base, and will be able to use the archives for information to stimulate creativity and intelligence".

An educational CD resource for schools and a new website containing several online exhibitions and educational activities will also be created as part of this project, which will see completion in June 2008.

#### CONSERVATION OF ARCHIVES

The Archives Service was fortunate to receive a grant of €4,000 towards conservation of its archives from the Heritage Council in 2007. Conservation treatment took place on drawings from the 'Paddy Mallon – GNR(I) Collection' as well as 12 indentures from the 'Roden Collection'. Work also commenced on a royal charter of King George III to the Corporation of Ardee.

#### COLLECTIONS

A total of 13 collections were deposited in the County Archive during the year, the most notable being: a collection of SIPTU records; historical papers and research notes of Reverend Thomas Gogarty cc; a roll book for Dún Dealgan National School dating from 1877 to 1880; and a treasurer's book of the Dundalk branch of the National Amalgamated Society of Operative House and Ship Painters & Decorators, 1923-1927. A number of small collections were processed by staff over the course of the year and these are now accessible to researchers. Work is also progressing well on an indexing project which involves volunteers working on Dundalk UDC's minute books.

#### EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

In the run up to the elections, the Archives Service placed a selection of archival election material on display in the

receptions of the three local authorities. From May to June, the Service hosted a travelling exhibition from Donegal County Museum entitled 'Before I Joined the Army'. The exhibition showcased the involvement of the men and women of Ulster in the First World War and featured themes such as Life in the Trenches, Women and the War, the Battle of the Somme, and the Easter Rising and Commemoration. A short film was included as well as original material relating to Louth, taken from the archival collections.

As part of Heritage Week and Archive Awareness Month, the Service held an Open Day on August 25 where members of the public were invited to visit and view archive material on display. In October, archives were brought to life through a series of living history re-enactments which took place under the Interreg project and were well attended. This included four performances of *Life in the Workhouse* for primary schools and three performances of an eviction for the public.

#### EDUCATION PACK FOR SCHOOLS

A highlight of the year was the production of the Archives Service's first school education pack. The pack, entitled 'Life in the Workhouse', was completed for primary schools before the end of the year to achieve the following aims:

- To provide schools with access to archives by way of providing sample copies of documents in the classroom.
- To act as a teaching aid for local history within the school curriculum.
- To promote the workhouse archival collection among schools.

The pack serves as an introduction to archives and the types of records available in the service. It consists of: background information on the workhouse for use by the teacher, facsimile copies of archives from the workhouse collection (with transcripts in some cases where the originals are difficult to read) and worksheet questions. This pack will assist pupils in developing investigative and interpretative skills as they have the opportunity to examine and analyse various documents. It will also assist them in learning about their locality and in understanding the past.

#### RECORDS MANAGEMENT

A review of storage space allocated to non-current records in the Archives Service resulted in the installation of additional shelving and the rearrangement of quantities of boxes to make better use of space. This was followed by the transfer of records from several departments, leaving a very limited area of space available for NC records. Meanwhile, the archivist

Actors from Palace Stables who performed the historical re-enactment of 'Life in the Workhouse' in the Archives, October 2007



produced a Records Management Policy for Louth Local Authorities and this was presented to the senior management team. The archivist also became a member of the working group for the revision of the National Retention Policy for Local Authority Records which is being coordinated by the LGMSB. The revision is due to be issued to all local authorities in 2008.

#### NATIONAL ARCHIVES ADVISORY COUNCIL (NAAC)

In October, the National Archives Advisory Council held their meeting in Louth County Council, preceded by a presentation from the Louth County Archivist. A visit to the County Archives Service also took place, and the Council were impressed by what has been achieved to date.

The NAAC was first established in January 1987, its principal function being to advise the Minister in the exercise of his/her powers under the National Archives Act and on all matters affecting archives and their use by the public. Under the Local Government Act 1994 and the Harbours Act 1996, the Council may also advise the Minister for the Environment and Local Government and the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources on any matters affecting local archives and harbour archives respectively. The Chairman of the NAAC is Mr Justice Bryan MacMahon.

# GOAL 5

*To form alliances and working partnerships, internally and with other organisations and service providers, to meet organisational goals and priorities*

## Louth County Development Board

### COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD (CDB)

The CDB continued its important function of implementing the actions of the Integrated Strategy for the Cultural, Social & Economic Development of County Louth. The Board met four times in 2007, with the nine implementation groups meeting more regularly.

Louth CDB continued to enjoy much success throughout 2007, highlighted below:

#### 1. Agriculture & Rural Development Group

This group, chaired by the Teagasc representative, met regularly during 2007 and successfully launched a Countryside Code for County Louth in May. The code has subsequently been distributed widely to community groups and schools throughout the county.

#### 2. Community & Voluntary Sector Development

The volunteer group successfully carried out detailed research into volunteering in Louth. Recommendations from the research have been forwarded to the Louth SIM Group for implementation.

#### 3. Life-Long Learning Group

This subgroup, chaired by a representative from DKIT, worked closely with the many education providers in the county to implement joint actions, including the establishment of an adult education committee.

#### 4. Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) Group

This group continued to meet every six weeks and increased its representation with the inclusion of a disability representative. They also launched the Integrated Strategy for Services to Travellers and piloted a Toy-box Project in Louth to increase play opportunities for the children of travellers.

#### 5. Enterprise & Investment/Infrastructure & Planning.

This subgroup, chaired by Enterprise Ireland representatives, has made considerable progress in entrepreneurship. New start-ups include the approval of a community enterprise centre in Greenore and the implementation of a Cross-Border Transform Programme.

#### 6. Quality of Life

Along with environmental issues, suicide prevention was a main priority area for this subgroup in 2007 and this led to the successful establishment of an alliance for action on suicide.

#### 7. Tourism

2007 was yet another successful year for the Louth Tourism

Sector. Louth Hospitality Ltd completed a four year programme with The East Border Region Committee with an investment of over €320,000 in local tourism projects.

#### 8. Childcare

Louth County Childcare Committee, chaired by the VEC representative, continued to meet the objectives of its Action Plan. County Louth gained two large scale grant aided childcare facilities in Dundalk and Drogheda in 2007.

#### 9. Culture

The main focus of this subgroup in 2007 was the development of sports and the Arts in County Louth. The interim sports partnership committee continued to meet regularly.

### INTEGRATION OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANIES AND URBAN BASED PARTNERSHIP (COHESION PROCESS)

In accordance with guidelines from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the process of integrating the three development agencies in Louth (Dundalk Employment Partnership, Drogheda Partnership Company and Louth Leader) progressed throughout 2007.

Staff from the Office of Community and Enterprise successfully liaised with the three development agencies and actively supported them in the cohesion process. They were particularly involved in the selection of the community and voluntary members to the new Cohesion Board in Louth, the Louth Leader Partnership.

## RAPID Programmes

### DUNDALK RAPID PROGRAMME

Through the work of the Dundalk RAPID Area Implementation Team, a number of actions have been progressed in the two RAPID areas in Dundalk: Cox's Demesne and Muirhevnamor. Two other forums facilitated by the RAPID Co-ordinator – the Dundalk Drugs Advisory Group and the social inclusion working group of the Dundalk Economic Development Group – are also actively pursuing social inclusion measures in the RAPID areas.

Key developments that took place during 2007 include:

- Funding of €196,000 secured through the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform for the implementation of

CCTV in the two areas.

- A number of sporting clubs in the RAPID areas were successful in securing a total of €546,000 in funding from the Sports Capital Programme 2007.
- Redeemer Crèche and Muirhevnamor Community and Youth Project secured funding for the development of childcare facilities.
- A Community Addiction Studies course was rolled out in Dundalk, targeting all sectors including statutory, community and voluntary personnel.
- Two Local Development Training Initiatives provided a basic construction skills programme aimed at young unemployed persons in the estates.
- Targeted hospitality training from Fáilte Ireland was organised in conjunction with local hotels.
- Installation of a MUGA in Muirhevnamor as part of the RAPID Leverage Scheme formed part of the wider development of a district park in the area.
- Pilot Access Programme helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds to gain entry into Dundalk Institute of Technology commenced in September 2007.
- Applications were submitted under the RAPID Dormant Accounts fund. Announcements expected in early 2008.
- Work was completed in devising a revised social regeneration plan for the two areas, including area profile, mapping exercise of existing services and the identification of actions under a number of different themes. This will provide a framework for the future direction of the programme at local level.

Nationally, a number of guidelines have been issued for community and agency participation and strategic themes. Local RAPID Programmes are expected to progress these guidelines in 2008.

## DROGHEDA RAPID REPORT

Overall community participation in the RAPID programme in Drogheda has been very productive and, together with resources from the agencies, a lot has been achieved. Leverage funds available through the programme continue to impact on the local communities, namely the Estate Enhancement Scheme, Traffic Calming Measures, and RAPID playground grants (amounting to a significant investment of €260,000 per annum). Several capital projects were completed in 2007 thanks to the allocation of €300,000 of RAPID ring-fenced funding.

A second RAPID newsletter was published in 2007 and two projects, the Older Persons Home Security Pilot Project and the Glen, received commendations from the Chamber of Commerce Local Government Awards 2007.

### CHILDCARE FACILITIES

Moneymore Childcare Centre was officially opened by Mayor Anthony Donohoe and the Minister of State for Children, Brendan Smith, in September 2007. The site, provided by Drogheda Borough Council, is located within yards of the Drogheda Institute of Further Education. This centre, with

facilities to cater for 82 children, will provide parents from the locality with the opportunity to avail of education and training opportunities at the college in the knowledge that their children are being well looked after by a team of professional childcare workers.

In December, Grove Early Years Education Centre opened its doors. Once again, what was once a derelict site has now become a new childcare facility serving four RAPID areas. This investment plus the investment in Moneymore Childcare Centre totalled approximately €3.2 million, excluding the value of the sites and staffing costs.

### MARIAN PARK MEADOW

The transformation of Marian Park Meadow from a forgotten derelict space littered with rubble, discarded domestic appliances and household junk into a garden for local residents was completed in 2007. It was opened by Deputy Mayor Frank Maher on the wettest day of the summer.

### NEW SERVICES

Following submissions to DJELR, Family Support Agency and the RAPID Dormant Accounts Fund, three new services were introduced into the Drogheda RAPID areas: a Garda Youth Diversion Project to be managed by Foróige; a Family Support Unit allocated to Moneymore; and the appointment of an advocate for older persons to provide community based support for this group. The latter, included in the original RAPID Plan, was finally achieved through the Interagency Older Persons Working Group.

### CCTV

Six community CCTV cameras became operational in July and a further grant was received for another six. The cameras will assist with the identification of perpetrators of crime and anti-social behaviour. The installation of the remaining six cameras in 2008 is eagerly awaited by residents.

### YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY

RAPID has impacted upon the Joint Policing Committee (JPC) and the preparation of the 2007 JPC Action Plan. A number of youth meetings have taken place and more are planned for 2008. A proposal for a Youth Café has been advanced for funding while architectural plans are being prepared for the refurbishment of Carnegie Library. This facility will provide a venue for the promotion of all aspects of youth health.

### LOURDES COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTRE

The Lourdes Community Recreation Centre received a face lift in 2007 with resources from the DBC, DOE&LG Social and Community Facilities Fund and Disability Access Grant. As the building formerly held a reputation for being the coldest in Drogheda, the new heating system and disability access have been very well received, particularly by the Bowling Club (established in 2006 under the auspices of RAPID).

## Promoting networks and partnerships to maximise development opportunities and quality of life in the county

### SEI PROJECT (DUNDALK 2020)

Sustainable Energy Ireland Group, Dundalk 2020



Louth County Council is joint lead partner, in conjunction with SEI, in implementing the Dundalk 2020 Project, which has established a Sustainable Energy Zone in Dundalk as a model for the rest of the country. This is the first EU Concerto Project awarded to Ireland and funding under this programme amounts to the sum of €12 million for the three communities. From this, €4 million will be spent in the Sustainable Energy Zone, leading to added value projects of approximately €20 million. Contracts were signed in Dundalk on June 28 by the three partner communities – Dundalk, the town of Modling in Austria and Neuchatel in Switzerland.

The overall objective of the Project is to promote the use of renewable sustainable energy within local communities. It is a pilot project which demonstrates these technologies to the wider community and the country as a whole.

A number of Action Groups have been set up to advance the different elements of the project. These are: the Energy Services Company Action Group; the Built Environment Action Group; the Socio-Economic Action Group; the Industry Action Group; the Demand Side Management Action Group; and the Communications Action Group.

Examples of Projects in progress are as follows:

- Biomass district heating system.
- A second wind turbine on the Xerox site.
- Retrofit of existing residential and non-residential buildings.
- Smart metering.
- Energy Bureau.
- Renewable street lighting using wind and solar energy.
- Socio-economic surveys.

The main project targets to be achieved by 2010 are:

- 20% of electricity used within the community to be generated from renewable energy sources.
- 40% improvement in the energy performance of selected buildings.

- 20% increase in the amount of heat generated from renewable sources in housing and community sectors.

### JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE (JPC)

In 2006, a Joint Policing Committee was established in the Drogheda Borough Council area. The committee provides a forum for consultation and discussion on matters relating to the policing of the Drogheda area. The membership of the committee is drawn from community representatives, elected members and staff of Drogheda Borough Council and members of An Garda Síochána and the Oireachtas.

The Committee held its inaugural meeting on October 23, 2006, and met on a quarterly basis during 2007. Their work programme for 2007 included the following:

- Drugs Seminar arranged by Ms. Valerie Artherton, RAPID Co-ordinator (March 2007).
- Two public meetings arranged by the JPC on the north side and the south side (May 2007).
- Community Justice and Mediation Services workshop (Autumn 2007).
- Expansion of Home Security Pilot Scheme.
- Implementation of Alcohol in Public Places By-Laws.
- Implementation of CCTV proposals in RAPID areas.
- Advance proposals for CCTV in Town Centre.

The membership of Drogheda Joint Policing Committee is as follows:

- |                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Councillor Paul Bell       | • Councillor Tommy Byrne           |
| • Councillor Matthew Coogan  | • Councillor Anthony Donohoe       |
| • Councillor Malachy Godfrey | • Councillor Frank Maher           |
| • Councillor Jimmy Mulroy    | • Councillor Tommy Murphy          |
| • Councillor Gerald Nash     | • Councillor Ken O'Heiligh         |
| • Councillor Dom Wilton      | • Mayor, Councillor Michael O'Dowd |
| • Deputy Seamus Kirk TD      | • Deputy Arthur Morgan TD          |
| • Deputy Fergus O'Dowd TD    | • Superintendent Gerry Smith       |
| • Inspector Tom Fox          |                                    |

- Ms M Moloney, County Manager
- Mr D Foley, Town Clerk
- Mr Kevin Callan, Drogheda Youth Development
- Ms Nuala Earley, Drogheda Senior Citizen's Group
- Ms Marie Russell, Moneymore Community House

The committee is chaired by Councillor J Mulroy.

### BARCELONA DECLARATION

#### SOCIAL INCLUSION

A Disability Implementation Plan is being developed and will include input from a survey circulated to disability groups in relation to access to services provided by Louth Local Authorities.

# Service Indicators

Housing		2006	2007
<b>Housing Vacancies</b>			
A. Total no. of local authority stock		2967	3160
B. % that are let		97	98
C. % of dwellings empty		3	2
D. % empty subject to major refurbishment		50	27
E. % of empty dwellings unavailable for letting		95	96
F. % of empty dwellings available for letting		5	4
Average time (in weeks) taken to re-let dwellings for letting		0.67	1
No. of repairs completed as a % of the no. of valid repair requests received		83.97	95
<b>Average time (in days) taken to inform applicants of local authority decision on application for:</b>			
Shared Home Ownership		1.29	0
Housing Loans Scheme		4.08	0
Local Authority Housing		8.96	13
Total no. of traveller families accommodated as a % of the targets set in the local traveller accommodation programme		80.43	33
Roads		2006	2007
A. Local and regional roads surface dressed per annum (sq. mtrs)		568358	345303
B. % of local and regional roads surface dressed per annum		9.39	5.71
Motor Tax		2006	2007
<b>% of Motor Tax transactions which were:</b>			
dealt with over counter		90.81	
dealt with via post		9.19	
dealt with other means		14.58	
<b>Number of postal applications and % of which are dealt with from receipt of application</b>			
A. on same day		3215	34.28%
B. on 3rd day or less		3895	41.53%
C. on 5th day or less		857	9.14%
D. over 5 days		1412	15.05%
Average no. of opening hours per week			28.75
Environmental Services		2006	2007
<b>% of river channel:</b>			
A. unpolluted		58	58
B. slightly polluted		21.7	21.7
C. moderately polluted		19.7	19.7
D. seriously polluted		0.6	1.4
<b>% of drinking water analysis in compliance with statutory requirements with regard to:</b>			
public schemes		98	99
private schemes		77	76
<b>Average time to mobilise fire brigades in:</b>			
full time stations		1.61	1.7
part time stations		3.9	4.8
<b>% of attendances at scenes where first attendance is:</b>			
within 10 minutes		83.6	75.9
within 20 minutes		14	22.1
over 20 minutes		2.4	2
<b>Total no. of Fire Safety applications:</b>			
received		299	371
processed		292	380
<b>Households provided with segregate waste collection</b>			
% of household waste recycled		19	20
% of household waste going to landfill		81	80
Recycling Facilities		2006	2007
<b>Glass</b>			
No. of Bring Sites		37	38
No. of Civic Amenity Sites		2	2
Total no. of facilities		39	40
<b>No. of locations per 5000 of population</b>			
		2	40
<b>Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per population</b>			
		5000	2708
<b>Cans</b>			
No. of Bring Sites		43	43
No. of Civic Amenity Sites		2	2
Total no. of facilities		45	45
No. of locations per 5000 of population		2	45
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per population		80.27	230
<b>Textiles</b>			
No. of Bring Sites		0	0
No. of Civic Amenity Sites		2	2
Total no. of facilities		2	2
No. of locations per 5000 of population		2	2
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per population		107	169
<b>Batteries</b>			
No. of Bring Sites		0	0
No. of Civic Amenity Sites		2	2
Total no. of facilities		2	2
No. of locations per 5000 of population		2	2
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per population		47	27
<b>Oils</b>			
No. of Bring Sites		0	0
No. of Civic Amenity Sites		2	2
Total no. of facilities		2	2
No. of locations per 5000 of population		2	2
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per population		11	11
<b>Others</b>			
No. of Bring Sites		0	43
No. of Civic Amenity Sites		2	2
Total no. of facilities		2	2
No. of locations per 5000 of population		2	2
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per population		10281	11277
<b>Litter Prevention &amp; Environmental Enforcement</b>			
<b>No. of Litter Wardens</b>			
Total no. of full time wardens		7	7

## SERVICE INDICATORS

Total no. of part time wardens	0	0
Total no. of wardens per 5000 of population	0.343	
No. of on the spot fines	1886	1207
No. of prosecutions for non payment	248	174
No. of prosecutions secured	101	55
<b>% of local authority area that is:</b>		
A. unpolluted	12	14
B. slightly polluted	57	78
C. moderately polluted	26	8
D. significantly polluted	5	0
E. grossly polluted	0	0
No. of environmental complaints received in three authorities for waste, litter, water pollution, noise pollution and air pollution	2053	2755
No. investigated	1910	2625
No. of enforcements procedures	244	217

### Green Schools Scheme

% of secondary schools in scheme	69	75
% of primary schools in scheme	63	64

### Planning

2006 2007

#### Planning Applications-Decision Making

##### Individual Houses

No. of applications determined	708	722
No. of complete applications determined in 8 weeks	336	305
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information	406	
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant under Sec 34 (9) of the Planning & Development Act	11	
Average length of time (in days) taken to determine an application where further information is sought	70	72
% of grants	82.77	76.45
% of refusals	17.23	23.55
% of cases where the decision is confirmed by An Bord Pleanála	62.96	59.26
% of cases where the decision was varied by An Bord Pleanála	13.79	
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanála	37.04	40.74

### Housing Development

No. of applications determined	143	144
% of complete applications determined in 8 weeks	60	48
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information	94	
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant under Sec 34 (9) of the Planning & Development Act	2	
Average length of time (in days) taken to determine an application where further information is sought	82	78
% of grants	73.43	74.31
% of refusals	26.57	25.69
% of cases where the decision is confirmed by An Bord Pleanála	63.64	63.64
% of cases where the decision was varied by An Bord Pleanála	0	
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanála	36.36	36.36

### Other: not requiring EIA

No. of applications determined	1112	1355
% of complete applications determined in 8 weeks	789	926
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information	414	
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant under Sec 34 (9) of the Planning & Development Act	15	

Average length of time (in days) taken to determine an application where further information is sought	73	75
% of grants	92.99	90.55
% of refusals	7.01	9.45
% of cases where the decision is confirmed by An Bord Pleanála	55.32	69.23
% of cases where the decision was varied by An Bord Pleanála	23.4	
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanála	23.26	30.77

### Other: requiring EIA

No. of applications determined	4	15
% of complete applications determined in 8 weeks	1	6
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information	8	
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant under Sec 34 (9) of the Planning & Development Act	1	
Average length of time (in days) taken to determine an application where further information is sought	111	107
% of grants	100	73.33

% of refusals	0	26.67
% of cases where the decision is confirmed by An Bord Pleanála	100	100
% of cases where the decision was varied by An Bord Pleanála	0	

% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanála	0	0
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### Planning Enforcement

No. of Planning enforcements investigated	979	700
No. of Planning enforcements dismissed	115	173
No. of Planning enforcement procedures through negotiations	238	
No. of enforcement procedures through warning letters	171	443
No. of enforcement procedures through enforcement notices	75	135
No. of prosecutions	27	36
No. of Planning public counter opening hours	39.16	39.17
Average length of time for pre-planning appointment with Planning (booking to meeting)	8.75	9.61

### Building Control:

Buildings inspected as % of new buildings notified	13.25	15.86
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### Revenue Collection

2006 2007

Amount of housing rent collected as % of amount due	88.77	88.35
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### Percentage of arrears

% 4-6 weeks old	8.32	8.91
% 6-12 weeks old	12.64	11.19
% more than 12 weeks old	69.6	71.41

Amount of housing loans collected as % of amount due	98.3	89.57
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### Percentage of arrears

% 1 month old	4.3	3.78
% 2-3 months old	5.09	4.85
% more than 3 months old	87.44	88.84

Amount of commercial rates collected at year end as a % of amount due	84.15	76.56
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Refuse charges	0	0
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Amount of non-domestic water charges collected at year end as a % of amount due	59.16	42.26
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**Corporate Issues**      2006    2007

% of working days lost to certified leave	4.2	4.25
% of working days lost to uncertified leave	0.77	0.9
Expenditure on training/development as a % of total payroll costs	5.68	4.75

**Library**      2006    2007

Average no. of opening hours per week for:		
full time libraries	34.52	35
part time libraries	19.66	20
No. of registered library members as % of local population	12416	11913
No. of library issues of books per head	286416	273429
No. of library issues of other items per head	51108	39012

% of libraries that offer internet sessions per 1000	100%	100%
No. of internet sessions provided per 1000 population	64955	1282.65

**Arts & Cultural Services**      2006    2007

No. of Arts grants allocated	96	98
Total value of Arts grants per 1000 population	620.83	83015

**Recreational Services***No. of playgrounds per 1000 population:*

A. provided by local authority	9	7
B. facilitated by local authority	1	1

No. of visitors to local authority facilitated swimming facilities per 1000 population	306404	347964
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**Community Participation & Co-operation**      2006    2007

% of local schools involved in the local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg	81.25	81.25
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# Financial Figures

EXPENDITURE	AUDITED 2006	BALANCE SHEET	AUDITED 2006
Housing & Building	7,864,638	Surplus/Deficit for Year	(1,452,880)
Road Transport & Safety	19,008,204	Transfers to/from Reserves	(1,813,212)
Water Supply & Sewerage	8,913,722	Overall Surplus/Deficit for Year	(3,266,092)
Development Incentives & Controls	4,283,310	Opening Balance	10,992,981
Environmental Protection	8,164,075	Closing Balance	7,726,889
Recreation & Amenity	3,583,150	<b>CAPITAL ACCOUNT</b>	
Ag., Ed., Health & Welfare	8,097,304	Expenditure	102,522,858
Miscellaneous Services	4,250,766	Receipts	102,526,774
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>64,165,169</b>	<b>CONFERENCES</b>	
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>AUDITED 2006</b>	Within State*	83,324
State Grants	32,084,227	Abroad	23,922
Goods & Services	16,686,471		
Contributions from Other LAs	7,403,364		
Rates	6,538,226		
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>62,712,288</b>		

\* Councillors used some of their conference money to make allocations to local activities

## DROGHEDA BOROUGH COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL FIGURES (AUDITED)

Total Revenue Expenditure 2006 was €25,640,428.00

Total Capital Expenditure 2006 was €37,271,125.00

## DUNDALK TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL FIGURES (AUDITED)

Total Revenue Expenditure 2006 was €27,031,039

Total Capital Expenditure 2006 was €29,345,000

LOUTH SUMMARY OF MAJOR REVENUE COLLECTIONS FOR 2006								
	Arrears at 01/01/2006 €	Accrued €	Write Off €	Waivers Off €	Total for Collection €	Collected €	Arrears at 31/12/2006 €	Collected %
Rates	529,221	6,536,848	519,162	Nil	6,546,907	5,786,453	760,454	88
Rents & Annuities	92,108	1,520,338	3,673	Nil	1,608,773	1,505,797	102,976	94
Commercial Water	530,042	594,260	56,880	Nil	1,067,422	508,916	558,506	48
Housing Loans	8,334	485,181	663	Nil	492,852	484,931	7,921	98