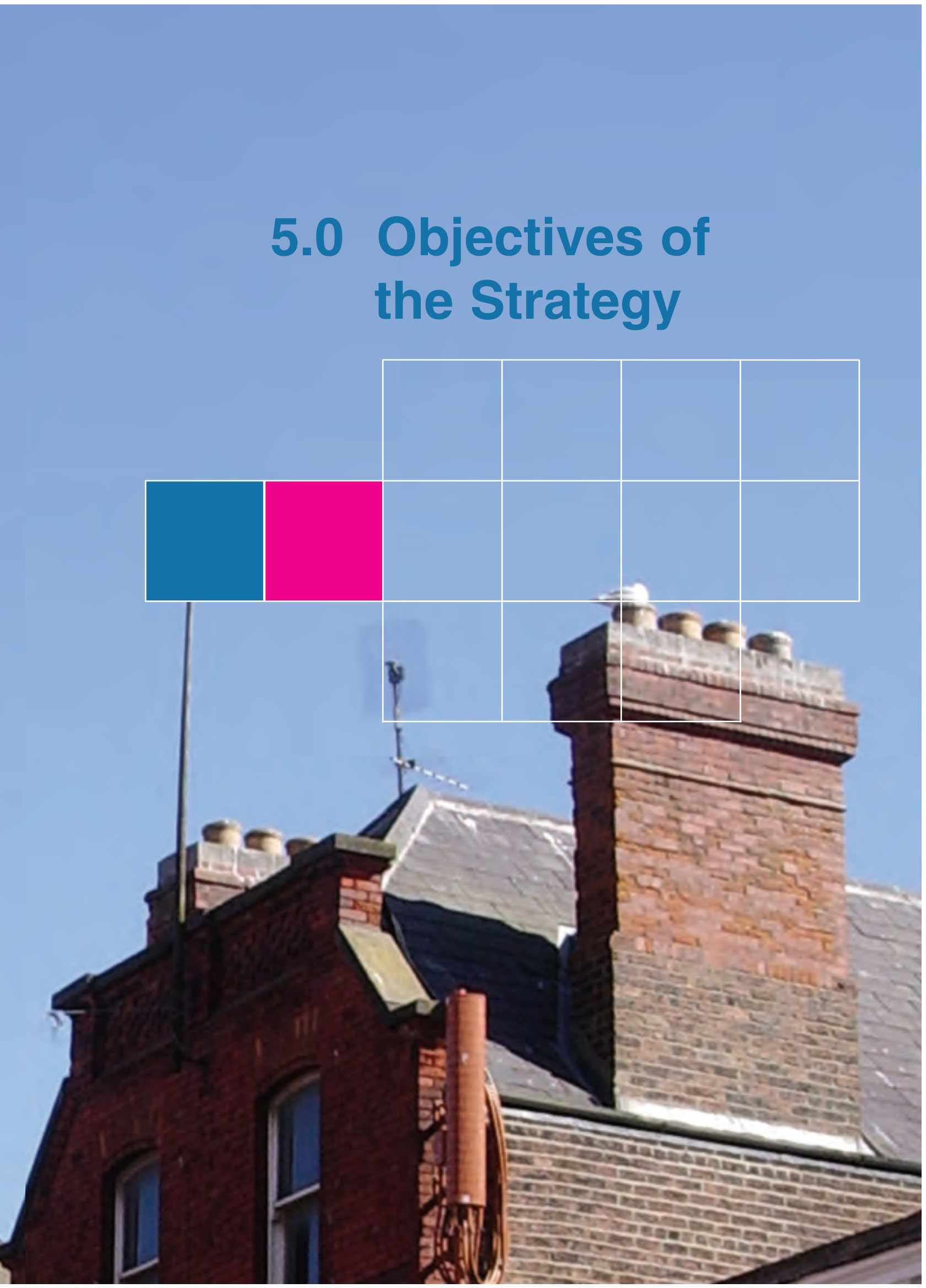
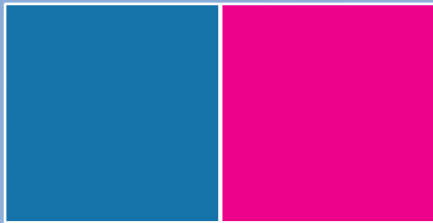




5.0 Objectives of the Strategy

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5.0 Objectives of the Strategy

5.1 Introduction

The aim of the Planning Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area is to manage the continuing population growth efficiently and in association with related services provision. It is further an objective to enhance the status of the area, both within the wider Border and Greater Dublin Area regions and nationally, as a place to live, visit and do business. In this regard the Strategy presents a statement of objectives for the next 20 years and recommends a process for the management of growth within the Study Area during that time.

5.2 Objectives of Strategy

5.2.1 Land Use and Spatial Planning

- To continue the consolidation and enhancement of the town centre.
- To promote the densification of the urban fabric.
- To support development patterns that encourage walking and cycling and facilitate thresholds of patronage for public transport.
- To support delivery of sustainable patterns of development at locations served by or close to jobs, education, health facilities, shopping, leisure and local services.
- To promote the creation of a high quality living environment with strong emphasis on the nature of the public domain.
- To delineate urban development limits as per the development of zoned areas and support a clear distinguishment between these and a surrounding strategic green belt.
- To protect sensitive landscapes and promote biodiversity.
- To promote measures to reduce the use of non-renewable energy and non-renewable resources.
- Where major town expansions are planned, to support clear and pragmatic phasing commitments to ensure the delivery of viable and sustainable neighbourhoods, with appropriate social and physical infrastructure implemented in tandem.

5.2.2 Transportation

- To enhance accessibility to and use of public transport services and to reduce the dependence on the motor car.
- To promote development patterns which will support an improved public transport network and to identify public transport service and infrastructure objectives.

- To ensure improved pedestrian facilities and cycle ways within existing and new development areas.
- To promote a more efficient use of the existing road network.
- To identify key road infrastructure requirements and to apply a delivery recommendation for those commensurate with the planned residential and economic growth levels.

5.2.3 Economic Development

- To promote employment opportunities by attracting inward investment and supporting local indigenous industry.
- To promote the clustering of businesses and firms, including those involved in inter-related activities and in high-growth, knowledge-intensive and technology-based specialisation.
- To plan for efficient and cost effective service provision to support economic activity.
- To promote reliable, secure and cost-competitive energy supply and effective telecommunications.
- To continue to support the development and expansion of the port and related activities, with possible new site options eastwards and on both sides of the river corridor, as demand emerges.
- To develop the heritage and tourism industry focusing on the region's strategic position as a gateway to the Boyne Valley and Brú na Bóinne.

5.2.4 Urban Form

- To identify and protect important views and visual corridors (and the primacy of important landmarks).
- To plan for a thriving, human-scale, cultural and social environment, concentrated around distinctive street patterns, and non-segregated land use.
- To open up the town further to the river frontage.
- To promote a high quality physical setting in terms of sensitive conservation of heritage buildings, high quality new architecture, urbanist street fabric and a pedestrian/cycle friendly town.
- To promote regional cultural venues such as theatres/galleries/ arts and sports centres.
- To identify high quality public space, including public squares, parks, green spaces and other amenity areas.
- To create good streets; this requires policies which enhance the role which building frontage and townscape has on the public realm areas such as footpaths. These are key considerations in the roll out of the new development districts.



View of Drogheda

- To promote an attractive movement framework (in terms of safety, lighting and quality) providing for direct access and permeability of the urban fabric.
- To identify significant site opportunities.
- To ensure direct penetration from new development areas into established neighbouring districts.
- To 'repair the edges' - provide for the re-integration of segregated, dispersed suburban areas.
- Provide guidance on urban form and development principles.

5.2.5 Services

- To protect natural resources: ensure appropriate waste assimilation capacity of receiving waters, confirm recharge capacity of aquifers for groundwater exploitation and ensure preservation of natural habitats where drainage is proposed.
- Take cognisance of legislative and local authority requirements and preferences including EU Directives (Framework Directive).
- Balance economy of scale and planning for future growth with a level of investment that does not entail short term redundancy; generally primary trunk infrastructure has been proposed for implementation with augmentation and improvement programmed in critical phases.

5.3 Key Elements

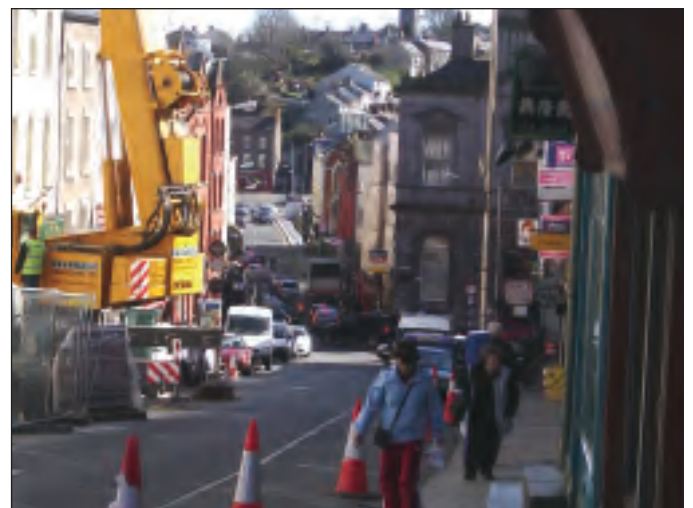
5.3.1 Key Elements - Land Use Planning, Spatial Development Framework and Urban Design

The Strategy proposed in this report is the result of the evaluation of eight different land-use scenarios for the

Greater Drogheda Area. Each scenario examined possible strategies for the delivery of the projected population growth in the area over the study period, measured against their ability to address development objectives and principles. The final Strategy is developed from the refinement and detailed appraisal of the preferred Strategy scenario. The Key Elements which informed the final Strategy are as follows:-

The Town Centre

Drogheda town centre is the core of the Study Area. It is the focus of commercial, services, residential and transport activity, and is regarded in this Strategy as the most important planning and land use location in terms of opportunity for innovation, quality of place, investment and growth generation for the sub-region. In effect the success of the town centre as a vibrant district will reflect the related strengthening of residential and employment growth throughout the Study Area.



Building Rejuvenation in the Town Centre

The importance of the development of a sustainable economy for the town aligned with a compact settlement form, and efficient public transportation corridors is intrinsic to the proposed Strategy. Management and upgrade of the historic urban character of the town centre alongside specific redevelopment opportunities (such as the quays) can deliver an increased threshold of attraction and investment required for the benefit of the wider Study Area.

The Economic Strategy highlights the importance of service employment. This is evidenced by the significant private sector investment in mixed-use development at Scotch Hall and the St Laurence Town Centre. Employment of this nature is best directed towards locations which are supportable by public transport. Higher value employment will more likely be attracted to locations where service provision is matched by an excellent urban domain. Drogheda town centre has potential to move in this direction through the careful regeneration of the quays north and south of the river. Drogheda Borough Council has been successful in attracting investment, and retail space into the town centre. A continuation of these trends over the period of the Strategy will result in a high quality urban place for residents, business and visitors alike.

The North and South Quays are therefore viewed as the heart of regeneration. This is identified in the Inner Quays development objective of the Drogheda Development Plan. Specific strategic requirements include the provision of improved pedestrian and bus linkage between the town centre proper and the main rail station. Additional pedestrian access routings to the rail station from the Marsh Road district for example would deliver a significant improvement in permeability.

A new bridge crossing in the area, where future regeneration along the North and South Quays is likely, should be promoted as a significant planning gain. A bridge (with bus prioritisation) would significantly enhance the accessibility of the north town centre from the Marsh Road corridor, which in turn is an important route to East Meath for an expanded Study Area bus network. Severance is clearly an issue in any riverside location. The delivery of an additional bridge here, in tandem with likely changes to the use mix and townscape on the quays would provide an important catalyst for use intensity and would improve the linkage between the established town centre (north) and the growing town centre quays district (south). It would also unlock further bus transport penetration into the heart of the town centre as part of an upgraded Study Area bus service network.

The area to the immediate east of the train station is a prime location for major commercial redevelopment. Again, good linkage to the town, and access by all modes (particularly local and strategic public transport) are

prerequisites to this area's development.

Detailed urban design proposals are also contained in the Strategy relating to the redevelopment of the key opportunity areas of Old Abbey Lane, West Street and the 'Backlanes'.

The River

The River Boyne is an excellent amenity resource and is an important symbol of the town's identity. An amenity corridor runs along the river from the Dowth complex through Drogheda and out to the Boyne Estuary. Both the Boyne Valley and the coastal resources alongside Drogheda to the north and south are major visitor attractions. The Strategy is focused on securing increased usage of the river corridor (in conjunction with its environmental capacity). In particular the town centre area can turn towards the riverside in terms of new development locations, the provision of public movement and spaces. Scotch Hall has provided a clear indication of this approach.



Recent Development focused on the River

Donore Road Corridor

The Donore Road is one of three key approach corridors to the town. The urban design vision for the Donore Road would see more cohesive development taking place along this route to reinforce its role as a gateway to the prime urban centre. This area will benefit from high-density schemes with strong architectural presence and the provision of good quality open space.

These objectives should be developed in combination with the ongoing intensification of employment within the Donore Road area, building on the strengths of the businesses already established in the area. The area is close to the national road network yet is readily accessible from the town centre and from many of the residential districts of the town. A densification and expansion is envisaged for the overall area including the roll out of employment on the IDA Park lands.



Donore Road

Town Expansion Areas

Significant town expansion areas are proposed at the Northern Environs (County Louth) and at Bryanstown (Co. Meath). The Northern Environs Local Area Plan and a Masterplan for these lands have been adopted. The Strategy addresses the role these areas play in the town's growth up to 2024, and ensures that their development progresses in a co-ordinated manner supportive of the wider objectives of the town and overall Study Area. The most important issue for both the north and south expansion areas is that their full completion will be a longer term exercise, though commencing in the short term. The careful phasing of development in these expansion areas is critical to ensuring that all necessary services and facilities are in place for each emerging neighbourhood.

Northern Environs

The Northern Environs will not be built out in one phase, but more likely over a period comparable to that set out in this Strategy. In the short term it is proposed to make the most of existing infrastructure and land development patterns where they provide a cost effective and efficient use of resources and investment, particularly with regard to road infrastructure.

In terms of access infrastructure, the Northern Environs is the location for the development of a Northern Port Access Road, linking the Port with the M1. The delivery of the Northern Port Access Road is linked to the need to secure a new access routing for port related traffic and also to remove port traffic from the town quays, amongst other considerations. These are important identified objectives confirmed in regional guidance and in the statutory development plans. This Strategy therefore supports the early and full completion of a Northern Port Access Road.

The development of the Northern Port Access Road also presents an opportunity to serve the residential and mixed-use development aspirations of the broader Northern Environs. While the location of new development in the Northern Environs is proposed to be oriented along internal and north-south movement corridors to deliver an

improved connection with the town centre, the proposed Northern Port Access Road will also allow for strategic and sub-regional traffic movements to and from the Northern Environs.

Overall, movement into and through the new communities will therefore be configured both north-south and east-west. This approach to local movement is indicated in the Local Area Plan for the Northern Environs, which in turn is the subject of a more specific detailing by the Planning Authority in the Northern Environs Plan.

All relevant road developments in the Northern Environs should be constructed in combination with the roll out of piped infrastructure for the overall area.

Surface water studies show that development of lands to the west of Twenties Lane is subject to frequent flooding events, and therefore requires a more detailed examination of this issue. The precise delineation of the flood risk area is being determined in the course of design work as part of the Northern Environs Draft Masterplan.

Bryanstown

The area of Bryanstown to the south of the town faces similar development issues as the areas to the north. It comprises a significant area of land which, if developed in an uncoordinated manner, could result in undesirable urban sprawl. Equally, however, the landbank as identified in a hatched area within the County Development Plan (the lands have no direct zoning at present) is well positioned to deliver a major new residential and mixed use community for Drogheda and is a key land resource for this Strategy. Meath County Council are developing plans to ensure a well designed, phased and sustainable roll out of new neighbourhoods here.

Transport analysis concludes that an M1-N1 link via Bryanstown is an important road scheme for the Southern Environs area and for Drogheda. Its role is also linked to the provision of new local development. This would form a prime activity corridor for the area.



Local Facilities at Bryanstown

Mill Road/ Marsh Road District. (East of current zoned area)

This district is not part of the current zoned landbank of the Core Study Area. However given its important location, it is plausible to consider possible changes of land use and function over the period of the Strategy.

As evident from the statistical research completed for this Strategy (see Chapter 2), the current zoned landbank for the Study Area is capable of accommodating the residential and employment needs of a growing population for the next twenty years. There is therefore no immediate landbank pressure. However, a series of factors including; the current usability of certain land areas and the linkage to identified and emerging transport corridors creates a circumstance where review of this landbank is merited.

Such a review would certainly be merited should a site specific opportunity emerge which is not readily capable of delivery on the established zoned landbank (such as south side port related activities).

In addition to this, the function of the Mill Road district has changed given the accessibility and movement patterns which have emerged on foot of major new developments within the town centre and new residential and employment growth throughout the Study Area. The Strategy supports any consequent road network improvements determined as appropriate to serve new development.

The Strategy also supports an improved East Meath/Drogheda town bus corridor (eventually connecting into Marsh Road). This bus and transport access corridor could deliver a refocus of the accessibility and mobility options available to this area. To unlock the overall bus transport network for the town and to improve transport links between East Meath and Drogheda town centre, a new bridge crossing over the river with bus priority is recommended. A likely location would be somewhere east of Scotch Hall. Final positioning of such a bridge could be examined at a later date in conjunction with other changes to the development pattern in the wider eastern part of the Core Area (i.e. the Mill Road/Marsh Road district). An inner east bridge crossing would be a valuable asset for public transport access in particular. It would not be reliant on car movement patterns for its justification, nor would it prejudice any subsequent decisions on separate traffic derived bridge development in Drogheda (east or west) into the longer term.

The Strategy advocates that a key requirement is that zoning change here should not constitute a simple duplication of development options, which would be better allocated elsewhere and for which the objectives have already been provided. For example the development rationale of major new residential districts at

the Northern Environs and at Bryanstown is dependent on thresholds of population to sustain related community, commercial and recreational facilities. The Strategy recommends that the integrity of those landbanks is not compromised by a process of additional zonings elsewhere.

East Meath (North) - Immediate Area of Influence

This area has a strong and potentially growing link with Drogheda. Future planning for the area is guided by the adopted Local Area Plan to provide for more sustainable growth, in line with service capacity and environmental constraints. Strategy objectives for this area are:

- To promote a stronger linkage to Drogheda in line with the Transport Strategy (particularly bus corridor and cycle routes).
- To reduce commuting to Dublin.
- To protect the amenity of the coastline and European Sites, in the context of the tourist potential of the area.
- To improve the urban fabric of the various settlements within East Meath.
- To link any further development with the provision of services.
- To link any development with the need to address social infrastructure deficit of the area, i.e. linking the further development of the area with strict community gain objectives .
- To continue to promote Bettystown as the main centre for the overall area in line with the Local Area Plan.



Cottages at Bettystown

Broader Area of Influence

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

- Allow for organic growth in line with the development framework set out in the LAPs.
- Preserve high value agricultural land.
- Preserve a strategic green belt outside the current zoned landbanks and Core Study Area. The green belt will accommodate agriculture and related agri-business services, local housing and employment need and access to natural resources as compatible with carrying capacity.
- Include strict conditions in the development plans with regard to one-off housing (in accordance with Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidance).

Other Actions

In addition to the specific areas referred to above, the Strategy supports a range of development and management opportunities throughout the Study Area, including:

- Prioritise development in town centre sites (particularly on brownfield sites).
- Promote managed expansion from the established districts of the town outwards.
- Promote medium to high-density development within the town core and along established and identified transport corridors.
- Promote the development of the old port area to provide for future mixed use town based activities including employment.
- Encourage new port related employment and related facilities (including infrastructure such as road and services improvements) along the river (either side as appropriate), in conjunction with the specific and emerging requirements of the Port Company.
- Address accessibility to the Donore Road district in conjunction with employment densification.
- Deliver on a new employment focused mixed-use hub immediately to the east of the train station.
- Support the early development and consolidation of employment activities at key locations.
- Manage future development along the river corridor, including the consideration of development to the west of the town (having regard to environmental implications).
- Ensure good east-west internal penetration (linked to neighbourhood centres and to north south town

connections) through the new northern and southern extension areas.

- Support local needs based growth patterns for surrounding villages in accordance with current development plan targets.
- Consider the development of a regional park/leisure facility at the former quarry site.
- Change the relationship of roads and development areas so that development and movement are directly related and not segregated.
- Ensure key services and infrastructure requirements are identified in accordance with resident population growth patterns.

5.3.2 Key Elements - Transport

Roads

The volume of traffic seeking to cross the River Boyne corridor is likely to double over the life of this Strategy, as the new residential and employment growth patterns are achieved.

Bridge capacity is not restricted so much by the capacity of actual bridges, but instead by the junction and multi-access points and related movement requirements either side of the bridges. Therefore, a town centre traffic management scheme should be implemented that seeks to remedy these capacity shortfalls. The Drogheda Transportation Study provides for a series of junction management measures at the key town centre locations (such as Bull Ring). In the short term this will negate the need to construct an additional road traffic bridge across the River Boyne in the town, but the need to plan for additional bridge crossing/s is a key recommendation of this Strategy.

The adopted land zoning will be a focus of new population growth. In conjunction with this, the anticipated consolidation of employment districts at Donore Road, at the town centre quays area, and indeed throughout the Core Area north and south, suggests a movement pattern will evolve with a strong emphasis on north-south movements and with a continued focus on the west side.

The emerging evidence suggests that a new western bridge crossing would provide for increased access and mobility. Such an option would deliver on local derived movement needs.

In conjunction with this, the completion of the Northern Port Access Route and the Southern Access Road (M1/N1 link) will enable wider movement patterns (for example Dublin traffic) to be managed onto the national road network at the M1. In addition, movement into the town core should be served by public transport networks.

A possible future strategic road crossing of the Boyne to the east of the Railway Viaduct should remain a policy option. The Strategy recommends ongoing review of the actual roll out of development within the zoned landbanks, to monitor emerging patterns of travel demand and to ensure that final decisions on the location of additional cross river bridge capacity will be made on the evidence then available.

East-west movement corridors for the Northern Environs area (the Northern Port Access Route) and the Bryanstown area (M1- N1 Link Road) are identified as being of strategic merit.

In addition to its established and targeted role as a major employment district, Donore Road is a key movement corridor and forms a principal access point into the town from the national motorway network. The capacity and use allocation of the Donore Road corridor will need to be addressed. A traffic management scheme should be adopted for the road. This should identify key junction improvements, realignment and/or widening exercises as appropriate. The importance of the Donore Road and an identification of key improvements is addressed in the Drogheda Transportation Study.

Bus

Better accessibility to Drogheda Rail Station for all modes is a key aim associated with the delivery of this Strategy, particularly to facilitate the integration of rail and bus services in the town. It is important to provide a more managed bus interchange associated with the rail station as part of the review of the Study Area bus network.



Local Bus Service

In order to deliver significant increased bus penetration to the town centre in particular from East Meath via the Marsh Road corridor, the Strategy supports the delivery of a bridge crossing over the River Boyne west of the railway viaduct and which prioritises bus and non-motorised movements.

A local bus route is proposed which will support a frequency of three buses per hour. The bus service network is predicated on supporting service frequency along a number of identified key corridors. These are positioned through the established town area and into the

heart of the major expansion locations at Northern Environs and Bryanstown. East Meath is in fact relatively close to Drogheda town centre, and the Marsh Road corridor eastwards from the town to Mornington/ Bettystown/ Laytown is a key identified corridor to deliver bus service frequency.

Park and Ride

In the shorter term, the development of the Northern Environs would support the realisation of a 500 space park and ride site located on the future rail station site.

A 500 space park and ride site is proposed to be sited inside the M1 corridor in land within the Donore Road employment hub. This would reduce the strain on long stay town centre car parking.

Rail

In conjunction with the roll out of development in the Northern Environs, an additional rail station sited in the northern environs area is important in order to reduce the quantum of traffic that will traverse the River Boyne during peak periods. This is a key objective of the Strategy.

A significant increase in rail service capacity for Drogheda must be considered in the context of an interconnector tunnel across the River Liffey, Dublin, from Heuston via Pearse to the Docklands and related upgrades to service capability on the loop line in central Dublin.

The Study Area currently has two commuter rail stations, one at Drogheda (which also serves the inter-city route) and one at Laytown. As future populations in the East Meath area and South Drogheda (Bryanstown) grow it is recommended that the level of patronage and the related means of access to and from Laytown be monitored. This may help determine the service benefits which would arise from the development of a further new station at Bettystown. At present, patronage estimates would suggest that the key requirement is to promote and deliver improved access to the current two stations and to seek the improvement of service frequency at these stations, both of which are on the south side of the Boyne. The provision of a new station on the Northern Environs lands is merited by reference to the absolute population growth anticipated for this growth area. It is also merited due to the constraints on access from the northside of the Boyne to the main Drogheda Station caused by the limited river crossings and a desire to avoid unnecessary vehicle flow increases to these river crossing points, particularly during the morning and evening peak periods.

5.3.3 Key Elements - Economic Issues

Factors that influence the locational decision of employers include:

- The availability of a skilled labour pool.
- Accessibility, both internal (within Drogheda) and external (connecting with other locations).
- The availability of other 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.
- Adequacy and flexibility in employment space to accommodate expansion and changes on foot of technological or procedural changes.
- Encouragement of Start-ups/ Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs).
- Awareness and perception. Employers will only consider a location if they are aware of it and perceive it as having the capacity to meet their requirements.

The availability of a skilled labour pool is in turn influenced by the presence of location attractors for employees. These include:

- Good quality affordable housing.
- Good transport link options between home and work.
- Availability locally of community and commercial amenities, notably schools.

- Further education and training/retraining opportunities.
- A strong and positive town identity, including visual appearance, and the extent of open and civic areas.

Many of the issues that attract employers and employees to the town are also relevant to residents and other visitors including tourists, though some additional issues arise also. The following summarises recommended actions:

- The three local authorities should monitor their commercial rates to ensure competitiveness with competing locations.
- Support development proposals for the provision of modern office space.
- Enterprise/ office based employment space near the railway station is likely to be particularly attractive for employers seeking possible relocation from within the Greater Dublin Area, as well as new employer operations.
- Ensure an adequate provision of incubator/start-up/SME space.
- Be pro-active about selective rates holidays or reductions for start-ups and SMEs.
- Market the town and its facilities (industrial land bank, labour pool, accessibility, infrastructure, amenities and local cost base) in a focussed way to potential employers, especially existing Dublin-based operators who may see the benefits of relocation.



Drogheda Train Station Front Entrance



Drogheda Station Platform

- Collect and make available on an annual basis, specific Study Area data on labour pool, land bank, industrial space, costs and utilities.
- Work with IDA Ireland to identify and target sectors more likely to establish or relocate to Drogheda, and those with the greatest scope to cluster, (for example International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) firms may see a strong linkage opportunity for back office and related services).
- Co-ordinate economic development projects amongst the three local authorities to drive the above, to establish and maintain links with firms and other players (Industrial Development Agency, ESB, etc.), identify firms' requirements and work on improving their delivery, and act as point of contact, information source and "one stop shop" for existing and potential employers.
- Continue with a clear vision for the physical enhancement of the town centre, with the riverfront as a key focus for this.
- Consolidate primacy of town core for commercial /social functions and discourage dispersal.
- Coordination of local authorities, employers, training and business promotion bodies, Drogheda Partnership, Drogheda Institute of further Education (DIFE) and Dublin and Dundalk universities and institutions to identify and meet ongoing local training and further education requirements.
- Accommodate and promote ongoing development of DIFE.
- Market Drogheda as a base for new departments/ expansions of Dublin educational institutions and DKIT.
- Increase awareness of Drogheda among public, tourists and tour operators.
- Public transport is important for tourists. Connect train and bus station better to the town core, e.g. signage and including train station in town bus routes. Improve bus connections with Newgrange, Battle of the Boyne site, the coast etc.
- Better signage on the M1, highlighting Drogheda's attractions and its suitability as a base to explore surrounding areas.
- Designation of Drogheda as a "heritage town".
- Marketing efforts should concentrate on including Drogheda in more coach trips to the surrounding attractions, and to encourage short breaks in the town, in cooperation with existing and new hotels. New and upcoming developments in Drogheda should be highlighted.



St Peter's Church



St Laurence's Gate



Martello Tower