

6. RETAILING, THE TOWN CENTRE AND URBAN RENEWAL

6.1 Introduction

This chapter gives effect to strategic objectives SO1 and SO2 and considers three interrelated topics, retailing, the town centre, and urban renewal. The background to the existing retail structure of the town is set out as well as future anticipated requirements. Broad policies are provided for the town centre, which sets out a framework for how future development of the town centre is expected to be guided. Urban renewal opportunities are also examined both within and outside of the town centre.

SO1

Assist in the development of Dundalk's Gateway status as a Regional Employment Growth Centre & Regional Shopping Destination.

SO2

Direct new development to the existing settlement structure; in accordance with the development strategy and other plan policies, relating development to accessibility to promote energy efficiency and helping to secure quality urban infrastructure and services.

The plan can help to achieve this aim through ensuring adequate land supply for town centre and retail development focused on the existing settlement pattern and urban structure. The aim is to promote containment, consolidation and the reinforcement of the existing settlement patterns to help ensure an efficient use of existing services, facilities and infrastructure.

6.2 Retailing Context

6.2.1 Government Guidance

In December 2000, the Department of Environment and Local Government issued Retail Planning Guidelines following a consultation process. The main features of the guidelines were to require applications for retail developments, which comprise large-scale additions to existing facilities to be guided by the following criteria;

- adequacy of existing retail shopping outlets.
- size and location of existing retail shopping outlets.
- quality and convenience of existing retail shopping outlets.
- effect on existing communities including in particular the effect on established retail shopping outlets and on employment.
- needs of those who may be dependant on the availability of retail shopping outlets within walking distance.



- need to counter urban decline and to promote the optimum utilisation of existing infrastructure in urban areas;
- and impacts on road traffic.

The Guidelines also place an embargo on the development of foodstores in excess of 3,000sqm or an extension to an existing supermarket resulting in a total retail floor space exceeding 3,000sqm pending the carrying out of a detailed study and the publication of Planning Guidelines.

These Guidelines came at a time when Dundalk and Drogheda Urban District Councils and Louth County Council received a number of planning applications for retail development. Some were for major out of town retail development in formats, which are not specifically recognised in current development plan policies. In light of the need for a review of retail policies, the three Councils commissioned a Retail Study to assess the current policy guidance, an appraisal of the retail provision and a retail health check of the main centres in the county.

This Retail Study has been finalised from which a Retail Strategy for County Louth has been formulated. While the Retail Study has been adopted at the County level, it has not been adopted for Dundalk town. This Development Plan has included relevant recommendations from both the Strategy and the Study, with regard retail policy.

6.2.2 Retailing in Dundalk

Dundalk is ranked sixth in terms of size and population in the Republic of Ireland. It has a well-developed retail district with Clanbrassil Street and Earl Street providing an attractive streetscape as the town's commercial focal point.



A floorspace survey was undertaken recently in Dundalk and found that the total floorspace amounts to 47,087sqm net lettable area, 67% of which is comparison floorspace¹. Much of the parking for the whole of the town is located in the Long Walk and the Clanbrassil Street Centre area.

¹ Retail goods categories are defined by reference to the National Income and Expenditure Accounts and can be divided into convenience goods and comparison goods as follows;
Convenience – food/alcoholic and non alcoholic beverages/tobacco/ non durable household goods
Comparison – clothing and footwear, furniture, furnishings and household equipment (excluding non durable household goods) medical and pharmaceutical products, therapeutic appliances and equipment; educational and recreation equipment and accessories; books newspapers and magazines; goods for personal care and goods not elsewhere classified

6.2.3 Developments and Planning Applications 1996- 2001

During the plan period, Dundalk and environs has been subject to a number of major retailing applications;

- Carroll Village Shopping Centre is a more recent development of approximately 4,924sqm. It is located to the north of the Long Walk Shopping Centre, but separated by an industrial building. The mall is anchored by a 3,251sqm Superquinn convenience store. There are 27 units and 500 car-parking spaces. A number of the units are still vacant in this development. The lack of retail continuity between this area and the remainder of the traditional town affects the levels of trade in this area.
- Retail Development at Ramparts Road Dundalk In January 2001 a planning application was submitted for a commercial retail development of 19,113sqm gross floor area comprising 27 retail units and car parking for 941 cars at Ramparts Road Dundalk. The development will be anchored by a 6,558sqm convenience store. A number of objections were received regarding the application. These referred to impacts on existing businesses and the integration of the proposals with the existing town centre.

This application has not yet been determined; a new revised scheme has been submitted which seeks to accord with the Retail Study's guidelines and the Plan policies. This area is seen as the new town centre expansion area and it is critical that any proposals for this area complement the existing town centre and are properly planned and integrated.

- Finnabair Industrial Estate, Inner Relief Road - an application has been approved in October 1999 for a retail warehousing development on a 58 acre site (some of which will be used for industrial and warehousing development). The retail-warehousing element comprises 20,438sqm in 18 units and parking provision for 802 cars.

Strict conditions have been attached relating to the permitted uses, restricting the use of the site to the sale of bulky household goods and DIY items. The planning conditions specifically exclude any form of convenience or other forms of comparison-shopping.

- Designer Outlet Village Ballymascanlon Dundalk - Louth County Council refused permission for an 18,600sqm-factory outlet centre on an 11ha site with 1600 car parking spaces and 30 coach bays. The principle reason for refusal was that this was a material contravention of the Louth County Development Plan 1997 as it would be contrary to the protected routes policy set out.

The level and significance of the applications for retail development within the Dundalk area helps to demonstrate the important role that Dundalk plays within the wider region and indeed the anticipated increased role that it is expected to play as a shopping destination in the future. It is a priority of the plan to maintain and strengthen the role of Dundalk as the principle-shopping destination within the county and the wider region.

6.2.4 Assessing the Vitality and Viability of the Town Centre

As part of the retail study, undertaken in 2001, an assessment to determine factors affecting the vitality and viability of the town centre was undertaken.

The main findings are as follows;

- The shopping malls are not adequate in terms of quality of environment or unit size to attract the international retailers.
- The major shopping streets Clanbrassil Street, Earl Street, Park Street and Francis Street seem buoyant with around 90% of units taken by retail uses, banks and professional services, food and drink uses with few streets including convenience stores.
- There are larger components of non-retail use to be found on Park Street and Francis Street and vacancy rates are lower here than in Clanbrassil street.
- The area adjacent to the Long Walk has significant potential for redevelopment.
- There is also an opportunity for the redevelopment or upgrading of the Ramparts Road area, which is currently of a lower visual quality and state of repair.

6.2.5 Future Retail Space Requirements

An advanced Retail study is to be undertaken by consultants due to the recent presentation to Dundalk of gateway status under the National Spatial Strategy.

6.3 Retailing Policies

6.3.1 The Retailing Hierarchy

RT1 Retail Hierarchy;

In order to guide the location of shopping and other services, the following retailing hierarchy is identified:

- a) Dundalk town centre is the prime regional shopping location and destination within the county and region;*
- b) Blackrock is identified as a village centre and as such there is a requirement to provide improved retail and other services to meet the daily needs of the local community;*
- c) Local centres are identified within the Neighbourhood Plan (Map 6) as important local service centres meeting daily needs of the local community.*

RT2 Dundalk Town Centre;

There will be a presumption in favour of proposals for retailing within Dundalk town centre where such proposals would enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre, in accordance with the policies set out, subject to;

- a) impact on the surrounding built environment - proposals should respect the character, setting and scale and be sensitively designed.*
- b) infrastructure and access provision - depending on the significance of the proposals - a Traffic Impact Assessment may be required.*
- c) parking and public transport arrangements - proposals entailing significant floorspace additions may be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of extra parking spaces within the town. There will also be a requirement to demonstrate linkages with local public transport provision.*

Dundalk is the primary retailing centre for the county of Louth and the northeast region and plan policy will seek to enhance this role within the region. The Council will seek to ensure that proposals for the town centre contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre and are not likely to adversely impact on the local environment.

RT3 Local and Neighbourhood Centres

Proposals for retailing within local and neighbourhood centres will be considered in relation to the size of the existing centre, the proximity to

the town centre and the level of existing service provision within the centre.

The Council will seek to ensure that the local/ neighbourhood shopping needs of local residential areas are accommodated to the extent justified by the size of the neighbourhood catchment

The Council may seek to redirect inappropriately sized retail and shopping developments to larger centres if they are considered out of scale with the location and services.

All new local and neighbourhood centres will be required to be provided in accordance with the plan policies and the guidance set out in the Retail Strategy and text below.

Within the built up areas of the plan a series of local/neighbourhood centres have been identified (please refer to Map 6 and to Chapter 7 Section 7.7 Creating Sustainable Neighbourhoods). These centres provide an important function within communities catering for daily needs. The Council will seek to maintain and enhance the role of such centres. In addition to the existing local centres, a number of areas have been identified where the provision of enhanced or new local centres would be considered to be of benefit to the local community.

The neighbourhood plan identifies a series of local neighbourhood centres, which perform an important function of meeting the daily needs of the local community. It is a priority of the plan to maintain and where appropriate, enhance the retailing element of such centres commensurate with their size and existing role. Proposals for new retail development will be generally required to conform to the retail locational hierarchy.

When considering proposals for local shopping development, the Council will have regard to the guidance set out in the Retail Strategy as adopted by Louth County Council but not Dundalk Town Council and will require that,

‘for new local shopping development or for the extension or alteration of existing centres, development that would be likely to damage the function, character, vitality or viability of existing town or local centres shall not be permitted. In considering such proposals, the local authority shall take account of the following factors:

- ***Design, scale, massing and materials.***
- ***Landscaping.***
- ***Servicing and parking arrangements.***
- ***Accessibility by public transport.***
- ***Facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.***
- ***Access for mobility impaired.***
- ***Effects on the scale and character of the area.***

- *Environmental impact of building, e.g. recycling, use of solar energy, use of energy efficient materials, etc*²

This policy is applicable in all local centres and existing settlements where there is a recognised need for local shops to meet local needs.

The absolute maximum gross floor area of any single neighbourhood shopping facility shall not exceed 1,000sqm and shall be located so as to provide accessibility to better than the 800 metre standard to the greatest possible quantity of housing. It shall be at the discretion of the planning authority to determine the relevant area of neighbourhood catchments for retail capacity.

Local/Neighbourhood Centres:

The neighbourhood centres should provide where possible a mix of uses to meet the daily needs of the local community living which could include;

- Local shops – from corner shop/newsagents to a small-scale supermarket;
- Grocery/Butchers;
- Post Office/Bank;
- Public house/restaurant;
- Pharmacy;
- Health centre/GP Facilities/Dentist;
- Professional Services – Solicitors/estate agents;
- Childcare Facilities;
- Educational Facilities – Primary/Secondary Schools;
- Community Hall/ Training Centre;
- Office space for professional services etc.;
- Recreational/Open space areas;

These local centres can provide a mix of uses to serve everyday needs such as a shop/public house or post office and possibly surgery. The size and diversity of uses will depend on the area in question, its proximity to other centres and the size of the local population and the demand for such services.

RT4 Resisting the Closure of Local Shops;

The Council will not approve proposals that would result in the loss of shops or other local services in local and neighbourhood centres.

Exceptions may be made where it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer viable or there is another existing local shop or service within reasonable walking distance of the proposal.

The protection of local shopping facilities is essential to ensuring the vitality of local centres and communities. Not alone do local facilities provide the important daily goods but they also play a crucial role in promoting social

² Retail Strategy for County Louth

inclusion and reducing the need to travel. It is important to maintain such facilities where possible or secure some other beneficial use where the existing retail use is no longer viable or economic rather than the site becoming derelict. The Council will consider such evidence on its merits, but will usually expect to see that the property has been marketed for a continuous period of twelve months or more.

RT5 New Local Shops and Services;

The Council would favourably consider the development of small-scale individual or a small group of shops providing for the daily needs of a local community at locations identified as local centres or where there is no suitable existing provision and there is a recognised need subject to;

- a) scale of service commensurate with local area.*
- b) provision of adequate parking and servicing.*
- c) accessibility by a choice of means of transport.*
- d) the proposal would not detract from the residential amenity or adversely affect highway safety or free flow of traffic.*
- e) accords with the guidance set out in the adopted Retail Strategy.*

RT6 The Sequential Test;

Except where specifically permitted by other policies, retail development outside the town centre core shopping areas should be resisted.

If it is demonstrated that no suitable town centre site is available for a proposed retail development, the council can reasonably expect the developer to consider first an edge of centre site as an alternative location before seeking sites elsewhere in and around the town.

Proposals for edge of centre retail development should not be permitted where they would;

- a) be out of scale and character with the area concerned; or*
- b) materially prejudice the amount and variety of land identified for other types of development in the plan.*

Only if it is demonstrated that there are no suitable sites available in or on the edge of the defined town centre/core shopping area, should out of centre sites be permitted for retail development, and then only if;

- c) the development would not be detrimental to the vitality and viability of the existing town centres; and*
- d) the site is accessible by a choice of means of transport; and*
- e) the scheme would not be out of scale and character with the area concerned; and*
- f) the proposals would not materially prejudice the amount of land zoned for employment uses in the plan, or result in the loss of existing or committed housing land.*

To maintain Dundalk's status as the principal retailing destination within the county and region, retail proposals will be required to meet the requirements of the sequential test.

6.3.2 Other Retail Operations

RT7 Ancillary Retail;

Outside of the town centre, industrial and commercial premises can only undertake retailing of their goods as an ancillary function of their business as a whole.

For the purposes of clarification of this policy, ancillary is defined as 10% of the total floorspace.

To help maintain the vitality and viability of the town centre and to protect local areas, it is important that retailing is undertaken within the defined centres as stipulated by policy. It is also reasonable to allow for ancillary retailing to be undertaken associated with the commercial and industrial uses, outside of the main retail centres, in a non-significant ancillary nature.

RT8 Discount Food Stores;

Discount Foodstores should only be permitted where they are in accordance with the sequential test, and where they support the overall strategy for the town centre.

To maintain Dundalk's status as the principal shopping destination, retail proposals must comply with the requirements of the sequential test.

RT9 Factory Outlet Centres;

The Council should adopt a sequential test to the location of a factory outlet centre in Dundalk. The preferred location is a brownfield site within the urban fabric of the town. If no such site is available, the Council should adopt an area of search for a factory outlet centre located within the northern environs of Dundalk to assist with that area's rejuvenation, to maximize its accessibility from Northern Ireland, and to capitalize upon the availability of various sites within this area. The site should meet the following criteria;

- a) the site should be accessible by a choice of means of transport and have good public transport linkages to the town centre which should be provide by legal agreement;
- b) the size of the outlet centre should be limited to between 10,000 and 12,000sqm. net floorspace;
- c) the centre should sell seconds/end of line products and will not be permitted to sell convenience goods;
- d) strict limitations will be placed on restaurants and take-aways;
- e) the amalgamation or sub-division of units will not be permitted;
- f) limited associated ancillary café/ restaurant facilities may be permitted;

- g) the proposal should comply with the other plan policy considerations.

There is potential to develop a factory outlet centre closely related to the Dundalk urban area. The best location for such a centre would be within the urban area of Dundalk, far enough away from the existing town centre so that the centre would not directly compete but accessible by a choice of means of transport and with good public transport linkages to the town centre.

RT10 Retail Warehousing;

Retail warehousing will be permitted within those areas identified for this use on the Land Use Zoning plan subject to conditions limiting the range of goods sold or the size on units and to minimise any adverse effect on the vitality of town centres.

In other cases, where a site for a proposed edge of centre or out of centre retail warehouse development satisfies the sequential test, conditions may be imposed or a legal agreement sought in connection with any permission that may thus be granted, to limit the range of goods sold or the size on units, and to minimise any adverse effect on the vitality of town centres. The minimum size of units permitted will be 700sqm. The linking of two or more units to create a larger unit will not be permitted.

Permission was granted in October 1999 for a retail park on the Finnabair Industrial estate on the Inner Relief Road. The retail element comprises 20, 438sqm of retail warehousing in 18 units and parking provision for 802 cars. The use of this site is strictly limited to the sale of bulky household/electrical goods and DIY items.

The retail study identified that there is potential for additional floorspace within the plan area and it is considered that the defined Coes Road site offers potential to accommodate this use, along with additional leisure and community facilities.

6.4 The Town Centre

6.4.1 Background Context

Dundalk is increasingly becoming attractive as a regional shopping destination. In more recent times the town centre has benefited from environmental improvements and the urban renewal scheme, which is helping to rejuvenate and enhance the town centre. However, there have also been an increasing number of applications for out of town retailing developments which if permitted could have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre. In the previous plan, the Council set out objectives to be achieved, which will help to strengthen and enhance the role of the town

centre. It is a consistent policy of the Council to strengthen the role of the town centre as the primary retailing centre for both the town of Dundalk and the northeast region.

Some progress has been achieved in the area of urban renewal; Carroll's Village is one of the more significant urban renewal developments completed during the previous plan period. The Council will continue to secure the renewal and redevelopment of the urban renewal sites during the plan period.

6.4.2 Role of the Town Centre

The Council will seek to maintain and enhance the status of Dundalk as the prime retailing destination of the county and region through implementing policies to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre and identifying areas for renewal and redevelopment opportunities within the urban area.

There is considerable potential for enhancing the town centre and promoting redevelopment opportunities. However, it is important that any new developments are in keeping with the character of the town centre and would not have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre. It is also important that retail developments outside of the town centre are resisted, except those permitted by other policies in the plan to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre.

The town centre policies provide policy guidance on design and opportunities for redevelopment within the town centre.

6.4.3 Specific Town Centre Uses

TC1 Prime Retailing Areas;

The Council will resist the conversion of the ground floors of premises on the principal shopping streets to non-retail uses, for the purposes of clarity the principal shopping streets are;

***Church Street (no's 1-5, 40)
Clanbrassil Street
Earl Street
Market Square
Demesne Arcade
Crowe Street (no's 1-8)
Francis Street (1-7, 23-28)
Park Street
Anne Street (1-3 and 71)***

The Council may in exceptional cases permit some financial or professional uses within the prime retailing areas, provided that a service that is frequently visited by the public is offered and that an active window display is maintained at ground floor level.

The Council will resist the change of use of the ground floors of buildings fronting the principal shopping streets from retail to non-retail uses. Non-retail uses would include but not be limited to; some professional and financial services, amusement arcades, bookmakers and hackney cab operations. However the Council will in exceptional circumstances, allow some level of professional and financial services to exist within the prime retailing area provided that it offers a service that is frequently visited by the public and that an active ground floor window display is in place.

It is a priority of the Council to maintain the town centre as the principal shopping area and as such the loss of retail uses and frontage will be resisted within the principal shopping areas.

TC2 Protecting the Principal Shopping Streets;

In the defined principal shopping streets, proposals, which would involve a net loss of convenience or comparison-shopping floorspace at ground level, will be resisted.



TC3 Vacant and Under-utilised Upper Floors;

Permission will be granted for residential use and banks and other professional services, restaurants and bars, food and drink or other entertainment uses on upper floors within these frontages on the principal shopping streets only if;

- a) the proposals would not harm the viability of the ground floor shopping unit; and***
- b) separate and safe access to the upper floors is provided; and***
- c) there would be no loss of existing residential accommodation, and no demonstrable harm caused to the living conditions of any neighbouring residents in terms of noise cooking smells or general disturbance.***

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

Maintaining the retail frontage at ground floor level is necessary in helping to retain the vitality and viability of the town centre. There is potential to improve the economic use of the upper floors by enabling uses, which would not detract from the retail or residential amenity.

TC4 Town Centre Infill;

Each site will be treated on its own merits in accordance with the site capabilities and the particular location, infill development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the town centre and the principles of good development within the town centre³.

TC5 Backland Development ;

In considering applications for backland development, the Council will treat each site on its own merits in accordance with the site capabilities and the particular location, backland development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the area and meet the requirements of the principles of good development within the town centre.⁴

Backland development of individual sites will not be permitted where it would be deemed likely to have a detrimental impact on the surrounding sites in that it would be likely to prejudice the comprehensive development of an area where reasonable development potential might otherwise exist

Infill and backland development is in many cases an appropriate means of redevelopment. It can be considered a suitable method of both promoting a sustainable use of land within the built up areas, improving the attractiveness of an area and also ensuring the continued viability and vitality of the town centre.

In certain other locations such as the area of land fronting the Ramparts River along the Ramparts Road stretching from the gardens adjacent to Williamson's Mall to the Cathedral. This area is considered unsuitable for infill residential development as it is within a sensitive location - adjacent to the Cathedral and fronting the Ramparts and covers an extensive area, which will be required to be considered as a whole as opposed to each individual plot.

This area, given its sensitive location, is to be the subject of a Development Brief which should set out options for the future development of this area and will the area should then be masterplanned in accordance with the principles and requirements of the Development Brief.

TC6 *The Council will require that a development brief be put in place to offer guidance on the type and scale of development, which can be permitted in the area along the Ramparts River, which stretches from Williamson's Mall to the Badminton club (see Map 5).*

This location has potential to be developed for a number of uses and there is potential to provide street frontage through the new development of this area, access however, should be restricted to one main crossing of the Ramparts River and should be sensitively designed, in keeping and in scale with the surrounding character.

A development brief will be required which should as a first point identify appropriate uses, developable plots, provide design guidance

³ see Policy TC10

⁴ see Policy TC10

and access details for the whole of the area and planning applications will be required to comply with the approved development brief.

The development of individual backland sites can conflict with the established pattern and character of development in an area. It can lead to piecemeal development through blocking access and prevent the comprehensive development of areas where reasonable development potential might otherwise exist.

In cases where individually acceptable sites are proposed for development, the normal requirements of open space, privacy, sightlines and distances between dwellings, general impact on amenity and character of the area applies.

TC7 Evening and Night-Time uses;

Development proposals for evening and late night entertainment including restaurants will be permitted within the retail core area, the district centre and the local centres and other appropriately located and accessible sites unless, individually or cumulatively, they are likely to have a detrimental effect on the environment, residential amenity, traffic generation and public or highway safety.

Each application for evening and night-time uses will be assessed on its own merits but should essentially not detract from the residential or commercial amenity.

TC8 The Council will seek to restrict the provision of hot-food takeaways and amusement arcades within the town centre.

It is the policy of the Council to strictly control the provision of amusement arcades within the town and there will be a presumption against such uses on ground floors of premises in the town centre area. The Council will resist the conversion of existing retail outlets to amusement arcades within the principle shopping streets.

The installation of amusement/gaming machines in premises primarily used for other purposes requires planning permission.

TC9 The Council will resist the conversion of existing premises to hot food takeaways within the principal shopping streets.

An undue proliferation of premises for the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises is considered to be undesirable having regard to the noise, litter and impact of such uses on surrounding residential and commercial establishments as well as the general amenities of areas. Having regard to the existing number and geographic spread of such establishments in the town centre at the present time, there will be a general presumption against further such freestanding establishments within the town centre.

TC10 The Council will strictly control the provision of hackney cab offices and will resist conversion of premises to hackney cab bases within the principal shopping streets or where they are likely to;

- **give rise to traffic congestion,**
- **interfere with the free flow of traffic,**
- **generate a traffic hazard or interfere with the general amenities of the area.**

Overall such uses will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Due to the nature of the hackney cab bases, they tend to interfere with the free flow of traffic and as such can give rise to traffic congestion and traffic hazard. A significant proportion of the business takes place at night time and can be a source of noise and litter pollution.

6.4.4 Development Control within the Town Centre

TC11 Principles for Good Development within the Town Centre;

The Council in seeking to protect and enhance the character and environment of the town centre and will encourage the redevelopment of the urban renewal sites and the sites identified for redevelopment within the town centre.

Any new developments within the town centre will be required to respect the heritage and architectural character of the street, maintaining a vertical emphasis and should;

- a) respect the character of the streetscape in terms of design detail including proposed materials.**
- b) conform with the scale, massing, layout, height and urban grain of the streetscape as far as possible to ensure continuity of street frontage and definition of public and private space.**
- c) observe the historic building line, avoiding any setbacks where possible.**
- d) respect and not restrict important views/ vistas or landmarks within the townscape.**
- e) where possible contribute to enhancing the focus of pedestrian movement within the town centre.**

In proposing new developments within the town centre, proposals should conform to the principles set out within the policies. In particular the principles set out for good development within the town centre to ensure that any new development respects the character and setting and would not detract from the townscape in terms of use, layout or design.

TC12 The Town Centre Environment;

Encourage and facilitate improvements to the physical fabric and environment of the town centre including streets, street furniture and buildings (including facades and signage).

The Council will seek to improve the physical fabric and environment of the town centre where possible to enhance Dundalk's environment for all those living, working, recreating and visiting in the town.

TC13 Design of Shop Fronts;

Permission will be granted only for Shop fronts, which preserve or enhance the character of a building and its setting by:

- a) repairing and retaining an historic shop front or historic features in a shop front;***
- b) treating the shop front as part of the design of the whole building and its setting whilst ensuring that the shopfront is in proportion;***
- c) designing fascias with a proportionate scale, depth and width, in relation to the shop front and building of which they will form a part.***
- d) using either internal lattice, toughened glass or removable grilles if a security shutter is proposed;***
- e) using shop front signs which, in their number, size and materials, conserve or enhance the appearance of a building and its setting;***
- f) utilising small traditional hanging signs and resisting bulky projecting box signs;***
- g) utilising externally illuminated signs rather than internally illuminated signs;***
- h) large expanses of glass should be avoided and display windows should be broken up through the use of vertical glazing bars and other methods so as to emphasise the vertical nature of the traditional buildings in the town centre;***
- i) lettering should generally be handpainted in the traditional style and should relate well to the height of the fascia board;***
- j) shop fronts should be painted, not varnished or stained.***

There will be a general presumption against the use of canopies on shop fronts other than in exceptional circumstances such as outlets selling perishable goods, which might otherwise be affected by sunlight.

The facades of buildings contribute significantly to the streetscape. When considering shopfronts, the Council will also consider the condition of the façade of the building and in particular the contribution, which the facade makes to the streetscape. Having regard to the contribution made by shopfronts to the overall environment of the town centre, it is important to protect and enhance the shopfronts traditional character that typifies Dundalk.

TC14 The Council will seek to produce a shopfront design guide for the urban area including guidance on suitable shopfront signage.

In order to enhance and maintain Dundalk's character, the Council will produce more design guidance with specific reference to shopfronts.

6.5 The Town Centre Redevelopment Opportunities

6.5.1 Introduction

There is considerable potential to further enhance the role of Dundalk as the principal shopping destination within the county and region through the redevelopment of urban renewal sites and other under-utilised sites within the town centre. The Council in advocating a containment policy for the plan area prioritises the redevelopment of brownfield land within the urban area as a means of enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre. Map 5 sets out some of the key redevelopment sites and map 4 identifies the urban renewal opportunities.

6.5.2 Redevelopment Opportunities

This section sets out the key redevelopment sites within Dundalk. The majority of which do not have urban renewal tax designation status – sites defined on Map 5 (the sites that have tax incentives under the town centre renewal scheme are outlined on Map 4, the reference number is provided for clarification with UR), the urban renewal sites are detailed in the next section.

The Landmark Redevelopment Opportunities;

TC15 The Dundalk Shopping Centre - Southern Entrance (T)

Encourage the redevelopment of the Dundalk Shopping Centre for mixed use to include retail, residential, office, commercial and or leisure to provide a new landmark entrance for Dundalk in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Retail Strategy and the other policies set out in this plan.

The shopping centre is located adjacent to the main southern entrance area to Dundalk. It does not provide the design or style befitting of a landmark entrance building that would be suitable for the prime-shopping destination of the northeast. There is potential for the redevelopment of the shopping centre to provide a positive landmark entrance for Dundalk and a new mixed-use scheme should be developed in accordance with a site development brief in agreement with the Council.

TC16 The Northern Entrance (UR A)

The Council will encourage the redevelopment of the urban renewal site at the northern end of the town as a landmark entrance building for the north of town, the site can be redeveloped for commercial/community and retail uses in accordance with the other plan policies.

This site is subject to urban renewal tax incentives. Map 4 displays the urban renewal sites (see UR A). This policy refers to the island site at the northern entrance to the town. There is potential to provide an anchor development for this area of town to help in regenerating and rejuvenating the northern area of Dundalk.

TC17 Area of land between Long Walk and Carroll Village

(W)

The Council will be minded to grant permission for the redevelopment of this area for a leisure/office and retail scheme, provided that proposals adhere to the relevant principles set out in other policies in the plan.

A redevelopment scheme in this area will be expected to create an attractive well-integrated town centre scheme, providing street frontage and incorporating the necessary pedestrian links within and between the existing shopping areas and public transport facilities.

This area is currently a disused warehouse and forms a visual barrier between the Long Walk and Carroll's Village, (see W on Map 5) the redevelopment of this site would help to create continuity in streetscape and help to encourage more movement between the long Walk and Carroll's Village. Redevelopment for mixed use-incorporating leisure/commercial and retail would be most appropriate in this location and the proposals should follow the building line and incorporates direct, attractive pedestrian links within and between the existing shopping areas, and also to the public transport facilities.

This area in general suffers from fragmentation and it is important that future development helps to connect and integrate the areas and the following principles should be adhered to for any developments in the Long Walk area;

TC18 Long Walk and Clanbrassil Street

(V AND Y)

The Council will seek to encourage redevelopment of the Clanbrassil Centre along with the car parking areas to the rear to provide ground floor retail and commercial units. The development to provide approximately 3,000 to 5,500 sqm net of floorspace, to integrate the existing shopping centres with the car parking located above the units *



The new scheme should incorporate adequate public linkages between Longwalk and Clanbrassil Street and the scheme should where possible incorporate an informal landscaped public space.

****The provision of multilevel parking within this location will be dependent upon the findings of the town centre parking and traffic study.***

There is potential for the development of a major new scheme within this area, (see V and Y Map 5) which could provide new frontage onto the Long Walks and adequate links between the Long Walk and Clanbrassil Street, by

breaking through gap and total redevelopment of Clanbrassil Street Shopping Centre and some of the redundant units on Clanbrassil Street. The redevelopment should allow for maximum flow between the bus station and the shopping core and provide service yards away from the public realm.

The redevelopment of this area would help to enable the creation of a new façade to the street and encourage more shoppers into this area.

TC19 The Adelphi Cinema and disused Retail Units (X)

Encourage the redevelopment of the derelict Cinema and retail units for a new landmark scheme of comparison retail units relating to and with links to Market Square and through Clanbrassil Street /Earl Street districts.

Where possible and subject to advice from a professional, the listed facades may be required to be maintained as part of any redevelopment scheme.

Any new development should comply with the principles set put for development within the town centre area and the other relevant plan policies.



The Adelphi Cinema Complex is in need of refurbishment and redevelopment. (See X Map 5) The facades to the cinema and café are listed and prior to any refurbishment or redevelopment, a detailed survey will be required to be undertaken to ascertain the potential for retaining the important listed facades.

Where possible and subject to the advice of a surveyor and Conservation Officer, any refurbishment or redevelopment proposed for this site would be required to retain and repair the listed facades and maintain the character of the building.

TC20 Land off Defender's Row (U)

The Council will advocate the redevelopment of this backland site for residential development at a relatively high density, in accordance with the design guidelines set out in this plan. Access details will also be devised in accordance with the Council.

This land is within close proximity to the town centre and is at present underused. There is the potential to develop the site for high quality and high-density housing. The surrounding area contains a mixture of commercial but mostly residential developments.

TC21 The Town Centre Expansion Area;

The Council will encourage the redevelopment of the area (defined on Map 5) as the town centre expansion area. This area should be developed with the Williamson's Mall area to maximise integration and

visibility from the town centre; the area is to be redeveloped in accordance with the principles set out which include;

- a) development should be of a scale and form that respects the nature and form of the town centre, particularly Francis Street frontage.*
- b) it should not be a pastiche of existing buildings but should be a striking piece of modern architecture in keeping with the urban grain and the urban setting.*
- c) it should use the small available frontage to advertise itself clearly from the town centre, in the same way the town centre should be clearly signed from the development. Legal agreements may be required to ensure this integration.*
- d) the area should maximise permeability and movement between and within having adequate links with the existing town centre area.*
- e) it should incorporate a new urban park area as part of the scheme in the Clark's Forest area.*
- f) services should be located away from the pedestrian flow areas and not sever the development from the town centre.*
- g) the scheme should provide clearly defined streetscape which where possible recreate the duality, form and pattern of the existing town and provide an attractive street frontage.*
- h) parking must be landscaped to create an attractive shopping environment.*
- i) careful consideration needs to be given to the crossing of the Ramparts Road, either through the use of a pedestrian crossing or by bridging the road and having retailing on the upper level, with parking below (south of the Ramparts Road only).*
- j) a maximum number of linkages between the site and the town centre should be identified, and signs should be located within the town centre and the development to identify the linkages.*

TC22 *The Council will encourage the redevelopment of Williamson's Mall as an integral part of the town centre expansion area, redevelopment will need to maximise integration and connectivity between the old and the new town centre expansion area, and in accordance with the other plan policies.*

It is considered that this area could be redeveloped for retail and commercial and ancillary uses. The redevelopment should be in the form of a courtyard to maintain as much as possible the concept of openness and integration.

6.5.3 Protection of peripheral Town Centre Areas' existing character.

The Planning Authority are cognizant of several peripheral areas with a short walking distance of the Town Centre, which have experienced a slow yet continuous influx of non-compliant uses over a sustained period of time. For example, many Jocelyn Street and Seatown Place properties, historically constructed and uses as dwellings, are currently being used as business premises for a diverse ranged of professional companies and bodies.

Under the previous Development Plan, a significant number of these established businesses were operating under various zonings such as residential, whose development objective discourages non-compliant uses, in

particular conversions to, or extensions of these non-compliant uses. Whilst it is not intended that this policy change the land use zoning of these peripheral areas a balance between the requirement to extend established business and maintain the overall integrity of the character of these areas, needs to be achieved.

In areas covered by this policy the Council will in consideration of applications for planning permission, ensure that proposals for development do not significantly or detrimentally affect the general character of the immediate areas. The Council will ensure that applications take account of the predominant uses of land and buildings in the vicinity; the mixture of such uses; and the architectural quality of the area; and do not conflict with nor detract from the character, amenity and design of an area.

The Council will consider, but not exclusively, the following criteria as a means of assessing the potential impact on an area;

- a. *Impact upon the existing character. The character of an area may be defined by an assessment of its main uses; the appropriateness of any diversification of existing uses; the desirability of introducing a development which may detrimentally alter the balance of existing uses; and the architectural style and quality of the area.*
- b. *Amenity. New developments should not adversely or significantly affect the degree of amenity already experienced by neighbouring properties. Where there is an inherent incompatibility of neighbouring developments or where remedial action cannot be made effective, applications are likely to be refused. Important aspects of amenity may include:*
 - *Overlooking – preventing any loss of privacy;*
 - *Overshadowing – preventing any significant loss of sunlight or natural daylight which would detrimentally affect amenity;*
 - *Overbearing - preventing any significant impact of proposal due to its proximity to existing structures;*
 - *Traffic – ensuring proposal does not significantly increase the volume and frequency of long term associated traffic, resulting in noise, pollution or general disruption which would detract from existing amenity;*
 - *General Disturbance – protection from activities and/or uses which would create unreasonable and sustained levels of noise, odour, general disturbances and other discomforts.*

It should be noted that these criteria are not considered exclusive. Other issues may also be taken into account.

TC23 Protection of peripheral Town Centre areas' existing character;

Within buildings or sites which are peripheral to the Town Centre; proposals for the conversion to, or for the extension of, a non-conforming use/activity which do not represent an inappropriate intensification of said use/activity may be favourably considered,

subject to assessment of the proposal's potential impact upon the existing character and amenity of the area.

6.6 Urban Renewal

6.6.1 Introduction

Urban Renewal Schemes were first introduced in Ireland in October 1985. These schemes were introduced in response to the increasing problem of dereliction and dilapidation, which had affected large inner areas of our towns and cities. A new awareness has emerged of the importance of conservation and the environment and has led to a resurrection of interest in the renewal of historic urban centres.

The main objectives of the schemes outlined is to promote urban renewal and redevelopment by promoting investment by the private sector in the construction and reconstruction of buildings in designated inner city areas. The incentives introduced were primarily tax-based, targeting investors in and occupiers of properties in designated areas.⁵

Dundalk urban area has a number of derelict and under-utilised sites especially within the town centre. The 1996 Development Plan identified a series of derelict sites for possible redevelopment schemes. The Planning Authority sought to undertake a more proactive role in terms of seeking the redevelopment of the derelict sites. The schemes have been successful to a degree. Some notable redevelopment has been achieved through identifying options for development of the sites and offering tax incentives through the Urban Renewal Schemes as a means of encouraging the redevelopment of these sites. Map 4 displays the urban renewal areas within and outside the town centre area.

The timeframe has been extended in the most recent budget for the scheme and the 1999 urban renewal incentives are now applicable until 31st December 2004. There is still considerable potential to redevelop these areas for a variety of uses. With the designation of Dundalk as a Gateway Town in the National Spatial Strategy, there are ample opportunities for growth and redevelopment. It is a priority of the Plan to achieve reuse and regeneration where possible and the redevelopment of derelict sites is fundamental to the town's long-term growth and development.

6.6.2 Town Centre Urban Renewal

In the recent past, Dundalk has witnessed a number of successful urban renewal schemes. These included the Longwalk Shopping Centre, the Carroll's Village retail and residential development and the Museum and County Library, which were developed as part of the Distillery Lane

⁵ <http://www.environ.ie/devindex.html>

Designated Area scheme. These projects were developed under the urban renewal scheme of the 1986 Derelict Sites Legislation.

The Council had also been successful in having three areas designated under the 1994 Urban Renewal Incentives scheme. These areas were the former Carrolls premises on Clanbrassil Street, the Tippings Buildings at Douglas Place and Hardy's / Gaskins premises at Park Street. Volume II provides details on the incentives available. Appendix 1 contains the details regarding schemes developed during the plan period. For further information regarding incentives, please refer to Louth County Council, Urban Renewal Scheme 1999; Dundalk.

6.6.3 Town Centre Urban Renewal Sites for Redevelopment

There are a significant number of sites, which are still subject to tax incentives under the 1999 scheme, which have yet to be developed, (see map 4). The table provides a breakdown of those within the town centre.

Table 6.4 *Sites designated for Urban Renewal within town centre.*

Urban Renewal Sites	Location	Category of Incentive/ Opportunity
UR A	An "island" site located at the northern end of town Northgate Street/ Linenhall Street	Commercial/ Residential/ Office/ Retail/ New Build/ Refurb
UR B	The former gas works with good frontage onto Bridge Street	Commercial/ Residential / Office/ New Build/ Refurb
UR C	Fronting Linenhall St.	Residential owner occupier/ New Build
UR D (partly developed)	Former Carroll's premises at Clanbrassil Street (The area between Laurel's Road and Patrick Street)	Commercial/ Residential/ Office/ Retail/ New Build / Refurb.
UR E (partly developed)	Site with frontage onto both Nicholas Street and onto Linenhall Street and contains O'Hares Mills (area to rear of shops facing onto Nicholas Street)	Mixed use development incl. retail on ground floor and office space on the upper floors
UR F	Old St. Nicholas' School facing both Chapel St. and York St.	Commercial/ Residential/ Office/ Retail/ other/ Refurbishment
UR G	Old Mill between Bachelors Walk and Market Street	Commercial/ Office/ Retail/ Other
UR H	Market Street below Clanbrassil Centre (and both sides of the square only)	Commercial/ Car Park/ Office Retail/other

The sites in the table above, which are still to be developed, have been designated under both the 1996 Development Plan and the 1999 Urban Renewal Scheme and the majority have been proposed to be redeveloped for mixed-use. There is a significant opportunity to redevelop these sites, in accordance with the policies and uses outlined and help to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre.

6.6.4 Town Centre Urban Renewal Policies

Developing derelict sites in a town centre is the sustainable way forward as opposed to utilising undeveloped greenfield land on the periphery of the urban area. The redevelopment of these urban renewal areas is a main objective of the Plan.

UR1

Proposals for Redevelopment of Urban Renewal Sites in the Town Centre;

The Council will encourage the redevelopment of derelict urban renewal sites in the town centre provided that:

- a) the development is in accordance with the policies set out in the plan and accords with the urban renewal scheme;***
- b) the proposal would as far as possible enable a comprehensive development of the whole site or enable the phased redevelopment of the site;***
- c) the design is in keeping with the town's character and the design guidelines contained within the plan;***
- d) the Council will encourage proposals for the reuse of derelict urban renewal sites for town centre uses, providing that such proposals adhere to design guidelines and the other plan policies.***

UR2

The Council in seeking to encourage reuse, redevelopment and regeneration of underused and derelict sites will consider alternatives which may involve reducing parking requirements and allowing alternatives in relation to open space; in proposals for the redevelopment of urban renewal sites, depending on the proposed use and specific location, within the defined town centre area.

Derelict sites detract from the visual appearance of the town and may discourage possible inward investment opportunities. The redevelopment of these sites will add to the economic development of the area, stimulating interest and hence increasing its vitality. The Council will encourage and promote the redevelopment of all derelict urban renewal areas within the town centre area in accordance with the other plan policies and guidelines.

The Council is seeking to encourage additional reuse and redevelopment in the identified urban renewal areas, in accordance with the sustainable development guidelines and the other policies of the Plan. There is a preference for brownfield redevelopment within the town. The Council will consider alternatives and in doing so, recognises that there may be potential to reduce the existing parking requirements and consider alternative forms of open space such as provision of roof gardens and balconies, with regard the urban renewal sites to help encourage redevelopment. It will also help to ensure a more efficient use of existing infrastructure facilities and services.

6.6.5 Urban Renewal Sites Outside of The Town Centre Area

Outside of the defined town centre boundary and within the urban area, there are additional urban renewal sites. In some cases, the differing locations and circumstances warrant particular site-specific policies to promote and encourage redevelopment opportunities.

The sites listed, which have not yet been developed, were designated under the 1999 Urban Renewal Scheme.

Table 6.6 displays the urban renewal locations and potential uses.

Table 6.6 Sites for urban renewal outside of Town Centre

Urban Renewal Site	Location	Proposed Use/ opportunity
UR I	Old Warehouses fronting Dublin Street	Commercial/ Industrial/ Residential owner occupier/ office/ refurbishment
UR J	Former ABC Plant fronting onto Mary Street North	Residential owner occupier/ New Build
UR K	Between Quay Street and Peter Street (below cattle yard)	Commercial/ Residential/ Office/ Retail/ other/ New Build/Refurb
UR L	Between Quay Street and Peter Street, fronting onto Anne Street, containing Harbour Office	Commercial/ Residential/ Office/ Retail/ other/ New build/ Refurb.
UR M	Between coal yard and cattle mart	Commercial/ Office/ Retail/other
UR N	Junction of St. Mary's Road and Castle Street	Commercial/ Industrial /Office

The timeframe has been extended in the most recent budget for the scheme and the 1999 urban renewal incentives are now applicable until 31st December 2004. There is still considerable potential to redevelop these areas for a variety of uses; the National Spatial Strategy designates Dundalk, as a Gateway Town therefore the redevelopment of derelict sites is fundamental to the town's long-term growth and consolidation.

6.6.6 Urban Renewal Policies outside of the town centre

URI

The Council will encourage the redevelopment of the old warehouse on Dublin Street for mixed use, to include hostel/ offices /leisure and ancillary commercial or residential use.

Where possible any redevelopment proposals should



include the retention and enhancement of the frontage (UR I).

This site contains an old warehouse fronting Dublin Street, which in its current condition could be considered an eyesore. The warehouses while not listed are of historical significance made of traditional stone.

It is an objective of the plan to encourage the redevelopment of urban renewal schemes for appropriate uses. The policy has widened the potential for the site to help ensure flexibility to encourage investment and appropriate redevelopment in the area.

Permission was granted for a 46-bedroom hostel on Quay Street, which included a restaurant and conference room in 1997, but there has been no further development to date.

The Port and Harbour Area;

The Development Plan identifies the Port and Harbour area along with the defined lands to the north of the Castletown River (see Map 1A) for an Action Area Plan. The Action Plan should identify opportunities and potential for the regeneration of the port area, safeguarding the nature conservation interest and encouraging additional recreational and amenity uses. The study is to take equal cognisance of the tourism and amenity value of the Port as it does the Ports commercial remit in order to ensure that the future development of the port will make a significant contribution to the commercial/recreational requirements of the town.

The Port area has suffered from a lack of investment and a decline in the port activity and has a number of derelict and underused buildings and sites. There is considerable potential to undertake a feasibility study to ascertain the most appropriate means of regenerating the wider area.

The urban renewal sites have been identified for potential uses, in addition to the Port uses to encourage their regeneration. The uses outlined for the urban renewal sites would allow a mix of uses to help rejuvenate the areas and should help to make these areas more attractive for redevelopment, in that, in some cases broader types of uses are encouraged and can be permitted within the area, in accordance with the other plan policies.

URL

The Council will encourage redevelopment of land between Quay Street and Peter Street for commercial/residential/office and retail (UR L).

This area extends to approximately .77ha's. It is delineated by Quay Street to the north, Barrack Street to the south, the rear of residential properties along St Josephs Park to the west and the rear of Carpetland to the east. The area is characterised by vacancy and under utilisation. The buildings consist of four two-storey dwellings and the preserved Harbour Office. A significant parcel of land to the rear of these buildings is also designated for urban renewal

The site is located within the traditional industrial area. It is important to maintain and seek to enhance opportunities for investment in such areas where possible and as such it is proposed that there is potential to redevelop this area for a mix of uses to include commercial, residential and offices.

URK

Encourage redevelopment of land and buildings between Quay Street and Peter Street (below cattle yard) for commercial, residential, office & or retail (UR K).

The main area to be developed would be the former warehouse building, which appears to be in good condition externally. It is situated next to a carpet show room. The sub area incorporates the Old Mill property on Quay Street. There is the potential to use the building as office or converting the building into apartments with offices.

URM

Encourage the redevelopment of the land between coal yard (UR M) and cattle mart for commercial/office/retail.

This site comprises a currently detached disused gatehouse type building and an adjacent scrap yard site. It is undeveloped at present. The house is currently listed in the development plan for protection, the building being regarded as being of local importance. Prior to any redevelopment, discussions should be had with the local authority regarding the latest status of the building in terms of protection and preservation. The site fronts Quay Street and offers an excellent redevelopment opportunity. Beside the site there is warehouse development ongoing at present. The site could be developed then for office, commercial or retail use.

URN

Encourage redevelopment of area defined (UR N) for Commercial/Industrial/Offices at the junction of St Mary's Road and Castle Road.

The area is between the coal yard and cattle mart. It is currently located between office/industrial premises to the west and the Horseware Company to the east. This area contains three two-storeys and a semi-demolished house. The dwellings are vacant and in poor condition. The location however, on Quay Street is easily accessible and would be suitable to be redeveloped for office use. There have been some recent office developments within the vicinity and it is considered that this site would also suit an office or light industrial type use.

URJ

Encourage the redevelopment of the industrial premises fronting onto Mary Street North for residential use (UR J).

At present there is a cash and carry in operation on this designated area. The cash and carry is situated opposite a row of one-storey houses. On previous occasions the site had been designated for residential and new build. The area is predominantly residential at the moment with the majority of dwellings

terraced so it would be in keeping with its surroundings to maintain this theme. The site could provide well-designed townhouses and apartments.

6.7 The Future For Urban Renewal Sites

While the current Urban Renewal Scheme (1999) has been extended until 2004, there is not expected to be any additional tax incentives made available from this date. It is therefore considered that it would be more beneficial if the areas outside of the town centre were zoned for a variety of mixed uses rather than for urban renewal. The plan policies initiate this process by setting out a mix of potential uses for these areas. It is an objective of the Council to continue to seek and research further funding opportunities for these urban renewal sites within the wider plan area.

6.7.1. Possible Funding Sources

Under the National Development Plan, the only scheme for urban renewal is the Urban and Village Renewal Scheme Programme 2000-2006. This scheme allows mainly for environmental improvements, and one such scheme is the future development of the Navy Bank Walk in 2002, but it does not target urban renewal as before.

There are however possible alternatives to the previous Urban Renewal Schemes. These alternatives include the availability of EU funding such as INTERREG III and the Peace II Programme 2000-2006. The schemes are still at the preparation stage but are based on promoting cross border relationships with counties in Northern Ireland. Dundalk has been recognised as a border town and as such will be eligible for funding. The schemes aim to help towns develop small firms, technological practices, develop its tourism potential and physical infrastructure. There is also the other possibility of receiving funding from the European Regional Development Fund by forming a Public Private Partnership.

It may be possible to seek EU funding to redevelop areas to the north of the town. There are sites here, which could avail of the funding for tourism and recreational development, encouraging cross border interaction. In addition, there may be potential to seek additional funding for the town centre to redevelop derelict buildings to facilitate the small firms and technological practices that are encouraged by the European Commission for community development.

The Council will continue to research funding opportunities and seek to avail of relevant funding to continue to encourage the reuse and redevelopment of derelict sites within the town centre.

6.8 Town Centre Zoning

The defined town centre zone is displayed on the zoning plan. Within these areas and subject to compliance with the other plan policies the following uses will be generally considered acceptable;

Development Objective	<i>To protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre</i>
Colour Code Purple	
<i>Shops, offices, residential, hotels, motels, guesthouses, pubs, restaurants, discotheques, night clubs, dance halls, public, cultural, recreational and religious workshop buildings, light industry, taxi bases, take away restaurants, petrol filling stations, restaurants, repair garages, car showrooms and ancillary uses subject to compliance with plan policy.</i>	