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Introduction

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1.1 The North Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan and the Master Plan

The North Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan (LAP) was adopted in 2004. The plan provides for a wide range of uses including the development of three new residential neighbourhoods to cater for a population of 20,000 people on an area extending to 254 hectares located approximately 2km north of Drogheda town centre.

The LAP states "it will be necessary to prepare a Master Plan for each of the three residential neighbourhoods identified in the plan before planning permissions will be granted on foot of any individual planning application" (Section 6.2B).

However, Louth County Council has prepared a single Master Plan, with three sub-sections, one dealing with each of the three proposed neighbourhoods. This approach was considered appropriate in order to ensure integration between neighbourhoods and facilitate adherence to legislative and regulatory requirements. The Master Plan forms a variation to the LAP.

Master Plan Objective: MP1

Whilst the provisions of the Master Plan, including the roads hierarchy are policy aims, objectives and targets that the Planning Authority requires adherence to, the Council recognises that a degree of flexibility is desirable. However, the level of flexibility shall not undermine the policy aims, objectives and targets of the Master Plan. The over-riding consideration is to ensure that the urban design framework, as set out in the Master Plan, is achieved, including strong levels of permeability throughout the Plan lands.

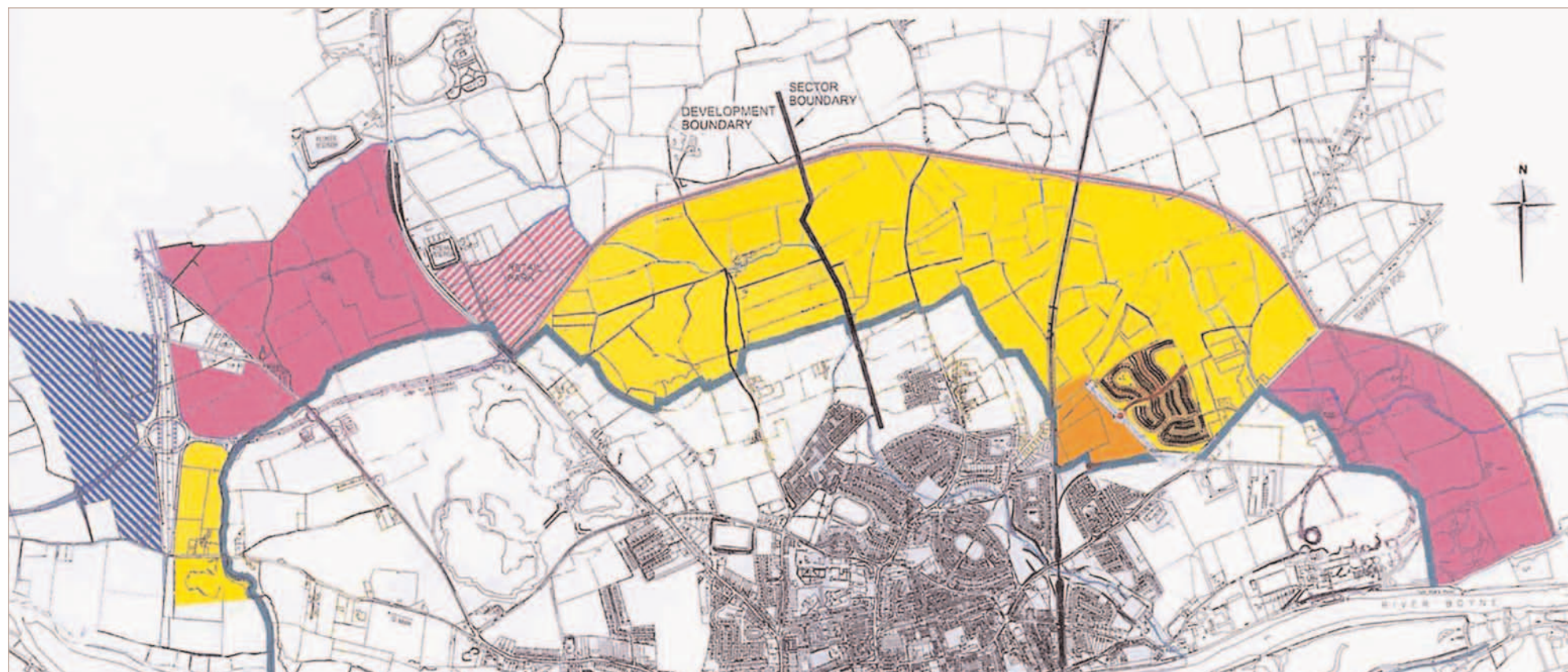
The Master Plan itself is in compliance with the policies, objectives and development control standards contained in the LAP. Nevertheless, it proposes some variation in respect of:

- Civic & Commercial Centres which are somewhat larger than the traditional concept of a neighbourhood centre;
- The location of a new rail station on the northern, rather than the southern, edge of neighbourhood three;
- A larger size of site for each of three primary schools, potentially a fourth primary school and a secondary school outside the plan lands; and
- Detailed arrangements for phasing.

The Master Plan provides for:

- The sustainable development of an area of land extending to approximately 254 hectares forming three separate but integrated residential neighbourhoods;
- Framework layout plans, phasing arrangements and urban design objectives / targets for each of the three neighbourhoods that will provide a high quality, varied and sustainable living environment with its own unique character;
- A civic and commercial centre and adjoining primary school within each residential neighbourhood to provide for the day-to-day needs of future residents;
- A linear park running from the R166 (Termonfeckin Road) to the east and the R132 (Dublin Road) to the west of the lands, incorporating pedestrian and cycle paths, playing areas and landscaped areas to provide for the recreational needs of residents;
- A sports and recreation area to the north of the Plan Lands;
- The preparation of a detailed development framework for both the new open space areas and the new residential and neighbourhood areas.
- The integration of the new open space areas with the new development areas and between the new areas and surrounding lands, ensuring that recreational/amenity areas are accessible to the wider community. This contributes towards the development of an integrated and sustainable community.
- Phased development of the residential neighbourhoods.
- Essential infrastructure through the preparation of an infrastructure framework and implementation plan that will provide for the construction of the Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR) to link the lands with the R132 to the west and the R166 to the east;
- A foul drainage network, public water supply, sustainable arrangements for the attenuation and disposal of surface water, and utilities.
- The preparation of appropriate development contributions' schemes to fund the provision of infrastructure; and,
- An Environmental Report describing the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Master Plan in accordance with EU and National regulations.

Overall Zoning Map 1 - Extract from North Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan, 2004



-  To provide for residential use in accordance with approved Master Plans
-  To provide for employment uses
-  To provide for mixed uses appropriate to transport hub
-  To provide for a retail park
-  To provide for tourism and leisure uses consistent with protection of adjoining heritage area

▲ Extract from the North Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan 2004



MAP 1. OVERALL ZONING MAP
NORTH DROGHEDA ENVIRONS PLAN
LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY HALL, DUNDALK

Map 2 Indicative Treatment of Residential Areas - Extract from North Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan, 2004



▲ Extract from the North Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan 2004

MAP 2. INDICATIVE TREATMENT OF
RESIDENTIAL AREAS
NORTH DROGHEDA ENVIRONS PLAN
LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY HALL, DUNDALK

- Borough Boundary
- To provide for residential use in accordance with approved Master Plans
- To provide for a neighbourhood centre and primary school
- To provide for mixed uses appropriate to transport hub
- Indicative location of linear open space
- ➔ Possible access points
- FP Flood Plain

1.2 Formal and Regulatory Requirements

The Master Plan has been prepared as a variation to the North Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), and associated Regulations, and will be implemented in compliance with the legislative and regulatory requirements of same Act and Regulations.

Similarly, a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Master Plan has been undertaken according to the provisions of European Directive 2001/42/EC1. Both the Master Plan and the Environmental Report associated with the Strategic Environmental Assessment will be subject to public consultation in accordance with relevant Acts and Regulations.

1.3 Plan Lands and Hinterland

Drogheda is located on the east coast of Ireland, midway between Dublin and Dundalk within the Border Region on the R132.

The Plan lands themselves are divided into three neighbourhoods as follows:

NH1 -	78 hectares
NH2 -	73 hectares
NH3 -	103 hectares

The lands are bounded to the west by field boundaries beyond which lies the R132, and to the east by the R166, Termonfeckin Road. 'Twenties Lane', the Ballymakenny Road and the Dublin-Belfast railway line bisect the lands in a north-south direction. The proposed Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR), which will connect the lands with the R132 to the west and R166 to the east, will form the northern boundary of the lands. To the south of the plan lands, are residential area of Drogheda, including Moneymore, Whitethorn, Castle Manor, Grange Rise and Termon Abbey.

The majority of the plan lands are in agricultural use, with a number of individual dwellings located on the county roads. The Sienna Convent is located within the northern part of residential neighbourhood one. The residential area known as 'Termon Abbey' is located within neighbourhood three of the plan lands.

1.4 Population

In the absence of any large scale urban development in the Plan lands (with the exception of Termon Abbey) and the proximity of the area to the Drogheda Urban Area, demographic analysis is based primarily on the Drogheda Borough Area.

The population of the Drogheda Urban Area in 2002 was 28,308 persons representing an increase of 15.7% from the 1996 population census, when the population was recorded at 24,460 persons. This represents an annual growth rate of 2.61%. Based on the 1996-2002 trends, the population of the Drogheda Urban Area would be in the region of 41,607 persons by 2020. However it should be noted that both national and regional planning policy is encouraging substantial growth; the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region envisage the population of Drogheda reaching 60,000 in the medium to long term, and this aim is reflected in the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan (2005-2011). Furthermore, the South Drogheda Environs have seen considerable growth since 1996.

1.5 Household Sizes

According to the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2005 - 2011, the average private household size for the Drogheda area is 2.94 persons. In the County Louth area the average household size has fallen from 3.76 persons to 3.21 persons during the 15-year period 1981 to 1996.

1.6 Demographic Profile and Educational Requirements

Another important consideration that has a bearing on the plan is the demographic profile of the population. The age profile of the population for the town of Drogheda, as contained in the 1996 Census of Population, demonstrates that the largest age group in the Drogheda area is between 25-44 years, followed by the 0-14 years age group.

This has important implications for the provision of schools, recreational and other social facilities both in terms of growth and government policy to reduce class sizes over time.

The Department of Education has set down a requirement of 25 children per classroom with a requirement of 24 classrooms in a school, to give a total pupil number of 600 pupils.

Therefore, in view of the demographic profile and predicted population of the plan lands and following consultation with Department of Education, a 1.2 hectare site has been reserved within each residential neighbourhood and adjacent to its civic commercial centre for the future provision of primary schools. A further site may be required for a fourth primary school on land north of the PANCR.

Following consultations with the Department of Education, secondary schools will be required. The Department advises that such schools require a significant land take, in the region of 4 to 5 hectares each, and suggests that such schools be located where they can share facilities, including sports grounds. A minimum of 1 large post-primary school will initially be required. In the event that a second post-primary school is required as phased development progresses, Louth County Council will cooperate with the Education Authorities in securing a further site. The Department of Education supports the use of shared facilities as this reduces the necessary land take. Given the 'shared access advice' of the Department, it is considered that north of the PANCR, preferably close to the proposed Sports Centre, will be suitable.

Regarding provision for special needs, the Council will cooperate fully with the Department of Education in this respect.

Childcare facilities must be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Louth Childcare Strategy 2002. These should normally be located within the civic commercial centres, close to schools and places of employment.