

To Provide Leadership and to deliver an efficient quality service to the people of Louth



LOUTH 2005

Local Authorities Annual Report



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Martina Moloney, County Manager.

I am delighted to welcome the publication of this Annual Report for 2005. The format of the Report for 2005 has been altered to reflect the goals adopted by Louth Local Authorities in the Corporate Plan (2004 – 2009). The Corporate Plan provides the framework for the Councils' activities, and has prioritised the areas of customer service, facilitation of economic development, improving quality of life, harnessing community participation and working in partnership with other stakeholders to meet the needs of the County.

The year 2005 was extremely busy for Louth Local Authorities. Some of the highlights in 2005 included, strategic planning for the County in line with the National Spatial Strategy and in particular the preparation of the Draft Local Area Plans for the Dundalk South West Sector and Drogheda Northern Environs. Continued infrastructural investment has seen the opening of the Dundalk Western By-pass, commencement of the A1/N1 Newry/Dundalk Link Road, and Port Oriel Pier extension. Further progress was made on housing and water services and broadband provision in the County. Louth Hospitality, with the assistance of the County Tourism Officer, undertook trojan work on the promotion and branding of the County as a tourism destination. A number of advances were made in the quality of life area, through the adoption of the County Arts Plan, support for strengthening Arts Festivals in the County, the development of a County Play Policy and ongoing construction of the new Drogheda Swimming Pool. The County Library Development Plan also provides an ambitious programme to encourage better access to and participation in the library facilities for a changing audience. I would like to compliment the Environment Section and the many individuals, communities, schools and Tidy Towns Groups who worked so hard in 2005 to protect and enhance the environment of the County. The tremendous response to the Green Schools and Schools Environment Programme Spring Clean and the Blue Flag Awards is

heartening and the extent of voluntary effort is to be commended. The appointment of the County's first Heritage Officer in 2005 will assist in the formulation of the County's first Heritage Plan. I also want to thank the Council's emergency services who attended to a number of very difficult and hazardous incidents during 2005.

This is just a snapshot of some of the important work carried out on behalf of the people of Louth and a more detailed analysis is set out in the report itself. In advancing the Council's Work Programme the input of the various Elected Councils has been supportive and co-operative in 2005. I sincerely thank them for their support and leadership. Finally, I want to thank the management and staff of Louth Local Authorities for their hard work and dedication during the year. Without their support it would not be possible to achieve such substantial progress against a general backdrop of rapid change and growing demands.

Martina Moloney
County Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martina Moloney".



Peter Savage



Martin Bellew



Tommy Murphy



Pádraig McKenny

This is the first Annual Report which follows the format of our most recent Corporate Plan 2004–2009, thus providing an ideal opportunity to show the public the work undertaken to achieve the objectives set out in the Plan.

2005 has been another successful year with the opening of the Dundalk Western By-pass, the commencement of work on the A1/N1 Newry/Dundalk Link Road and the introduction of broadband to Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee, all of which assist in making Louth a unique location for investment.

Louth Local Authorities continue to encourage participation in the local democratic process. In the spirit of partnership, we continue to foster a good working relationship between the local authorities and the community, and this can be seen by the increase in participation in the various environmental programmes and the contribution to

policy by our various Strategic and Municipal Policy Committees. It is particularly pleasing also that our Junior Council has developed during the course of 2005 into a very worthwhile and valuable forum in obtaining the views of our young people on the various aspects of our service.

This year has also seen great strides in our bid to provide a better customer service with the adoption of our Customer Charter and Action plan, the introduction of our new Lo-Call number and the various actions undertaken under the Barcelona Declaration to improve access to all our facilities.

We would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our colleagues on the Councils and to the local authority management and staff, all of whom contributed in their own way to the successful year that is outlined in the content of this report.

Peter Savage
Cathaoirleach
Louth County Council

Martin Bellew
Cathaoirleach
Dundalk Town Council

Tommy Murphy
Cathaoirleach
Drogheda Borough Council

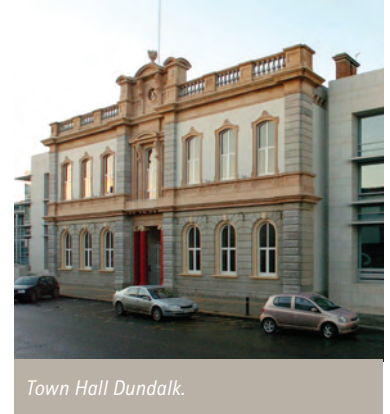
Pádraig McKenny
Cathaoirleach
Ardee Town Council



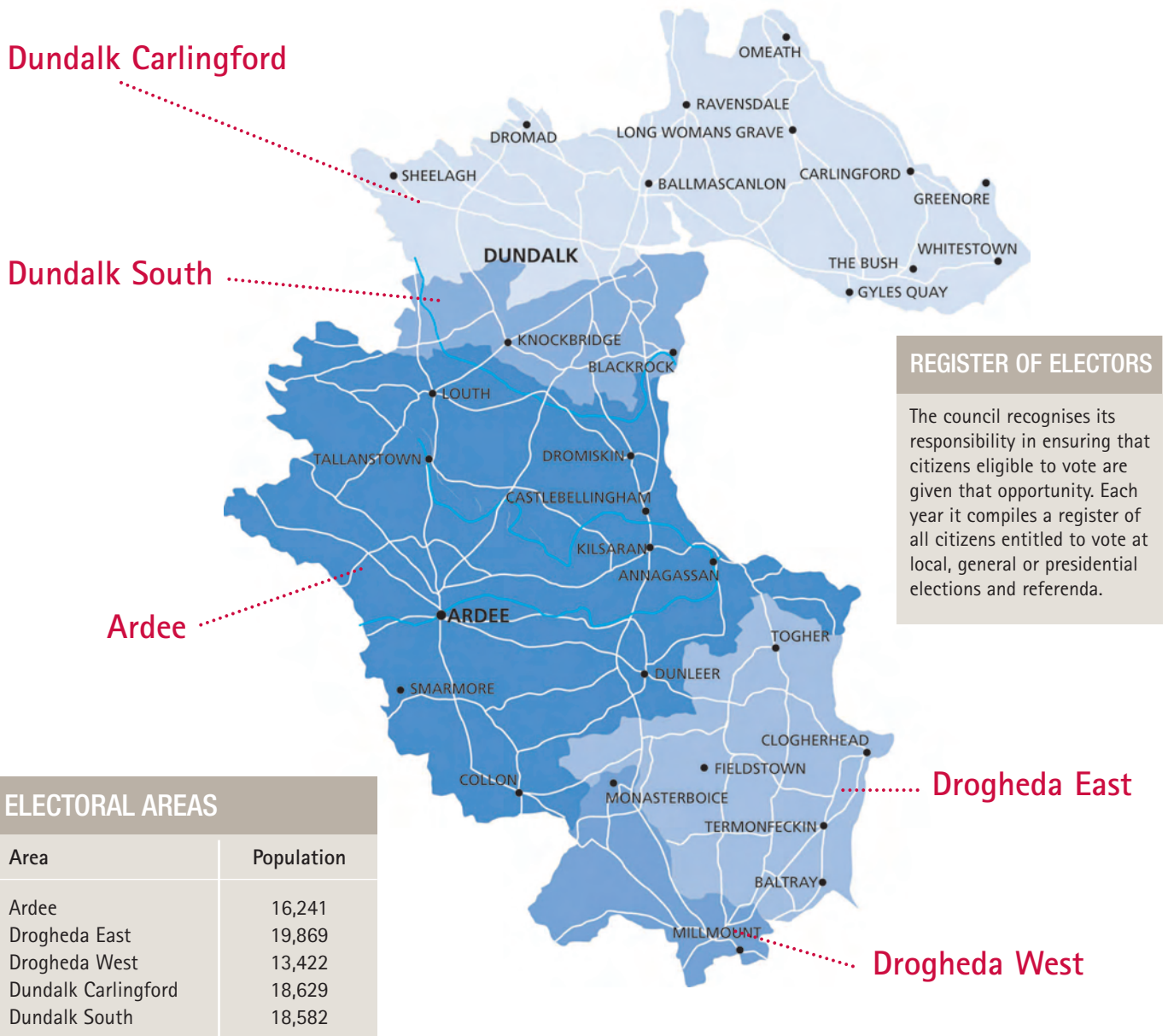
Drogheda Borough Council, Drogheda



County Hall, Millenium Centre, Dundalk.



Town Hall Dundalk.



ELECTORAL AREAS	
Area	Population
Ardee	16,241
Drogheda East	19,869
Drogheda West	13,422
Dundalk Carlingford	18,629
Dundalk South	18,582

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

Martina Moloney – 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

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. Woods – (Financial Accountant)

A. Ward – (County Librarian)

Senior Engineers

R. McKenna – (Housing)

P. Fallon – (Roads & Marine)

D. O'Neill – (Environmental Services)

M. O'Callaghan – (Sanitary Services)

Senior planner

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
Geraldine Murphy



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

M. Moloney County Manager

F. Pentony Town Clerk

C. 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

M. Moloney County Manager

D. Foley Town Clerk

D. Agnew Borough Engineer

Ardee Town Council Members



Fine Gael
Niall Carberry



Sinn Féin
Seamus Gaffney



Progressive Democrats
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

M. Moloney County Manager

F. Reilly Town Clerk

GOAL 1

To Deliver the Best Possible Service to Our Customers and Clients

The delivery of a high quality service is a theme that cuts across all Louth Local Authorities' activities and we strive to meet the diverse and changing needs of our customers.

Customer Charter

Louth Local Authorities are committed to the principles of Quality Customer Service and in 2005 formulated a Customer Charter and Action Plan which sets out our core principles with regard to our Customer service and how we propose to implement these principles and ensure that our customers are dealt with in an efficient and effective manner at all times.



Quality Customer Service.

Identifying the needs of our Customers

Customer Survey

In order to identify what service our customers want, a customer survey was undertaken by Cygnet Market Research, with help from a number of students from DKIT, on behalf of Louth Local Authorities. In total, 500 households in Louth were surveyed and each Electoral Division was included. The survey was based in the three local authority areas in order for comparisons to be drawn. The general findings included:

- Satisfaction with Fire Service
- Louth offers a good quality of life and is accessible
- Almost half of respondents were either unaware or indifferent about local authority services
- Decline in volunteerism/community work
- General satisfaction with customer service provided by local authorities
- Need for the Local Authorities to establish a customer panel in order to communicate with customers

This survey will act as a benchmark for all future customer satisfaction surveys.

Customer complaints/comment system

In an effort to consistently improve the quality of our customer service we have during 2005 updated our complaints/comment system.

Any person who feels that:

- They have been unfairly treated
- A service to which they are entitled to is not been provided
- The level of customer service which was provided was inadequate
- A decision made with regard to them is wrong or did not take into consideration all the facts

Goal 1

- A request for a service/information has been ignored may make a complaint. Complaint/comment forms are available on every public desk and on the web-site, and all complaints/comments are responded to and dealt with as speedily as possible. In 2005, 17 complaints were received.



Complaints/comment form

Freedom of Information

Louth Local Authorities responded to requests under the Freedom of Information Act during the year with a total number of 71 across the four authorities being received in 2005.

Access to Services

Lo-Call number

In February 2005, Louth County Council provided a Lo-call number for accessing all services provided. This new number, 1890 202 303, provides direct access into the main switchboard of Louth County Council headquarters and provides the public with a Lo-call option to access all sections and services of the Council.

Customers and clients who utilise this number can also be re-routed to our two sister Authorities, Dundalk Town Council and Drogheda Borough Council and it is hoped that this will improve services generally for all our customers and clients.



The use of Information Systems to support customer service delivery points

I.T. provides support to the broad range of activities carried out by the local authority but services are also provided directly to the customer

Internet and training

In the libraries, free internet access is provided to the public using Microsoft-based software and desktop terminals. The very same technology also allows a training room to be provided for public use.

Assistive technologies

Local authority public counters are equipped with wireless loops to assist hearing aid wearers to conduct their business easily. In addition, software and hardware are provided via the libraries to assist people who are visually disabled to research the web and use standard office applications.

Websites

Council websites have been redeveloped to ensure they are usable by all customers. The council has ensured that its web sites are W3C and WAI compliant. These standards mean that the web sites are viewable by the maximum number of people

Web sites are also moving towards providing facilities for the customer to look up information such as annual reports, and also carry out a transaction such as submitting a change to the electoral register or making a payment online.

Planning information is also available and the public can now view planning details using maps of the locality.

Map/File No.	Applicant	Description	Decision
06128	MW Developments Ltd	(P) A neighbourhood shopping centre (on the ground floor of a two storey building) comprising 6 retail outlets totalling 1144 sq metres with stand alone open plan offices over, containing 1014 sq	

G-plan- Online Mapping system which allows the viewing of planning applications along with Ordnance Survey Mapping.

Social Inclusion

In 2005, the Social Inclusion Unit focused strongly on customer service and undertook actions to improve service delivery to our customers. It ensured that there was a Social Inclusion element throughout the Customer Services Action Plan as well as developing and analysing various customer surveys to ensure best possible service is provided. To assist changing customer needs, translation of a number of LLA housing documents into three languages was undertaken. In order to help us to

improve access to our buildings and services, an accessibility audit of sixteen LLA buildings was carried out during the year resulting in various works being carried out around the Local Authority buildings to assist persons with a disability. In addition, the Social Inclusion Unit reviewed actions and implemented new initiatives under the Barcelona Declaration Project. Staff of Louth Local Authorities attended Anti-Racism and Diversity training and Sign Language classes which improved the quality of service delivery to our customers.

Barcelona Declaration

The Barcelona Declaration is a European wide project that aims to create an inclusive society. It contains specific goals which relate to all aspects of our lives, including social, environmental and economic issues. The three Louth Local Authorities; Louth County Council, Dundalk Town Council & Drogheda Borough Council, have signed up to this project. An implementation team is in place to oversee actions which improve access to Local Authority buildings and services, promote disability awareness in the workplace and the community, develop policies and equality/disability-proof decision-making processes. This process has been facilitated by the Social Inclusion Unit of Louth Local Authorities.

In 2005 some of the actions carried out in Louth Local Authorities include:

- An Access Audit of 16 buildings
- Purchase of assistive technology for The Learning Centre and optical scanning software for visually impaired for Drogheda Library.
- Installation of loop systems
- Upgrade of lights and crossings, including audio signals and tactile paving in Ardee, Drogheda and Dundalk.
- Upgrade of footpath access at Fairgreen, Ardee and Archives, Dundalk
- Installation of a lift in Ardee Castle
- Installation of playground equipment in Ardee
- Staff training in sign language
- Disability awareness training for staff
- A low level desk in the Motor Tax Office, Dundalk was provided to allow for form filling by Wheelchair users.

Training and Development of Staff

Staff Training & Development

In 2005, a total of €355,000 was allocated to staff training & development in Louth Local Authorities. This accounted for 4.99% of the overall payroll budget which exceeds the National Target of 3%. Staff Training & Development is recognised by Louth Local authorities as a significant and important element in achieving and securing the goals of the local authority.

In 2005, a comprehensive programme of tailored training was rolled out to local authority staff with particular emphasis placed on equipping staff with the necessary skills to provide top quality service. This included training in Customer Care & Personal Development, Disability, Diversity & Equality Training, and tailored training in Customer Care for Outdoor Staff.

The Local Authority promotes and encourages all staff training and development which enables staff to acquire the necessary skills, qualifications, and knowledge to perform effectively the duties and

responsibilities of their posts.

In this regard a number of middle management staff from Louth have commenced a Certificate in Management Development along with a number of other participants from the North East Border Region. As always there is a significant number of staff pursuing the Certificate in Local Government and the Diploma in Local Government. 2005 saw the implementation of the FÁS Apprenticeship Scheme. A total of 7 employees have undertaken an apprenticeship course in conjunction with FAS and are currently successfully completing each phase of the apprenticeship.

2005 also saw the establishment of a Cross Border Local Authority Management Training Programme. four staff members of Louth Local Authorities participated in this unique training programme which proved highly successful with local authority staff from both north and south of the border participating and sharing knowledge and experience. The Training Section has also worked closely with the Partnership Group and the Social Inclusion Unit.



Employees receiving the Higher Certificate in Science & Construction.

Performance Management and Development System

In 2005, Louth Local Authorities commenced the introduction of a Performance Management and Development System designed to improve levels of service to our customers, encourage staff development and make better use of our resources by creating a climate where staff and managers can give of their very best.

Through the development of Team Development Plans, which are informed by the organisation's Operational Plans, organisational objectives are fully communicated to all members of staff. The opportunity of Personal Development Plan conversations with Team



Training on The Performance Management & Development System.

Goal 1

Leaders allows staff the space to discuss departmental tasks, and their individual development to achieve these tasks.

Louth Local Authorities appointed 3 PMDS Facilitators/Trainers from its staff to roll out PMDS consistently across the organisation. A Roll Out Strategy encompassing all aspects needed to embed PMDS in the organisation, such as management, training, resources, monitoring, implementation and communications, was drawn up and adopted by the Senior Management Team and the Partnership Group. A Steering Group has been formed to monitor the implementation of the Strategy.

It was agreed to pilot PMDS initially in two sections in LLAs. The chosen sections were Environment & Enforcement and Finance in Louth County Council. Initial feedback is good with the objective for 2006 to roll out PMDS in all sections of Louth Local Authorities.

Provision of Facilities

Animal welfare, as well as customer service, has been significantly improved with the opening of a state of the art Animal Compound in Dromiskin in September. This new premises represents the best of its type in the country and will serve the County and its citizens well for many years to come. The Compound includes:

- 16 individual kennels, with under-floor heating, each unit sealed for disease control
- 4 large stables
- Large modern reception foyer with separate wardens' office, kitchen, food store and disabled WC
- Vet's office, treatment room and potential operating theatre for neutering dogs
- Walk-in chill room for hygienic storage
- Enclosed yard with vehicle wash area and secure storage of vehicles, horsebox and trailer
- Landscaped grounds with high security fencing and CCTV
- Enclosed, pea-gravel, horse exercise area
- Public picnic area, complete with recycled plastic picnic table.

The project had a degree of sustainability factored in with the provision of a wind turbine to supply some of the electrical needs of the building. The Pound also embraced the latest in information technology, having a wireless broadband link with County Hall and also by putting

the pound 'on-line', which allows the public 24 hour access to view the animals being housed. This will facilitate re-homing and also allow worried dog owners check for lost dogs at any time.

The new Pound also offers an excellent opportunity for the council to showcase environmental issues, from responsible dog ownership to recycling and renewable energy. To date, the Pound has accommodated visits from schools and various community groups.

The overall winners in this project are the dogs with the re-homing rates jumping from 20% to over 60% since it opened. Public visits have rocketed, staff morale is excellent and, with the new improved facilities, incidents of disease have been negligible.



Minister Dick Roche, T.D., at the official opening of the Animal Compound.



Dog meets its new owners.



Animal Compound at Dromiskin.

GOAL 2

To Facilitate Economic Development and Maximize our Strategic Border Location mid-point between Dublin and Belfast

Louth Local Authorities recognise the significance of Louth's unique location and we endeavour to ensure that Louth's strengths as a location for investment in social, economic, environmental, and cultural terms are harnessed and managed effectively through appropriate planning, quality infrastructure, and the promotion of Louth as a quality Tourism destination

Dundalk Gateway

Economic Plan for Dundalk

Dundalk Economic Development Plan was complete in 2005, and is due to be launched early 2006. The Development Priorities for Dundalk are:

1. Improve physical attractiveness of Town Centre
2. Develop selected industrial and internationally-traded services clusters.
3. Reposition Branding of Dundalk as a place to invest, visit, live and work.
4. Develop Dundalk as a key, short-stay tourism market for Greater Dublin and other areas.
5. Invest in human resource capital development
6. Facilitate profitable expansion of retail and distribution sectors
7. Address any outstanding infrastructural needs
8. Implement priority programme to reduce social exclusion.

Dundalk South West Local Area Plan

Work on the preparation of this plan was ongoing during 2005 and the draft document prepared for formal public display. It is anticipated that



Marshes Shopping Centre, Dundalk.

the plan will be adopted in Spring 2006. The plan will facilitate the development of Dundalk as a gateway under the National Spatial Strategy and will provide, when fully implemented, for a population of 20,000

Drogheda as a Primary Development Centre

Drogheda Economic Development Group: Action Plan 2004-2007

The Drogheda Economic Development Group Action Plan was launched in November 2004. The plan builds on the valuable work presented in the Economic and Spatial Development Study of Drogheda and its

Environs which was completed by Peter Bacon and Associates in 2001.

The key economic challenge which Drogheda faces over the coming years is to cater for the anticipated growth of the town in a sustainable way with the range of employment, accommodation, and services which meet the needs of the local population. The Action Plan has been prepared to ensure that Drogheda fulfills this aim.

Actions progressed in 2005:

1. Provision of the Metropolitan Area Network – completed
2. Develop a Traffic Management Plan for the town – completed
3. Prepare an Arts Plan for the county – completed
4. To establish an annual 'Festival' for the town – Build on the Samba Festival and explore opportunities for establishing further festivals
5. Develop a network of playgrounds throughout the town – one playground provided in 2005
6. Develop Civic Amenity Site – ongoing – under construction
7. Improve all approach roads to the town – ongoing
8. Pedestrianise Town Centre – ongoing
9. Upgrade Waste Water Treatment Plant – ongoing
10. Upgrade Water Supply – ongoing
11. Implement a Water Conservation Project in the town – ongoing
12. Review the operation of the weekly market – ongoing
13. Develop the Highlanes Gallery – ongoing
14. Develop open space at Moneymore for passive and active recreation – ongoing
15. To facilitate the effective provision of decentralization in Drogheda – ongoing
16. Advance the Greater Drogheda Area Planning Strategy – ongoing

Planning strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area

Work on this study, which is a joint venture by Louth County Council, Drogheda Borough Council and Meath County Council, was ongoing during 2005, and will be completed in the first half of 2006. It will provide a strategic framework for the development of Drogheda for the period 2004 to 2024, and will provide for a population within that period of 50,000 to 60,000, in line with the targets set down in the Regional Planning Guidelines.

Masterplan for the Northern Environ 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 the Northern Environs of Drogheda, with a population of 20,000 within the next 20 years. This Local Area Plan forms the basis of the Master Plan for the area currently in preparation. To give this Master Plan legal effect, it was decided to adopt it as a variation of the Local Area Plan.

A team led by Stephen Ward Planning Consultants, after conducting a pre-draft public consultation in the spring of 2005 and further significant consultation with landowners in the plan area of the Drogheda Northern Environs, completed a draft Master Plan which was approved by the December 2005 meeting of Louth County Council to be brought to the public consultation phase of the adoption process. This public consultation on the draft masterplan will be completed in the first quarter of 2006.



Scotch Hall, Drogheda.

Town and Village Development

Urban & 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 provide 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.

Category 1 Development Centres

The Baltray/Termonfeckin Local Area Plan was amended during 2005 to include a review within the plan area of the phasing of residential development on certain zoned lands zoning requirements in the town centre to reduce the emphasis on apartments and masterplanning requirements.

The Improvement of Infrastructure in the County

Dundalk Western Bypass

In 2005, the major road infrastructure programme included the opening to traffic of the 11km Public Private Partnership, Dundalk Western Bypass part of the Trans European Network (Tens) Euro Route 1 by the Minister of Transport, Mr. Martin Cullen TD. Completed ahead of schedule, the DWB now carries an average daily volume of approximately 24,000 vehicles. The real winners since it's opening, have been the motorists using the motorway, but the residents of Dundalk the Gateway are also enjoying a through traffic-free town with increased opportunities to access the motorway and improved journey times to Dublin and Belfast.

A1/N1 Newry /Dundalk Link Road

The contract for the final stretch of the Trans European Network through County Louth – the A1/N1 Newry / Dundalk Link Road, was awarded to the consortium of Siac/Ferrovial. Groundworks are progressing on this joint cross border project which is expected to be completed in early 2008.

Delays encountered by traffic using the N1 are at a minimum

following agreement on a traffic management plan by Council staff and the contractor. A number of land and house purchases necessary for the road project were effective in the year with the balanced expected to be completed when accommodation works are agreed.

R173 Improvement Scheme

On 8th June 2005, the chairman Cllr. Terry Brennan opened the 3.1km Rockmarshall Section of the R173 Improvement Scheme at a cost of €4.6m. This is the final phase of the scheme which has also seen improvements at Bellurgan, Bush, and more recently, Rampark. The road is an important Regional route serving many of the Cooley Peninsula's favourite tourist attractions including Carlingford, Omeath and the Cooley Mountains. The Heavy Goods Vehicle traffic servicing the deep sea port at Greenore are among the many other users which have benefited for the scheme. Regional Road bye-laws were adopted by Council reinstating the speed limit on the road where appropriate to 100 kph such is the quality of the road design and standard of construction.

County wide Major works

Major reconstruction and realignment, together with the installation of Public Lighting and footpaths, were carried out at Wallace's Road, Blackrock and Tierney Street Ardee. Substantial works were also carried out on the N52 (Kells Road) in Ardee.

Other projects which were advanced in the year include, R178



Official opening of the R173 Improvement Scheme.



Official Opening of the Dundalk Western By-pass.



Dundalk Western By-pass open to traffic.



Aerial photo of Rockmarshall region.

Dundalk to Carrickmacross Road (Red Bog Section), R177 Armagh Road at Kilcurry, and design works for the Station Road, Castlebellingham are advancing well. In Blackrock the contractor commenced work on Main Street, works which will continue into 2006.

Road Infrastructure – Dundalk

- Bothar an Iarainn (St. Alphonsus Road to Avenue Road). These works were completed as part of an agreement between Dundalk Town Council and Calderford Property Trading Ltd who are developing the Marshes Shopping Centre. This project was completed and the road opened in 2005.
- Inner Relief Road, Re-construction of the Armagh Road.
- Funding was secured to reconstruct a section of the Armagh Road.



Blackrock Main Street improvements.

Road Infrastructure – Drogheda

- West Street Environmental Improvement Scheme – Contract documents complete and tendering procedure commenced.
- Termonfeckin/Newtown Link Road – Tendering process completed with tenders received end 2005, for works to progress in 2006.
- Byranstown Cross Route – Byranstown Cross Route linking Dublin Road to Blackbush Lane and Beymore Road, works ongoing for completion in 2006.

Significant Improvement Works – County Road Network

As part of the Annual Road works programme, significant improvement works were carried out at various locations on the County road network which included restructuring, resurfacing and drainage works.

Other road improvement initiatives were carried out under the Local Contribution Scheme, The Local Improvement Scheme, the Clar and Interreg Programmes.

Funding for Village and Countryside improvement was provided for projects in Carlingford, Greenore and Omeath, in partnership with Leader.

Improvement works – Drogheda

Works were completed at the R132 & Rosehall Junction, Collon Road, R166 Cross-lanes, Rathmullen Road, Windmill Road, Laurence Street/Palace Street Junction, Thomas Street/Chord Road Junction, Ascal a hAon (LT91664), Yellowbatter and Laurences Park.

Urban and Village Renewal Scheme

A total of €453,449 was spent on Urban and Village Renewal Scheme Projects in 2005. Projects were completed in Dromiskin, Greenore and Kilcurley. The schemes included the installation and upgrading of public footpaths, installation of decorative public lighting and soft landscaping. Other key features included:

Dromiskin

- An artistic feature depicting a sunken Viking Ship
- Erection of interpretative panels
- Restoration of village pump

Greenore

- Victorian style public lighting erected.
- Under grounding of power cables.

Kilcurley

- Granite stone signage on all approach roads.
- Block walls stone faced & seating provided.

Interreg Projects

Funding was secured under the Interreg programme for a cross border initiative by Louth County Council and Newry and Mourne District Council. The County Louth element of the project will include the erection of visitor information panels at appropriate locations along



Roundabout at Bothar an Iarainn.



Urban & Village Renewal, Dromiskin.

Carlingford Lough. The project, which will roll out over a three year period, will see improvement works at Omeath Pier, Greens Quay and Carlingford Harbour.

Marine Projects

Funding for a major redevelopment and upgrade of Port Oriel was secured from the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. The contractor commenced work in March and the project is expected to be completed in late 2006. This project has an overall estimated cost of €11.2 M of which Louth County Council will match fund.

The scheme of works will include:

- 105 metre extension to the pier
- The widening of the existing pier
- Deepening of the Harbour basin
- Provision of pier service
- Construction of sea defence with concrete armour units

Coastal Protection

Works, as identified in the Councils' programme of Coastal protection works, continued to be carried out in 2005. This programme is subject to funding from the Department of Communication Marine and Natural Resources. Consultants were appointed to commence a study on the dunes at Port Oriel with a view to recommending protection measures that might be implemented to protect the ever-diminishing dune feature.

Water Services

Water supply

Louth County Council Water Services Section managed the distribution of some five million cubic metres of water in the county area in 2005. Tests carried out on the water by the Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of Louth County Council showed a return of 98% compliance with international standards for drinking water.

Drogheda Borough Council continues to carry out water repairs, minor improvements and connections to public mains throughout the water distribution network as required. Drogheda Borough Council also continues to monitor and test the quality of the public drinking water supply.

The implications of the National Water Pricing Policy continued to impact on the work and role of the section in 2005. The installation of meter boxes at all non-domestic users premises was well advanced and a contract was confirmed for the supply of meters and automatic meter reading (AMR) devices which will be installed in 2006.

County Water Conservation Project

An in-house Water Conservation project team supported by consultants has been put in place. Work has commenced on modelling the water network and confirming District Metering Areas (DMAs). These DMAs will be used to monitor and gain an understanding of water use patterns in particular areas. This information will aid the identification of water losses for active leakage control teams that will be established as the project rolls out over the next eighteen months. Drogheda Borough Council has commenced enabling works in the setting up of District

Metered Areas (DMAs) in the southside of the distribution network.

Capital Schemes

Tullyallen Sewerage Scheme

The scheme was completed and was commissioned in the final quarter of 2005, and provides for a capacity of 1500pe.

Drogheda Waste Water Treatment Plant Extension

The successful tender was confirmed and contractor and site staff were appointed. Construction work is underway with an expected completion date of early 2007.

Ardee Sewerage Scheme

Consultants were appointed and work on the preliminary report has commenced. Subject to approval of the report and confirmation of funding, work will commence in 2007.

Mid Louth Regional Water Supply Scheme

The preliminary report on the scheme was completed and final in-house technical appraisal of same was drafted in order for a Submission to be made to the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government.

Rural Water Programme

A total expenditure of €467,772.60 was incurred in improving water services infrastructure under the Rural Water Programme. Works under the programme included water source protection measures, extension to



Tullyallen Sewerage Works.



Drogheda Sewage Treatment plant.

water mains and supplies, replacement of lead piping, Telemetry controls, and modeling of Sewage schemes.

Group Schemes

The important role local Group Water Schemes play as part of the overall County Water Service infrastructure is evident in that a sum of €225,179.23 was made available by way of Grant assistance. Schemes that availed of the funding for upgrading of facilities included:

- Mountain Park, Dunmahon, Ardagh, Tinure,
- Grangebellew, Ballymakenny (Stage 3) ,Sheepgrange. The new facility of Marmions Cross was also funded as part of the scheme.

Group Schemes at Dunmahon and Cookstown were taken in charge by the Council in 2005. Another five schemes received subsidies totalling €100,835.85 towards the operational cost of their group schemes and 39 applicants were paid grants totalling €70,312.88 under the scheme for the provision or necessary improvement of an individual water supply to a house.

Water Quality Testing

A total number of 287 water tests were carried out by the EPA on behalf of Louth County Council (248 public water supplies and 39 group water schemes) during 2005. The tests on the public water supplies were on average 98% compliant and tests on the group water schemes were 81% compliant.

Broadband Infrastructure

The physical infrastructure to facilitate the installation of the Municipal Area Networks (MANS) Broadband was completed in Dundalk and Drogheda. This facility was made available to e-net teoranta who will manage the provision of the Broadband service. Application for a similar infrastructure network for Ardee was compiled and submitted to the Department of Communication, Marine and Natural Resources for approval

Louth – A Quality Tourism Destination

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 the wealth of heritage and myths associated with the county, excellent location, blue flag beaches and scenic coastline, Louth has the potential to be a premier tourism destination.

During 2005, Louth Hospitality attended a number of holiday fairs and trade shows in Ireland, the UK and Belgium; produced a new look county guide profiling Louth and its attractions, as well as advertising the county in a wide range of Failte Ireland publications. Marketing activities are funded by the Louth County Council Peace II Task Force and have included a re-branding of Drogheda with associated guides and website development, Heritage trails in Drogheda and Ardee, and an interactive photographic cd-rom. With regard to product development, the Tourism Officer in involved in the East Border Region Tourism programme with investment being channelled into festivals, visitor attractions and the development of the Táin Way route.

Film Commission

The Louth, Newry & Mourne Film Commission was established in 2005 as a joint venture between Louth County Council and Newry & Mourne District Council. It is an Interreg IIIA – funded scheme, designed to encourage filmmaking in the region, thereby raising the profile of the area, providing work and experience for locals, and promoting cross-border co-operation.

Mairtin de Barra was appointed Director of the Film Commission in March 2005. Mairtin has a background in Film & Television production and Communications. Some of the more immediate priorities were to establish a brand image for the Commission and raise its profile. Through a marketing campaign focussed on industry decision-makers at home and abroad, this has been achieved. The Louth, Newry & Mourne Film Commission also became the first Irish regional film commission to fulfil the criteria to join the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI).

Over the course of 2005, the number of projects being filmed in the region grew steadily, and by the time the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dermot Ahern, TD, officially launched the Commission in November, almost 50 enquiries had been dealt with, and a number of these had filmed in the area.



Launch of Louth, Newry & Mourne Film Commission.



German Crew filming in Louth.

GOAL 3

To Improve the quality of life for residents now and for future generations.

The growing importance of quality of life issues in Louth is recognised by Louth Local Authorities and we continue to strive to:

- Ensure that all citizens can enjoy an adequate standard of housing accommodation appropriate to their needs
- Enhance participation and improve standards in the cultural and sporting life of the community
- Make Louth a clean attractive county
- Provide an effective Emergency Service

Housing Programme

Housing Needs Assessment

The statutory 3 year Assessment of Housing Need was carried out in March 2005, which resulted in an approved waiting list of over 1,600 applicants. The continuing trend towards smaller family units was evident from the assessment figures with increasing numbers of single person households pointing to a need to include higher ratios of smaller two bedroom units in planning our new schemes.

Social Housing Construction

Further progress was achieved in meeting the targets set out in the Five Year Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing 2004-2008. New social housing schemes were completed at Castlebellingham (9), Termonfeckin (28), Sean O'Carroll Street, Ardee (26), Laurence's Drive, Drogheda (22) and Farndreg, Dundalk (88), while further schemes were commenced at Termonfeckin (30), Blackrock (25), Louth Village (32),



Cutting the sod for Blackrock Housing Scheme.



Termonfeckin Housing.

Mayfield (6), Gort Uaine, Clogherhead (27), Moneymore (2), St. Finian's Park (4 OPDs) and Mullaharlin Road (110).

Planning was further advanced on social schemes at Greenore Road, Carlingford (55), Back Lane, Carlingford (2), Oriel Road, Collon (19), Termonfeckin Road (76), Tredagh View (79) and Lios Dubh (68).

Affordable Housing and Private Sites

8 affordable houses were completed at the end of the year at Sean O'Carroll Street, Ardee while work commenced on 6 such units at Blackrock and 15 at Gort Uaine, Clogherhead. In addition, work commenced on 5 affordable sites at Blackrock and 7 sites at Clogherhead. By December planning was well advanced on 12 affordable houses and 5 sites at Carlingford, 10 affordable houses and 4 sites at Collon, 24 affordable houses at Termonfeckin Road, 16 affordable houses at Tredagh View and 20 affordable houses at Lios Dubh.

Under Part V of the Planning and Development Act a number of affordable houses were delivered in Ardee and Dundalk and negotiations initiated with quite a number of developers on plans for delivery of further such units in 2006 and beyond.

A review of the housing strategy was undertaken towards the end of the year.

Maintenance and Improvement of Housing Stock

The Councils continued to maintain their housing stock of over 2,000 dwellings throughout the year. More extensive expenditure was incurred on renovating and refurbishing a number of vacant houses in order to



Before and after house refurbishment.

bring them more in line with current standards prior to re-letting.

During the year extensive surveys of the rented housing stock were commenced in order to inform a programme of planned maintenance.

The programme for installation of central heating and improved insulation in our rented stock continued through 2005. In the county area Phase 2 of the OPD stock was completed and contracts were being finalised for the final phase of the OPD stock, together with the first phase of the general housing stock, consisting of approximately 60 dwellings. 70 dwellings were provided with gas central heating in Drogheda and in Dundalk a contract was awarded for Phase 4 consisting of 191 houses. It is intended that all our rented stock will have central heating before the Government deadline of 2008.

Voluntary Housing

The Councils continued to encourage and facilitate involvement by the voluntary housing sector in meeting a share of overall social housing need and to this end proposals were advanced on planning for schemes at Tierney Street, Ardee (Oaklee – 39 social units), Lavin Park, Tullyallen (North and East – 10 social units), Oriel Road, Collon (Clúid – 19 social units), Termonfeckin Road (30 units), Tredagh View (31 units) and Lios Dubh (50 units). In addition a scheme of 69 dwellings at Tom Bellew Avenue was completed. These schemes will be built on land either provided directly by the local authority or the funding for the purchase of which was facilitated by the local authority.

Traveller Accommodation

The councils continued to co-ordinate the functioning of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee which met on 3 occasions throughout 2005 and which oversaw the adoption of a new four year Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005-2008. A number of traveller families were accommodated in a temporary halting site at Killineer while arrangements were being made to identify a suitable location for a permanent transient site in the county area as required under the Programme. Overall targets for traveller accommodation as set out in the Accommodation Programme were exceeded in 2005.

Homelessness

Louth County Council continued to co-ordinate the functioning of the County Louth Forum on Homelessness which met on 4 occasions during the year. The local authorities continued to make a significant contribution towards addressing the homelessness issue through provision of B & B accommodation, financial subventions to the voluntary bodies and direct provision of social housing. Planning permission was obtained for a new hostel for homeless women in Drogheda with work due to start in mid 2006. The existing hostels in Dundalk and Drogheda continued to provide a valuable service to homeless persons throughout the year.

Rental Accommodation Scheme (R.A.S.)

Significant steps were taken during the year to facilitate the introduction of the Rental Accommodation Scheme (R.A.S.) whereby the local authorities will progressively take over the housing needs of rent supplement recipients with a long term housing need through the procurement of accommodation from the private rented sector. A R.A.S.

co-ordinator was appointed for county Louth as well as an Assistant Programme Manager for counties Louth, Meath and Monaghan. Drogheda was designated as one of the pilot areas for this scheme and significant progress was made throughout the year, in co-operation with the Supplementary Welfare Officers of the Health Service Executive in identifying suitable tenancies for transfer over to R.A.S.

Remedial Works Scheme

Work continued on the Remedial Works Scheme at St. Finian's Park, Drogheda with Phase 2 of the programme (43 houses) completed in October 2005, bringing to 82 the total done to date. This work mainly consists of replacement of wall cladding with conventional blockwork construction, double glazed doors and windows and gas central heating together with environmental works in the estate consisting of new walls, landscaping, planting and public lighting. A contract for Phase 3 (50 units) was awarded before years end.

Two major remedial works schemes were initiated in Muirhevna Mór and Coxes Demense, Dundalk which will see a comprehensive regeneration of these two large estates. A Project Manager, Tenant Liaison Officer and two firms of consultants were appointed in order to get the schemes up and running.

Loans, Grants and Subsidies

While a moderate level of activity took place under the heading of loans and subsidies, there was a significant upsurge in the numbers of applications for Disabled Persons Grants and Essential Repairs Grants.

Applications for D.P.G.'s in 2005 totalled 291, an increase of almost 50% over the figure for 2004. Grant approvals for the year came to 196 at a value of €2.4 million and grant payments totalled 117 at a value of €1.4 million.

Applications for Essential Repair Grants increased from 13 in 2004 to 44 in 2005. 29 approvals were issued in the year at a value of €198,299 and 11 grants paid totalling €78,002.

Rents and Sales Schemes

Our Housing Rents Scheme was revised with effect from April 2005 and all tenants had their rents reviewed to take account of up to date income and other household circumstances. Average weekly rent amounted to €42.20.

Estate Management and Tenant Participation

A new Tenant Liaison Officer was recruited during the year and further progress was made in extending the tenant participation initiatives into the Council's housing estates. The pilot project in Ferdia Park, Ardee was advanced still further culminating in the allocation of a vacant dwellinghouse in the estate to the local residents committee for use as a community house. This will enable a wide range of community services to be delivered locally on the estate by the residents themselves.

A revised version of the policy document on Tenant Participation was adopted by the S.P.C. and the Council during the year.



Opening of Drogheda Arts Festival.



Making music workshop, ArtQuake, Dundalk.

Arts Recreations and Museum

Arts

The strategic, county-wide approach to the development of the Arts in Louth gathered momentum in 2005, with a number of initiatives taking place. The first-ever Arts Plan for Louth was adopted by Louth County Council, Drogheda Borough Council, and Dundalk Town Council. This shared vision will inform and direct local authority support for the arts, and will reinforce partnerships between the public, artists, and state agencies.



Performance at Drogheda Arts Festival.



Drogheda Arts Festival.



Announcement of National Skateboard grant allocation, Nov 2005.



Dance Artist in Residence.

One of the key objectives of the Arts Plan is the development of the arts festival programme in Louth. Since 2004, a number of festivals have been initiated by Louth Local Authorities in response to perceived geographical and sectoral weaknesses. In 2005, these included Drogheda Arts Festival, Moonreel Film Week, and Ardee Baroque, which complemented existing arts festivals such as the Dundalk International Maytime Drama Festival, County Louth Fleadh, Táin Rhythm and Roots, Drogheda Traditional Week, Ceol Chairlinn, Feis Dhun Dealgan, Drogheda Samba Festival and Feile Uí Mheith, all of which were supported by Louth Local Authorities.

Two new Artist in Residence initiatives began in 2005. Film-maker Dara McCluskey and Dance Artist Mairead Vaughan worked closely with schools, young people and community groups in Dundalk and Drogheda respectively. Residencies are an important way of bringing artists and arts practice to groups who may not usually come into contact with painters, writers, and creative artists of all types. Experiences and techniques are passed on and shared, and the process is an enriching one for both the artist and the host-community.

The Arts Service continues to expand its role in the areas of Information and Advice, Funding, Artistic Programming, and Community Projects, working in conjunction with other Agencies, both local and national, in creating opportunities through the arts for individual and community development.

Sports/Recreation & Play

The County Sports, Leisure and Recreation Strategy was developed, Leisure consultants, Ms. Holohan Leisure, commissioned by Louth Co. Council early in 2005 to assist in preparation a County Sport, Recreation and Leisure strategy, completed the public consultation phase and substantial research on the County's existing facilities. The strategy, being developed through the Corporate Services SPC, will establish priorities for Louth Local Authorities in utilizing resources to best advantage to meet targets set in the CDB 10 year strategy in these areas. It will go before Councils for discussion and adoption early in 2006.

Development of County Play Policy

A County Play Policy / Play Action Plan was adopted by Louth County Council in December. The Co. Sports and Recreation Officer, Noel Redmond has been designated as the Play Officer for Louth Local Authorities and implementation of the Play Action Plan will be monitored by the Corporate services SPC. Grants towards the provision of playground equipment at a proposed Playground at Clogherhead and for a skateboard park in Dundalk were secured by LCC during the year. Work on the development of two further playgrounds commenced in Dundalk and LCC continued its efforts to identify sites for further public playgrounds at specific locations (Collon, Blackrock, Tallanstown and Tinure).

Louth Sports Partnership

Contacts were established with Co-ordinating officers in Meath and Fingal LSPs during 2005 with a view to re-activating the Louth Working Group on publication of the Departments Report on Review of LSPs carried out in latter part of the year.

Sports Development

- A Grant scheme to assist with the cost of attending or running accredited training courses to provide new/better qualified coaches for sports in Co. Louth was developed/approved and will be introduced in 2006
- Links and partnership projects with the Area Physical Activity Co-ordinator and Cardiac Strategy Facilitator in HSE were initiated.
- A joint application for Grant assistance under Peace 11 Programme towards the employment of a Minority Sports Development Officer was prepared/submitted by Louth County and Newry and Mourne



Playground at Drogheda.

District Councils. It is proposed, subject to securing funding, to have such an officer in place by mid 2006.

- LCC worked with the Irish volleyball Association and Badminton Union of Ireland on developing initiatives for delivery to schools in 2006 and participated in Joint Skateboard Taskforce established by Newry and Mourne D.C.
- An information seminar on the 2006 Sports Capital programme organized by LCC in December attracted representatives from 35 different sporting/community groups and schools.
- Initial meetings were held with the Slí na Sláinte national Co-ordinator and representatives from Blackrock Tidy Towns Committee to identify new Slí routes in the area.

Drogheda Swimming Pool

Works commenced on the construction of Drogheda Swimming Pool in October 2004 and was ongoing throughout in 2005. It is envisaged that the facility will open in June 2006. The development will consist of a new swimming pool and leisure complex of total floor area approximately 2350m² including the floor, pool hall with 25m 5 lane pool, learner pool and toddler pool. The pool also includes spectator seating. Also included is a health spa and sauna as well as a fitness suite with gym and aerobics studio.

Dundalk Sports Centre

As the only public sports hall available on a seven-day week basis throughout the year, Dundalk Sports Centre continued to be well used by clubs and social sports groups throughout 2005. Whilst indoor football, badminton and basketball are still the most played sports, the Centre also caters for a variety of other sports/activities including archery, martial arts, indoor bowls, tennis, table tennis, uni-hoc and increasingly children's parties.

The Centre expanded its programme of children's activities in 2005 and the addition of activities camps during the February mid-term, Easter and the October mid-term proved hugely popular in addition to the Summer Activities Programme which ran during the months of July and August. Tennis, Basketball, Badminton, and our popular Sports and Activities camps were all formed part of the Summer programme.

October saw the launch of our After-Schools Activities programme catering for children from 6 to 12 years of age. The programme runs every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 3pm to 5pm on a pay as



Work in progress – Drogheda Swimming Pool.

you go basis. The activities are fully supervised and include soccer, basketball, multi-sports, uni-hoc, dodgeball and badminton. So successful has the programme been that it has been extended indefinitely.

The Centre also expanded its range of activities for children with learning and physical disabilities and the number of special needs camps run by the Centre in conjunction with Louth Disability Services doubled in 2005.

2005 also saw the Sports Centre develop on its Outreach Programmes. The success of the Outreach programme run in conjunction with the Redeemer Community Centre in September saw up to 50 local children participating in a range of supervised sports, free of charge, on a daily basis.

The centre continues to provide all activities and facilities at a reasonable cost.

Library

Louth County Library Service Development Plan 2004-2009 was formally adopted by Louth County Council on April 18th, 2005. The plan came about from a targeted consultation phase utilising both staff and users of the facilities. Contributions to the plan were made by the community fora and public consultation was carried out in the branches by survey and draft document feedback.

The development plan is centered around a number of themes, as follows:

1. Encouraging access and participation
2. Improving the range and quality of stock
3. Providing appropriate infrastructure
4. Enhancing promotional activities
5. The library as a centre for Arts, Culture and Heritage
6. Enhancing services to children and young people
7. The library as a centre for learning and information
8. Investing in library staff

A review was taken of the Mobile Library stops in April and two new stops in local authority housing estates in Toberona, Dundalk and Ferdia Park, Ardee were added to the rota in May, and time schedules were modified accordingly.

An access audit was undertaken of all library buildings and vehicles.

There was continued co-operation with DKIT Library regarding inter-library loans. The Borrow Books service was set up by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna to provide a countrywide service of inter-library loans where library borrowers can access the holdings of all Irish public libraries online. It has been in full operation since November 2005 and has greatly increased the volume of inter-library loans in the county. A collection of fiction in various languages such as French, Czech, Lithuanian, Latvian and Polish was added to our lending material, thus endeavouring to meet the needs of the ethnic minorities. The purchase of a new schools library van was approved and will be operational in 2006.

Improvement in the IT network in all branches involved BIPreach connection installed in HQ for network upgrade. This completed the project for Dundalk Town Council and the Library. The Drogheda upgrade followed and is completed.

The main library branches were used as venues for exhibitions including the Artisans Art Group; Professional Photographers Association Annual Exhibition; Science Week Roadshow under the aegis of the Department of Education Independent Newspapers Century of Photographs; Drogheda Photo Club annual exhibition including a display of cameras old & new. Events were held in all library branches to promote festivals such as Children's Book Festival, Library Week, World Book Day, Seachtaine Na Gaeilge, Bealtaine etc.

Class visits continue to be provided for pre-school, primary and secondary schools both urban and rural, further promoting the various services provided.

Two adult book-clubs are active in Dundalk library facilitated by library staff and material is provided for a third book-club run in association with Ardee Library. All books are supplied by the library service. This initiative helps both to encourage and promote reading, and also promotes the library as a centre for arts and culture. When the books are read they are displayed in the branch for general use and members of the book-clubs are encouraged to write reviews of recent reading material.



Musical Stories with Toby Kinsella in Drogheda Library.

Classes in creative writing were held from June to December 2005 in Dundalk, Drogheda, Ardee and Carlingford libraries and proved very popular. The computerisation of non-Catholic church records from microfilm onto an Access database continues in Dundalk Library. This project is overseen by Irish Genealogy Ltd. As the library already holds the Catholic church records for Louth pre-1900, the completion of this project will further enhance the genealogy service provided.

There are two children's book-clubs in Dundalk Library for children aged 9-12 and they meet on a monthly basis. A children's charter was compiled for the library service in Louth County Library.

Activities such as storytelling, author visits, arts & crafts etc, took place in all branches throughout the year particularly during the summer and to coincide with the Children's Book Festival. Visiting authors and entertainers included Oisín McGann author and illustrator, Toby Kinsella, bilingual musical storyteller, Gemini the Magician and Olwyn Whelan, an illustrator.



Illustrators workshop with Olwyn Whelan at Drogheda Library.

The Learning Centre continued to expand its interests by targeting specific groups with details of the Lifesteps programme, an initiative, managed by the Library Council and funded by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The programme consists of 17 guides ranging from 'Using the Internet' to 'Buying a Home'. Among the groups using Lifesteps are National Learning Network, V.E.C. and FAS. Computer packages available in the Learning Centre include MS Word, MS Access and MS Powerpoint, in addition to a wide range of other software for individual use.

There was continued co-operation with groups such as FAS, VEC, NTDI, REHAB, by providing library tours and specific courses in Learning Centre.

Library staff attended various training courses throughout the year such as Challenging Behaviour; Disability Awareness; Safety Representative training and Supervisory Skills. Some members of staff developed their ability to carry out the service in Irish by attending regular ranganna Gaeilge.

Museum

A museum is arguably best described as an institution that collects, conserves and communicates. By examining the artefactual remains of its collection the Museum provides the basis to examine the historical development of society highlighting those areas where improvement can be made to benefit future generations. 2005 witnessed a great deal of variety in the nature of the events organised at the Museum. It saw the rich diversity of Irish life examined from a series of different vantage points ranging from architecture and literature to cultural pursuits and religious affairs.

Events

If anything the month of January typified the sheer breadth of the Irish historiographical experience via two exhibitions and a series of evening talks. The month began with the by now annual display from the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland (RIAI) and their exhibition of award-winning designs for 2004. The Museum also hosted an art exhibition to mark the International Holocaust Day and the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz Concentration Camp. To coincide with this two seminal lectures were given looking at the nature and extent of Irish-Jewish relations not only in the early 20th Century but also up to the present day, both of which provided for a great deal of debate and discussion in the questions-and-answers session which followed.

The diversity which characterised events in January continued throughout the year. Seachtain na Gaeilge in March celebrated the richness of Irish culture in dance and literature through a mixture of the mythical, the magical and the literal through lectures and reading on the Táin, the translation of the first Harry Potter book to Irish and the poetry of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill. Indeed St. Patrick's Day was a veritable riot of colour with a display by Mona Roddy's School of Dancing complementing a storyreading session based on the writings of Neal McEaney. April saw the opening of The Battles Beyond the Boyne Exhibition, organised by students from the DKIT. The exhibition provided a fascinating insight into the Orange Order. Made up of three distinct parts – an exhibition of banners, a photographic display and an exhibition that looked at Orangemen in conflicts other than that in 1690. The exhibition revealed much about the nature and philosophy of Orangeism and indeed revealed that a lodge once existed in Dundalk in the late 19th Century. Other events held in the Museum included a photographic exhibition of musicians in performance coinciding with the Rhythm and Roots festival in October as well as an art exhibition inspired by the story of the Táin itself.

Education Project

Perhaps the most significant event to occur over the course of the year was the successful application to Co-operation Ireland to fund the Joint Education Project run between the County Museum and the Newry & Mourne Museum. For the past number of years we have been exceptionally fortunate to be able to run an outreach programme for schools and community groups via funding from the Dundalk Town Council, Newry & Mourne District Council and Co-operation Ireland. The successful application will see the continued development of this project in terms of its involvement not only in terms of its traditional



Performance of "The Big House" organised by the Education Project.

stakeholders with respect to its outreach imperative but also with regard to the overarching aim of making the Museum concept relevant to the public through the organisation of specifically tailored and targeted activities for groups of all ages.

Collection

It is via the Museum's collection that activities such as the Education Project can operate and again 2005 saw a broad range of items deposited with the Museum. In essence these items point to the varied historical experience of Louth's inhabitants, these included two dietary sheets from the Ardee Workhouse, a theodolite belonging to James Barton (who was involved in the construction of the Boyne viaduct), a wooden washing machine from the early 20th and a Tobacco press from one of P.J. Carroll's subsidiaries. In addition to these items the completion of the Education Programme's Cross-Border Oral History Project sees a significant enhancement of the Museum's collection not only for the present generation in understanding and appreciating the importance of history but for future generations to come.

In essence then the Museum looks to 2006 with great confidence building on the developments of the year just gone. The growth of the collection through donations from the public, the continued interest for the Museum's activities and events, and the support for the Education Project bode well for the year ahead. We look forward to developing our activities for all our stakeholders throughout 2006.

Environmental Protection and Waste Management

Waste Management

A major Review of the North East Waste Management Plan was substantially complete by the end of the year. Louth County Council participated in a meaningful public consultation process which included information sessions in Libraries, public buildings, Credit Union offices and supermarkets throughout the county. The Replacement Plan sets out the Waste Management Policy for the North East Region for the period 2005-2010 and provides for an integrated waste management solution.

The appointment of an Environment Awareness Officer in January provided greater focus for the county's waste awareness/education

programme with contact established and maintained with the commercial and industrial sector in relation to the Race Against Waste.

Landfill

The opening of new Cells in Whiteriver Landfill Site was substantially complete by the end of the year and a new public tipping area was provided to facilitate enhanced disposal facilities for members of the public using the facility. The site was managed to a high environmental standard during the year in accordance with EPA Licence conditions.

Recycling Centres

The proposed new recycling centre in Drogheda progressed well during the year with completion and official opening expected in early summer 2006 while the well established recycling centre in Dundalk went from strength to strength during the course of 2005.

Enforcement

The very active waste enforcement team enjoyed high profile success during the year. A number of road check points were held to monitor compliance with Waste Permits/Licences. Waste audits of permitted facilities were undertaken and compliance with packaging and WEEE Regulations were monitored. A number of companies ended up-in Court due to non-compliance with the required regulations. The on going investigation of waste and litter complaints was, and continues to be, a high priority.

Fifteen new Waste Permits were issued during the year and at the end of December a total of 152 businesses in the County were registered with

Repak in compliance with the Waste Management Packaging Regulations. Three firms registered with Louth County Council under the Self Compliance Scheme.

Litter Management

A review of the Litter Management Plan commenced during the year with the key objectives of enforcement, education, awareness and monitoring receiving great emphasis at all stages throughout the consultation for the Review. Litter Enforcement improved during the year with a total of 1222 on the spot fines issued and 78 prosecutions secured. A series of awareness/education activities were undertaken focusing particularly on schools but also including advertisements and promotions aimed at the general public.

Louth Local Authorities organized a keenly contested Litter League and the major urbans of Dundalk and Drogheda improved their performance in the national IBAL Litter League, where Dundalk came in an impressive fourth.

Blue Flag Scheme

Louth re-entered this international awards scheme for beaches in 2005 and secured Blue Flags for two of its beaches, Port and Templetown. The beaches had to comply with stringent water quality criteria, beach management, beach facilities and education and awareness programmes. The flags were presented by Dick Roche TD, Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government to Cllr. Terry Brennan, Cathaoirleach Louth County Council and Environment Staff at a presentation ceremony in Malahide, Co Dublin.



Dundalk receive fourth place overall in the Irish Business Against Litter league 2005.



Blue Flag raising ceremony at Templetown Beach (beach activity day).



Blue Flag raising ceremony at Port Beach.

Quarries

All quarries in the county, except those that were granted planning permission since 28th April 1999, were obliged to register with Louth County Council by 27th April 2005. Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 provides for the publication of notice of the quarry registration, the opportunity for concerned parties to make submissions/observations, the imposition within a period of 2 years of the registration by the Council of conditions on the operation of the quarry or the modification of previously imposed conditions, and an appeal process for quarry operators. Louth County Council received 12 applications for registration and is currently in the process of assessing these quarry operations.

Waste and Waste Water Services

River Basin Management Initiative

Louth participated in two River Basin Districts, one being the Eastern River Basin District and the second being the Neagh Bann International River Basin district. The objective of the project is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater.

Road Safety

The popular Road Safety School Programme continued with the Road Safety Officer appointing more "seat belt sheriffs" in schools throughout



Congratulations to the CBS, Dundalk on successful completion of the Junior School Warden Programme.

the county. As part of our Road Safety measures low cost safety measures were installed at several locations throughout the County. An Anti-Collision prevention initiative in partnership with the Gardai has recommenced and will be rolled out throughout the county in the coming years.

Conservation of Building

Conservation and Built Heritage

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 Co. Council continued her work in this area during 2005. A total of 5 grants for repairs to roofs, stonework, windows and thatching were approved and paid during 2004 at a total cost of €84,000.



Rethatching a cottage at Whiterath.

Emergency Services

County Louth Civil Defence Services

Training in emergency response skills continued at centres throughout the county for members. Specialists Boat, Kayak and Heights rescue teams continued to develop their personal and team skills including interface with other emergency services.

Improved training and operational links were developed with front line emergency services in 2005 and Civil Defence Members played a role in a number of Fire and Ambulance Service training exercises.

The introduction of electronic defibrillators and training in the use of same was rolled out in 2005. The addition of this equipment has improved the capabilities of the Civil Defence member at many community and sporting events which the members continued to service through out the year.

Members had the opportunity to travel to Wales to partake in advanced Heights rescue training. This training together with the introduction of new equipment has extended the capabilities of the County Heights rescue team who have provided a very effective mountain rescue service in the past.

The National Kayak and National Boat exercises were hosed in counties Donegal and Roscommon respectively. Members from Louth participated in both and as usual acquitted themselves very well.



Member of Civil Defence with Niall Quinn at Poc Fada.



Demonstration during Fire Safety Week.

Fire Services

2005 was a good year for Louth Fire Services, with DEHLG funding secured for a wide range of improvements.

Dunleer Fire Station was upgraded with the provision of a new entrance and resurfacing the forecourt. A backup fire tender covering the three county fire stations was purchased.

Agreement was reached with the DEHLG for funding a new fire station for Drogheda Fire Service. Work on this will commence in 2006.

A large range of new road traffic accident equipment was purchased for Dundalk and Drogheda Fire Services. This will improve the capability of these fire services to provide an efficient response at road traffic accidents.

The service provided by Dundalk Training Centre was improved by the provision of a new portacabin building for training courses.

Dundalk Fire Service also purchased two ex-Royal Navy fire tenders for backup response purposes.

The Cross-Border Schools Fire Safety Project finished in Oct. 2005. During the year the primary schools fire safety programme was delivered to all Louth primary schools and the secondary schools programme was piloted in schools in Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee.

A backup defibrillator service to the Health Service was commenced in Dundalk, Drogheda and Carlingford Fire Services.

The Fire Service Partnership process commenced in 2005 and delivered a number of improvements, including the installation of an exhaust extraction system in Dundalk fire station.

GOAL 4

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

Louth Local Authorities play a significant role in supporting and encouraging active community involvement and participation in local decision making processes through the development of the Strategic Policy committees, Junior Council Comhairle na nÓg, Community Fora, our environmental campaigns, the promotion of awareness in our heritage and local history and the provision of financial support for Peace II and other Interreg projects.

Participation in Local Democracy

Strategic Policy Committees – Louth County Council

Louth County Council has five strategic policy committees and Dundalk Town Council has four municipal policy committees. The committees were established to enhance the role of elected Councillors and to develop a partnership model at local level with all sectoral interests. The role of the S.P.C. is to formulate policy for recommendation to the Council.

Housing, Economic, Community and Enterprise S.P.C

This committee met on seven occasions during 2005. Representation is made up of the following: Local Authority, Business, Community and Voluntary, and the Trade Union pillars. The main policy issues dealt with during the year included;

- Tenant participation in estate Management
- Traveller Accommodation Programme
- Community Consultation Policy
- Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing

- Rental Accommodation Scheme
- Defibrillators
- Sustainable Energy Policy

Infrastructure S.P.C.

This committee met on six occasions during 2005. Representation is made up of the following; Local Authority, Business, Community and Voluntary pillars. The main policy issues dealt with during the year included;

- Speed Limit Bye-Laws
- Amendments to Foreshore Bye-Laws 2003.
- Submission on regulation for taxis, hackneys and limousines in Ireland to the Commission for Taxi Regulation.

The committee also received presentations on the review of the County Development Board Strategy, the Railway Corridor Study, the Ground Water Protection Scheme, Broadband and An Garda Síochána's role in the enforcement of traffic laws.

Planning S.P.C.

This committee met four times in 2005. Representation is made up of the following; Local Authority, Business, Community and Voluntary and Farming pillars. The main policy issue reviewed during the year included;

- Planning strategy for the greater Drogheda area.
- Drogheda Northern Environs Masterplan
- Sustainable Rural Housing guidelines
- Amendments to County Development Plan
- Regional Planning guidelines.

Environment & Emergency Services S.P.C

This committee met four times in 2005. Representation is made up of the following ; Local Authority, Farming, Business, Community and Voluntary pillars. The main policy issues progressed during 2005 included;

- River Basin Catchment Project
- Formation of Louth Tidy Town Together Committee
- Input to Draft Waste Management Plan for the North East Region 2005–2010
- Examination of Oxigen's Material Recovery Facility.

Corporate, Recreation & Amentiy S.P.C

This committee met on 7 occasions in 2005. Representation is made up of the following; Local Authority, Business, Community Et Voluntary and Trade Union pillars. The main policy issues dealt with in 2005 included;

- Sport, Leisure Et Recreation Policy
- Play Policy
- Library Plan
- Arts Plan
- Customer Charter Et Action Plan

Municipal Policy Committees – Dundalk Town Council Environment M.P.C

This committee met four times in 2005. The main issues dealt with included;

- Improve our Town Competition
- Recycling
- Landfill Restoration Project
- Education/Awareness Campaign
- Litter Management task force

Housing M.P.C.

This committee met four times in 2005. The main policy issues dealt with included;

- Traveller Accommodation Programme
- Tenant Participation in Estate Management
- Community Consultation Policy
- Scheme of Priorities for the allocation of Social Et Affordable housing
- Re-let Policy
- Revision of Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Infrastructure M.P.C.

This committee met four times in 2005. The main issues dealt with included;

- Town Centre Transportation Study
- Traffic Calming measures
- Water Pricing Policy
- Water Conservation Programme
- Sustainable Transport Policy
- Speed Limits Policy

Planning M.P.C.

This committee met four times in 2005. The main issues dealt with included;

- Dundalk South West Local Area Plan
- Dundalk Economic Development Plan

- Rockview Local Area Plan
- Northern Environs Mater Plan
- Dundalk Port Feasibility study.

Junior Council

The Junior Council continued to enjoy great success in the course of the year with the second Council ending its term of office in May 2005 and elections for the third Council being held in late 2005. The second Council held monthly meetings between February and May covering the following issues:

- Play Policy
- Litter Pollution
- Draft Bye-Laws for the consumption of Intoxicating substances in public places in Ardee Town Council Area
- National Recreation Policy for young people ages 12.-18



Junior Council election count.

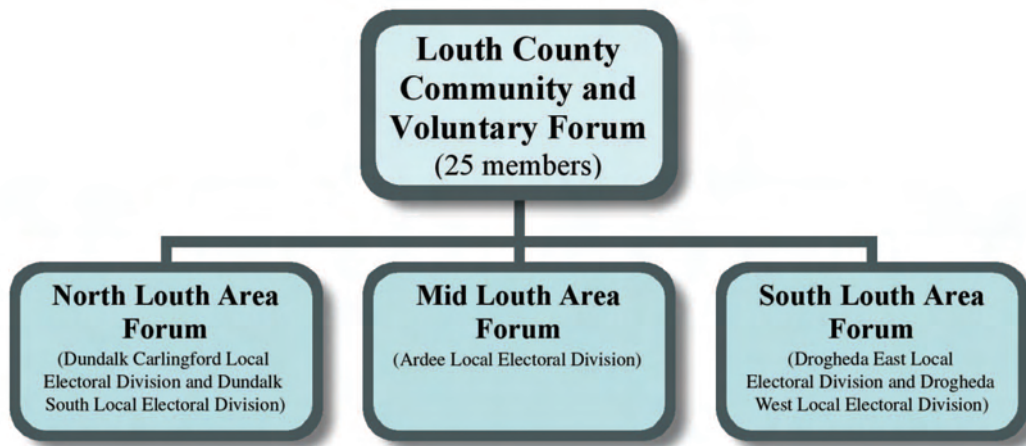


Newly elected Junior Council.

The election process for the third Council commenced in November with each school forming an electoral area, nominations taken for candidates, ballot papers produced and voting taking place using the PR system. A 26 member council was elected and training organized to support them in their role.

Comhairle na nÓg

Louth Comhairle na nÓg took place on 9th February 2005 and involved thirteen schools. Four delegates from Louth were elected and took part actively in the Annual Dail na nÓg event in Croke Park, Dublin.



County Community & Voluntary Forum

Our aim in Louth is for a fair society where individuality is respected and diversity celebrated and where there is as a strong, active community and voluntary sector that actively participates in local decision making processes.

The primary example of this is the Community & Voluntary Forum. Its membership is drawn from the three Area Fora which are based on the Local Electoral Area boundaries.

Community & Voluntary sector representatives are elected from the Community & Voluntary Forum to sit on the:

- Louth County Development Board
- Social Inclusion Measures Subgroup of Louth County Development Board
- 5 Strategic Policy Committees of Louth County Council
- 3 Municipal Policy Committees of Dundalk Town Council
- Louth Hospitality
- Louth LEADER Board
- Louth County Council led Peace II Task Force
- Louth County Childcare Committee
- Louth County Heritage Forum
- Louth Volunteering Working Group
- Border Area Regional Community and Voluntary Forum
- Fingal Area Regional Community and Voluntary Forum
- National Community and Voluntary Forum

In July 2005, Louth County Council employed a full-time Community Forum Development Officer to work with the Community Forum and the Local Area Fora in assisting them to develop and implement their work programme(s) over the next two years.

Estate Management and Tenant Participation

Tenant Liaison Officers were appointed by the Louth Local Authorities in 2005 with the purpose of: liaising with residents of local authority estates through residents' associations; facilitating and promoting the establishment of new associations where required; preparing and implementing, in conjunction with residents associations, constructive and innovative action plans for the effective implementation of the local authority's policies and objectives for resident participation and better estate management; and investigating complaints of anti-social behaviour or other breaches of tenancy within local authority housing

estates/halting and initiating follow-up action.

The pilot project in Ferdia Park, Ardee was advanced still further culminating with the allocation of a vacant dwellinghouse in the estate to the local residents committee for use as a community house. This will enable a wide range of community services to be delivered locally on the estate by the residents.

Environmental Campaigns

The Environment Section of Louth Local Authorities depend, to a large extent, on participation of the public, to ensure the success of the many campaigns organised on an annual basis.

Tidy Towns Activity

A total number of Tidy Towns Groups and Residents Associations availed of Louth County Council's Amenity Grant Scheme to assist them with environmental management and improvement of their local areas. A very successful Tidy Estates/Districts Competition was held the results of which were announced to a packed attendance at a function officiated at by Mairead McGuinness MEP in November.

Overall Winner	Tallanstown
Housing Estate Category A	Glyde Road Cottages, Tallanstown
Housing Estate Category B	Castleview, Tallanstown
Housing Estate Category C	St Mary's Villas, Kilsaran
Housing Estate Category D	DeLaSalle Crescent/Mulladrillen, Ardee
Best Presented Football Pitch	Naomh Feichin GFC
Best Maintained Graveyard	Kane Graveyard



Sliabh Breagh Residents Association, Ardee, 2nd prize winners in the tidy estates/districts competition.

A total of 14 Towns/Villages in the County participated in the National Tidy Towns Competition and brought credit to our County as a result of the excellent environmental work programme carried out by enthusiastic volunteers supported by the local authority.

The communities of Ardee and Knockbridge demonstrated extraordinary community spirit and civic pride when they represented Louth in the All Ireland Pride of Place Initiative.

School Environment Programme

The annual Louth Local Authorities School Environment Competition attracted an entry of 33 in 2005. The assessment criteria were reviewed to make the competition more compatible with the European Green Flag



Presentation of the Green Flag at St. Joseph's CBS Post Primary School by Mairead McGuinness MEP.



Martin Reilly (Litter Warden) & helper during National Spring Clean event.



National Spring Clean event at St. Joseph's NS, Avenue Road, Dundalk with Stephen O'Connor (Litter Warden).

Scheme and to give added focus to the ever increasing challenges of waste and litter management. Hundreds of pupils, with their teachers, demonstrated their commitment to playing their part in improving their local environment by their voluntary participation in what for them is an extra curriculum activity.

The main winners in the keenly contested awards were:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Overall Rural School | Rampark National School |
| Overall Urban School | Realt na Mara Junior School |
| Louth County Council Category A | Dromin National School |
| Louth County Council Category B | Monastery National School |
| 1st Place Drogheda | St Brigid's Junior school, Bothar Brugha |
| 1st Place Dundalk | Christian Brothers Primary School |
| Junior Environmentalist – Female | Jessica Dalton, CBS NS, Chapel St, Dundalk |
| Junior Environmentalist – Male | Andrew McGarrity, St Oliver's NS, Carlingford |

A further 5 schools were awarded the prestigious Green Flag during the year bringing the total number of Green Schools in the County to 13 which is well in keeping with the National average. Congratulations to Dromin National School, Gaelscoil Dhun Dealgan and Rampark National School who joined the 8 other primary schools in the County who fly the flag and particular congratulations to St. Joseph's CBS, Newfoundwell and Dundalk Grammer School who became the first two secondary schools in the county to earn the coveted flag for environmental excellence.

National Spring Clean

A massive clean-up of the county, which mobilised approximately 3000 volunteers of all ages and from all backgrounds, took place during the month of April in recognition of National Spring Clean, Ireland's major clean up event. This voluntary effort, supported by the local authority saw 164 tons of waste removed from the county's roadsides, beaches, housing estates, beauty spots and litter blackspots during the 130 registered clean-ups.

Civic Receptions.

Drogheda

Drogheda Borough Council hosted a Civic Reception in order to recognise the following individuals for voluntary work performed in the community.

- Ms. Tina Kearney
- Mr. Dick Duff
- Ms. Nuala Early
- Mr. Eugene Kierans

A second Civic Reception was held for Drogheda United Football Club in December 2005 following their win in the F.A. Cup Final.



Restoration works on wall at Drogheda ramparts.

Dundalk

Two Civic Receptions were hosted by Dundalk Town Council to recognise excellence in sporting achievements by Dundalk Institute of Technology in hosting the Sigerson Cup and Dundalk City Womens Football Club in winning the Womens Football Association of Ireland Challenge Cup

Promoting our Heritage and increasing awareness of our Local History

Heritage

Louth Local Authorities employed a heritage officer for the second half of 2005, in LCC's Community and Enterprise department, with substantial financial assistance from the Heritage Council. The principle task of the heritage officer has been to produce a heritage plan for Louth (including Ardee, Drogheda and Dundalk). In order to advise on and direct this process, a Louth heritage forum was set up and met for the first time in September. This heritage forum is based on the Social Partnership model, as used to great effect in the County Development Board, and has 30 members drawn from councillors, council staff, statutory agencies, the social partners, the Louth community and voluntary forum and specialist heritage groups such as local BirdWatch Ireland groups and the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society. Cllr Declan Breathnach is Chairman of the Forum, while Ms Breeda Tuite is the vice-chair.

At its first meeting, the Louth heritage forum set up three specialist subgroups to look in detail at natural, cultural and built (both archaeological and architectural) heritage respectively. These have been working, under the guidance of the heritage officer and using the many submissions received during the extensive public consultation, to develop policies and actions for inclusion in the proposed Louth heritage plan 2007-2011. It is expected that this first ever Louth heritage plan will be available, in draft form, for further public consultation in summer 2006 and will be adopted by the four Louth Local Authorities by the end of 2006. The Heritage Council has a match-funding policy in relation to adopted heritage plans and Louth Local Authorities hope that the partner organisations on the forum will also commit resources to its implementation.

The Heritage Council provided funding in 2005 for restoration work on

Drogheda's Ramparts Walk and for the production of a Conservation Plan for the remains of Drogheda's historic town walls.

Archives

Louth County Archives Service operates a range of services to ensure the identification, preservation and availability of our public and private archives.

Over the course of the year, the Archives Service received a significant number of acquisitions of archives illustrating the social, economic, and historical development of the county. Some notable items included Omeath national school rolls, accounting records of William Tempest, ledgers detailing daily business transactions of Drogheda businesses dating to 1726, an 1862 report on Harbour Improvement at Dundalk, oral history recordings, and a wonderful 350 year old map of Dundalk, now our oldest document. The Archives Service is particularly grateful to those who so kindly donated or deposited items for our present and future generations to access.

A highlight of the year was the establishment of an official County Oral History Archive collection. Many interviews were recorded with people across the whole spectrum of Louth society – politicians, fishermen, businessmen, elderly, voluntary groups, and past and present staff of Louth Local Authorities. The collection is unique as part of Louth's history is being documented by the people of Louth. It has proved to be a rich resource providing a rewarding insight into the life experiences of our county's populace. The enormous task of transcribing the collection will take place over the coming year, before being made available to those researching various aspects of the county's development.



Part of Drogheda town walls.



Part of exhibition "WWII: Sixty Years On".



President McAleese addresses the crowd at the official opening of Carlingford Community Development Centre.



Opening of Carlingford Community Development Centre Feb 2005.

Heritage Week & Archive Awareness Month were very eventful with a range of events all highlighting the importance of archives and our documentary heritage. The main event was an exhibition which marked the 60th anniversary since the end of WWII. 'WWII: Sixty Years On' contained a wealth of public and private archives covering a range of themes – the shortage of supplies, rationing, turf production schemes, air raid precautions, involvement of parish councils, Step Together Parades – bringing back vivid memories to many. The exhibition proved to be of immense interest, so much so that it was extended for an extra two weeks. Other events included a successful open day, a conservation workshop on how to care for archives, and two murder mystery events.

The Service also re-established the production of its newsletter under the title 'Arc News' and distributed it county-wide.

While the high number of staff file requests to the Records Centre continued, the year 2005 saw a significant increase in the number of researchers and queries handled by the Archives Service while it also saw the Service establish a great many links with a variety of user groups – schools, historical groups, elderly, and community groups. With the wealth of documentary heritage in existence, Louth County Archives Service has the potential to be Louth's premier research service.

Peace II Programme

Peace II

In 2005 the Louth County Council led Task Force continued to support the 28 projects which were granted funding under the Peace II Programme 2002-2004. A total of €1,700,000 was paid out to assist the project promoters in the development of their projects in 2005. In June 2005 Peace II Extension 2005 – 2006 was launched. Louth County Council led Task Force was allocated an amount of €1,449,000 over the two year period 2005 – 2006. Applicants were invited to apply for this funding in September of 2005. A total of 53 applications were received. Funding will be awarded and distributed from 2006 onwards.

GOAL 5

Form alliances and working partnerships, both internally and with other organisations and service providers to meet organisational goals and priorities

County Development Board

A comprehensive review of all actions within the County Development Board Strategy was completed in December 2005. It included a comprehensive update on the implementation on all actions within the Strategy 2002–2012.

The nine implementation groups of the CDB were reconstituted with new Chairs agreed.

The review was endorsed by Louth CDB members in December 2005 and forwarded to Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government.

In conjunction with the review, a three year Action Plan 2006–2008 was also agreed and endorsed by the Louth CDB, following extensive consultations with relevant agencies.

Partnerships with other Organisations

The Office of Community & Enterprise continued to represent Louth Local Authorities throughout 2005, on the following bodies: Louth County Enterprise Board; Louth Leader; Louth County Childcare Committee; Louth County Enterprise Fund; East Board Region Committee; Drogheda Partnership Company; Dundalk Employment Partnership and Dundalk Economic Development Group.

There has been continued input from all agencies on the RAPID Area Implementation Team and on specific task groups that are established from time to time. A review and planning session with the Area Implementation Team took place during 2005 where progress to date was documented and future priority areas identified.

The Environment Section formed a number of successful alliances to assist in achieving key objectives identified as critical to the success of

the County's Environment Campaign. To the forefront of these alliances was the excellent partnership with Louth Leader which saw a number of significant projects co-funded by LEADER during the year. These included:

- The production and distribution of 55,000 copies of Econews Plus, an environment newsletter designed to increase environmental awareness and develop good environmental management practice among citizens of the county.
- The refurbishment of the Marian Shrine Grotto in Knockbridge in association with Knockbridge Tidy Towns.
- The upgrading and colour co-ordination of street furniture in



M. Murtagh & K. Muckian (Louth County Council), M. Ward (Louth LEADER), R. Barry (Tallanstown Tidy Town) with members of the Tidy Towns Committee at Tidy Towns Workshop.

Tallanstown in association with Tallanstown Tidy Towns.

- The holding of a professional workshop/training session on the theme of the National Tidy Town's application process.
- The commissioning of a consultant to produce, in consultation with Tidy Towns Groups, village plans for the top six National Tidy Town performers in the county.

Other alliances that were formed during the year, to the advantage of the County's Environment Campaign included:

- Sponsorship from Oxigen Environmental and Mark Murtagh Machinery which resulted in a massive clean up of Ardee Bog which cleared the site of 16 1/2 ton of illegally disposed of waste.
- Bank of Ireland who, once again, contributed financially to the cost of running the Annual School Environment Programme.
- Drogheda Concentrates who sponsored refreshments for many of our events throughout the year.
- Paddy Callan Machinery who sponsored a mulcher for our Christmas Tree Recycling Project

The establishment of Louth Tidy Towns Together, a network for Tidy Towns Groups in the county, in February 2005 assisted in professionalizing the Tidy Towns movement in the county. It offers a network to share experiences and best practice as well as a formal forum for the Tidy Towns volunteers to liaise with relevant local authorities staff charged with the responsibility of implementing and supporting the Tidy Towns Programme.

The ever evolving and improving relationship with the Gardai has resulted in high impact enforcement of the Waste Management Act through a series of check points to verify compliance with the Act and various Waste Regulations and Permits.

Rapid Programmes

Dundalk

There are active community representatives on the Dundalk RAPID Area Implementation Team and ongoing liaison with local tenant and resident groups and community councils.

Through RAPID Programme in Dundalk, funding has been secured for the development of a number of recreational facilities including



RAPID project – Community based practical skills programme.

playground development (Dormant Accounts – €80,000), the fencing of the Redeemer Celtic Football Club's pitch (Sports Capital Programme 2005 – €52,000) and inclusion of a skateboard facility in the overall community park, Cox's Demesne. Works on this community park which is funded through a cocktail of funding accessed by Dundalk Town Council commenced during 2005.

Lios na Nog, childcare facility (Muirhevnamor) secured €1.2 million under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme to construct a purpose built facility. A further €300,000 was granted through the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

A community based practical skills programme targeted at young unemployed males in Cox's Demesne rolled out during 2005. This pilot initiative represented a multi agency approach in tackling the issue of unemployment in the estate and included FAS, Dundalk Employment Partnership, Local Employment Service, VEC, Le Cheile CDP, Linkage Programme and community based youth projects.

A number of leverage schemes specific to the RAPID areas were rolled out in 2005, including the Estate Enhancement Scheme (€100,000), Traffic Calming Measures (€45,000) and Playground Scheme (€66,000)



Community Safety Conference.

Sustainable Energy Ireland in co-operation with Dundalk Town Council and the local Community Development Projects targeted low income households in the RAPID areas for the provision of insulation in their homes, in an effort to combat fuel poverty. During 2005, 60 households availed of this scheme. This will be continued in the first quarter of 2006.

A Community Safety Conference examining various responses to tackling anti social behaviour was hosted by Dundalk Town Council in November 2005. This conference was targeted at elected members throughout the country and the community and voluntary sector in Dundalk. Linked to the work of the community safety agenda, application for funding under the pre-development stage of the Community Based CCTV Scheme was made in respect to Muirhevnamor.

Drogheda

Money more Community House Ltd. agreed to sponsor an inter-estate community environmental initiative. A management team made up of representatives from the seven RAPID neighbourhoods in Drogheda have



RAIPID project – Drogheda Youth Training Initiative.

shown great initiative in maximising the impact of environmental enhancement throughout the seven neighbourhoods. Nine jobs initiative workers most of whom come from RAPID neighbourhoods are funded by FAS through the Jobs Initiative Scheme. The RAPID Housing Estate Enhancement Scheme has added value to both the training and type of work being undertaken by the JI team while at the same time the areas have benefited significantly. Residents are now more disposed to keeping their areas clean and in most cases the application of a clear system of communication to the Drogheda Borough Council via Moneymore Community House Ltd. has improved and developed positive relations with the council. The evidence on the ground is there to see in all seven neighbourhoods although there is still much more to be done.

Linked to this work has been the further development of Estate Leadership Teams operating in three estates namely Rathmullen, Pearse Park and Yellowbatter. Together Pearse Park and Yellowbatter have managed to secure full cooperation of an Garda Siochana for their newly formed neighbourhood Watch Scheme. In addition and now with the potential support of a Section 65 Grant from the Health Service Executive they have set up a bowling club for older residents in the Lourdes Community & Recreation Centre .

An innovative RAPID Project in Drogheda involving the refurbishment of a local authority house in Marian Park is reuniting 15 young males under 25 with education and training. A RAPID Interagency project sponsored by the Resource Centre for Unemployed and funded by FAS, Drogheda Partnership Drogheda Borough Council and Louth VEC has called on the expertise of DIFE College , Drogheda Youth Development ,Youth Advocacy Service, Social Welfare and the LES to provide a comprehensive package of training and education programmes for the young men. Most of the students were recruited from the seven RAPID estates. In addition to advancing their own skills they are contributing to the estate enhancement of Marian Park by refurbishing the house and extensive garden.

Social Inclusion Measures

Louth SIM Group continued to operate effectively throughout 2005. A total of nine meetings took place. A Traveller SIM sub group was established in 2005, with the objective of implementing actions specifically related to the Traveller community in Louth.

Submissions were also made by Louth SIM Group to the Dept of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs for funding under the cohesion funds. SIM was successful in securing funding for volunteering initiatives and a volunteering sub group has been established to implement the actions.

Cross Border Funding

Interreg Funding

Louth County Council individually and in conjunction with a number of partners accessed funding from Interreg for the following projects:

Social Economy Bridging Programme	€200k
Newry / Dundalk Mini Metropolis	€45k
Promoting pride in our rural villages	€00k
Life Long Learning for the Tourism Sector	€25k
East Border Region Tourism Partnership	€386k
Cross Border Community Safety Network	€239k
East Border Arts Partnership Project	€187,045
Highlanes Gallery	€1.179m
East Regional Development Project	€87k

Farmers Market

Dundalk held its First Farmers Market in the courtyard of the County Museum in September 2005. The market is a 3 year cross-border project supported by the EU Interreg programme, Dundalk Town Council, Newry & Mourne District Council and the Chambers of Commerce in both towns and takes place in Newry every Friday and Dundalk every Saturday morning.



Opening of Farmers market in Dundalk.



Partnership – Retirement Awards.

Workplace Partnership

Workplace Review

A consultant conducted a staff survey/workplace review in order to assess the views of staff working in Louth Local Authorities. 51% of staff responded.

A Partnership working group has been established to implement a number of actions to address the issues raised by staff in the Workplace Review.

Partnership in Fire Service

The Louth Fire Service established a Partnership structure which is representative of senior management and all fire fighters from the five stations including retained and full-time fire fighters. The Fire Service Partnership meets every 2 months and is working towards the development of a workplan for the year 2006.

Apprenticeship Scheme for General Operatives

The Partnership Committee agreed a scheme for enabling 6 general operatives train with FAS to become craftworkers. The apprentices will

complete a 4 year training programme which will include working on-site either in the Local Authority or with a contractor and training off site in FAS or an Institute of Technology. A Partnership Monitoring Group has been established to monitor the progress of the scheme. This is a pilot initiative for all local authorities.

Retirement Awards

The Partnership Committee presented 16 retiring staff with awards for their service. The awards were presented by the County Manager and the Partnership Committee at the annual Christmas reunion for former staff. Each retiree received a crystal decanter and glasses with a personal inscription.

Progress in Education

In total 18 members of staff completed the Progress in Education Course delivered by Louth VEC. The County Manager and the CEO of Louth VEC presented the participants with a certificate of achievement. The Progress in Education Course aims to assist staff with acquiring certification for returning to learning.

Service Indicators

HOUSING		'04	'05
Housing Vacancies			
A. Total number of local authority stock		2899	2954
B. Percentage that are let		98.03	97
C. Percentage of dwellings empty		1.97	3
D. Percentage empty subject to major refurbishment		14.04	43.24
E. Percentage of empty dwellings unavailable for letting		100	83.33
F. Percentage of empty dwellings available for letting		0	16.67
Average time (in weeks) taken to re-let dwellings for letting		1.5	0.6
Number of repairs completed as a percentage of the number of valid repair requests received		72.81	79
Average time taken to inform applicants of local authority decision on application for:			
Shared Home Ownership		35	5
Housing Loans Scheme		n/a	5
Local Authority Housing		8	9
Total number of traveller families accommodated as a percentage of the targets set in the local traveller accommodation programme		80	98
C. on 5th day or less		2656 – 22.3%	947–14.34%
D. over 5 days		0	1639–24.82%
Average number of opening hours per week		28.75	28.75
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES		'04	'05
Percentage of river channel			
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
Percentage of drinking water analysis in compliance with statutory requirements with regard to:			
public schemes		98.7	97.81
private schemes		71.4	81.46
Average time to mobilise fire brigades in:			
Full time stations		1.75	2.84
Part-time stations		3.94	4.51
Percentage of attendances at scenes where first attendance is:			
within 10 minutes		71.4	67
within 20 minutes		20	27.8
over 20 minutes		8.6	5.2
Total number of:			
Fire Safety applications received		229	229
Fire Safety applications process		217	217
Percentage of households provided with segregated waste collection		0	0
Percentage of household waste recycled		20.91	25.88
Percentage of household waste going to landfill		79	74.12
ROADS		'04	'05
A. Local and regional roads surface dressed per annum (sq. metres)		546523	550457
B. Percentage of local and regional roads surface dressed per annum		8.9	8.96
MOTOR TAX		'04	'05
Percentage of Motor Tax transactions which			
Dealt with over counter		82.72	97.57
Dealt with by post		11.10	7.85
Dealt with by other means		6.18	14.58
Number of postal applications and percentage of postal which are dealt with from receipt of application –			
A. on same day	506 – 5.2%	1541–23.34%	
B. on 3rd day or less	7692 – 72.5%	2477–37.50%	
Recycling Facilities		'04	'05
Glass			
No. of Bring Sites		36	39
No. of Civic Amenity Sites		1	1

% of cases where the decision was confirmed by An Bord Pleanála	29.41	55.32
% of cases where the decision was varied by An Bord Pleanála	29.41	23.40
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanála	41.18	21.28

Other: requiring EIA

No. of applications determined	7	10
% of complete applications determined within 8 weeks	100	100
Average length of time taken to determine an application where further information is sought	98.67	79.80
% of grants	71.43	90
% of refusals	28.57	10
% of cases where the decision was confirmed by An Bord Pleanála	0	100
% of cases where the decision was varied by An Bord Pleanála	0	0
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanála	0	0

Planning Enforcement

Number of Planning Enforcements Investigated	470	845
Number of Planning Enforcements Dismissed	50	40
Number of Enforcement Procedures through warning letters	232	375
Number of Enforcement Procedures through enforcement notices	87	173
Number of prosecutions	20	32
Number of Planning Public Counter Opening Hours	37.25	39.16
Average length of time for pre-planning appointment with planning (booking to meeting)	14	14
Building Control		
Buildings inspected as percentage of new buildings notified.	22.8	23.13

REVENUE COLLECTION

Amount of housing rent collected as percentage of due	88.84	90.94
Percentage of arrears		
percentage 4-6 weeks old	13.64	10.01
percentage 6-12 weeks old	22.62	13.81
percentage more than 12 weeks old	54.38	64.71
Amount of housing loans collected as percentage of due	96.60	95.98
Percentage of arrears		
Percentage 1 month old	11.7	4.58
Percentage 2-3 months old	7.19	4.18
Percentage more than 3 months old	70.55	89.05
Amount of commercial rates collected at year end as a percentage of amount due	81.54	85.31
Refuse charges	0	0

Amount of non-domestic water charges collected at year end as a percentage of amount due.	57.74	57.34
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CORPORATE ISSUES

Percentage of working days lost to certified leave	3.86	4.07
Percentage of working days lost to uncertified leave	0.59	0.82
Expenditure on training/development as percentage of total payroll costs.	3.323	4.99

LIBRARY

Average number of opening hours per week for full-time libraries	39	39
Average number of opening hours per week for part-time libraries	13.84	23.34
Number of library members as percentage of local population	11.2%	12.6%
Number of library issues of books per head	2.8	2.74
Number of library issues of other items per head	0.3	0.4
Percentage of libraries that offer internet sessions per 1000	100%	100%
Number of Internet sessions provided per 1,000 population	74.65	698.43

ARTS & CULTURAL SERVICES

Number of arts grants allocated	68	87
Total value of arts grants per 1000 population.	404.14	543.92

RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Number of playgrounds per 1000 population		
A. provided by local authority	0.0295	0.049
B. facilitated by local authority	0.0196	0.0098
Number of visitors to local authority facilitated swimming facilities per 1000 population	2246.6	1762.1

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION & COOPERATION

Percentage of local schools involved in the local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg	94.1%	70.4%
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Local Indicators

Housing	'04	'05
No. of additional council housing estates where tenant participation initiative has been introduced	LCC - 2 DTC - 5 DBC - 4	LCC - 3 DTC - 3 DBC - 2
No. of derelict sites removed from register	LCC - 29% DTC - 55% DBC - 84%	LCC - 0% DTC - 0% DBC - 0%

Roads	'04	'05
Pay Parking	LCC - €500	LCC - €775.85
Parking/Yield per space	DTC - €500 DBC - €912	DTC - €437.82 DBC - €1402.98

Sanitary Services	'04	'05
Average timescale for restoration of water supply where breakdown occurs	12	LCC-3.6hrs DTC-12hrs DBC-12hrs
% of unaccounted for water	40%	LCC-40% DTC-40% DBC-48%

Environment	'04	'05
Waste Permit Audits - No. of sites audited within last 12 months	6%	35%
Recycling Rates	Glass 1244.59 Plastics 209.49 Cans 58.55	1507.82 262.16 67.23
Civic Amenity Tonnage collected	7984.51	9,095.09
Number of Secondary Schools Visited on awareness issues	50%	LCC-75% DTC-70% DBC-100%

Vets	'04	'05
Number of dogs licensed	7495	7390
Number of horses licensed under byelaws	30	28
Re-homing rate of dogs from pound	27.5%	35.22%

Corporate	'04	'05
Recruitment - % of competitions completed within 12 weeks from managers approval to advertise to offer of contract.	LCC-29%	LCC-85% DTC-100% DBC-85%
Members IT - No. of members using council email on a regular basis	LCC - 12 DTC - 10 DBC -10	LCC - 16 DTC - 5 DBC - 6

IT	'04	'05
No. of maintenance calls addressed within 24 hours	LCC - 93% DTC - 91% DBC - 95%	LCC - 94% DTC - 96% DBC - 99%

Library	'04	'05
Library Visits - No. of public Utilising public library facilities	266,512	280,242

Amenity	'04	'05
No. of Museum & Archive visits	16,937	12,645
Archive visits	381	736
public queries	296	207

Finance	'04	'05
% of payroll on paypath	LCC - 82% DTC - 67% DBC - 71%	LCC-98.10% DTC-94% DBC-99%
% of debtors paid by electronic means	LCC - 10% DTC - 19% DBC - 5.5%	LCC - 32.03 DTC - 19% DBC - 6.3%

Fire Service	'04	'05
Cost of Fire Service per head of Population	LCC-?23.40 DTC-?69.06 DBC-?45.91	LCC-?26.60 DTC-?70.56 DBC-?52.42

% of Chimney Fires of All calls addressed	LCC-3.6% DTC-4.2% DBC-4.2%	LCC-3.5% DTC-2.3% DBC-3.4%
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Financial Figures

	AUDITED 2004	2005
EXPENDITURE		
Housing & Building	3,197,599	3,465,844
Road Transport & Safety	15,420,146	15,619,861
Water Supply & Sewerage	6,563,388	6,780,748
Development Incentives & Controls	3,675,833	4,323,353
Environmental Protection	6,442,042	7,748,010
Recreation & Amenity	2,904,283	3,144,237
Ag. Ed. Health & Welfare	6,888,243	11,674,428
Miscellaneous Services	3,808,094	2,341,898
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	48,899,628	55,098,379
State Grants	26,742,175	25,016,883
Goods & Services	19,164,585	19,051,168
Contributions from Other LA's	2,750,000	2,850,000
Rates	4,602,434	5,541,965
TOTAL INCOME	53,259,194	52,460,016
Surplus/Deficit for Year	4,359,566	3,084,256
Transfers to/from Reserves	-3,550,719	-2,503,600
Overall Surplus/Deficit for Year	808,847	580,656
Opening Balance	12,083,219	12,892,066
Closing Balance	12,892,066	13,472,722
Capital Account		
Expenditure	27,636,999	35,552,430
Receipts	36,097,974	53,716,945
Conferences		
Within State*	104,690	112,961
Abroad	14,721	17,975

DROGHEDA BOROUGH COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL FIGURES

Total Revenue Expenditure 2005 was €24,814,512.22

Total Capital Expenditure 2005 was €32,621,585.78

FINANCIAL FIGURES

Total Revenue Expenditure 2005 was €25,133,859

Total Capital Expenditure 2005 was €30,132,810

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

** 2004 figures are audited. 2005 figures are unaudited.

LOUTH SUMMARY OF MAJOR REVENUE COLLECTIONS FOR 2005

	Arrears @ 01/01/2005 €	Accrued €	Write Off €	Waivers €	Total for Collection €	Collected €	Arrears @ 31/12/2005 €	% Collected %
Rates	449,975	5,645,910	1,827		6,094,058	5,398,944	695,114	89%
Rents & Annuities	113,189	1,358,518	13,107		1,458,600	1,366,492	92,108	94%
Commercial Water	509,506	630,008	28,717	6,442	1,104,355	563,307	541,048	51%
Housing Loans	-3,773	497,574	146		493,655	485,321	8,334	98%

Corporate Plan

Annual Progress Report

In accordance with Section 134 (11) (a) of the Local Government Act 2001 I set out hereunder the progress report for 2005 in respect of the local authority's corporate plan.

GOAL 1: To deliver the best possible service to our Customers and Clients

Strategic Objective 1

- 1.0 To implement consistent corporate standards throughout the organisation.
- 1.1 To ensure that the knowledge and experience emerging from current practices throughout the organisation and other best practice initiatives are shared to the benefit of the organisation as a whole.

Actions in 2005

- Annual operational plans were prepared in Dec 2004 and are being implemented
- Customer Charter & Action plan developed

Strategic Objective 2

- 2.0 To integrate information systems to support customer service delivery points

Actions in 2005

- E-direct in use in planning to record details of pre planning discussions and give feedback to customers
- Local I.C.T. strategy adopted

Strategic Objective 3

- 3.0 To continually monitor the needs of our customers and clients
- 3.1 To increase and improve availability of and access to all of our services

Actions in 2005

- Customer survey complete
- Customer complaints/comment system in place
- Funding of €350,000 secured under the Disability Act for access works and spent throughout the county
- Lo-call number initiated
- Commencement on reconstruction of internet site to improve access

to same by people with disabilities

- Barcelona Declaration – new actions identified in July are being implemented at present.
- Disability audit underway

Strategic Objective 4

- 4.0 To provide appropriate and effective training and development for all staff to enable them acquire the qualifications, skills and knowledge necessary to perform effectively the duties and responsibilities of their posts.
- 4.1 To implement clear and concise Human Resource policies and strategies to ensure that the local authorities in Louth are viewed as premier employers with motivated and committed staff.
- 4.2 To implement Performance Management Development System

Actions in 2005

- Work commenced in 2005 on the implementation of PMDS
 - 3 Facilitators appointed
 - Team Development Plans completed in two pilot areas
 - Roll out strategy adopted by Management
 - Steering group set up to monitor implementation of roll-out strategy

Strategic Objective 5

- 5.0 To continue the development and wider use by the organisation of the Aggresso Financial Management System.
- 5.1 To maximise our financial resources to achieve value for money.

Actions in 2005

- Aggresso 5.4 rolled out

Strategic Objective 6

- 6.0 To maintain existing initiatives designed to continuously improve our management information IT systems and continue to refine them to strengthen our organisation.
- 6.1 To implement the eGovernment agenda.

Actions in 2005

- Business improvement process underway in Planning departments and will be completed by year end.
- GPlan rolled out to provide information on planning files to the public
- Commencement on re-construction of website to make it more user-friendly
- Facility on the website to make amendments to Electoral Register now available
- Payments via internet commenced
- Business Improvement process completed for Housing Construction, D.P.G.s and Part 8

Strategic Objective 7

7.0 To promote the concept of partnership in the workplace.

Actions in 2005

- Local partnership in place in the Fire Service
- Senior union/senior management forum now in place

GOAL 2: To facilitate economic development and maximise our strategic border location mid-point between Dublin and Belfast

Strategic Objective 1

1.0 To develop Dundalk as the Gateway for the North East Region. To develop Drogheda as a Primary Development Centre.

Actions in 2005

- Drogheda Economic Action Plan 2004-2007 prepared and being presently implemented.
- Economic Development Plan for Dundalk substantially completed.

Strategic Objective 2

2.0 To market Louth as a centre for economic development regionally, nationally and internationally

2.1 To proactively support indigenous and inward investment within the county and support the creation of economic and job opportunities throughout the county, through appropriate planning, infrastructure provision, and partnerships with other agencies and groups.

Actions in 2005

- Master Plan for the Drogheda North Area well advanced and going to the members of LCC for approval to put on display at the December meeting of LCC
- Dundalk South West LAP going on public display in early January 2006
- Work presently underway on the Planning Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area

Strategic Objective 3

3.0 To continue to improve all infrastructure in the county.

3.1 To facilitate and assist Government Departments and agencies in the development of county's infrastructure to facilitate the development of other elements of the National Development plan e.g. ports, rail, electricity supply, telecom infrastructure, childcare provision.

Actions in 2005

- Construction work has commenced on the extension to Drogheda Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Consultants & In-house team appointed to Water Conservation Project and project underway
- Investigations ongoing to identify new water sources to facilitate upgrade to Drogheda water supply
- Construction of A1/N1 cross-border route commenced in 2005
- Dundalk Western By-pass mainline completed and opened in 2005
- Statutory documentation prepared in relation to Ardee By-pass
- R173 (Rockmarshall section realignment & reconstruction completed
- Works commenced on Harbour at Port Oriel, Clogherhead improvements
- Statutory compulsory purchase order procedures completed on Southern Link Road Roundabout & Industrial Distributor Road

Strategic Objective 4

4.0 To promote and develop Louth as a quality tourism destination

Actions in 2005

- Louth, Newry & Mourne Film Commission established to attract film events to the region
- Louth Hospitality marketing and development plan has been adopted and implementation underway
- Louth Hospitality actively involved in promoting the tourism product in Louth, familiarization trips being organized for Louth Hospitality Board and Tourism Ireland representatives
- Work ongoing on Castle in Ardee

Strategic Objective 5

5.0 To continue to encourage the development and expansion of broadband services to all areas throughout the county

Actions in 2005

- Broadband metropolitan Area networks (MANS) sponsored and established in Dundalk & Drogheda with Ardee to follow.

Strategic Objective 8

8.0 To facilitate and support communities and agencies in the development of cross border economic projects.

8.1 To tackle areas of inequality and disadvantage in the county.

Actions in 2005

- Supporting the development of the High Lanes Gallery.
- Implementation of the RAPID and CLAR programmes in Co. Louth

GOAL 3: To improve the quality of life for residents, now and for future generations

Strategic Objective 1

- 1.0 To promote plan led high quality varied and sustainable residential development within the county.
- 1.1 To provide high quality, safe and sustainable housing design and construction that is affordable, energy efficient, architecturally appropriate, uses best available construction techniques, and is adaptable to changing needs over its lifetime.
- 1.2 To deliver the Housing Construction Programme in a timely manner

Actions in 2005

- Housing strategy currently being reviewed
- Local Authority Housing Construction – 122 starts to end 2005
- Part V – 6 affordable houses delivered to date
- D.P.G.s on target
- Review of 2001-2006 Housing strategy commenced
- Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005-2008 adopted and presently being implemented
- Survey of Housing Stock 1/3 complete
- Homeless Action Plan 2004-2006 adopted
- Central Heating in L.A. stock
 - final phase of OPDs about to start
 - first phase of general stock about to start

Strategic Objective 2

- 2.0 To develop and implement new strategies for the provision of accessible and affordable public amenities, e.g. the arts, museums, libraries, amenity areas.
- 2.1 To prepare and commence implementation of a County Sports & Recreation Strategy.
- 2.2 To develop strategies and policies that position the arts, culture and leisure services as offering critical experiences that enhance life quality.

Actions in 2005

- Arts Plan 2005-2007 adopted and implementation commenced
- Cultural Festival Programme
 - 1st Drogheda Arts Festival took place in May 2005
 - Continuation of other cultural festival ie. Ardee Baroque,
 - Leanbh Childrens Arts Festival, Tain Rhythm & Roots Festival
 - Continued support for Dundalk Maytime Festival and report commissioned by the Arts Office on the future development of the Dundalk Maytime Festival
- Draft Recreation & Sports Strategy document prepared
- County Play Policy/Action Plan Adopted
- Funding secured for Dunleer Branch Library
- Funding secured for Schools Library service vehicle
- Funding secured for Ashling Park Skatepark
- Restoration of Bramble Lodge
 - Plans prepared
 - Engaging with Credit Union.
 - Funding secured for Library.

Strategic Objective 3

- 3.0 To increase efforts in the areas of environmental protection and pollution control.
- 3.1 To continue to adopt, implement and enforce policies and programmes for the protection of the environment and the satisfactory management and reduction of waste.
- 3.2 To provide and maintain efficient and effective environmental monitoring and enforcement systems.
- 3.3 To provide high quality water and wastewater services.
- 3.4 To ensure compliance with all relevant EU Directives, including the:
 - Urban Waste Water Directive
 - Drinking Water Directive
 - Water Framework Directive
 - River Basin Management Initiatives
- 3.5 To meet the targets for waste disposal as set out in the Waste Management Plan through prevention, reuse, and recycle.

Actions in 2005

- Blue flag status achieved for two beaches in 2005
- North East waste management Plan under review and will be finalised in early 2006
- Litter management plan will be reviewed at Environment SPC Dec 05
- River Basin District Councils established and local authority members nominated to them
- Environmental improvements made in the areas of increased recycling, commitment under campaigns i.e National spring clean, green schools and tidy towns. In addition the STEM project which involves LCC's infrastructure department and a number of private businesses working towards good environmental management systems in underway
- The WEEE directive is being implemented since its commencement date in August 2005.
- Environment enforcement section engaged in auditing permitted site, responding to complaints regarding water, litter or pollution, and taking action where there is any breach of environmental legislation or policy
- Restoration of cell at Whiteriver Landfill is about to commence, contract awarded.
- Restoration works commenced on the two town landfill sites in 2005.

Strategic Objective 4

- 4.0 To improve transport infrastructure and management in the county, including urban transport.
- 4.1 Continue to implement Road Safety Awareness Programmes and develop innovative strategies for road safety in County Louth.

Actions in 2005

- Dundalk Western By-pass mainline completed and opened in 2005.
- Construction of A1/N1 cross-border route commenced in 2005.
- Traffic Management Plans underway in Drogheda and Dundalk.

Strategic Objective 5

5.0 To develop innovative responses to support disadvantaged communities.

Actions in 2005

- Expansion of Tenant Liaison Service
 - Pilot Project Ferdia Park
 - Community House about to be occupied
 - Pilot being extended to other estates e.g. Church View, Tower View, St. Oliver's Park
- Implementation of the RAPID and CLAR programmes in Co. Louth

Strategic Objective 6

6.0 To protect and promote an appreciation of the built and natural heritage and promote their enjoyment by all.

Actions in 2005

- Heritage Officer appointed in 2005
- Preparation of County Heritage Plan commenced

Strategic Objective 7

7 To ensure that people, property and local infrastructure are protected from fire and other emergency situations.

Actions in 2005

- Continuing to provide the Fire & Emergency response.

GOAL 4: To harness community participation, provide civic leadership and encourage civic pride

Strategic Objective 1

1.0 To provide financial support through the administration of the County Council led PEACE II Task Force funding

1.1 To lobby for the extension of cross border funding programmes post 2006.

1.2 To develop and implement initiatives to support disadvantaged communities.

Actions in 2005

- Implementation of RAPID Action Plan ongoing. Continued participation of community representation on Area Implementation Team (4 in total)
- Implementation of the Peace II programme

Strategic Objective 2

2.0 To encourage and promote greater pride in our environment by developing and implementing strategies and campaigns to achieve more responsible attitudes and behaviour by everyone.

Actions in 2005

- Two towns, Ardee and Knockbridge competed in "Pride of Place" in 2005
- Increased activity in green schools campaign in 2005 and great emphasis on environment awareness through the environmental

awareness officer

- "Tidy Towns Together" group formed with representation from all tidy towns committees.
- Community planning initiatives commenced through "Tidy Towns Together" group. Matched funding available for some projects from Leader
- Environmental improvements made in the areas of increased recycling, commitment under campaigns i.e. National spring clean, green schools and tidy towns.

Strategic Objective 3

3.0 To continue to support, develop and increase participation in the Junior County Council and Comhairle na nÓg.

3.1 To maximise the potential of the SPC's, Expanded Area Committees, and other sub structures of the Local Authorities.

3.2 To improve voter turnout at all elections

Actions in 2005

- New delegates elected on Comhairle na nÓg and Junior Council
- Work Programmes for SPC's agreed and underway.

Strategic Objective 4

4.0 To continue to support and develop the Community Forum as the representative body for the community & voluntary sector in Louth.

4.1 To facilitate community groups develop cross border partnerships and access cross border funding opportunities.

4.2 To develop strategies to increase volunteerism throughout the county

Actions in 2005

- Community Fora Development Officer appointed and annual work plan developed
- Support provided to community groups through the office of Community & Enterprise.

Strategic Objective 5

5.0 To promote the heritage of Louth and respect for religious, cultural, political and racial diversity In the county.

5.1 To support initiatives to increase awareness of local history and heritage

Actions in 2005

- Heritage Officer appointed in 2005
- Commencement of preparation of County Heritage Plan
- Oral archivist engaged to record local experiences

GOAL 5: To form alliances and working partnerships both internally and with other organisations and service providers, to meet organisational goals and priorities

Strategic Objective 1

- 1.0 To lead and participate fully in the work of the CDB and oversee the implementation of its 10 year Strategy.
- 1.1 To work in partnership with other agencies to address the needs of the communities in RAPID and CLAR areas.
- 1.2 To work in partnership with Louth Hospitality Ltd. To develop and market tourism in the county.
- 1.3 To work in partnership with other local authorities, both north and south of the border, to assist in the social, economic and cultural development of the Region.
- 1.4 To co-operate with Louth LEADER in developing initiatives to support rural communities.
- 1.5 To continue to participate on the Boards of Local Development Agencies.
- 1.6 To promote networks and partnerships to maximise development opportunities and quality of life in the county
- 1.7 To promote an integrated approach to sustainable rural development through the CDB.

Actions in 2005

- LCC works with Louth Leader where appropriate to deliver joint objectives i.e. village/town projects which will add value for tourism and national tidy towns competition. Also in producing Eco news which is a joint project and aims at ensuring greater environmental awareness
- Participation on two cross border projects through environment department, satellite imaging and STEM. Also the Fire service has completed a cross border schools fire prevention programme in October 2005
- A comprehensive review of the Louth CDB strategy has taken place throughout 2005. An Action Plan setting out 77 priority actions for 2006-08 has been agreed and endorsed by Louth CDB.
- LLA representation as listed below.
 - Louth County Enterprise Board
 - Louth County Enterprise Fund
 - Louth LEADER Company
 - Dundalk Employment Partnership
 - Drogheda Partnership Company
 - Louth County Childcare Committee
 - Louth Hospitality
 - East Border Region Tourism Partnership
 - Louth Banbridge Social Economy Project
 - Louth/Newry Community Safety Programme
 - Plato
 - Newry Dundalk Twin City
 - Sustainable Energy Ireland Concerto project
 - Dundalk and Drogheda Economic Development Groups
 - Drake Cross Border Project, Newry
 - Housing Unit Consultative Committee
 - CCMA – C & E Sub-Group
 - Border Midlands & Western Region – Foresight Group
 - Regional Network of Housing Practitioners
- Louth SIM Group meet on a six weekly basis.
- 15 Cross-border projects spanning all directorates currently underway

Strategic Objective 4

- 4.0 To fully support the principle of workplace partnership.
- 4.1 To further develop internal cross departmental co-operation.

Actions in 2005

- Work Place Partnership committees in place
- A number of cross-functional teams are in place.

Strategic Objective 5

- 5.0 To implement the Barcelona Declaration in partnership with local disability interest groups.

Actions in 2005

- Work programme being implemented

Strategic Objective 6

- 6.0 To work with economic development agencies to maximise economic development in the county, including the towns of Drogheda and Dundalk.

Actions in 2005

- Louth Hospitality actively involved in promoting the tourism product in Louth, familiarisation trips being organised for Louth Hospitality Board and Tourism Ireland representatives.
- Drogheda Economic Action Plan 2004-2007 prepared and being presently implemented.
- Economic Development Plan for Dundalk substantially completed.