

## Chapter 6 Housing and Community Facilities

### 6.1 Introduction

This Chapter deals with planning at community and neighbourhood level. Physical planning at this level is not merely about the physical environment but rather extends beyond this aspect to include the concept of stable integrated communities. This involves issues such as the timely provision of education facilities and / or the provision



of facilities for all sections of the population including community facilities, playgrounds, or public transport for example. In essence, planning objectives at the neighbourhood level must encompass the broad themes outlined below;

- Provision of community facilities
- Efficient use of resources
- Amenity and quality of life issues
- Conservation of the built and natural environment

A total of seven character areas have been identified across the Borough. Each of these character areas have been the subject of a community facility audit. Detailed descriptions of each character area are contained within Appendix 7.

In relation to the provision of housing, the plan aims to secure the provision of sustainable new residential communities supported by a range of essential community facilities and services. This requires residential areas that are capable of accommodating the requirements and aspirations of a wide range of household types, sizes and tenures including the provision of supporting community infrastructure. Housing needs and policies are in compliance with the provision of the *Louth Housing Strategy 2009* and national guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

There has been much interest in the provision of residential development in Drogheda over the last decade and this has resulted in significant growth within the town and its environs. Development within the Town Centre, in particular, has resulted in a more effective use of land and enhanced the profile of Drogheda as a major urban centre.

The Council will seek to secure the provision of sustainable neighbourhoods where supporting infrastructure and community facilities are delivered in tandem with the provision of dwellings.

The strategic objective for Housing and Community is:

**Strategic Objective 6** Ensure the provision of socially inclusive residential communities supported by the provision of high quality dwelling units and community facilities.

## 6.2 The Louth Housing Strategy

The *Louth Housing Strategy* is being reviewed as part of the process involved in the review of the Louth County Development Plan and the housing policies contained in this plan for Drogheda are reflective of the provisions and recommendations of the Housing Strategy at county level.

The *Louth Housing Strategy* aims to ensure that:

- Sufficient land is zoned and serviced to meet the housing needs of all sections of the population, both existing and anticipated.
- Affordable housing is available to those on lower incomes.
- A mix of house types and sizes are provided.
- Integration between people of different social backgrounds.
- The strategy requires that 20% of residential development sites, including mixed use development where residential is included, is utilised for social or affordable housing.

### Policy HC 1

Ensure that all applicable development complies with the requirements of the Louth Housing Strategy.

### 6.2.1 Residential Zoning

There are five principal residential land use zoning categories contained in the plan. These are detailed below. It is envisaged that a number of mixed use schemes developed during the course of the plan period will deliver additional residential areas within a wider mixed use context.

At present, there are 121 hectares of undeveloped residentially zoned lands within the Drogheda Borough Council Plan Area. Of these lands 24.27ha are serviced and 96.64 hectares are un-serviced.



If all the residentially zoned lands available were to be developed (both serviced and un-serviced) the current land bank within the Borough could accommodate 4,840 additional dwellings. The resultant population would amount to some 13,135 additional residents. When added to the 2006 population of the Borough (28,973 persons) this would equate to a population of 42,108. This figure

excludes the wider population of the contiguous urban area. This calculation is based on an average density of 40 units per hectare and an occupancy rate of 2.72 persons per housing unit. (Census 2006)

If the current residentially zoned and serviced land bank were to be developed the resultant population increase would be in the order of 2,640 persons. The total Borough population which would result from this development would equate to 31,613 persons.

The population projections set out in Chapter One indicate that the Borough should grow to a population of 36,038 by the end of the plan period in 2017. It is clear therefore that there is more than sufficient zoned land within the Borough to cater for the anticipated growth over the plan period. As such there is no need or justification for the zoning of any additional lands for residential purposes. The only exceptions to this may be for some minor adjustments considered necessary in the interests of orderly development.

### 6.2.2 Social and Affordable Housing

Part V of the *Local Government, (Planning and Development) Act 2000* (as amended) requires, subject to the preparation of a housing strategy by the local authority, that provision be made in residential developments of four or more houses or sites in excess of 0.1 hectares for social and affordable housing. The Louth Housing Strategy states that 20% of sites so



affected must be reserved for social and affordable housing. In making a planning application for residential development, applicants must indicate how they propose to comply with Part V. A planning condition will be imposed requiring the developer to enter into an agreement with the planning authority for the purposes of the delivery of social and affordable housing. However, to encourage the regeneration of the character areas with a large concentration of social housing, the provisions of the Housing Strategy may be relaxed. In the Moneymore/ Newfoundwell and the Rathmullen/ Lagavoureen character areas a relaxation in Part V may apply.

#### Policy HC 2

Secure the provision of 20% of residential sites for social and affordable housing developments except within the Moneymore/ Newfoundwell and Rathmullen Lagavoureen character areas.

### 6.2.3 Housing Mix

An appropriate mix of dwelling sizes and types to accommodate different housing needs and changing demographic patterns within the community is required under the provisions of Louth Housing Strategy.

It is the aim of Drogheda Borough Council to cater for the housing needs of the community on a housing for life basis. Thus housing provision should provide for a range of housing needs which cater for all sectors of society from young single individuals through to families at various stages to older people and those in society with distinct mobility or other needs.

Such an approach is considered appropriate in order to avoid large homogenous housing developments occupied predominantly by a single socio-economic group and to allow families the opportunity to upsize or downsize their accommodation without the need to relocate outside their existing community.



### Policy HC 3

Secure greater social integration, and community ties through the provision of an appropriate mix of house types within residential areas.

#### 6.2.4 Specialised Housing

The Housing Strategy establishes the importance of ensuring an adequate supply of housing suitable for a range of accommodation needs including older people and those with particular physical or other requirements. Where such needs have been identified, the provision of such specialised housing units, including nursing homes, within private developments may be secured through the developer's obligation under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Louth Local Authorities currently provide and assist in the provision of specialist housing accommodation under their social housing programmes. These programmes are regularly updated and their provisions in respect of housing needs will continue to be renewed within the period of the plan.

The location for such specialised housing should have regard to the importance of accessibility by the occupants to local community facilities and services.

### Policy HC 4

Require the provision of special needs housing as part of the implementation of the Housing Strategy and to ensure that such provision is located close to local facilities and services that are appropriately landscaped and wheel chair accessible.

#### 6.3 Social Housing

##### 6.3.1 Housing Programme

Drogheda Borough Council maintains a rented stock of 1,308 housing units (as of the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009) which included an increase of 282 units since 2004 as a direct result of the accelerated building programme delivered by the Council during this period.

Building programmes by the Local Authority are based on an allocation of new home starts from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government on a four year multi-annual programme basis. A Housing Services Plan outlining intended capital projects prepared under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 will be undertaken.

### 6.3.2 Affordable Housing Scheme

Under the 1999 Affordable Housing Scheme, Local Authorities are directly involved in the provision of affordable housing units on council land. A total of 58 houses have been provided by Drogheda Borough Council under this scheme up to November 2009. A further 22 units have been provided under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, during the same period and this number will continue to grow during the lifetime of the Development Plan.

### 6.3.3 Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

The Rental Accommodation Scheme is an initiative introduced to cater for the accommodation needs of people who are in receipt of rent supplement for more than eighteen months and who have a long-term housing need (excluding students or asylum seekers or non-nationals who do not have leave to remain in the state permanently). The scheme is being administered by the Council and it is intended to provide an additional source of good quality rented accommodation for eligible persons to enhance the response of Local Authorities to meet long-term housing need. Drogheda Borough Council has, to date, a total of 57 housing units rented to persons on the Housing List.

### 6.3.4 Social Housing Investment Programme 2009

In February 2009, the government issued the *Social Housing Investment Programme – Licensing Arrangements 2009*. This scheme provides for Local Authorities to lease dwellings for periods of 10 to 20 years from private developers and to rent houses so leased to qualifying applicants instead of the construction of new local authority housing.

### 6.3.5 Voluntary Housing and Co-operative Sector

A number of voluntary housing organisations contribute to the social housing stock within Drogheda. The Council recognises the valuable contribution made by the voluntary housing sector and will continue to cooperate with such groups in the delivery of housing units within the Drogheda area.

#### **Policy HC 5**

Implement Louth Local Authorities Housing Services Plan so as to ensure that all who are in need of housing are provided with suitable accommodation.

### 6.3.6 Travellers

The *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005- 2008* is currently being reviewed in accordance with the requirements of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998.

Drogheda Borough Council has one Traveller Halting Site with 10 bays and also a Traveller Group Housing Scheme with 4 houses at Cement Road.

**Policy HC 6**

Implement the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009.

**6.4 Regeneration of Residential Areas**

The emphasis and need for greater social inclusion requires that in certain residential areas inclusive of adjacent green spaces, regeneration is required. In Drogheda seven areas, namely Moneymore, Yellowbatter, Pearse Park, St Finian's Park, Rathmullen Park, Ballsgrove, Marian Park have been designated as areas for future regeneration.

The aim of the regeneration in the aforementioned areas is to deliver vibrant, sustainable communities with enhanced social and physical infrastructure that will deliver on people's expectations, where people want to live and work now and in the future.

**6.4.1 Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) programme.**

There are seven designated RAPID areas within Drogheda namely Moneymore, Yellowbatter, Pearse Park, St Finian's Park, Rathmullen Park, Ballsgrove and Marian Park. Refer to Map 6.1 Rapid Areas.

An Area Implementation Team (AIT) comprising of community representatives is responsible for the planning and implementation of the RAPID programme at local level it. In co-operation with residents the team seeks to provide innovative

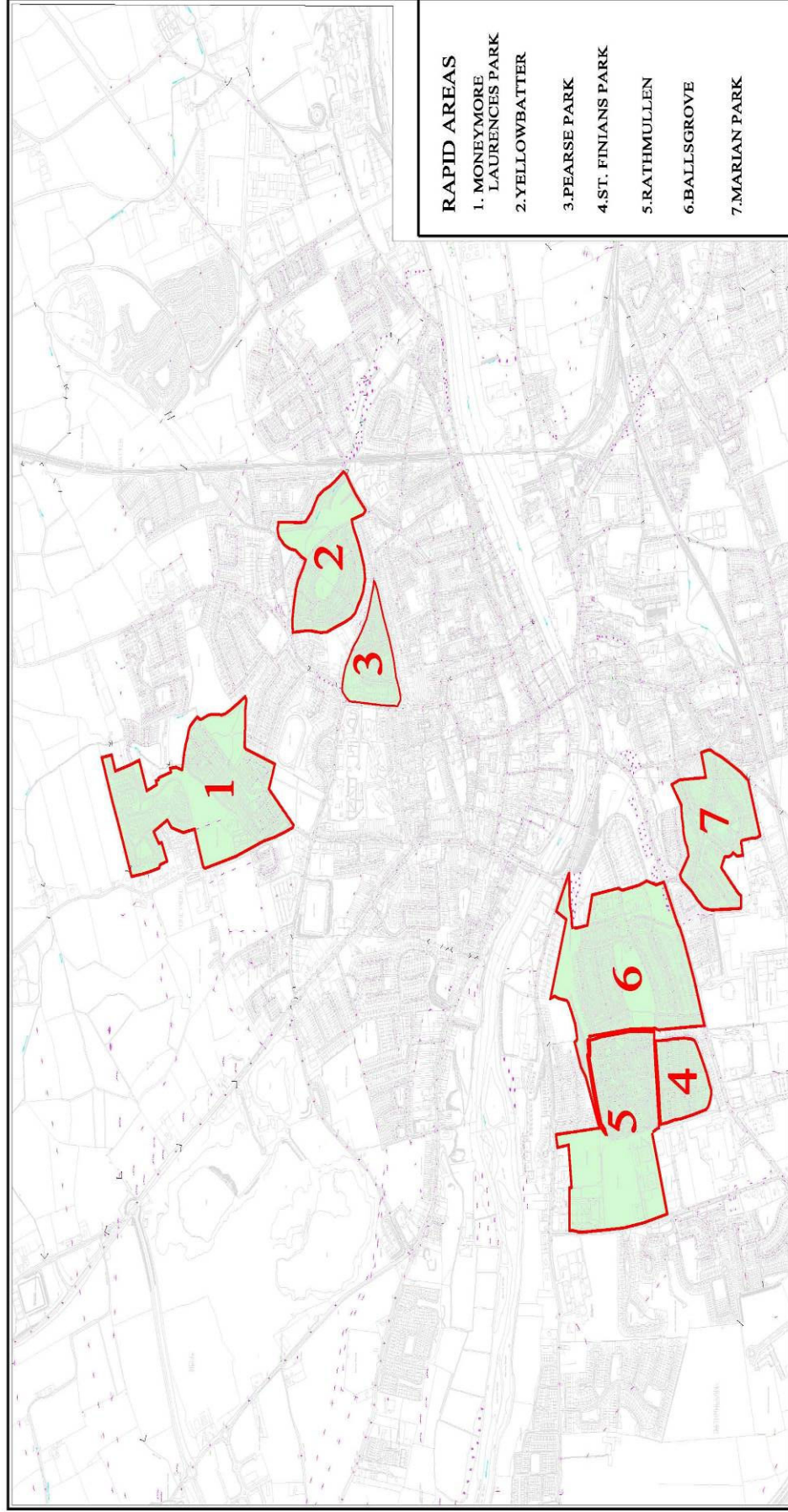


solutions to a range of concerns likely to undermine quality of life. Projects to be implemented in each RAPID Area are based on the outcome of local consultation processes.

The RAPID programmes are implemented under the guidance of a steering committee consisting of representatives of the local community, the voluntary sector, the Council, the VEC, FÁS and the Gardaí. The groups are being facilitated by a programme co-ordinator and report to the Social Inclusion Measures Group. RAPID enables an interagency response to the identified needs of the seven estates.

In Moneymore, Yellowbatter, Pearse Park, St Finian's Park, Rathmullen Park, Ballsgrove and Marian Park, the RAPID programmes have improved community safety by targeting anti social behaviour, delivered new and improved services , developed health initiatives and public education programmes, provided new community facilities and implemented environmental improvements.

Map 6.1: Rapid Areas



Some of the projects that RAPID have been involved in the seven areas are outlined below:

- Creation of a purpose built childcare facility at Ballsgrove and Moneymore
- Development of the Holy Family Community Centre (Ballsgrove) consisting of a café, hall area and offices catering for different age and user groups.
- Refurbishment of a community facility (Lourdes Community & Recreation centre)
- Refurbishment of an estate house for community use in Rathmullen.
- Provision of two multi user games areas, a playground and two all-weather pitches in Moneymore and Marian Park.
- Implementation of St. Finian's Park Remedial Works Scheme.
- Open space regeneration projects at The Meadow, The Glen, and Rathmullen greens.
- Development of new sensory garden at Marian Park.
- Encouraging participation in soccer, hurling and gaelic through a number of targeted initiatives.
- Providing a range of courses on health, parenting drugs awareness etc.
- Establishing a Family Resource Centre in Moneymore.
- Setting up the RAPID Community Environmental Initiative which operates in seven estates.
- Refurbishment of an Alzheimer's Facility.
- Installation of six community based CCTV's.
- Employment of an advocate for older persons.
- Provision of home and /or personal security systems for seventy persons over 65 years old.
- Completed four Youth Training Employment Initiatives.
- Accessed funding for a project manager for Drogheda Breakfast Club, the IT centre at Drogheda Youth Development, Lifestyle Development and Lourdes Community and Recreation Centre.
- Establishment of a traveller primary care unit.
- Endorsing and receiving capital funding for five sports groups.
- Resourced funding to set up a bowling club for older persons.
- Initiation of Drogheda Young person's Network.
- Setting up Drogheda RAPID Forum-Phase 1.
- Initiation of two Estate Leadership Training programmes.
- Progressing development of an integrated youth service with a youth café.
- Development of environmental initiatives such as the Big Hog recycling project
- Joint county wide RAPID Youth & Enterprise Initiative in partnership with Junior Achievement Ireland launched on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009.
- Introduction of three new training initiatives for 18-25 year olds targeting RAPID areas

### **Policy HC 7**

Support and promote the regeneration of Moneymore, Yellowbatter, Pearse Park, St Finian's Park, Rathmullen Park, Ballsgrove and Marian Park and the implementation of the RAPID programme in the designated areas.

## 6.5 Sustainable Residential Development

In order to secure the provision of sustainable residential development and communities, it is important that areas are properly planned and delivered in a phased and co-ordinated fashion in order to ensure that the full range of community facilities, services and infrastructure is provided in tandem with the development of the dwellings. This plan led and co-ordinated approach to new residential development is supported by government policy as articulated in a range of guidance documents and best practice guides that have been published in recent years.



### 6.5.1 Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Sustainable neighbourhoods are described as areas where an efficient use of land, high quality urban design and effective integration of physical and social infrastructure such as public transport, schools, amenities and other facilities combine to create places where people want to live. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has recently published a number of guidelines in relation to residential developments. These include the following: *Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Manual 2009*, *“Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities”*, *“Sustainable Urban Design Guidelines–Standards for Apartments”, 2007* and *“Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities”* as well as the recommendations contained in the Guidelines on *“Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas”* and the accompanying *Urban Design Manual*. The Council will require that all residential developments comply with the Department’s guidelines.

These guidelines contain a number of high level aims for successful and sustainable residential development in urban areas as follows:

- Deliver a quality of life which residents and visitors are entitled to expect in terms of amenity, safety and convenience
- Provide a good range of community and support facilities, where and when they are needed
- Present an attractive and well maintained appearance, with a distinct sense of place
- Are easy to access and find ones way around,
- Facilitate walking, cycling and public transport and minimise the need to use cars
- Promote the efficient use of land and of energy and minimise greenhouse gas emissions
- Promote social integration, and provide accommodation for a diverse range of household types and age groups
- Enhance and protect the built and natural heritage.

*“Urban Design Manual- A Best Practice Guide”* accompanies the Sustainable Residential Guidelines in order to ensure that best practice is employed in the implementation of the

guidelines and in the design of residential areas. The guide is based on answering 12 core questions which encapsulate the range of design considerations for sustainable residential areas and these are summarised in the table 6.4.

**Table 6.1: Design Principles for Sustainable Communities**

Scale	Policy Issue	Objectives
<b>Neighbourhood Area</b>	1. Context	To promote places that are locally distinctive, having regard to their setting and context.
	2. Connectivity	To promote places that allow for ease of movement, permeability and integration.
	3. Inclusively	To promote places that are designed to be accessible to all in terms of social integration, providing physical access to all and configuration of appropriate services and respond to local need.
	4. Variety	To promote places that contain a mixture of uses, are viable and able to respond to local needs.
<b>Site</b>	5. Efficiency	To promote places that make efficient use of land and are designed to respond to the challenge of climate change.
	6. Distinctiveness	To promote places that build upon existing site assets, have a clear identity, are legible and easy to navigate.
	7. Layout	To promote places with layouts and streets and spaces that are people friendly.
	8. Public realm	To promote public spaces that are successful, have vitality, are safe and secure, attractive and accessible to all.
<b>Building</b>	9. Adaptability	To promote places through the design that are adaptable over time.
	10. Privacy and amenity	To promote the design of buildings that provide good standards of amenity.
	11. Parking	To promote the integration of car parking in the urban environment in a way that is well located, secure, and attractive.
	12. Detailed Design	The design of the building should make a positive contribution to the locality.

**Policy HC 8**

Implement the guidelines and best practice manuals issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government as contained in the policy documents

Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Manual 2009, Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities; Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities 2007 and Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments. Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2007 - in the planning for and provision of sustainable communities within new residential areas .

### 6.5.2 Master Plans

Master Plans are a valuable tool in ensuring that the development of large areas of land, particularly where such land is in multiple ownership, is appropriately planned and developed in a site sensitive and sustainable fashion. Master Plans should be prepared by the applicant in consultation with the Planning Authority and should establish strategic planning principles and objectives for each area including phasing, infrastructure provision, community facilities, density, layout, open spaces, landscaping and development design briefs and statements.

The principles elements of Master Plans are detailed below. Whilst this checklist provides a guide to the preparation of a Master Plan, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Therefore, it is recommended that applicants and designers engage in a scoping exercise with the Planning Authority in advance of the preparation of Master Plans in order to ensure that all relevant aspects of the proposed development are included. The agreed Master Plan shall be submitted with planning applications for all areas within the Master Plan boundary.

### 6.5.3 Checklist for the Preparation of Master Plans

- Is the Master Plan consistent with the policies and objectives of the Development Plan or Local Area Plan?
- Is the Master Plan in compliance with the range of guidance documents issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government with regard to design, density, the provision of educational and other facilities and flooding risk.
- Are the Master Plan and design brief reflective of the twelve key considerations set out in The Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide?
- Does it establish an overall urban design framework for the development of the area, including design guidance on quality architectural treatments (materials, height) in respect to topography, urban structure and built form, consistent with the established character of the town and village?
- Is an integrated infrastructure Framework Plan included for roads, cycle and pedestrian paths, bus routes, public lighting and water services?
- Has the principles of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and water conservation measures been incorporated?
- Have an audit of the availability of essential community facilities such as school places, crèches and local shops been carried and where deficiencies have been identified, has provision been made to address these in the Master Plan?
- Does the Master Plan demonstrate how the development connects with the town or village centre, adjoining residential neighbourhoods and planned employment areas in terms of safe and accessible pedestrian and vehicular linkages?
- Does it contain a detailed design brief and guidance on the provision of high quality urban design and built form consistent with or complementary to the established character of the town or village or adjoining areas?

- Particular cognisance should be taken by developers of the provisions contained within the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government's guidelines on The Planning System and Flood Risk Management 2009.

### Policy HC 9

Require developers and landowners to prepare Master Plans to ensure integrated and coherent development of large scale development sites and areas.

#### 6.5.4 Homezone Principles

Homezones can facilitate higher density development due to the provision of on street parking and by designing the streets to act as attractive public spaces, thus reducing the requirement for private amenity space for each dwelling unit. As such, they are most suitable for closely built up urban areas such as much of Drogheda and edge of centre sites. The principals are however, generic and therefore applicable across a range of instances, being especially suitable in areas where higher density schemes are proposed.

Homezones characteristics include:

- Shared surface for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists, with no separate raised pavements. A variety of surface treatments suited to a pedestrian environment, including trees, planting and street furniture. Bollards and street lighting should be incorporated to afford pedestrian protection.
- Features which require drivers to drive slowly, such as speed bumps, ramps, chicanes, unclear junction priorities, and restricted carriageway widths designed for a normal peak flow in the region of 100 vehicles per hour.
- Vehicle pathways should be not less than 3.0m with passing opportunities provided in the carriageway at least every 50m.
- Entrance(s) that are clearly marked by localised signage and physical changes in the street surface.
- A high degree of permeability is important throughout the development, therefore extensive use of cul-de-sacs is not desirable.
- Bus routes within comfortable walking distance in the range 100 – 200 metres.
- One-way streets are not encouraged due to the tendency for vehicle drivers to increase speed in such areas.
- Effective pedestrian and cycle desire lines should be provided.
- Careful consideration of the requirements of people with mobility impairment, including people with physical disabilities, people with sensory impairment, parents with prams, young children and older people. Special attention should be given to surface treatments.
- Incorporation of a wide variety of housing designs and development layouts, including variations in building lines, building heights, deviations in the width and alignment of vehicle paths, a variety of surface treatments and extensive use of street furniture and planting.



**Policy HC 10**

Encourage the use of homezone principles in the design of residential layouts, particularly where higher density developments are proposed.

**6.5.5 Energy Performance of Dwellings**

The EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings (EPBD) contains a range of provisions aimed at improving energy performance of residential and non-residential buildings, both new-build and existing. As part of the Directive, a Building Energy Rating (BER) certificate, which is effectively an energy label, will be required at the point of sale or rental of a building or on completion of a new building.



The current minimum energy performance requirements for residential buildings are set out in the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations 1997 (S.I. No. 497 of 1997). Amendments to the statutory regulations came into effect from the 1st of July 2008 (Building Regulations (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 854 of 2007)). The provisions of these regulations must be complied with.

The Council will encourage both passive and active solar design principles in residential developments in the interest of energy conservation and the reduction of green house gases. Passive solar design refers to matters such as orientation, size of openings and glazed areas, internal layout and avoidance of overshadowing. Active solar design does not rely on site orientation or layout but is incorporated within building design to maximise energy efficiency and includes the use of technology such as solar panels, geothermal heat pumps, and wood pellet burners in conjunction with very high levels of building insulation. In this regard, the council considers it appropriate that at least 25% of all residential energy requirements should be obtained from renewable energy sources. Proposed residential developments should also take into consideration the energy principles detailed in Chapter 9.

**Policy HC 11**

Require applicants for residential developments to demonstrate that a minimum of 25% of the energy requirements of the building is from renewable sources.

## 6.6 Design Guidelines

### 6.6.1 Framework Plans for Seven Character Areas

Over the Plan period Drogheda Borough Council shall develop framework plans for each of the seven character areas. The Framework plans shall examine the existing townscape character of each area and shall make detailed policies on the various design issues including the heights of buildings.

### 6.6.2 Layout

New residential layouts should have user friendly designs to the forefront and high levels of connectivity and integration with existing areas. The aim of all residential layouts should be to prioritise the requirements of non motorised movements thus placing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users to the fore. Development proposals should have layouts which provide for and facilitate all forms of movement based on natural desire lines in order to create a permeable interconnected series of routes that are easy and logical to navigate. Thus, for example, excessively long cul-de-sac layouts should be avoided.



Housing units should be focused on the streets and create active frontages by facing the front door directly onto the street. The streets should be designed as places where people live, instead of roads, thereby helping to creating a suitable environment whereby pedestrians, cyclists and children have priority. Traffic calming measures should be incorporated into the design and layout of the development rather than by the retro fitting of measures such as speed humps.

### 6.6.3 Security / Defensible Space

All proposals for new residential developments should be in accordance with the principles of “*defensible space*”. The key feature in defensible space is the importance of designing layouts which provide passive surveillance and some degree of control over access, thus enhancing the “ownership” of an area by its residents.

Public lighting should be designed to ensure that there are no dark alleys or other un-illuminated public areas. Housing should overlook car-parking areas and bus stops. Designers are advised to liaise with the local Gardaí at an early stage in the design process in order to secure advice in relation to the elimination of aspects of the design that might give rise to anti-social behaviour.

### 6.6.4 Flexibility

Housing units should be designed so as to be flexible, allowing for extensions to be built at a later stage. Larger housing units, designed to be split into separate residential units or home based workspaces, may be acceptable if such an option is designed into the building at the outset, including appropriate provision of car parking and concerns regarding residential amenity have been addressed.

### 6.6.5 Access for all

In all proposals for new residential development, adequate provision should be made to enable people with mobility impairments to safely and independently access and use a building. When designing residential layouts, provision for movement of people with mobility impairments should be included at the design stage. Such provision should include access to open space, public transport facilities and other public areas.

### 6.6.6 Lifetime Housing

Lifetime housing developments and units are designed to accommodate the changing needs of the groups, families and individuals who will occupy them over the course of the house's lifetime. These needs will vary as each individual's circumstances change and the homes are designed to be inherently flexible in this respect. Lifetime homes should be physically accessible and easily adaptable at minimum cost with minimum disruption. The principles of universal, inclusive, barrier free design must be demonstratively applied where possible.

### 6.6.7 Building Lines

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

#### Policy HC 12

Ensure that a high degree of building flexibility is incorporated into the design of new dwellings, including adaptability to lifetime housing needs and provision of accessibility for people with impaired mobility.

### 6.6.8 Infill / Backland Development

Infill development is development located in gaps between existing buildings. Backland development is development located to the rear of existing buildings which has due regard to the character and scale of surrounding built development and respects the historic development of the area. Development on these sites should have due regard to existing surrounding development in terms of design, scale, height and building line should be in keeping with the existing development and should not be detrimental to the local existing residential amenities in the area.

## Density

In the case of backland housing developments outside of the Town Centre, it will be at the discretion of the Planning Authority to permit a higher density, only if such higher density is considered appropriate to the character of the area and to that of adjoining development and would not be detrimental to the residential amenities of the existing adjoining properties.

Piecemeal or ad-hoc backland development will not be permitted where such development would jeopardise the comprehensive and integrated development of adjoining backland areas. Only comprehensive assemblages of suitable sites will be considered, particularly in the Town Core.

## Design and Scale

The design and scale of the proposed development should be in keeping with the surrounding character of the area. The proposed design, orientation and massing shall not cause any unacceptable overbearing or overshadowing on existing dwellings and the applicant will be required to demonstrate that there are no adverse effects on the existing buildings. The following design principles should be considered:

- Where taller buildings are proposed within an established residential area-building heights tapering downwards towards the boundary.
- Avoidance of overlooking.
- Provision of adequate private and public open space, including landscaping where appropriate.
- Adequate internal space in apartments.
- Suitable parking provision close to dwellings.
- Provision of ancillary facilities which are linked effectively with local neighbourhood centres.

## Access

Access to backland development shall be by way of a separate designated access and shall not interfere with the existing accesses to residences. Proposed developments shall provide for access to surrounding lands which have potential for backland development and proposed arrangements and shall be submitted for agreement by the Planning Authority with the planning application.

## Materials and Form

Materials and form shall respect those which are prevalent within the immediate vicinity of the site. Photographs and examples shall be submitted with the planning application for agreement with the Planning Authority.

## Open Space

The proposal shall demonstrate that an adequate supply of informal and formal public open space is available within the development site. However, on brownfield sites in schemes of exceptionally high architectural quality and whose innovative layouts are in close proximity to public parks or other natural amenities, a relaxation of the open space

standards may be permitted. The emphasis in these cases will be on qualitative open space rather than on quantitative standards in line with the Department's Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines.

#### **6.6.9 Extension to Residential Properties**

Planning applications for extensions to residential properties should ensure that the proposal does not:

- Detrimently affect the scale, appearance and character of the existing dwelling
- Conflict with the existing building in terms of materials and finishes
- Cause any overshadowing or overlooking on adjoining properties
- Lead to a reduction in garden size of more than 25% or 25sq.m whichever is greater.

#### **6.6.10 Accommodation for Older People and Dependent Relatives**

The demand for accommodation to meet the needs of older people and dependent relatives will inevitably increase due to the rise in average life expectancy. In recent years this has led to a demand for custom built extensions to family dwellings or the conversion of garages or other structures within the curtilage for this purpose. The Planning Authority sees considerable merit in this form of accommodation for older and dependent people and will favourably consider any such proposal subject to the following.

The proposed development shall:

- Be single storey and attached to the existing dwelling
- Be linked internally to the existing dwelling
- Must not have more than 2 bedrooms and the gross floor area must not exceed of 50 square metres
- Not have a separate access provided on the front elevation of the dwelling

Where it is proposed to convert and/or extend an existing garage or outbuilding within the curtilage for this purpose, planning permission will depend on whether the development provides a modest scale of accommodation only and whether or not the unit remains in the same ownership as that of the existing dwelling on the site. Where an extension to an existing garage or outbuilding is required in order to provide a satisfactory level of accommodation, the existing and proposed additional floor area shall not exceed 50 square metres.

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

Applicants seeking to provide for accommodation for dependants may, at the discretion of Drogheda Borough Council, be requested to provide proof of need, in writing, for the extension.

**Policy HC 13**

Facilitate the provision of accommodation for older people and dependant relatives within the curtilage of the existing family home subject to compliance with the above criteria.

**6.6.11 Bus Routes and Stops**

Within larger new residential developments, provision should be made for penetration by public transport when designing internal circular distribution routes. The overall layout should contribute to the efficient and logical movement of buses around the area. Bus routes should be identified and included in proposed layouts.

**6.6.12 Public Transport Catchments.**

A bus route will only be viable if there are enough people within a 400m radius (or approx. 5 min. walk) of each stop. If bus stops are provided at 250 – 350 m intervals, a minimum density of 98 – 100 persons per hectare (35 units per hectare) along a corridor 400m wide each side of the route will provide a potential passenger market which will prove attractive to bus operators.

The arrangement of land uses so that journeys are busy both ways (rather than full buses departing residential areas in the morning, and returning empty), increases the viability of the route.

Careful consideration should be given to the design of bus routes including the location of bus stops and lay-bys. Bus stops should be provided in locations where the majority of dwellings are at a maximum distance of 400m and should be located as close as possible to the main public road.

Bus passenger facilities should be located as close as possible to the main pedestrian access in accordance with logical pedestrian desire lines. Pedestrian routes from the bus arrival and departure areas should avoid the need to cross any heavily trafficked roads and the route should avoid unnecessary changes in level and unnecessary street furniture. The design of surface treatments adjacent to bus infrastructure should highlight pedestrian needs and include dropped kerbs, tactile surfaces and clear signage.

**Policy HC 14**

Require that Master Plans and planning applications for large scale residential developments design and provide bus routes, bus stops and lay-bys in such a manner as to ensure that the majority of residents are no more than 400 metres from a stop.

**6.6.13 Pedestrian and Cycle Infrastructure: General Principles**

Pedestrian & Cycle routes should be as direct as practicable between commercial and residential areas and major attractors such as shops, schools and other community

facilities including public transport. The routes should make efficient use of local topography and attractive natural features. Routes should minimise likely conflicts with vehicular traffic but should be inter-visible between each other. The layout and detailed design of the internal road network should ensure that non-residential vehicular traffic finds the main distributor roads more convenient than local access roads. In this respect, it is recommended that non residential traffic be deterred in residential areas particularly, through the use of speed restraint measures including vertical and horizontal displacement. Within purely residential areas, consideration should be given to shared surface layouts and “Homezone” configurations.

### **Cycle Requirements**

In order to promote greater cycle usage, developers will be required to provide cycle facilities within development sites and to provide linkages beyond the site. Development proposals should identify the optimal clear cycle desire lines both within the development site and to major local attractors such as housing areas, shopping, leisure, educational and public transport facilities. These desire lines should then be prioritised within layouts in order to give safe priority and advantage to cyclists over motorised traffic.

Segregated or shared pedestrian / cycle tracks should be provided throughout developments. Excessive gradients should be avoided where possible. Where only a limited number of vehicular entrances are proposed, the possibility of providing additional horizontally controlled cycle / pedestrian accesses should be investigated. Bicycle parking areas equipped with suitable upright parking features should be provided at locations as close to pedestrian entrances to the development as possible.

### **Pedestrian Facilities**

Pedestrian facilities share much of the features of cycle provision and both can often be provided in tandem. Pedestrian facilities should be as direct as practicable in relation to local facilities both within and beyond the development. Routes through and around the development should be both attractive and safe.

#### **Policy HC 15**

Require that Master Plans and planning applications for large scale residential developments identify pedestrian and cycle paths within the site and externally to adjoining residential areas, existing services and community facilities.

#### **6.6.14 School / Educational Transport Requirements**

Schools have become the focus for debate in relation to the journey to school; this has become a significant element particularly in morning rush hour traffic. In relation to existing schools, much thought is being given to initiatives seeking to provide safe and viable alternatives to the car, such as the “walking bus” and dedicated cycling routes.

**Policy HC 16**

Encourage the provision of safe and viable alternatives to the car for school traffic such as walking buses and dedicated cycling routes.

**6.7 Residential Development Standards**

**6.7.1 Density**

The Planning Authority recognises the benefits of increased residential density as recommended in the DoEHLG's '*Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities 1999*'. The need for higher densities was based on consideration of trends towards smaller average household sizes, the need to encourage the provision of affordable housing and to support a more efficient use of energy in the residential developments. *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2007* reviewed and revised the 1999 *Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, particularly with regard to appropriate densities in smaller towns and villages.

The revised guidelines recommend that new development should contribute to maintaining compact forms and its scale should be in proportion to existing development. The guidelines also require that new development should provide for easy connectivity to existing facilities, especially by pedestrians and cyclists, and that 'leap-frogging' of development at some distance from the existing built up area should be avoided.

Having regard to the DoEHLG guidelines on residential density and the need to maintain compact urban form, residential development within the Plan area shall comply with the density requirements set out below.

**Table 6.2: Residential Density Targets for Drogheda Borough (Dwellings per ha)**

<b>Location of Development</b>	<b>Density per Hectare</b>
Town Centre	Minimum 50
Brown field sites	Minimum 50
Drogheda Transport Development Area	Minimum 50
Development within identified district / neighbourhood centres	Minimum 50
Public transport corridors out of town centre	Minimum 50
Inner suburban infill	50- 100
Outer suburban /green field sites	35-50 (overall average 40)

**6.7.2 Permitted Densities along Key Transportation Corridors and within District and Neighbourhood Centres**

Residential development in excess of 50 units per hectare (20 units per acre) will be considered in new Neighbourhood Centres. These higher densities may also be permissible in the immediate environs of existing District Centres and Neighbourhood Centres subject to the agreement of Drogheda Borough Council. Higher density

development may also be permissible along the following key transportation road corridors;

- North Road
- Dublin Road
- Donore Road

Other key routes may be considered only if the proposed development is served by existing or proposed public transport routes. Each proposal for any road corridor including those highlighted above will be considered on a case by case basis.

In all cases such densities will only be permitted where it is the opinion of the Borough Council that the proposal is innovative and well designed and that the standard of layout is such that high density is fundamental in achieving a quality, aesthetically pleasing residential environment.

#### **Policy HC 17**

Apply the density standards as detailed in sections 6.7.1 and 6.7.2 above.

### **6.7.3 Private Amenity Space**

The provision of some form of external private amenity space is an essential part of the quality of a residential environment. The provision of an adequate sized external space which is free from undue observation is a fundamental part of residential amenity. It is a function of development planning to ensure, as far as is practically possible, that maximum privacy is accorded each residential unit.

#### **Private Amenity Space Design Characteristics**

- Paved / Grassed area permitting sitting space, small childrens play area and washing / drying area.
- Space for planting / garden storage
- Space for potential dwelling extensions
- Access to sunlight for at least part of the day

#### **New Houses (Terraced / Semi-detached / Detached)**

Private amenity space should normally be provided to the rear of houses. In certain layouts a combination of private and semi-private spaces may be acceptable. An example of such layouts might provide small private areas opening directly onto semi-private enclosed landscaped space which is dedicated solely for the use of residents. This approach is most suitable within enclosed developments.

#### **Apartments / Duplex Dwellings**

Private open space in apartment and duplex style developments should be provided in a number of ways including balconies, terraces, patios, roof gardens, enclosed winter gardens, courtyards, and private yards. All private open spaces should be readily accessible, secure and usable for occupiers.

**Table 6.3: Private Amenity Space Standards**

<b>Dwelling Unit Type</b>	<b>Min. Private Open Space Standard</b>
Houses - 1 & 2 bedrooms (Greenfield/suburban)	60 m <sup>2</sup>
Houses – 3 plus bedrooms (Greenfield/suburban)	80 m <sup>2</sup>
Houses (Town Centre / Brownfield)	50 m <sup>2</sup>
Apartments/Duplexes (Greenfield/suburban)	
1 bedroom unit	20 m <sup>2</sup>
2/3 bedroom unit	40 m <sup>2</sup>
Apartments/Duplexes (Town Core / Brownfield)	
1 bedroom unit	10 m <sup>2</sup>
2/3 bedroom unit	20 m <sup>2</sup>

Where it is considered appropriate in the interests of protecting residential amenity, the Planning Authority will attach planning conditions requiring that certain categories of exempted development permissible within the curtilage of a private dwelling shall not take place. This may include domestic garages, sunrooms and extensions among others.

#### **Policy HC 18**

Require that private amenity space is provided in accordance with the quantitative standards set out in table 6.6.

### **6.7.4 Public Open Space**

#### **Qualitative Requirements**

The provision of public open space within residential developments is a key requirement for high quality residential areas. The basic principle governing public open space is that provision should be made for both 'active' and 'passive' recreation. Accordingly, open space networks should be an integral part of an overall development and provide linkages to adjoining areas of residential and community facilities. Open space networks should be organised along passive green linear parks, with local or pockets of active open space, community facilities and schools located close to or alongside them.

In proposed developments, public open space should be arranged to facilitate the retention of existing landscape features such as mature trees, hedgerows, biodiversity rich areas, streams, rivers and archaeological remains. The provision of high quality landscaping, including the provision of semi mature trees, should be an integral part of any residential development. Finished levels for public open space relative to adjoining

areas and full details of hard and soft landscaping, play equipment and street furniture should be provided with the planning application.

Passive surveillance, accessibility and linkages to other public open spaces, existing and proposed, should be incorporated into the layout. Peripheral areas, narrow tracts, back land areas and poorly proportioned areas will not be acceptable. No area of public open spaces should be less than 200 square metres in area and no edge or boundary shall be less than 10 metres in length.

It is recommended that public open space should be provided in a variety of forms, to cater for the active and passive recreational needs of the community, including the provision for:

- Informal 'kick-about' areas
- Playgrounds for a specific age group i.e. local equipped areas for play (LEAPS) as specified by the National Playing Fields Association for 4-8 year olds and neighbourhood equipped areas for play (NEAPS) for 8-12 year olds.
- Circuit training facilities
- Formal playing fields
- Village greens in larger developments
- Landscaped gardens
- Small parks or natural parkland accommodating native flora and fauna
- Seating and rest areas
- Paved areas should be designed using sustainable urban drainage principles

Table 6.4 contains standards that apply to the provision of playing facilities and pitches within residential areas.

**Table 6.4: Provision of Play Facilities**

Number of dwellings	Min Quantity & type of multi use sports facilities required.
100- 199	Children's play area within designated open space
200- 499	One juvenile playing pitch sized up to GAA/ Soccer pitch size.
500- 599	One full size pitch sized to GAA/soccer dimensions
600- 999	One full sized pitch to GAA/soccer dimensions and a training area.
1000+	At least two full sized pitched and a training area.

( Source: Louth Local Authorities, Sports and Recreation Strategy 2006-2012)

Smaller housing developments falling within the range of 50-100 dwellings may be required to provide a children's play area within designated open space at the discretion of Drogheda Borough Council.

### Quantitative Standards

A minimum of 14% of the total site area shall be provided as public open space within new residential developments. Where the site includes an area which is zoned for recreation and amenity purposes in the Plan, applicants may be permitted to provide up to 10% public open space within the area so zoned. In such circumstances, a minimum of 4% public open space shall be provided as pocket parks at convenient locations throughout the development.

In green-field sites or those sites for which a Local Area Plan is appropriate, public open space should be provided at a minimum rate of 15% of the total site area. This allocation should be in the form of useful open spaces within residential developments and, where appropriate, larger neighbourhood parks to serve the wider community;

In other cases, such as large infill sites or brown field sites, public open space should generally be provided at a minimum rate of 10% of the total site area;

In institutional lands and 'windfall' sites which are often characterised by a large private or institutional building set in substantial open lands and which in some cases may be accessible as an amenity to the wider community, any proposals for higher density residential development must take into account the objective of retaining the "open character" of these lands, while at the same time ensuring that an efficient use is made of the land. In these cases, a minimum requirement of 20% of site area should be specified; however, this should be assessed in the context of the quality and provision of existing or proposed open space in the wider area. Whilst the quantum of open space may be increased vis-à-vis other sites, the amount of residential yield should be no less than would be achieved on any comparable residential site. Increasing densities in selected parts of the site subject to the safeguards expressed elsewhere may be necessary to achieve this.

Where open space standards cannot be achieved in restricted town core, infill or brown field sites, more intensive recreational facilities may be provided. A financial contribution towards public open space or recreational facilities in lieu of the provision of public open space may be acceptable in certain circumstances e.g. infill sites where the area is already served by adequate open space and recreational facilities. Any such contribution will be spent on the provision, upgrading or maintenance of facilities in the area.

The quantitative standards for open space required in residential developments are set out in Table 6.8.

**Table 6.5: Quantitative Standards**

	Percentage of the site area
Standard Requirement*	14 %
Institutional Lands	20 %

*\*Where residential developments are in close proximity to public parks or other natural amenities or in the town core, a relaxation of the above standards may be permitted. Where open space standards cannot be achieved, more intensive recreational facilities may be accepted by the Planning Authority. Where neither of the aforementioned options are deliverable, a contribution in lieu may be acceptable towards the costs of the provision of recreational amenities in the area by the Local Authority.*

**Policy HC 19**

Require that the quantitative standard of a minimum of 14% of the gross site area is provided as public open space in all new residential developments and that the qualitative requirements described above are adhered to.

Ensure that no area of public open space is less than 200 square metres in area and no boundary is less than 10 metres in length.

**6.7.5 Car Parking**

Car parking provision is important, particularly in low density suburban sites but less so within the town core or close to public transport facilities. Car parking spaces should be provided in accordance to table 6.9 below and designed to comply with the principles of passive surveillance.

**Table 6.6: Residential Car Parking Standards**

Land Use Zoning	Car Parking (Spaces per Unit)	
	Dwelling	Apartment
Town Centre & Docklands	1	1
All Other Zonings	2	1.3

The above standards are applicable in respect of both conventional housing and apartments/duplexes. However, within the Town Centre and Docklands the above standards may be relaxed and a financial contribution in lieu of the provision of car parking by the developer may be acceptable.

**Policy HC 20**

Ensure that car parking provision in residential areas is in accordance with the standards set down in table 6.9, except within certain town centre developments where a financial contribution in lieu may be acceptable.

**6.7.6 Privacy and Spacing between Buildings**

The design and layout of a development should ensure sufficient privacy for its intended residents both inside and outside the dwelling.

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

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

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

### 6.7.7 Internal Space Requirements

Recommended minimum internal space requirements for houses and apartments are set down in the DoEHLG documents *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities 2007* and *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2007)*. Internal space requirements and room sizes are primarily determined by the use of individual rooms and spaces. Living room and bedroom space should be well proportioned in terms of floor shapes and ceiling heights so as to provide a high quality living environment for the occupants.

It is important that the recommended standards should be applied to provisions made for storage areas, balconies, patios and acceptable room dimensions. In line with the recommendations set out in the guidelines, this Plan requires that the minimum standards for apartment sizes should not be taken as the norm and the majority of apartments in any scheme should exceed the minimum standard. It is considered that this is a reasonable and necessary requirement to ensure that new apartment development will provide for a sustainable and attractive living environment for future residents. The requirement of the Council in respect of apartment developments are set out in Appendix 3.

#### Policy HC 21

Require that all proposed residential developments, including apartments, comply with the internal space provisions as set out in Appendix 3.

Require that the minimum apartment sizes set out in Appendix 3 are exceeded by at least 20% in respect of not less than 50% of the total number of units in the scheme.

Ensure that in any apartment development of 30 or more units, 40% of the units should exceed 80sqm in floor area.

### 6.7.8 Waste Storage General Principles

Adequate provision should be made for the storage, segregation and recycling of refuse and for convenient access for its deposit and collection as detailed in table 6.10 below. Refuse enclosures should be designed so that they are integrated with the building or boundary enclosures and are well screened from public view or adjoining residences.

Suitable provision for general storage space should be planned in all dwellings. Externally accessible space should also be considered for storing garden equipment and tools, as well as play equipment and bicycles. Refuse storage space should be externally accessible from the front of the house and be large enough to allow for the separation of recyclable waste into a number of receptacles.

**Table 6.7: Provision for Waste Storage**

Unit type	Provision requirements
Detached/Semi Detached houses	Direct external access should be made available from the rear of the dwelling to the public road for collection.
Terraced / Duplexes	Communal bin storage facilities should be provided at secure, well screened locations convenient to the units served and for the purposes of collection
Apartments	Communal bin storage facilities should be provided in a secure well ventilated space within the basement of the apartment block convenient to the units served and for the purposes of collection

**Policy HC 22**

Ensure that provision is made for the storage, segregation and recycling of refuse and for convenient access for its deposit and collection.

**6.7.9 Naming of Estates**

The Planning Authority will require the naming of residential development to reflect local or historical place names in accordance with the Department of the Environment and Local Government circular entitled '*Naming of Streets and Roads, Numbering of houses and the Use of Irish*'. The naming of all residential estates shall seek and gain the approval of the Louth Local Authorities Place Names Committee.

**6.7.10 Estate Management**

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

**6.7.11 Taking in Charge of Housing Estates**

Local Authorities are required under the provisions of Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 to take in charge roads, open spaces, car parks, sewers, water mains and drains where requested to do so by the person carrying out the development or by a majority of the owners or occupiers of the houses involved. The Council's policy and procedures in relation to taking in charge of housing estates is set down in the policy document *Procedures for Taking in Charge of Recently Completed Housing Estates*. This document is attached as Appendix 4 of this Plan.

### Policy HC 23

Take in charge, on request, housing developments where the development has been completed to the satisfaction of the planning authority in accordance with the permission granted and any conditions to which the permission is subject.

#### 6.7.12 Conversion of Dwellings to Apartments

Conversion of dwellings to apartments will normally be permitted in the Town Core where:

- The building is considered suitable for sub-division and the proposal provides for acceptable residential amenity provisions
- The proposal would not hinder traffic movement or prejudice the safety of road users or pedestrians
- The proposal includes amenities comprising refuse disposal facilities, drying areas and access to private outdoor amenity space
- The proposal is for self contained flats
- Where appropriate, the proposal should include convenient off-street car parking without detracting from the amenity and character of the property itself or neighbouring properties
- The proposal is in accordance with the guidance and other policies set out in this Plan

#### 6.7.13 Utility Services

All service cables including ESB, Eircom, Broadband and television shall be laid underground throughout residential areas. Service facilities such as transformer stations shall be sited in an unobtrusive manner.

Meter boxes should not be positioned on the front elevation of dwellings so as to be visible from the adjoining public road.

Public lighting in residential areas and along pedestrian and cycle ways should be provided in accordance with the latest ESB requirements at the time of the commencement of development and should be the most energy efficient models available.

It shall be the responsibility of the developer to provide public lighting in accordance with ESB requirements. In considering whether to take lighting in charge, the Council will have regard to whether the lighting in any particular area serves the wider general public.

All individual water and drainage pipelines serving individual dwellings shall be connected to the mains system in public areas and in general, no mains systems shall be provided on what are intended to be private areas such as front gardens of dwellings. In addition, all stopcocks, sluice valves and hydrants shall be placed in public areas.

### 6.7.14 Boundary Walls

#### Rear Boundary Treatment

A 2 metre high masonry wall should be provided along the rear boundary of all new residential proposals.

#### Front boundary treatment

Where residential proposals front directly onto local distributor roads or other high capacity routes a set back and boundary treatment shall be provided to such a standard as to protect the safety of the residents.

## 6.8 Community Facilities

Successful communities require a wide range of local services and facilities. These include employment, commercial, childcare, educational, health, civic amenities and leisure based activities. All community facilities, insofar as it is practical, should be readily accessible from residential areas by safe, convenient and direct walking and cycle routes. In this regard, the layout of new residential estates needs to facilitate pedestrian and cycle movements to nearby services and facilities.

It is essential that large scale residential developments in the Plan area are carried out in such a manner as to provide for the provision of childcare facilities, healthcare, nursing homes, community buildings, sports facilities and amenity schemes in tandem with the completion of houses. To facilitate this, applicants for planning permission for residential developments on



sites over one (1) hectare (2.47 acres) or for more than 50 residential units, will be required to submit an audit of community facilities as part of the planning application. This should provide details of all available community facilities in the locality and where a shortfall in facilities exist, demonstrate how this should be made good, either through provision on site or such other means as are acceptable to the Planning Authority.

### Policy HC 24

Require applicants for residential developments on sites of one (1) hectare or over or for more than 50 residential units to provide an audit of existing community facilities in the locality and where a shortfall in facilities exist, demonstrate how this should be made good, either through provision on site or such other means as are acceptable to the Planning Authority.

### 6.8.1 Schools and Education

In July 2008, the Department of Education and Science and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published a joint document entitled *The Provision of Schools and the Planning System - a Code of Practice for Planning Authorities*. This is part of a package of initiatives designed to facilitate the timely and cost-effective provision of schools, particularly primary schools and school related infrastructure within the planning system, coupled to new mechanisms for site identification and acquisition

The existing schools within the Drogheda Plan area are included in Table 6.8

**Table 6.8: Existing Schools within Drogheda Borough Council area**

Primary School	Secondary Education
Presentation Convent, Ballymakenny Road	St Oliver C.C, Rathmullen
Scoil Aonghusa, Sundays Gate	Drogheda Institute of Further Education, Twenties Lane
Marymount National School, Ballsgrove.	St Mary's Diocesan, Beamore Road
Christian Brothers, Sundays Gate	St Josephs CBS, Newfoundwell
St Patricks, Bothar Brugha	Sacred Heart, Sunnyside
Scoil Mhuire Fatima, Dublin Road	Our Ladys College, Greenhills
St Mary's Congress Avenue	
St Peter's, Bolton Square	
St Bridget's, Bothar Brugha	
St John's and St Paul's, Rathmullen	
Ballymakenny Girls School, Ballymakenny Road.	
St Joseph's, Mell	

The Department of Education and Science calculates that an additional 55 classrooms shall be required to cater for increasing annual primary enrolments in the wider Drogheda Area up to 2014/15. This is based on a calculation of 28 pupils per classroom. For the town of Drogheda (including environs) itself, it is estimated that approximately 40 new classrooms will be required. The Department of Education will facilitate the creation of additional capacity at existing sites where appropriate. There may be a potential solution during the lifetime of the Plan for the provision of such capacity at a new school to be provided in Mell. A further new school may be required in the Borough area during the lifetime of the Plan.

New schools should generally be located close to, or within the main residential areas so that there is the opportunity for children to walk or cycle to school. Schools should also be as close as possible to community facilities such as playing fields and libraries. Multi-campus school facilities will be encouraged with allowance for reduced land take for shared facilities. The school should be designed so that the wider community may benefit from the building outside school hours. Given the spread of new housing within the Borough boundary it is anticipated that a new school will be required on either side of the River Boyne. The Council will cooperate with the Department of Education and Science in the identification of suitable sites.

The Department of Education shall carry out a detailed analysis of the post-primary school requirement for Drogheda and the wider area.

**Policy HC 25**

Co-operate with the Department of Education and Science, County Louth VEC and other relevant agencies in the identification of need for and provision of school sites.

**6.8.2 Drogheda Institute of Further Education (DIFE)**

The original Drogheda Institute of Further Education (DIFE) building is located on King Street. The new building along Twenties Lane opened in September 2003. DIFE provides a valuable tertiary educational facility for Drogheda and its wider hinterland.



DIFE offers almost 40 courses in a variety of disciplines. The courses are validated by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and other recognised professional bodies. Further Education courses are offered to school leavers, and adults returning to education. The courses facilitate the transition either to employment or further study. DIFE works closely with employers to ensure that courses are relevant and up to date.

The college is expanding rapidly, in May 2009 planning permission was granted for a 590sq.m extension accommodating demonstration rooms, a commerce/computing room, additional classrooms, a large lecture hall, as well as ancillary accommodation. It is anticipated that DIFE will continue to grow over the Plan period.

**Policy HC 26**

Support the expansion and development of Drogheda Institute of Further Education.

**6.8.3 Third Level Education Facility**

At present there is no facility for third level education in Drogheda. During the course of the plan, this is likely to be addressed at a location yet to be determined. Further details of this initiative are contained in Chapter 3, Economic Development, Tourism and Retailing.

#### 6.8.4 Childcare Facilities

Childcare may be defined as “full day-care and session facilities and services for pre-school children and school-going children out of school hours”. It is recognised that the increased female participation in the labour force, together with social change, has resulted in a major increase in the demand for childcare. Access to good quality childcare facilities contributes to the social, emotional and educational development of children. *The Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities* which were published by the DoEHLG in 2001, advocates a more pro-active role by the planning authority in the promotion of increased childcare provision while at the same time protecting residential amenities. The Department’s guidelines recommend the provision of a twenty unit crèche or child care facility for every 75 houses within new developments. Where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that there are sufficient childcare spaces available in the locality, the Council will not require that additional child care facilities be provided. Where this applies, developers will be required to provide other community benefits by way of direct provision or financial contribution in lieu, as agreed with the Planning Authority.

*The National Childcare Strategy 2006 - 2010* produced by the Department of Health and Children and the *Louth Childcare Strategy* both aim to improve the availability and quality of childcare facilities to meet the needs of both children and parents. A new National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010 is expected to create a further 50,000 childcare places over the prescribed period. It may be anticipated that this programme will be replaced during the course of the Plan.

There are at present 30 childcare facilities in Drogheda. These are registered with the Louth Childcare Committee and these facilities, both private and public, provide sessional and full-day services. It is recommended that prospective applicants for residential development should consult with the Louth Childcare Committee and the Health Service Executive in order to ensure that childcare facilities are appropriately deigned and to avoid duplication, where adequate facilities currently exist.

##### **Policy HC 27**

Ensure that adequate and suitable childcare facilities are provided as required within new residential development having regard to DoEHLG guidelines and the *Louth Childcare Strategy*.

Seek the provision of additional community benefits by way of direct provision or financial contribution in lieu of the provision of childcare provision where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that there are sufficient childcare spaces available in the locality.

#### 6.8.5 Nursing Homes

Due to better nutrition and the advances of modern medicine, the life expectancy of Irish people is extending. As the average age of the population increases, the need for nursing and care facilities for older people will continue to grow. A nursing home may be defined as a facility where care of older, sick or disabled people is provided. Such facilities can range in size from a small domestic dwelling with a capacity of two or three bed spaces to large institutions with hundreds of bed spaces.

Nursing homes generally fall into three categories:

- Custom built facilities on green field or brown field sites
- Change of use of existing buildings such as large dwellings, guest houses and hotels
- Small scale conversions or extensions to existing family homes

The Planning Authority considers that nursing homes should be located within or adjacent to built up areas where:

- Public utilities such as water and sewerage facilities are available
- Opportunities for greater social inclusion and integration into the community exist
- Accessibility by means of public transportation is available
- Visitors can combine trips to see patients and relatives with other trips such as shopping and worship.

In assessing planning applications for nursing homes the Planning Authority will have regard to the following:

- Site location and suitability - having regard to the zoning objectives for the area and the site's size, shape and adjoining buildings and its compatibility with other uses in the area.
- Accessibility –access must be provided in a manner that is safe and adequate to meet the traffic flows anticipated and adequate parking provision in accordance with the standards set down in this Plan. The location of nursing homes along public transportation routes is highly recommended in the interest of sustainability and to facilitate employees, relatives and visitors who depend upon public transport.
- Design and layout – should respect the characteristics of the site and fit in comfortably within the landscape and adjoining properties. Applicants should consult with the Health Service Executive with regard to internal design and layout at the design stage.
- Amenity - sufficient amenity space and landscaped areas should be provided to meet the needs of the residents and provide an attractive setting.
- Utilities – connection to public water supply and foul drainage will be required. Private water supply and foul drainage will only be considered as temporary measures where connection to public facilities will shortly be available.

### **Policy HC 28**

Support the provision of nursing homes, day care and respite facilities for older people

#### **6.8.6 Primary Health Facilities**

The provision of high quality health services is considered vital in providing for the needs of the Borough. There are a number of public, voluntary and private agencies responsible for the provision of health-care facilities in the Borough with the Health Service Executive (HSE) - being the primary body responsible for the management and delivery of health and personal social services. It is necessary that good quality, accessible health care is provided within the local community.

Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda located on Cross Lanes provides a general acute hospital service to a large catchment area of Louth, Meath and North Dublin. It is also the centre for many regional services including



Emergency Medicine/ Trauma and Symptomatic Breast Care.

The Council fully supports the continued operation and development of hospital facilities within the town. The Hospital is the largest single employer in the Study Area, accounting for approximately 1,300 employees. There is a link between health and economic development, and in turn to quality of life. Populations with poor health as well as poor education conditions find it harder to achieve sustained economic growth and generally have a poor quality of life. Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital is recognised for the vital role it plays in health care provision and employment.

#### Policy HC 29

Support the continued development of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital as a major acute hospital

#### 6.8.7 Private Medical Centres and Hospitals

A private medical centre or hospital is owned by a for-profit company or a non-profit organisation and privately funded through payment for medical services by patients themselves, by insurers, or by foreign embassies. In Drogheda and across Ireland as a whole, people are increasingly opting to avail of private medical facilities. As such the demand for private medical centres and hospitals is on the increase. It is anticipated that this trend shall continue over the Plan period.

Private hospitals and medical care facilities are often based on the development of multidisciplinary medical teams. New medical facilities require a substantial amount of space and must be accessible to all members of the public including the elderly and less able bodied.

When accessing applications for private medical facilities and hospitals the Planning Authority shall have regard to the following matters:

- **Locality.** The Planning Authority considers that private medical facilities and hospitals would be best located within or adjacent to existing Neighbourhood Centres. They would also be considered on civic community or institutional lands and at upper floor level on Town Centre lands or where there is an existing agglomeration of community

uses. The Planning Authority shall have regard to the existing character of the area in which the proposal is to be located and the compatibility of the use in such an area.

- **Siting.** Due regard should be had to the size of site, its configuration and any physical characteristics and constraints attaching thereto, including the position of the buildings.
- **Traffic.** That access requirements can be met. That the existing road network can satisfactorily accommodate any additional traffic from the proposal. On and off street parking and servicing requirements can be met taking into account provision for staff, (full-time and part-time) visitors, ambulances, service vehicles, taxis etc and bearing in mind the capacity of the site/area to accept them.
- **Amenity.** Due regard will be given to the effect of Private hospitals and medical care facilities on the amenity of area in question, both visually and with regard to noise, nuisance and general disturbance.
- **Design and Layout.** In cases other than change of use it is important to ensure that the design and layout of buildings on site are satisfactory in themselves and in relation to adjoining properties. The Planning Authority will have regard to the height, scale, massing, space around buildings, distances from boundaries etc and to the provision of garden amenity space for use by residents.
- **Landscaping.** The impact of any proposals on existing landscaping will be considered together with the need for the provision of new or additional landscape treatment on any proposed site.
- The facilitation of public transport needs should be met in terms of road layout, carriageway layover provision, passenger waiting facilities and the siting of such infrastructure in close, safe proximity to the principle entrances of the medical centre / hospital. Public transport infrastructure should, wherever possible avoid the need for users to negotiate vehicular traffic when accessing the building (s)

### Policy HC 30

Promote the development of Medical facilities within the town, Neighbourhood centres and close to public transport nodes.

### 6.8.8 Community Buildings and Sports Facilities

Community buildings, sports and recreational facilities play a very important role in fostering a sense of community identity and well being. With the substantial increase in population in the County and projected further growth, it is important that the necessary facilities are provided in the town and in new residential developments.



In 2006 the *Louth Local Authorities Sports and Recreation Strategy 2006-2012* was published. The aim of this strategy is to establish a set of strategic objectives to increase opportunities for sport, recreation, play and leisure for the inhabitants of the County. The Council will seek to secure the implementation of this strategy over the period of this Plan. A specific set of actions for Drogheda have been established through the strategy. A number of the actions have already become reality and it is anticipated that more of the infrastructural matters will be addressed during the course of the Plan.

#### **Policy HC 31**

Ensure that adequate provision is made for community building, sports and recreational facilities, including playing fields and childrens play areas in Master Plans and residential proposals, and other developments having regard to the Louth Local Authorities Sports & Recreation Strategy 2006-2012. These may include facilities such as a cycle network for the Borough.

Resist the loss of existing social and community facilities and playing fields.

#### **6.8.9 Dual Usage of Existing and New School Buildings**

Drogheda Borough Council recognises the importance of providing existing communities with a varied range of community facilities but acknowledges that it is difficult to retro fit new community buildings into existing built up neighbourhoods. Often schools are the hubs of neighbourhoods and accessible to a wide section of the population. School buildings are seldom used in the evening time, at weekends or during holiday periods. The opportunity therefore arises to utilise existing and new school buildings for community purposes at times when the school is not in operation. Drogheda Borough Council considers that this would result in an effective use of resources and would contribute to sustainable development.

#### **Policy HC 32**

Encourage and facilitate co-operation between relevant bodies to ensure that existing and new schools can be used for community purposes.

#### **6.8.10 Disabled Persons**

The Barcelona Declaration 2002, of which Ireland is a signatory, advocates the right of disabled people to equal opportunities and recognises their contribution to society and the environment they live in. Under the terms of the Barcelona Declaration, the Council consulted with people with disabilities and adopted the *Louth Local Authorities Disability Implementation Plan 2008 -2015*. This Plan outlines actions that the Local Authority will take to ensure that persons with disabilities and impaired mobility have unrestricted access to their buildings and services.

In addition, Part M of the Building Regulations 1990 requires that all public and private buildings should have provision for suitable access for disabled persons.

There has been much criticism in the past of public buildings where the available facilities are inadequate and in particular the location of the public rest rooms. Although

all public buildings shall be compliant with Part M of the Building Regulations, it is also essential to require the provision of resting facilities and public toilets adjacent to all entrances/ exits.

**Policy HC 33**

Seek to ensure that public buildings include rest facilities for those with special needs and public toilets at main public entrance/ exit.

**6.8.11 The Library Service**

Louth County Council is the authority responsible for the library service in the town. The library facility is not merely concerned with the lending of books but it also hosts numerous visits by school classes, adult students and other groups. Progress has been made in the expansion of IT facilities for the public. This includes courses for public use on a number of terminals, public cards for use on public internet terminals and the provision of a wide selection of CD ROMs.

The Mobile Library which is managed by Louth County Council is a service that aims to reduce inequalities in accessing information brought about by a variety of reasons such as a lack of transport. The Mobile Service also serves the less advantaged areas in the community, visiting Local Authority housing estates throughout Drogheda. Special attention is given in stock provision to provide a service to mothers and young children and to the elderly. The mobile library also services some of the settlements beyond Drogheda Borough which act as feeders to the town.

**Policy HC 34**

Support the continued development of library service in Drogheda and the wider south Louth area.