



Purpose of the Strategy

The Planning Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area was commissioned by Drogheda Borough Council, Louth County Council and Meath County Council to establish a cohesive and interlinked Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area for the period to 2024.

The Strategy provides a framework within which the future planning of the area will take place. It will inform the content and implementation of present and future statutory plans.

Profile of the Study Area

The Strategy is informed by a comprehensive overview and profile of the Study Area, including population analysis, examination of residential, industrial and commercial development, transport and economic activity.

The current zoned landbank in the Study Area for both employment and residential use is substantial. There are approximately 580 hectares of residentially zoned land in total in the core Study Area that are undeveloped at present. This landbank could accommodate a population of between 50,000 to 60,000 persons, thereby potentially trebling the overall population of Drogheda from the current estimated level of approximately 32,300 persons to around 90,000 persons.

Further to this, there are approximately 400 hectares of greenfield and other undeveloped sites zoned for employment uses, of which approximately 146 hectares are located in the Borough area (including approx. 50 hectares at the Old Quarry site), ca. 145 hectares are located in County Louth and ca. 113 hectares in County Meath (including the recently completed IDA Business Park). This is in addition to the established employment areas in the town. It is evident that there is a sizeable landbank of zoned land in the Study Area capable of accommodating new employment uses.

The Policy Context

There are some variations with regard to population projections for Drogheda within the different published planning policy documents such as the National Spatial Strategy, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region and the Drogheda Borough Development Plan. Population projections range from an ultimate population horizon of 40,000 to 70,000 persons.

Although Drogheda has a population larger than other Primary Development Centres in the Greater Dublin

Area and is comparable for example to the Gateway of Dundalk in the Border Region, it is clear that the town suffers from its location *'at once in both regions, and at the same time in neither'*. The aim of this Strategy is therefore to determine the future role and function of Drogheda within the wider policy framework.

The policy context for East Meath is set by the adopted Local Area Plans which are derived from national and regional guidance. This Strategy proposes that the population horizon for East Meath going forward should reflect the levels envisaged under national, regional and local guidance and should ensure that East Meath plays a role as an important residential, local employment and community location, with a supporting role for other larger centres including Drogheda.

Key Issues

Some of the key issues and pressures facing the Study Area that have been identified in the course of the Strategy are set out below:

Regenerating the Town

- Maintaining and developing Drogheda as a major centre for economic, social and cultural activity.
- Making Drogheda more attractive for visitors and residents alike.
- Maintaining the compact footprint of Drogheda.
- Building on the heritage and townscape value of the town.

Achieving Sustainable Development

- Redressing the commuter trends to Dublin.
- Expansion of the town on good design principles and in a coherent and phased manner.
- Addressing the needs likely to be generated by the exceptional levels of residential growth anticipated for the Study Area.
- Providing for adequate community and social infrastructure for the areas of residential expansion.
- Redressing the social infrastructure deficit of the East Meath area.

Realising and Managing Economic Growth

- Building on Drogheda's strategic locational benefits.
- Matching employment with population growth.

Creating an Integrated and Environmentally Sound Transport Framework

- Promoting sustainable transport including improved public transport and walking and cycle facilities.
- Improving linkages between East Meath and Drogheda.

Developing a Recommended Strategy

The Strategy put forward in this report represents the preferred option developed from a process of evaluating eight different land-use scenarios for the Greater Drogheda Area. Each land-use scenario examined different possible strategies for the delivery of the projected population and employment growth in the area over the study period. The scenarios were scored against a set of evaluation criteria to establish the major elements of a preferred Strategy.

The Recommended Strategy: Key Principles

Urban Form and Urban Expansion

- Prioritisation of development of town centre sites (particularly on brownfield sites).
- New development to be medium to high-density in town core and along transport corridors.
- Intensification of development along river banks, including the consideration of development to the west of the town (having regard to technical and environmental implications).
- New expansion areas to north and south of the town to provide for residential, local employment, and district scale recreation and amenity facilities.
- Promote managed expansion from town centre to periphery of the Study Area.
- Examine specific opportunity for redevelopment of current industrial complex beside river on Rathmullen Road to provide for mainly residential development.
- Promote the street as the basic element of urban form and design.
- Ensure that road infrastructure is related to, appropriate to, and subservient to the roll out of development land.
- Ensure key infrastructure services are in place before development of an area begins.

Transport and Access

- Ensure early and full completion of the Port Access Road.
- Phase the development of north-south extensions with transport corridors.
- Ensure good east-west internal penetration (linked to neighbourhood centres and to north south town connections) through new northern and southern extension areas.
- Provide for improved bus transport network including a new bridge crossing broadly to the east of Scotch Hall, to unlock further north-south bus services including linkage through to East Meath.

- Provision of access to railway station from Marsh Road to be explored.
- Plan for a new bridge crossing to accommodate anticipated growth in local based movements, as new residential and employment populations are secured within the Core Study Area.

Economic Development

- Develop the old port area to provide for future employment.
- Promote intensification of employment at Donore Road.
- Provide for employment focused mixed-use hub to east of train station.
- Explore potential mixed use core at Collon Road (R168) area.
- Consider provisions of a regional park/leisure facility at the disused quarry.
- Ensure that new port related employment and facilities are encouraged and accommodated along the riverside (either side as appropriate).

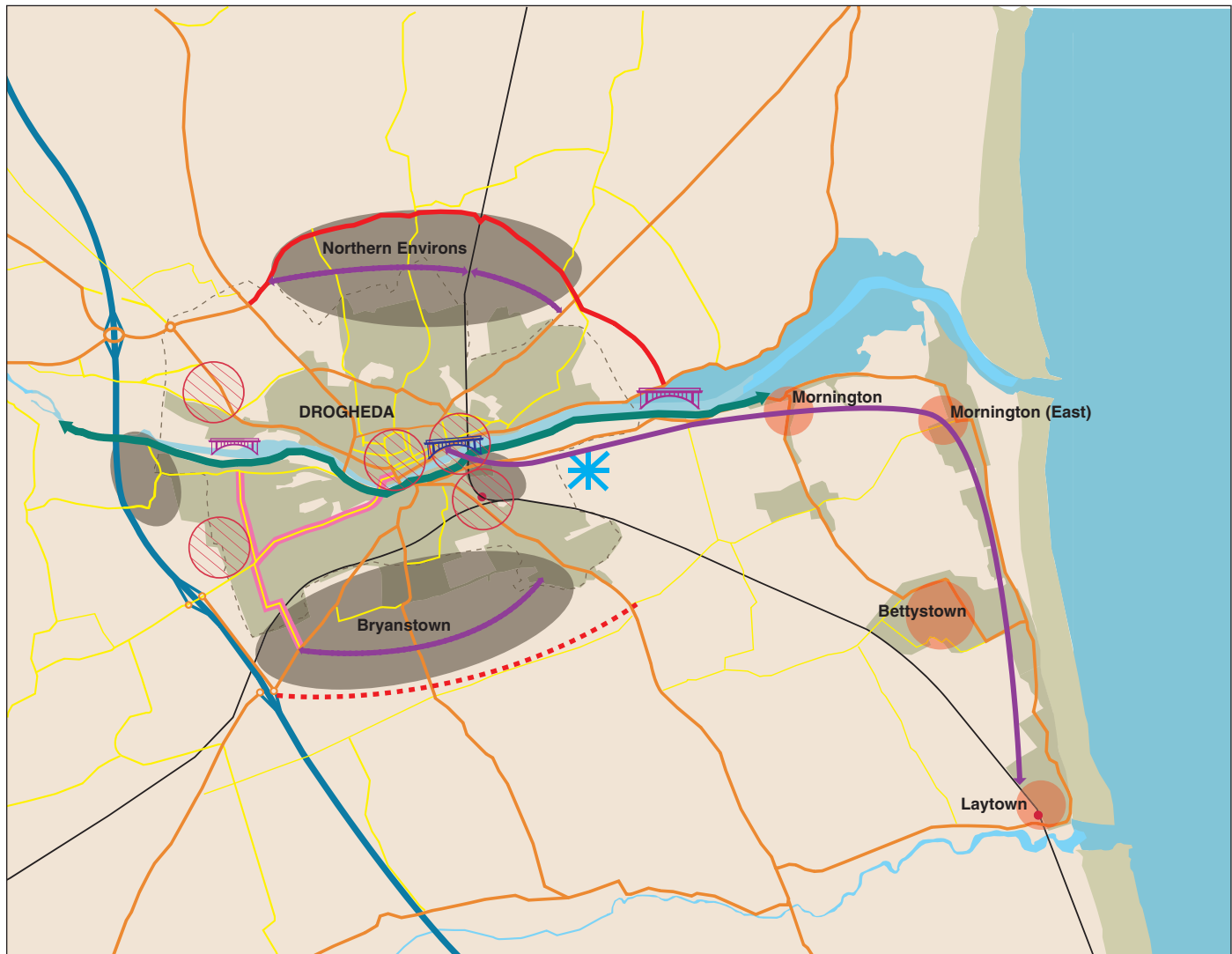
East Meath and Surrounding Area

- Promote stronger linkages between the East Meath area and Drogheda.
- Provide for organic local growth in the surrounding villages.

See Map I for a graphic illustration of the above.



De Lacey Bridge Scotch Hall



Map I - Preferred Scenario Map

Preferred Scenario	
Land Use Proposals	
	Core Area Residential Growth Areas
	Core Employment Hub
	East Meath Growth Areas
	Intensify Land Use
	Amenity Corridor
	Strategic Land Reserve
Transport / Traffic Proposals	
	Northern Port Access Road
	Southern Access Road
	Local and Public Transport Movement
	Potential New Bridges (Options)
	New Bridge (Bus only)

	Third Class Road
	Regional Road
	M1 Motorway
	Railway line

Population Growth Estimates

The estimates contained in the Strategy indicate that the zoned landbank in the Core Study Area could accommodate an additional 60,000 persons thereby potentially trebling the population of Drogheda to 90,000 persons. However, it is considered unlikely that a full roll out of lands will be achieved in the 20-year period of the Strategy. Looking at the exceptional rates of growth for the period 1996 to 2002 in which Drogheda and environs grew by 22.7 per cent and extrapolating this growth rate into the future, the population of Drogheda would still only reach approximately 64,000 people in 2024 (at an annual average growth rate of approximately 3.5%).

The ultimate horizon in terms of additional population to 2024 as proposed in the Strategy has been set at 65,000 people for Drogheda (core Study Area) in line with regional guidance and 24,000 persons for the East Meath (North) area in line with the zoning under the East Meath Local Area Plan.

One of the recommendations of the Strategy is that no substantial further land should be zoned in the East Meath area to ensure that a reasonable balance in terms of population between Drogheda and East Meath is maintained.

The overall population projections are set out in Table I below.

Future Residential Development

The projected growth was further analysed in terms of its land use implications for Drogheda. Ultimately the key determinant of successful residential development is the associated roll out of infrastructure and community facilities. In summary, the four periods set out in Table 1 below can be described as follows:

Period 1 - to 2008

- Infrastructure to facilitate development of the environs will be progressing through the planning system.
- Development of established zoned landbank within the Core Area.
- Progress on planning and consent procedures for the Northern Environs.

Period 2 - 2008 to 2014

- Improvements in infrastructure in the north and south environs area.
- Northern Environs: early delivery of the Port Access Route (R132-R166) and related services; approximately 2,100 new dwellings to be constructed in a sequence working northwards from the established town area; commencement of works on neighbourhood centre facilities.
- Bryanstown area: first phase development progressing from east to west.

Period 3 - 2014 to 2020

- Northern Environs: completion of neighbourhood centres and associated community and park facilities; development of a further 2,500 dwellings.
- Bryanstown area: residential development continues.
- Build out of lands to the east of the railway station as a transport node and employment hub.
- Regeneration of the North Port Area with a substantial residential element.

Period 4 - 2020 to 2024

- Build out of remaining lands in Bryanstown area and the Northern Environs.

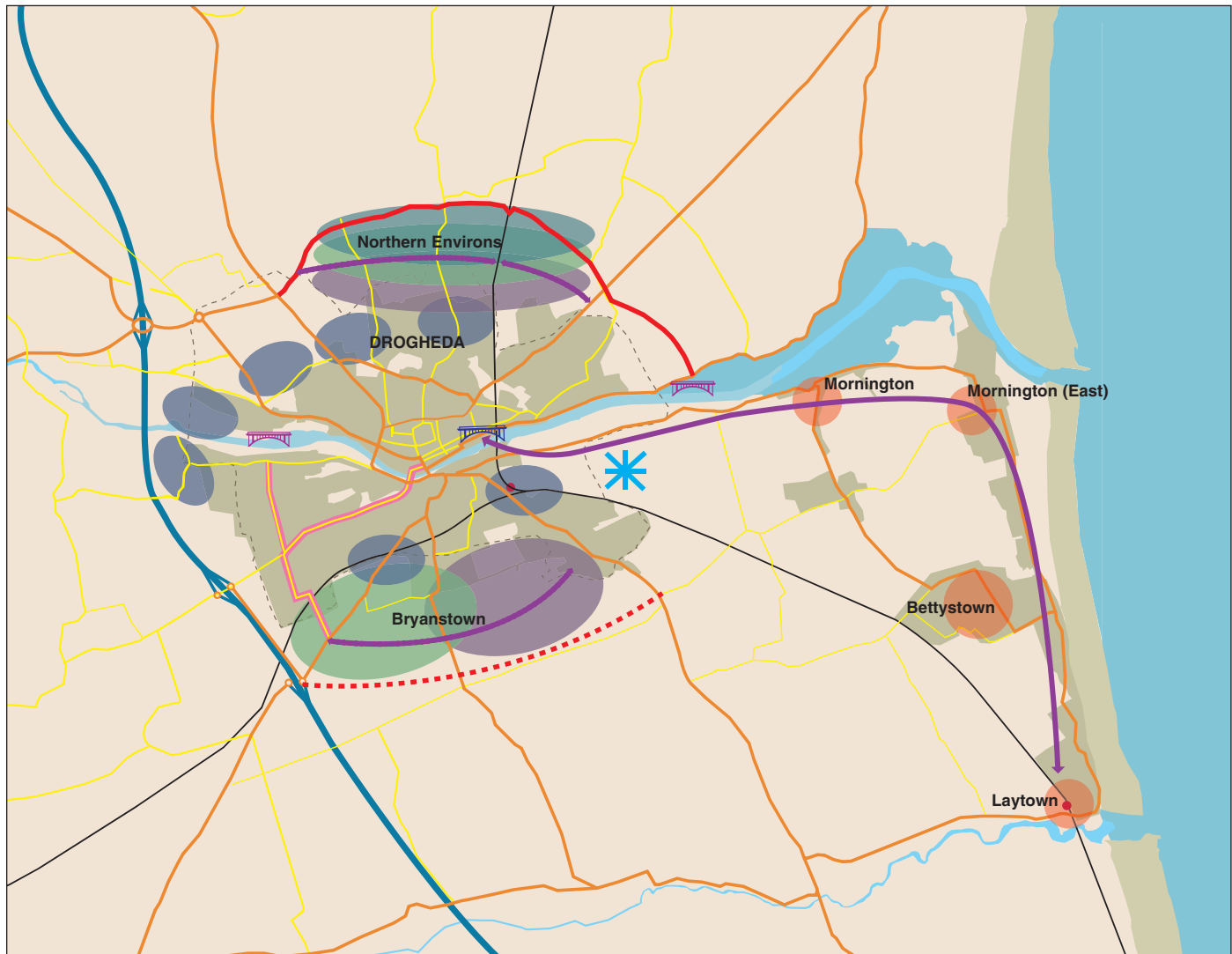
Map II overleaf illustrates an indicative roll out of residential development lands. This is conceptual and shows overlapping phasing rings in the major new districts at Northern Environs and Bryanstown where specific phasing approaches have been/are being developed by the respective Planning Authorities.

Employment Growth

The current jobs ratio (i.e. the total number of jobs divided by the labour force) is approximately 0.79 in the core Study Area. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area indicate that in order to secure a good balance between resident population and local employment opportunities, the jobs ratio should not fall below 0.7. Applying this ratio, the overall area of Drogheda and environs and East Meath (North) will need to provide for an additional 15,500 jobs to maintain a reasonable level of employment in line with the anticipated population growth.

Table I Population Growth Projection

Area	2004 Current Population	2024 Ultimate Horizon	2008 Period 1	2014 Period 2	2020 Period 3	2024 Period 4
Drogheda + Environs	32,300	65,000 (+32,700)	36,300 (+4,000)	48,000 (+11,700)	59,500 (+11,500)	65,000 (+5,500)
North East Meath Meath (Laytown, Bettystown, Mornington, Donacorney, Julianstown)	9,400	24,000 (+14,600)	12,000 (+2,600)	17,000 (+5,000)	21,500 (+4,500)	24,000 (+2,500)
Total	41,700	89,000 (+47,300)	48,300 (+6,600)	65,000 (+16,700)	81,000 (+16,000)	89,000 (+8,000)



Map II - Indicative Roll Out of Development Land

Indicative Roll Out of Development Land	
	Zoned Land (Core Area) - Period 1
	East Meath Growth Areas
New Development Areas	
	Period 2
	Period 3
	Period 4
	Northern Port Access Road
	Southern Access Road
	Strategic Land Reserve
	Potential New Bridges (Options)
	New Bridge (Bus only)
	Local and Public Transport

	Third Class Road
	Regional Road
	M1 Motorway
	Railway line

Provision of Infrastructure and Community Services

The neighbourhood principle is fundamental to the phasing of the Strategy. Where greenfield town expansions are planned, each phase of development should create a sustainable neighbourhood, with appropriate social and physical infrastructure to be provided in conjunction with new housing. A social infrastructure deficit currently exists in many parts of the Study Area. Constructive solutions are required from developers to this problem before subsequent phases of development are allowed to proceed. To ensure flexibility, the proposed phasing schedule is aimed to be sequential rather than time-specific.

The requirements for social infrastructure and 'piped' services are correlated against the four phases of the Strategy period. A detailed overview of all infrastructure services that will be required to support the projected population is provided in Table II (at the end of the Executive Summary).

Spatial Development and Urban Design Framework

The following provides a summary of the future spatial development and urban design framework for the town of Drogheda and surrounding areas.

The Town Centre

Drogheda town centre is regarded as the core of the Study Area and the focus of commercial, services, residential and transport activity. Objectives include;

- Recognition of the north and south quays as the heart of the regeneration of the town.
- Provision of a new bridge crossing along the quays.
- Development of the area to the immediate east of the train station as a commercial core.
- Preparation of detailed urban design proposals for the redevelopment of the key opportunity areas of Old Abbey Lane, West Street and the 'Backlanes'.

The River

- Recognition of the river as an untapped amenity resource and symbol for the town's rejuvenation, improvement and development.
- Promotion of the amenity corridor that runs along the river from the Dowth complex through Drogheda and out to the Boyne Estuary with its fine beaches and European amenity area status.

Donore Road Corridor

- One of three key approach corridors to the town.
- More cohesive development to take place along this route to reinforce its role as a gateway to the town.
- Development of high-density schemes with strong architectural presence and provision of good quality open space.
- Designation of the Donore Road Area as a major employment hub building on strengths of the businesses already established in the area.

Town Expansion Areas

Significant town expansion areas are proposed at the Northern Environs (Co. Louth) and at Bryanstown (Co. Meath). The Northern Environs Plan is now adopted. Fundamental to the success of the Strategy is the careful phasing of development so that all necessary services and facilities are provided in tandem with new housing. These areas must not be developed in isolation, but need to be integrated with developments located within the Borough area.

Northern Environs

- Incremental build out of area in a planned and managed sequence.
- Early and full completion of a Port Access Road.

Bryanstown

- Progression of a Master Plan to guide development of the area.
- Development of landbank in an east-west direction.
- Implementation of M1-N1 link road scheme running East-West.

Mill Road/ Marsh Road District (east of current zoned area)

- Consideration of possible changes to land use and function within this area which is not part of current zoned landbank.

East Meath (North) - Immediate Area of Influence

This is the area that has the strongest link with Drogheda and equates to the 'East Meath Coastal Zone'. Objectives for this area include;

- Promotion of stronger linkage to Drogheda i.e. bus corridor and cycle track.
- Guidance of future planning for the area by detailed Local Area Plans to provide for more sustainable growth, in line with service capacity and environmental constraints.
- Direct economic orientation of settlements to Drogheda for employment and opportunity (rather than continuation of commuting focus to Dublin), as economy of Drogheda develops.

- Protection of coastline and European Sites, in the context of the tourist potential of the area.
- Knitting together the urban fabric, to provide for cohesion of settlement in this area, and ensure maximum social benefit is gained from new development.
- Link any further development with a clear provision of essential services.
- Link the further development of the area with strict community gain objectives to redress the social infrastructure deficit.
- Promote Bettystown as the main centre for the overall area in line with the Local Area Plan.

Broader Area of Influence

This equates to the remainder of villages in the hinterland area of Drogheda within Counties Meath and Louth. Objectives for this area are as follows;

- Allow for organic growth in line with the development framework set out in the Local Area Plans.
- Preserve high value agricultural land.
- Preserve green belt.
- Include policies in the Development Plan with regard to one-off housing in accordance with Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidance.

Transport Strategy

The Strategy seeks to deliver a movement framework incrementally, which is coordinated with the delivery of new development. The movement framework includes all forms of transport and attaches the most importance to travel by sustainable modes of transport, including walking. The main elements of the transport strategy can be summarised as follows:

Road Infrastructure

- Implement a Town Centre Traffic Management Scheme in the short term to maximise the crossing capacity of the existing bridge infrastructure and facilitate bus priority through the core town area.
- Provide a pedestrian, cycle and bus only bridge link in the short to medium term across the River Boyne to improve access to the station by sustainable travel modes.
- Northern and Southern Environs Local Distributor Roads will form an important component of the new residential developments around the town and also a key part of the future public transport network. The local distributor roads should be constructed in line with the development of the adjacent land.

- Construct a Western River Crossing in the medium term to accommodate the increase in demand for cross-river peak period travel by car.
- Upgrade the Donore Road in order to facilitate future peak period traffic volumes.

Public Transport

- Upgrade of the McBride Rail Station in the short term to establish it as a true high profile multi-modal interchange in the 'centre' of the town and link with the proposed bus network.
- Introduce additional bus routes in line with the realisation of development corridors.
- Provide Park and Ride Sites at Donore Road and Northern Environs in the medium term (or possibly earlier if a source of temporary subsidy can be established).
- Consider provision of a rail station for the Northern Environs as a long-term aspiration subject to the successful growth of the Northern Environs.



View from Dominic's Bridge



The Viaduct

Economic Development Strategy

The Strategy focuses on Drogheda's economic profile, likely future trends and growth sectors and the steps that can be taken locally to optimise future economic performance. The recommendations set out in the Strategy are also relevant to help maintain jobs in existing key sectors. Objectives include;

- Ensure the availability of a skilled labour pool.
- Improve accessibility, both internal (within Drogheda) and external (connecting with other locations).
- Promote the development of infrastructure (e.g. electricity, gas, water, telecoms, waste management) business expertise (e.g. legal, financial), and services (notably top class hotel accommodation) at competitive cost.
- Ensure the provision of adequate and flexible employment space to accommodate expansion on foot of technological or procedural changes.
- Encourage Start-ups/ Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs).
- Promote awareness and perception. Employers will only consider a location if they are aware of it and perceive it as having the capacity to provide for their requirements.

The availability of a skilled labour pool is influenced by the presence of location attractors, as well as facilities for further education and training/retraining, to enable workers to keep up-to-date and deal with economic restructuring. Such factors include;

- Good quality, competitively priced housing.
- Good transport links between home and work.
- Further education and training/retraining opportunities.
- A strong and positive town identity, visual appearance, and extensive open and civic areas.



Millmount Museum and Martello Tower

Strategy Implementation

The programme and implementation of a multi-disciplinary strategy, which applies across the boundaries of three local authorities, requires the coordination of land use, economic and transport development.

The success of the Strategy is closely related to the capacity of key projects to attract financial support, be it from public or private sectors. The main sources of finance are seen as central government, developer contributions and special project leverage.

Implementation of the Strategy must be carefully managed and co-ordinated to ensure its success. It is recommended that a *Drogheda 2024 Steering Committee* be established from amongst the three local authorities. The Steering Committee will act as the forum for high level co-operation and co-ordination amongst the three local authorities.

Table II Proposed Infrastructure Provision for Drogheda and Environs (D&E) and East Meath North (EMN) for each period of the Strategy in line with the projected population (as set out in Table I)

Period 1 to 2008	Period 2 to 2014	Period 3 to 2020	Period 4 to 2024
Community Services (indicative)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor 'playing' space: 9.6ha (D&E) and 6.24ha (EMN) 2 Primary Schools (1 D&E and 1 EMN) 2 Doctor's Surgery (1 D&E and 1 EMN) 3 Corner Shops (2 D&E and 1 EMN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor 'playing' space: 28.08 ha (D&E) and 12 ha (EMN) 4 Primary Schools (3 D&E and 1EMN) 2 Post-Primary Schools (1 D&E and 1EMN) 7 Doctor's Surgery (5 D&E and 2EMN) 1 Indoor Pool (D&E) 3 Public Houses (2D&E and 1EMN) 8 Corner Shops (6 D&E and 2 EMN) 3 Local Shopping Areas (2 D&E and 1EMN) 3 Community Centres (2 D&E and 1 EMN) 1 Library also: Post Offices, Churches and Youth Clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor 'playing' space: 26.4 ha (D&E) and 10.8 ha (EMN) 4 Primary Schools (3 D&E and 1 EMN) 1 Post-Primary Schools (D&E) 7 Doctor's Surgery (5 D&E and 2 EMN) 3 Public Houses (2 D&E and 1 EMN) 8 Corner Shops (6 D&E and 2 EMN) 2 Local Shopping Areas (D&E) 1 Community Centre (D&E) 1 Library 1 Sports Centre 1 Golf Course also: additional Post Offices, Churches and Youth Clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor 'playing' space: 13.2 ha (D&E) and 6 ha (EMN) 2 Primary Schools (1 D&E and 1 EMN) 2 Post-Primary Schools (1 D&E and 1EMN) 3 Doctor's Surgery (2 D&E and 1 EMN) 1 Public Houses (D&E) 3 Corner Shops (2 D&E and 1 EMN) 2 Local Shopping Areas (1 D&E and 1 EMN) 2 Community Centre (1 D&E and 1EMN) also: additional Post Offices, Churches and Youth Clubs
Infrastructure Services			
<p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trial well drilling / groundwater exploration Emergency works for increased abstraction from the River Boyne Site Investigation Contract & Production well drilling New 7.4 MI/d groundwater source & new 4.5 MI Reservoir at Donore New 5 MI/d groundwater source and 5 MI storage at Kiltrough Staleen WTW & Roughgrange Abstraction Refurbishment & Staleen WTW to North Drogheda trunk and West delivery mains Kiltrough tower to Julianstown, Gormanstown and Balloy Reservoir Distribution Mains Kiltrough tower to South Drogheda Distribution Main Water Conservation and Leakage Detection Programme <p>Sewage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lagavoreen WWTW upgrade from 67,000 PE to 101,400 PE North & South Trunk Sewers <p>Stormwater Drainage & Flooding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream Improvement Works to be carried out to Ushers & Beaulieu Streams Diversion pipeline for the Beaulieu Stream Implementation of SUDS for all development The retention of designated flood plain for the Ushers Catchment 	<p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Investigation Contract & Production well drilling Kiltrough groundwater source upgrade from 5 MI/day to 10 MI/day & additional storage from 5MI to 10 MI Killineer reservoir (7.1 MI) including North Drogheda to Killineer Reservoir Trunk Mains and North Drogheda Delivery Main Abandon Barnattin-Killineer/Rosehall source in 2008 Continued Water Conservation and Leakage Detection Programme <p>Sewage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate possibility of locating WWTW in East Meath to treat East Meath coastal loads. Lagavoreen WWTW upgrade from 101,400 PE to 150,000 PE <p>Stormwater Drainage & Flooding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of SUDS for all development 	<p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Investigation Contract & Production well drilling Kiltrough groundwater source upgrade from 10 MI/day to 15 MI/day & additional storage from 10 MI to 14MI Kiltrough groundwater source upgrade from 15 MI/day to 19.1MI/day North Drogheda East delivery mains Kiltrough WSA Supply from Roughgrange/Staleen ceased in 2014 Continued Water Conservation and Leakage Detection Programme <p>Stormwater Drainage & Flooding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of SUDS for all development 	<p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Water Conservation and Leakage Detection Programme <p>Stormwater Drainage & Flooding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of SUDS for all development
Transport Infrastructure			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of a Town Centre Traffic Management Scheme Start up of provision of a pedestrian, cycle and bus only bridge link Interim Northern Environs Park and Ride Service Start up of Northern Environs Port Access Route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donore Road Park and Ride Service inc. 500 space carpark Additional Western Bridge Crossing Completion of Northern Environs Port Access Road Start-up of M1-N1 Link Road (Southern Environs) Investigation of feasibility of Northern Environs Rail Station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of M1-N1 Link Road (Southern Environs) Donore Road Corridor Capacity Improvements Provision of Northern Environs Rail Station (depending on feasibility assessment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of Northern Environs Rail Station (depending on feasibility assessment)

Source: Department of Education, Barton et al (2000) 'Sustainable Communities', the National Playing Fields Association (UK), Sports Council (UK), Regional Sports Council (UK).

Note: Provision for primary and secondary schools given in the table was obtained from the Department of Education. Children of school-going age are calculated by the Department of Education as 11.3% of the population for Primary level and 8.5% of the population for Post-Primary level. Classroom Size is calculated at 25 pupils per class. Classrooms per school can range from between 16 to 24 (approximately).



View of Drogheda