



6.0 Recommended Strategy

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6.0 Recommended Strategy

The strategy recommendations are considered under the following headings;

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Urban Design
- Summary of Key Elements

6.1 Land Use

6.1.1 Future Residential Development: Land Use Implications

The population growth patterns have been analysed in terms of the land use implications for the Study Area. The estimated residential development growth within the defined periods is indicative only. The key factor is that the lands are all zoned for appropriate residential use and in some cases are subject to detailed Masterplan analysis.

Ultimately the key determinant of successful residential development is the associated roll out of infrastructure and community facilities. In this regard the Strategy recommends that the neighbourhood centres (at Northern Environs and the Bryanstown hatched area for example) be carefully managed, and that the viability of each identified neighbourhood is secured to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, to avoid unnecessary duplication. This applies throughout all major residential locations in the Study Area including East Meath.

The timescale for completion of development within each defined Period varies depending on factors such as overall housing supply, demand, market and economic conditions. This requires an approach which is as flexible as possible to ensure that what is developed satisfies good planning principles, and that reliance of new residences on future services and facilities is avoided.

Map 6.1 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. This is appropriate for a strategic level plan and allows for the flexibility described above and also for more precise detailing at local or masterplan level.

Period 1

In the short term up to 2008, infrastructure (and associated permissions for development) to develop out the environs will likely be progressing through the planning system. In line with the principles of sustainable

development it is appropriate to continue to support the established zoned landbank within the Core Area. The main locations of development would likely be around Scotch Hall, the quays, Duleek Road, Rathmullen Road Ballymakenny Road (in the vicinity of Castle Manor housing estate).

Period 2

This period would correlate with improvements in infrastructure in the North and South Environs areas. In the Northern Environs, the adopted policy is to ensure early delivery of the Port Access Route (R132-R166) and related services and to develop in the region of 2,100 dwellings, progressing northwards from the established town area. This Period will also see the commencement of works on neighbourhood centre facilities. In the Bryanstown area development should be phased progressively from east to west. Again a key issue for the Strategy is to ensure that the emerging neighbourhoods within these areas are developed to viable thresholds of activity and that needless duplication is avoided.

As stated above, although described as Period 2, the Strategy would envisage design work and planning procedures commencing for these areas in the immediate future and with a view to the first delivery of development by 2007/ 2008.

Period 3

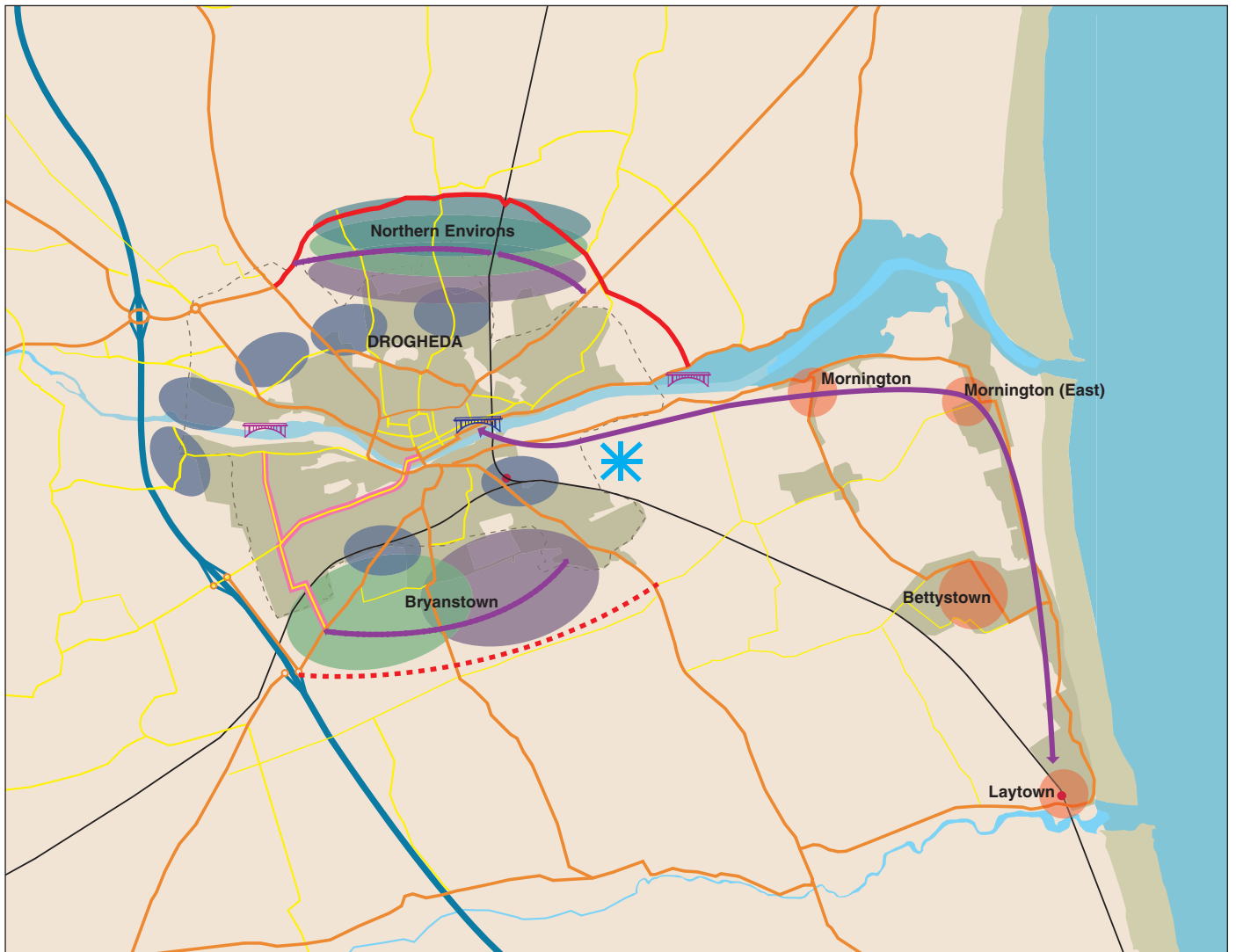
In the Northern Environs the neighbourhood centres would be complete along with associated community and park facilities. The development of a further 2,500 dwellings would be facilitated, again working northwards from the previously built first phase communities.

In Bryanstown, residential development options would continue including the western end of the overall lands.














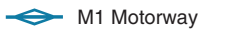
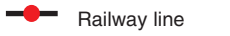
It is anticipated that the lands to the east of the railway station would be built out, having regard to its key location as a transport node and employment hub. It is anticipated that the regeneration of the north port area with a substantial residential element should be in progress by this phase. These areas could commence earlier depending on factors including a design solution for the railway station hub and the ability to release north quays development in conjunction with removal of port traffic and consolidation of land uses within the wider port area.

Period 4

The ongoing build out of lands will be reviewed on a regular basis by the three constituent local authorities. The final phase of the Strategy would see the build out of remaining lands in Bryanstown to the south and the Northern Environs (northern edge).



Map 6.1 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

6.1.2 Future Employment Development: Land Use Implications

In Chapter 2 of this report it is outlined that the jobs ratio (the total number of jobs divided by the labour force) is currently approximately 0.79 in the Core Study Area. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area state that in order to make a sustainable place, the jobs ratio should not fall below 0.7. Table 6.1 below gives an overview of the job targets for the Study Area assuming a minimum jobs ratio of 0.7 and application of this to the projected population growth.

It is evident from this that the overall area of Drogheda and environs and East Meath (North) will have to provide for an additional 15,500 jobs to maintain a reasonable level of employment in line with the anticipated population growth.

6.1.3 Spatial Allocation of Future Employment

Table 2.6 in Section 2.5 gives an overview of the zoned landbank within the Core Study Area and indicates that sufficient land has been zoned to accommodate future enterprise. The attraction of enterprise to the Study Area depends on a large number of factors and not simply on the availability of zoned land. The recommendations as to how employment can be attracted and generated are set out in the Economic Development Section of the report. The following gives guidance as to how the spatial allocation of future employment should be determined. Factors that are taken into account in relation to this are mostly based on the transport framework and accessibility of employment to the resident population.

In this regard, it is recommended that high-intensity uses (those that generate large numbers of employees) should ideally be located near the public transport network. The main rationale of the Strategy is therefore to develop two main employment hubs: the town centre and the Donore Road Area. This is in line with the preferred scenario that emerged from the scenario exercise.

The town, centre comprises of the actual centre itself, the Inner Quays (Inner Quays Development Area) and the area around the railway station. Approximately 2,000 jobs are expected to be provided in the Scotch Hall and St Laurence Town Centre developments. In the short to medium term development should be encouraged particularly in the brownfield sites that will become available due to the relocation of the port. In the medium to long term, the area around the station should be further developed into a major mixed use hub (in line with the recommendations of the current Drogheda Borough Development Plan). In this regard, consideration should also be given to densification options for areas in the vicinity of the station for employment and or mixed use schemes. This should be done in combination with access improvements from the station to the quays area.

The second employment hub should be focused around the existing Donore Road area business parks and the adjacent newly completed IDA Park. This is currently the biggest cluster of employers in the area and therefore easily served by a regular bus service. There is scope for intensification in this area, particularly through the redevelopment of obsolete sites and the development of remaining undeveloped greenfield sites. The Donore Road itself is envisaged to be developed as one of three main 'approach corridors' (for details see Urban Design Section of the report).

Table 6.1 Job targets for the 4 Periods in line with a jobs ratio of 0.7

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	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)
Number of additional jobs needed		15,500	2,200	5,500	5,300	2,500

Other lands zoned for employment such as those adjacent to the Mell Interchange in County Louth and those at and around the port area on the north side of the river, have an important role to play in providing for current and future employment growth. The Mell Interchange area is well connected to the national transport network (M1), yet is also accessible to the town centre.

Related industry and port related uses are envisaged to locate near the port- and 'Premier Periclase' factory, i.e. the area located between the Boyne River and Termonfeckin Road. As recommended above, all employment options should continue to be explored here as these lands are proximate to the town core and will benefit from overall growth levels and changes to the town, as well as from improved transport accessibility in tandem with this population growth.

It is also envisaged that employment will be provided in the new neighbourhood centres in the Northern and Southern Environs of Drogheda as well as in the developing town and neighbourhood centres of the East Meath area, in particular the Bettystown town centre.

Adjacent to the quarry site (Collon Road area) there are some 30 hectares of land zoned for 'Business Park'. These lands will play a catalysing role for this part of the town and could promote a new cluster of development. Given the related amenity (old quarry and also river corridor) in combination with good access to the M1 and the commercial development to the north, this area also has strong potential for employment growth.

Lands along the Marsh Road are also zoned for employment generating uses under the current Drogheda Borough Development Plan (land east of the Viaduct along the Boyne). These lands are currently within the zones of impact of the 'Flo Gas' site and are likely to play a growing role in the delivery of higher value employment and mixed-use development in the short to medium term.

6.2 Transportation

The Land Use Strategy presents the development of Drogheda and its environs as four distinct periods. The four periods broadly mirror periods during which national census data will be collected or statutory planning documents reviewed. Thus the development of the Transport Strategy is benchmarked against the following years:

- Period 1 - 2008
- Period 2 - 2014
- Period 3 - 2020
- Period 4 - 2024

The Transport Strategy seeks to deliver a movement framework incrementally, which is coordinated with the delivery of the Study Area land use programme. The movement framework is relevant to all forms of transport and attaches the most importance to travel by sustainable modes of transport, including walking.

The Strategy recognises that a fully integrated public transport network needs to be realised in Drogheda in order to offer successful alternatives to the car.

The transport implications, infrastructural requirements and strategy relevant to each of the periods are set out below.

6.2.1 Road Strategy

Road Proposals

The realisation of the Strategy will significantly increase the volume of traffic travelling through the town. This is illustrated below in Table 6.2, which presents the total volume of AM peak hour traffic crossing the River Boyne.

The table indicates that the volume of traffic that needs to cross the River Boyne will double over the lifespan of this Strategy. Given that the town centre is already congested during peak periods road capacity improvements are required that will increase cross-river vehicular capacity.

Table 6.2 Increase in Traffic Volume

	End of				
	Existing	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4
Two Way AM Peak Hour Cross – River Flow	3,200	3,850	5,050	6,050	6,700
Percentage Increase		+20%	+31%	+20%	+11%

Measures will also need to be introduced to maximise the capacity of the existing bridge crossings. As mentioned previously in Chapter 2 current bridge capacity is not restricted necessarily by the capacity of the actual bridge but by the junction issues and related traffic movement patterns on either side of the bridges and in their immediate environs. This is typical of town centre locations. 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. However, the need to plan ahead for additional bridge crossing is a key recommendation of this Strategy.

In the longer term additional bridge crossing of the Boyne will be required to meet the capacity requirements of the growing Study Area. The adopted land zoning (in the case of Bryanstown - an indication of intended zoning) throughout the Core Study Area, principally the two largest residential/ mixed use landbanks at North Environs and at Bryanstown will be the focus of new population growth. In conjunction with this, the anticipated consolidation of the employment district at Donore Road, at the town centre quays area and indeed throughout the Core Area north and south, suggests that a movement pattern will evolve which will have a strong emphasis on north-south movements. Continued focus will also be on the west side.

The Strategy for land use development would indicate that a possible new western bridge would contribute to the access and mobility requirements of a growing residential and employment population. Such an option would deliver on local derived movements needs. In conjunction with this the completion of the Port Access Route and the M1/N1 link would enable wider movement patterns (for example Dublin traffic) to be managed onto the national road network at the M1. In addition, movements into the town core should be served by public transport networks.

Other options for a bridge crossing may become apparent into the longer term, as the actual roll out of new populations is manifested.

It is recommended therefore that a new bridge location to the west of the town centre, be considered with a view to seeking delivery at Period 3. A specific bridge design and environmental assessment process should be undertaken to establish the exact location and form of the bridge crossing.

The Strategy further proposes that east-west movement options are enshrined in the roll out of development at the Northern Environs and the Southern

Environs. These roads are provided for in the Northern Environs Plan and pre-draft working documents for the hatched area at Bryanstown. Strong east-west permeability is required within those development areas, particularly to ensure workable bus transport routings, all linked into the town centre.

The Strategy recognises the Donore Road as a key movement corridor. Its role as an employment destination will be established and its role as a principal access point into the town from the motorway will be confirmed. Therefore, in the longer term the capacity of the Donore Road corridor will need to be addressed. The Strategy suggests that a traffic management scheme should be adopted for the road, which should include widening proposals and junction improvements where appropriate.



Bus Éireann/ Donore Road Junction

6.2.2 Road Hierarchy

The future road strategy seeks to complement the road hierarchy in the town that has been established since the opening of the M1 bypass. The future road hierarchy dictated by the development of the town is illustrated below as Figure 6.1.

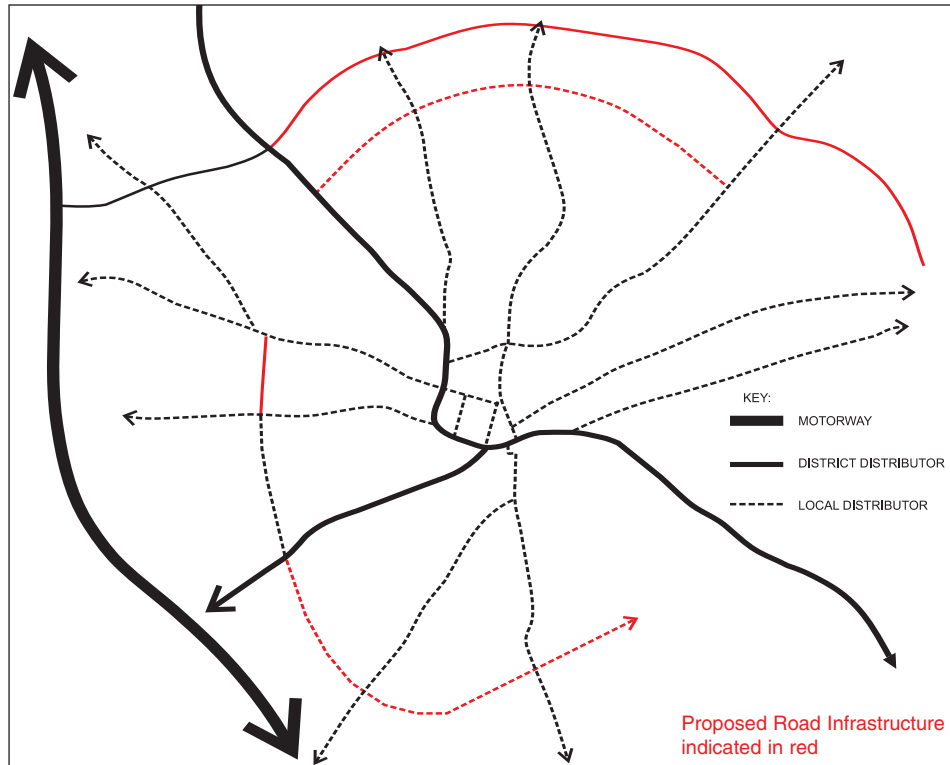


Figure 6.1 Future Road Hierarchy

The future hierarchy of the roads in Drogheda highlights the strategic nature of roads that bypass the town and connect to the motorway. The other roads should be considered as 'streets' and designed as such.

6.2.3 Public Transport

Drogheda Public Transport Interchange Facility

The existing McBride Rail Station will continue to be the main public transport hub for Drogheda and its environs. However, accessibility to the station should be improved. Better accessibility to the station for all modes should be a key aim associated with the delivery of this Strategy. There are currently no strong linkages forged between rail and bus services in the town.

In order to maximise the use of public transport for inter-urban and regional travel it is important to provide formal bus station facilities associated with the rail station. Furthermore, the realisation of the Scotch Hall development will create a stronger link between the town centre via Marsh Road. Therefore, high quality bus and pedestrian linkage between the station and the town

centre should be delivered. For pedestrian movements innovative link options from Marsh Road are merited and could have an urban design benefit. For bus linkage the key issue remains service frequency and the overall expansion of the Study Area network, with increased service levels along the R132 (Old Dublin Road).

In order to reinforce the linkages between Marsh Road and the rail station, this Strategy is supportive of the delivery of an additional town centre bridge crossing over the River Boyne with prioritisation particularly for bus and non-motorised movements. Such an additional river crossing to the east of the existing town centre bridges could help to bring the rail station closer to the town via new pedestrian routings. Such a bridge would also facilitate new penetration by the Study Area bus service network, discussed below.

6.2.4 Bus Services

Drogheda Town Centre

A conceptual town centre orbital bus service is included in the figure below. The routing system is focused on linking into the principal northern and southern local distributor roads through the town, which form the focal points for the future residential and employment hubs. The route also serves key existing destinations along it that include the hospital, the town centre and Drogheda Rail Station. Within the Northern and Southern Environs, precise detailing of local roadways and related bus capability has been identified in separate studies. The principal of east-west movement through these new development areas is shown here

Bus routes become viable if there are enough potential patrons within a 400m radius (5 minute walk) of each bus stop. The minimum housing density proposed by the Strategy for lands along the bus route(s) equates to around 80 persons per hectare. This provides an ultimate catchment of c.2000 people per bus stop and assumes bus stops are provided at c. 300m intervals along the bus route network.

Residents of a town the size of Drogheda can be expected to optimistically make 40 bus trips per annum per person (two way). Therefore, the resultant number of bus trips is set out below in Table 6.3.

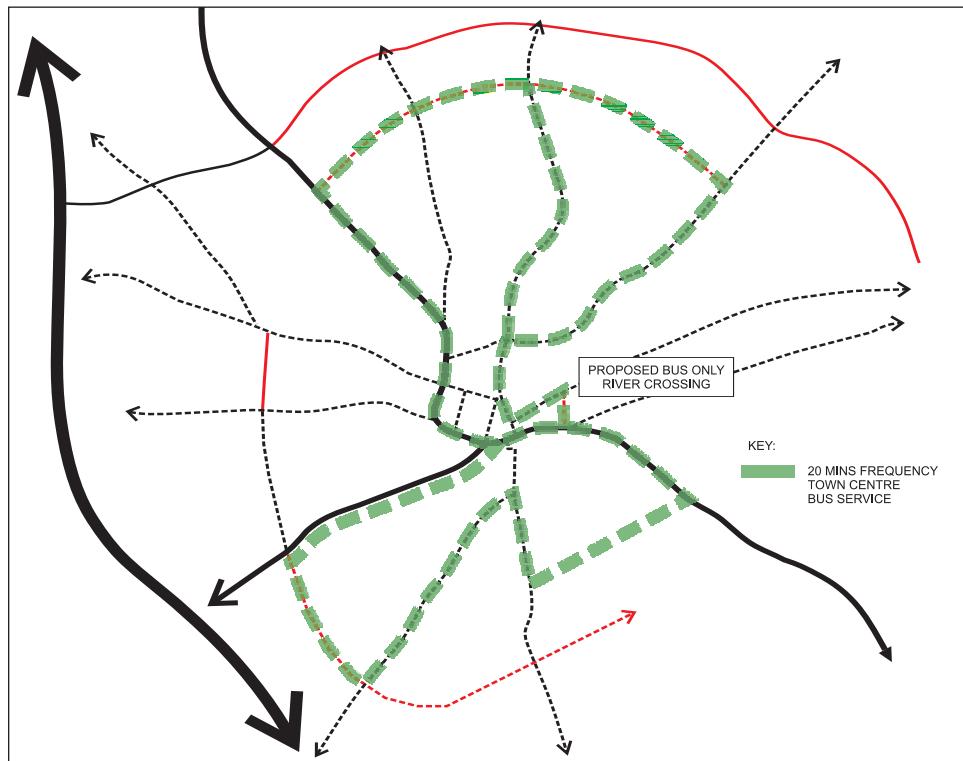


Figure 6.2 Proposed bus services (conceptual)

conceptually and is compatible with the ultimate proposed roll out of the new neighbourhoods, as per the plan work of Louth County Council and Meath County Council.

During earlier phases of the Strategy it is recognised that several key road links will not be fully constructed to allow this route to be followed. For example in the Northern Environs Local Area Plan, the phasing of new residential communities provides for a gradual design outwards from the established town area, across the full width of the Northern Environs area. New residential cell developments should therefore be designed with this in mind and should be permeable in form, to allow for buses to travel through them.

Table 6.3 Number of Bus Trips

Development Area	Approximate Target Population Increase	Two Way - Maximum		
		Annual Bus Trips	Typical Daily Bus Trips	Typical Peak Hour Bus Trips
Northern Environs	21,000	840,000	2,800	280
Southern Environs	7,800	312,000	1,040	104

Assuming a 75/25 tidal flow split during the peak operating periods, the bus route will support a frequency of 3 buses per hour.

The patronage levels and continued bus route suitability should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis in order to ensure its success.

Town Centre Bus Priority Infrastructure

The Strategy proposes a bridge crossing in the area of the south/north quays, somewhere east of Scotch Hall. Any bridge here should ensure prioritisation for bus movements and would present a key element in the upgraded bus transport network for the town and Study Area. It would also enable exploitation of bus transport penetration from East Meath into the heart of Drogheda town centre. It is not anticipated that buses will experience enough delay or operate at a high enough frequency to warrant the realisation of dedicated bus lanes through the town. Instead, it is suggested that a series of 'soft' bus priority measures are introduced into the developing town. In many respects this equates to junction improvements and flow revisions.

Relevant traffic signal junctions should be fitted with bus priority technology to allow buses to clear the junction during the first relevant green period. Furthermore, a detailed vehicle queue relocation system should be considered for the town centre bridges and adjoining road network. To prevent down-stream blocking, traffic queues could be moved to an upstream section with sufficient capacity to contain the queues. This provides bus priority without a substantial reallocation of road space.

East Meath

In order to provide a bus service that presents a realistic alternative to the car for journeys between East Meath and Drogheda town it would be important to focus future residential development along a single, relatively high density corridor. This should be focused around the Bettystown - Laytown coast road and seek to adhere to 80 persons per hectare residential densities within a 400m offset distance either side of the road. This could ultimately support a bus frequency of 2 buses per hour along the corridor.

The potential additional bus patronage numbers along the corridor are summarised below in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 Potential Additional Bus Patronage

Area	Two Way - Maximum			
	Approximate Target Population Increase	Annual Bus Trips	Typical Daily Bus Trips	Typical Peak Hour Bus Trips
East Meath	14,600	584,000	1,947	195

6.2.5 Rail

Patronage Estimates

Currently during the AM peak commuter period (07:00 - 10:00) there are c. 1,100 Dublin-bound rail trips boarding at the McBride Rail Station (Source: Iarnród Éireann). This equates to an existing rail modal share of almost 40% of all peak period commuting to the GDA.

The DTO 'A Platform for Change' Strategy suggests that 49% of Greater Dublin Area (GDA) AM peak hour travel should be by rail in year 2016. Approximately 30% of the Study Area workforce is employed in the Greater Dublin Area. Moreover, at least 20% of these are employed in locations easily accessible by rail i.e. Dublin city centre, Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown and parts of Fingal.

This Strategy should be cognisant of the DTO target rail modal share for travel to the GDA. This equates to a potential additional c. 1,500 Dublin-bound rail trips during the AM peak commuter period (07:00 - 10:00) originating in Drogheda by the year 2028.

It is estimated that c.1,000 of the additional AM period rail trips will have journey origins in Drogheda Northern Environs. This suggests that an additional rail station sited in the Northern Environs is necessary in order to reduce the quantum of traffic that will traverse the River Boyne during peak periods. However, it is unlikely that there will be sufficient demand for a rail station until the majority of the northern environs land has been developed. Therefore a new rail station should be considered as a longer-term aspiration within the context of this Strategy.

Interim Park and Ride Facility

In the shorter term, the development of the Northern Environs would support the realisation of a modest 500 space park and ride site located on the future rail station site. The park and ride site would become viable in terms of patronage numbers by around Phase 3 (year 2020). However, the feasibility of subsidising the route for a number of years to allow for its early operation should be explored. The site would provide an interim mechanism to reduce car based travel demand across the River Boyne between the existing rail station and the Northern Environs. In order to encourage the use of the park and ride facility bus linkages should be provided at a frequency of four services per hour during peak periods, which is cognisant of the rail service timetable.

Barriers to Increased Rail Patronage

Although there will be a significant increase in demand for peak period rail travel between Drogheda and Dublin it is recognised that most of the peak period services are already running at capacity. Therefore, there is a need to increase capacity along the northern rail line strategically before it will be possible for the rail line to absorb the additional rail travel demands generated by Drogheda.

In the short term there is potential to provide a modest amount of additional capacity along the line through a resignalling programme. This is a priority project for Iarnród Éireann and is being actively pursued in order to provide an additional four train paths through the city centre.

In the long term, a significant increase in capacity along the rail line can only be considered in the context of an interconnector tunnel across the River Liffey in Dublin, from Heuston Station via Pearse Station to the Docklands.



Drogheda Train Station

6.2.6 Parking Demand Management

The number of vehicles crossing the River Boyne will increase substantially following the realisation of the Strategy. Demand management (or 'carrot and stick' measures) should be put into place to support the concept of a congestion free town centre core and unrestricted vehicular flow across the town's bridges.

Long stay visitors including those who work in the town centre should be encouraged to park in peripheral town centre car parks or a future park and ride site. This should be complemented by a car park charging structure that supports this approach and allows short stay town centre visitors to utilise the most convenient car park locations.

Donore Road Park and Ride Facility

Many people who work in the town centre come from the wider geographic area and have no real alternative to the car. These people occupy c. 35% of jobs in Drogheda town. Therefore, the Strategy proposes that a 500 space park and ride site should be sited inside the M1 corridor in land within the Donore Road employment hub. This means that a significant number of vehicles could park in the outskirts for a lower cost than parking in the town centre. This would reduce the strain on long stay town centre car parking.

Furthermore, unlike many long term park and ride sites the bus service would not be operationally viable. In the AM peak period it would carry town centre workers from the peripheral park and ride site to the town centre hub. Rather than returning back to the park and ride site empty, the bus service could attract use from town centre residents and rail commuters who work in and around the Donore Road employment hub. The converse would apply to the PM peak period. The park and ride facility may also provide a useful alternative to shorter stay tourists and shoppers visiting the town.

The park and ride site should be linked to the town centre and central rail station by a competitive bus service operating at a frequency of four per hour during peak periods. The park and ride site would become viable in terms of patronage numbers by around Period 3 (year 2020).

The location of the park and ride site and the associated bus route for the Donore Road and northern environs interim park and ride facility is illustrated below.

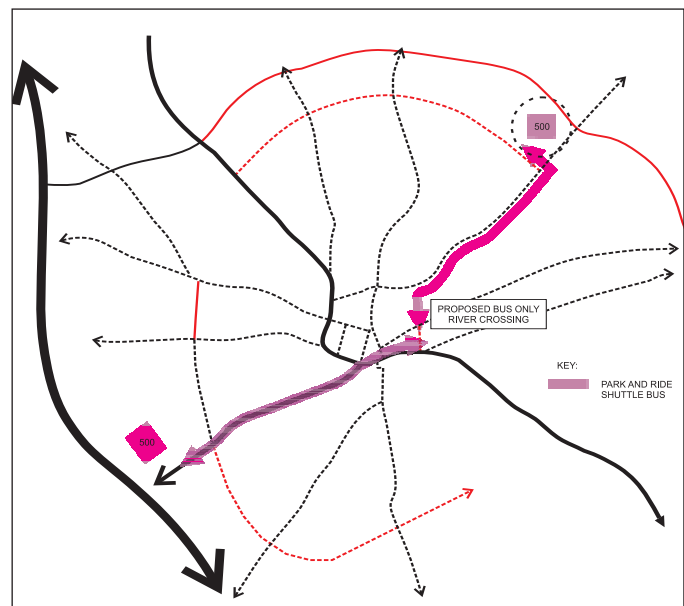


Figure 6.3 Park and Ride Facilities

6.2.7 Slow Mode Provision

It is generally accepted that there is a short and long-term requirement to utilise more sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling. This would result in reduced congestion levels, improved local environments and healthier and safer lifestyles.

The Strategy suggests that cycling should be established as a high profile mode of transport through the core area. This should be achieved through the provision of direct, uninterrupted facilities along the existing key radial corridors and proposed local distributor road network. The cycle network should provide linkages between key local activity centres, which include schools, rail station(s) and employment hubs.

Safe and convenient access to the principal cycle [and road] network from homes will be facilitated by the provision of secondary cycle facilities through the residential areas, including cycle only linkages where appropriate. The introduction of 20 mph 'home zones' in new residential areas must be considered to promote the use of safe cycling. This will often negate the need for segregated cycle facilities within residential areas.

The compact scale of the core area means that the principal cycle route network will also form the backbone of the pedestrian network.

6.2.8 Transport - Key Implementation Measures

Road Infrastructure

- **Town Centre Traffic Management Scheme**

A town centre traffic management scheme should be implemented in order to maximise the crossing capacity of the existing bridge infrastructure and facilitate bus priority through the core town area. This should be carried out in the short term.

- **Bridge Crossing within 'Town Centre'**

A new bridge link with public transport and non-motorised prioritisation should be provided across the River Boyne, west of the Railway Viaduct. This will significantly improve accessibility and mobility for public transport into the heart of the town centre and will be of particular benefit in opening up and facilitating a bus service link from East Meath via the Marsh Road right into the town centre. This should be constructed in the short to medium term as a key contributor to accessibility improvements and consequent modal shift.

- **Northern and Southern Environs Distributor Roads**

Strategic road routes within the northern and southern environs are the Northern Port Access Road and the M1-N1 Link. In addition to their strategic importance they will form a component of the new residential and related district developments within these expansion areas of the town. The roads may also play a role in future bus transport networks. These routes will be complemented by internal local roads for slow mode penetration and bus services within the overall development lands.

- **Construction of an additional river crossing for town based traffic movements**

Assuming the roll out of the current landbank areas, particularly the development of large new populations in the environs and the densification of the employment districts, an additional bridge crossing over the Boyne Valley for all traffic will be required in the medium term to accommodate the consequent increase in demand for cross-river peak period travel.

The Strategy has assessed the likely directional patterns of this increased traffic movement. This assessment concludes that the focus of these new movements and the related point of pressure for new bridge capacity is likely to be to the west of the current town centre. In this regard a western bridge crossing is recorded as a strategic medium term option.

It is also noted that the roll out of the developed landbanks may occur in a range of permutations. Similarly the delivery of the Northern Port Access Road, which is a short term requirement of the North Environs Masterplan, may transform actual movement patterns in that area and beyond. A possible future strategic road crossing of the Boyne to the east of the Railway Viaduct should also remain a policy option. It is important to review the actual roll out of development within the zoned landbanks on an ongoing basis and to monitor emerging patterns of travel demand to ensure that final decisions on the location of additional cross river bridge capacity will be made on the evidence then available of movement desire lines.

- **Donore Road Improvements**

The Donore Road will need to be upgraded in order to facilitate future peak period traffic volumes either travelling to (or from) the

motorway or with journey origins and destinations in the Donore Road area. This should be carried out in the medium to long term.

Public Transport

• Rail Station

The Strategy suggests that the existing McBride Rail Station should be upgraded in the short term to establish itself as a true high profile multi-modal interchange in the 'centre' of the town. This can link strongly with the proposed bus network.

• Bus Routes

The bus routes set out earlier in this section should be introduced in line with the realisation of development corridors, which meet the minimum density requirements set out previously.

• Park and Ride Sites

The Donore Road and Northern Environs park and ride schemes should become economically viable in the medium term. However, they could be opened earlier if a source of temporary subsidy was established.

• Rail Station - Northern Environs

Demand for a future additional rail station in the Northern Environs will be derived from the roll out of development as per the Northern Environs Draft Masterplan. A commuter rail station here will be critical to delivery of substantial accessibility and mobility to the northside of the town. Ultimately the completion of a usable service from a new station here will depend on rail upgrade exercises elsewhere, particularly in the loop area of central Dublin. Nevertheless this rail station is a key public transport objective of the Strategy.

Drogheda Interlink into Heuston Station



6.3 Economic Development

6.3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 of this report has profiled employment trends nationally and regionally and provides a detailed analysis of the economic profile of the Study Area. In many ways Drogheda reflects the national and regional economic situation, though one notable difference is the relatively high level of manufacturing employment still in Drogheda, but with numbers falling in line with trends nationally and in the GDA. At the outset, this sub-section considers Drogheda's strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas with potential that Drogheda can exploit. The sub-section then details sectors with growth potential and an overview of steps that will enable Drogheda to exploit its full growth potential.

6.3.2 Strengths, Weaknesses and Untapped Potential

Strengths

- Drogheda is an expanding town with a rapidly growing labour force. Some of this workforce is employed elsewhere, mainly in the GDA, but represents a major asset if workers spend their leisure time and money in Drogheda.
- The town is close to Dublin, and is easily accessible via the M1 and the rail network. This gives access to the amenities, educational and other facilities, notably Dublin airport, specialised services and labour force available in the GDA.
- Drogheda does not have any insurmountable problems with the provision of utilities, including electricity, broadband, water supply and wastewater services. The port also represents an important asset.
- There is sufficient zoned and serviceable land to cater for foreseeable developments over the period of this Strategy.
- The costs of doing business in Drogheda should be lower than in Dublin.
- Drogheda is one of the most historic towns in Ireland and is situated in a strong tourist area, surrounded by major attractors such as Newgrange, Tara, Mellifont, etc., the coast, and mountains further north.

- The town has a compact core, and upcoming developments will consolidate this, as would the future redevelopment of the town quays.

Weaknesses

- A higher than average dependence on manufacturing employment, a sector that is declining over time.
- Unemployment is high in the town core, and redeployment of workers from traditional employment sectors represents a challenge.
- Physical access within the town is constrained.
- The IDA indicate that there is a lack of modern office space for small to medium-sized enterprises in the town.
- There has been a lack of top-class hotel accommodation in the town, though this has been addressed by the opening of the new hotel at Scotch Hall.
- Proximity to Dublin has both positive and negative aspects. While bringing benefits, it also means Drogheda must compete with all the other towns in the GDA, many of which are closer to Dublin. The development of tourism in Drogheda may also have been affected, since it is easy to access the amenities around Drogheda from Dublin.
- Lack of third level education facilities represents untapped Potential
- In a sectoral sense, there is little doubt that tourism represents a major untapped potential in Drogheda. The example of Kilkenny is often given, where careful development of the historic fabric of the town has been the seed for a thriving tourist sector, attracting as many if not more domestic tourists as international tourists. Drogheda has the added advantage of major established attractions and the seaside within easy reach. Tourism in Bettystown and along the coast is already well developed, but might benefit from better management and marketing. Tourist development in Drogheda and East Meath should generate synergies.
- The growing labour pool, many of whom work in Dublin, may give opportunities to attract employers away from Dublin.

- Lower costs, particularly land costs, compared with Dublin also create potential for relocation of Dublin businesses.
- This labour pool also represents a major untapped resource for the services sector in Drogheda, if they can be persuaded to spend their money and leisure time in the town as opposed to elsewhere. The expected growth in population as well as incomes in the medium term will represent major opportunities for businesses in Drogheda.

It is possible to make an estimate of the level of spending involved, given various population growth scenarios. The population of the core area plus the coastal villages in 2004 was roughly 40,000 (Issues Paper March 2005, Appendix III), and that disposable income per head in the study area in 2004 was €19,000¹². This implies that aggregate disposable income in 2004 in the study area was €752 million.

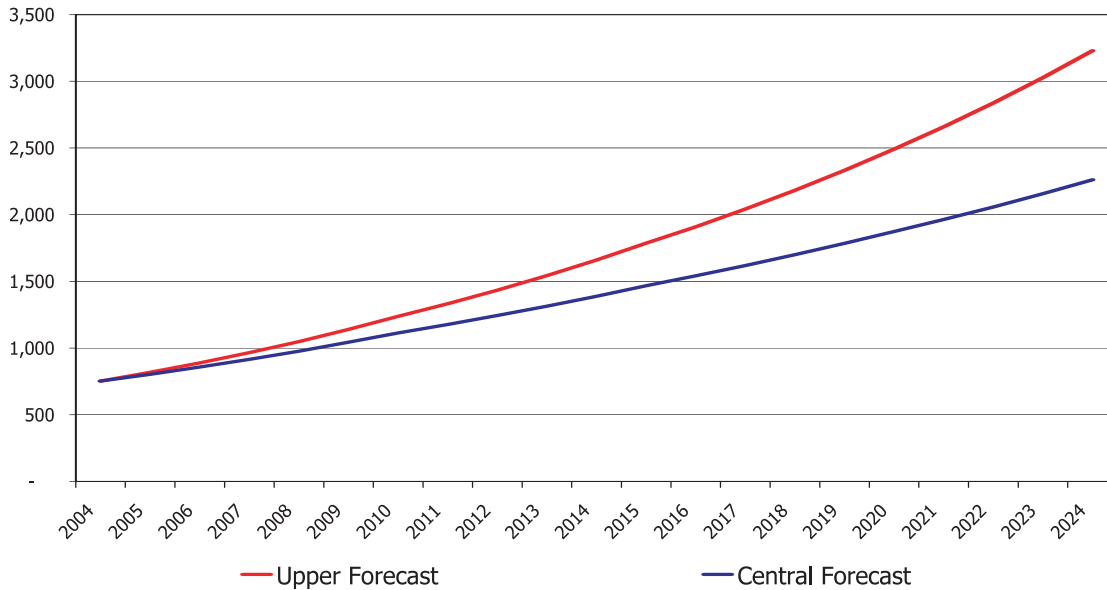
Taking the forecast of economic growth according to the ESRI Medium Term Review July 2003, it is estimated that if the population were to reach 100,000 by 2024, then aggregate disposable incomes in that year in the study area would be in the region of €3.23 billion (in 2004 equivalent). In other words, disposable income would more than quadruple over the period. A population forecast of 70,000 by 2024 would lead to aggregate disposable income reaching €2.3 billion by 2024 (Figure 6.4) overleaf.



Scotch Hall

¹² This based on disposable income per head in the Mid-East Region (Meath, Kildare and Wicklow) in 2002 per the CSO. The comparable figure for Co. Louth is 18,100, but we believe that income levels in the Mid-East region would better reflect the position in Drogheda and surroundings, given the profile of commuting into the GDA.

Figure 6.4 Aggregate Disposable Income in Study Area, Million 2004-2024



Source: DKM and RPS estimates, ESRI MTR

3rd Level Education in Drogheda

One can argue that the lack of a third level education facility based in Drogheda is a weakness, and certainly such facilities are important economically, especially if they can service the labour skill and research requirements of locally-based businesses. Two points are relevant here, however:

- Drogheda benefits from the nearness of third level facilities in Dublin and Dundalk, and DKIT has a number of outreach activities in Drogheda, including via the Drogheda Institute of Further Education (DIFE), nurse training at the Lourdes Hospital and Millmount Enterprise Incubation Centre; however, the presence of these well-established educational institutions nearby make a new facility in Drogheda less viable;
- The third level sector has expanded significantly over the last decade or so, while demographic changes are now starting to lead to reduced demand for third level education. The Institutes of Technology in particular are feeling the pinch in this regard, but so too are some university departments (see for example Irish Independent 24th August 2004: “College Vacancies at a Record High”). Points requirements for many courses in the ITs across the country are falling, and recent years have seen increasing difficulties filling places on these courses. This is not a very promising environment in which to seek to establish a new third level institute.

In summary, the likelihood of the Department of Education and Science being persuaded to fund a new third level institution in Drogheda in the short to medium term is not great. In the longer term, if Drogheda and its surroundings start reaching the upper levels of its population forecasts, the argument for a third level institute becomes stronger.

In the meantime, one can take a pragmatic view and consider that the primary function of 3rd Level education is to service the skills needs of workers and employers. As Drogheda expands, and as structural economic change continues, these requirements will increase. In that regard, the Drogheda Institute of further Education (DIFE), currently with 500 students, is a considerable asset, that has scope for expansion over time, and could be the seed for a fully-fledged third level institute. There may also be scope to accommodate a department or further outreach facilities of an existing 3rd level institute (DKIT or DCU are the most obvious candidates).

6.3.3 Sectors with Growth Potential

Growing Sectors

As set out in Chapter 2, a number of sectors present themselves as having growth potential. Looking at the pronouncements of the Competitiveness Strategy Group, the three main sectors in the economy are:

1. Internationally Traded Services, most notably financial and software, including shared services/ contact services.
2. High Value-Added Manufacturing, most notably bio-pharma and IT.
3. Domestically-Traded Sector, mainly business/ financial services, wholesale, retail, distribution, consumer services, and the tourist sector.

The domestically-traded sector, while perhaps less prestigious than the other two, accounted for over 80% of total employment in the Irish economy in 2003. This is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Regardless of the success or otherwise of attracting firms in the manufacturing or internationally traded sectors, the majority of new employment opportunities for the population of Drogheda will be in the domestically traded sector.

Manufacturing and internationally traded services employment is by its nature unpredictable. Despite the best efforts of the IDA and others, there is no guarantee that these types of employment will establish themselves in Drogheda. Drogheda competes not only with locations internationally for these jobs, but also with locations in Ireland, and particularly within the GDA. Drogheda is further from the M50 than most points in the GDA, and although the M1 and the rail line give it relatively good access at the moment, in the medium term all major points in the GDA will have access to the M50 by motorway or equivalent. Furthermore, once established, there are no guarantees that such employment will remain in Drogheda. Indeed, it is the nature of such employment that it is mobile, and will relocate when “better” (generally lower cost) locations present themselves.

Two other characteristics of this type of economic activity are that:

1. Cluster effects are important. Firms operating in a particular sector prefer to establish close to similar firms. A major factor in this is the availability of skilled labour. This is a two-way flow: workers with particular

skills are more likely to relocate to an area where there are more job opportunities for them to exploit.

2. Such firms prefer to establish where there is a deep labour pool, where specialised services are available, and where amenities are of a high quality. This tends to push firms towards large cities.

These two factors go some way to explaining why the bulk of these firms have set up in a small number of locations. It is estimated that 80% of FDI in Ireland is concentrated in the five main cities. It is difficult to “get a start” as a location for these firms, and Drogheda is not alone in this regard: the State (including locations in the Greater Dublin Area) is dotted with underutilised IDA business parks.

One factor that Drogheda could exploit is if there is a general move for businesses to relocate out of Dublin city over time. This may occur in the medium term as firms currently based in the city get to the point where they need to upgrade their accommodation (e.g. an insurance firm modernising its office space). This may be an opportunity to move to a lower cost location, especially if they find that a high proportion of their workforce now lives outside Dublin.

Non-traded services employment by contrast tends to be far less mobile and unpredictable because it primarily serves the local population. As discussed earlier, the local population will have growing spending power over time. If Drogheda provides the services people require at competitive prices and in attractive and convenient surroundings, this business and its related employment should remain in the town and be sustainable. Individual businesses will of course fail over time, but they should be replaced by alternative locally-based firms. Residents of the study area will travel to other locations if they cannot obtain the services they require in Drogheda, but this is a factor that is very much in Drogheda's own hands.

Tourism, although generally included above in the domestically-traded sector, is in many respects like an internationally traded service. The Study Area competes for the tourist spend with both Irish and international locations. It resembles the domestically traded sector in that it is location-specific and the firms involved are mainly domestically owned SMEs. It is generally accepted that Drogheda has been “boxing below its weight” in tourist terms, despite its historic setting and the presence of internationally known attractions in the vicinity, and well-established tourism along the East Meath coast. Many tourist-related developments are currently underway or planned, notably:

- The re-branding of the town, with the “Drogheda on the Boyne” campaign.
- Improved signage and a heritage trail in the town.
- Enhancement of the Battle of the Boyne site and surrounding lands, including better connectivity with the town.
- A new 4/5 star hotel in the town centre (Scotch Hall).
- A major new fun park planned for an old industrial site in the Donore Road industrial estate.
- 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/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.

These should give a significant boost to the tourism performance of Drogheda. There are two main sectors with potential:

- The weekend/short break, which mainly serves the Irish market, and
- The longer holiday, which mainly involves international tourists and several parts of the country, though there is also the domestic seaside holiday sector.

Drogheda probably has more potential catering for the first of these, at least initially, and indeed it may be the more lucrative of the two. However, there is also scope to become part of the itinerary for the longer holiday group.

6.3.4 Steps to Enable Drogheda to Exploit Growth Potential

What can be done to make Drogheda more attractive, whether it be for businesses to base themselves in and operate from the town, or for individuals (residents, non-residents, tourists) to spend their time and money in the town?

It is useful to consider the factors that may influence the locational decision of an employer as well as residents. These steps are also relevant for helping to maintain jobs in existing key employers (Table 6.5). The focus needs to be on making the choice of coming to Drogheda to work and live easier. These factors include:

- The availability of a skilled labour pool.
- Accessibility, both internal (within Drogheda) and external (connecting with other locations).
- Good quality competitively priced housing.
- Good transport links between home and work (i.e. accessibility as described above).
- 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.

The availability of a skilled labour pool is in turn influenced by the presence of location attractors for employees, as well as facilities for further education and training/ retraining, to enable workers to keep up-to-date with their skills and deal with economic restructuring. These include:

Many of the issues that attract employers and employees to the town are also relevant to tourists, though some additional issues arise also. In Table 6.5 we consider Drogheda's position on each of these factors, under the headings: strength/ weakness, capacity to influence, actions to take, and observations.

Table 6.5 Optimising Drogheda's Economic Attractiveness

Factor	Strength or Weakness?	Local Capacity to Influence	Local Actions	Observations
1 Skilled labour pool	Strength	Some capacity	accommodate population growth.	Large regional labour pool also a strength.
2 Physical Accessibility to/ from other locations	Strength	Limited	Accommodate development of Drogheda port, including Northern Port Access Route.	External accessibility by road and air is close to being optimised. Completion of M1 and Dublin Port tunnel will further improve accessibility. NPAR has impacts on adjacent land usage.
3 Physical Accessibility within Drogheda	Weakness	High	Implement the Strategy's Transport recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town core imposes constraints. Roll-out of development in town can influence viability of local bus services.
4 Availability of utilities (electricity, gas, water,telecoms/ broadband, waste management)	Strength	High for Water & Waste; limited for others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain adequate capacity going forward and keep costs competitive. Coordinate with utility and infrastructure providers to ensure that planned developments are consistent with ongoing provision and up-grading of utilities in the study area. 	Water and waste management capacity not a constraint for the foreseeable future.
5 Cost of doing business in Drogheda	Strength	Some capacity	Keep commercial rates competitive with competing locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination between three Local Authorities needed - some arrangement for redistribution of rates income may be appropriate. IBEC: Louth one of three cheapest counties for Commercial Rates (website 7th June 2005).
6 Availability of business expertise and services	Some weaknesses	Some capacity	Encourage provision of modern office space through planning system (e.g. require certain amount of office space in appropriate developments).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of these services in GDA is a strength. 4/5 star hotel at Scotch Hall will be important. Redevelopment of town quays gives opportunity to improve business accommodation.
7 Adequacy and flexibility of enterprise space	Strength	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure ongoing adequacy of zoned and serviced land for enterprise activities, with flexibility in zoning. Enterprise space near railway station may be attractive for operators relocating from Dublin (e.g. redeveloped town quays). 	Overall quantity of zoned lands adequate.
8 Encouragement of Start- ups /SMEs	Some weaknesses	Some capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate provision of incubator/ start-up/SME space. Selective rates holidays or reductions for start-ups and SMEs. 	Coordinate with Louth County Enterprise Board and DKIT Outreach activities.
9 Awareness & Perception	Some weaknesses	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. E.g. advertising in trade publications, direct contact, internet (www.invest.meath.ie is a good model). Collect and make available data on labour pool (including sectoral and commuting pattern), land bank, industrial and industrial space, costs and utilities. Work with IDA Ireland to identify and target sectors more likely to establish or relocate in Drogheda, and with greatest scope to cluster, e.g. IFSC firms. Appoint an economic development officer, to drive and coordinate the above, establish and maintain links with firms and other players (IDA, 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. 	Requires ongoing resources to compile and update data, for publicity and for economic development officer role.

Table 6.5 Optimising Drogheda's Economic Attractiveness (continued from page 93)

Factor	Strength or Weakness?	Local Capacity to Influence	Local Actions	Observations
10 Good quality competitively priced housing	Strength	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequacy of zoned and serviced land, to help keep land prices low. • Planning regulations can influence quality of housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoned and serviced land for housing not a constraint. • Roll-out of new housing development can influence viability of public transport.
11 Local amenities, town identity, visual appearance, open and civic areas	Some weaknesses	High for most issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Strategy Planning and architectural recommendations, to optimise physical attractiveness of town. • Consolidate primacy of town core for commercial/social functions and discourage dispersal, via zoning and commercial rates structure. • Accommodate developments that will improve amenity. • Future function of West St. requires attention post Scotch Hall, St. Laurence Centre and Quays redevelopment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in amenity on-stream (Scotch Hall, St. Laurence Centre Donore Road Leisure Park, swimming pool, fun park). • Redevelopment of town quays gives opportunities for business space and leisure amenities. • Funding for new schools is triggered by population increases. • Coordination between three Local Authorities needed - some arrangements for redistribution of rates income may be appropriate.
12 Further education and training / retraining opportunities	Some weaknesses	Some capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of Local Authorities, employers, training and business promotion bodies, Drogheda Partnership, 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearness of Dublin and DKIT an advantage, but makes establishment of Drogheda 3rd level institution less likely. • Expanding population, availability of suitable lands and establishment and operating costs are advantages for attracting departments of existing institutions. • Unemployment in town core and high reliance on manufacturing point to high ongoing requirement for retraining to keep and return workers to the workforce.
13. Tourism	Some weaknesses, many strengths	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing awareness of Drogheda among public, tourists and tour operators is essential. A survey to ascertain awareness of Drogheda, and town's image, would identify issues to be addressed in improving and marketing the town. • 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, etc., and the coast. • Better signage on the M1, highlighting Drogheda's attractions, and 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. • Inner Quays represent a major opportunity to develop an attraction landmark for visitors (and locals). This should have a strong river-based focus. Develop and implement Masterplan for the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the attractors for residents and workers also relevant for tourists. • The obvious initial market for attracting more tourists is Dublin, but awareness/perception issues may have to be addressed. • There should be synergies between Drogheda and coastal tourism.

6.4 Urban Design

Urban Design is concerned with the creation of places of beauty and distinct identity. It is derived from related matters such as planning and transportation policy, architectural design, development economics, landscape and engineering. It draws these and other strands together. In summary, urban design is about creating a vision for an area and then deploying the skills and resources to realise that vision¹³.

6.4.1 General Principles

The Urban Design Strategy is based on the following principles of development¹⁴:

Places for People

For places to be well-used and well-loved, they must be safe, comfortable, varied and attractive. They also need to be distinctive and offer variety, choice and opportunities for meeting people.

Enrich the Existing

New development should enrich the qualities of existing urban places. This means encouraging a distinctive response that arises from and complements its setting. This applies at every scale - region, city, town, neighbourhood, and street.

Make Connections

Places need to be easy to get to and be integrated physically and visually with their surroundings. This requires attention to how to get around by foot, bicycle, public transport and the car - and in that order.

Work with the Landscape

Places that strike a balance between the natural and man made environment and utilise each site's intrinsic resources - the climate, landform, landscape and ecology - to maximise energy conservation and amenity.

Mix Uses and Forms

Stimulating, enjoyable and convenient places meet a variety of demands from the widest possible range of users, amenities and social groups. They also weave together different building forms, uses, tenures and densities.

Manage the Investment

For projects to be developable and well cared for they must be economically viable, well managed and maintained. This means understanding the market considerations of developers, ensuring long term commitment from the community and the local authority, defining appropriate delivery mechanisms and seeing this as part of the design process.

Design for Change

New development needs to be flexible enough to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle and demography. This means designing for energy and resource efficiency; creating flexibility in the use of property, public spaces and the service infrastructure and introducing new approaches to transportation, traffic management and parking.

6.4.2 Built Form

The consideration of built or urban form is integral to the relationship of development and transport, and the maximisation of the use of walking, cycling and public transport

The built form of a town has a significant influence on how people move, and their choice of mode in undertaking daily activities. Various street/ road networks and residential layouts have different impacts on travel.

In particular, the motor car has had a strong influence on urban areas by, on the one hand loosening the urban structure, and on the other introducing a highly segregated road hierarchy, where the functions, character, and form of streets have been typically subordinated to traffic.

The rigidity and standardisation of most recent housing layouts are partly the result of the dominance of motor vehicles. Layouts have been based on the geometry of vehicle movement, with the result that residents find it easier to use their car than any other form of travel. In these circumstances the car is immensely convenient. But there are many journeys made by car which, with better planning, could be made by walking, cycling or public transport¹⁵.

¹³ Llewelyn Davis (2000) Urban Design Compendium, English Partnerships

¹⁴ Llewelyn Davis (2000) Urban Design Compendium, English Partnerships

¹⁵ (Department for Local Government Regions (DTLR)/ Commission for Architecture and The Built Environment (CABE) (2001) By Design, Better Places to Live, Thomas Telford. p.24).

In order to support the aims and objectives of the Strategy, urban form must contribute to the reduction of the number of miles travelled per person per day between workplace, home, school, shops and leisure activities. Due to the commuting character of Drogheda, the influence of urban form on work place trips will be somewhat limited in the short-term (other than providing for direct links to public transport). For other destinations however, urban form remains highly relevant.

Ideally, the pedestrian should be able to access all the usual daily and weekly urban functions (i.e. school, crèche, shops) within five to seven minutes walking distance, without recourse to transport. This typically correlates to a traditional neighbourhood area.

Suburban areas have typically developed as 'pods', where separate uses (i.e. shopping centre, apartments, houses) have been developed as separate and segregated physical elements, each with their own access to a main distributor road (see figure 6.5 below). The other notable outcome of this form of development is the significant waste of land, and loosening of urban footprints.

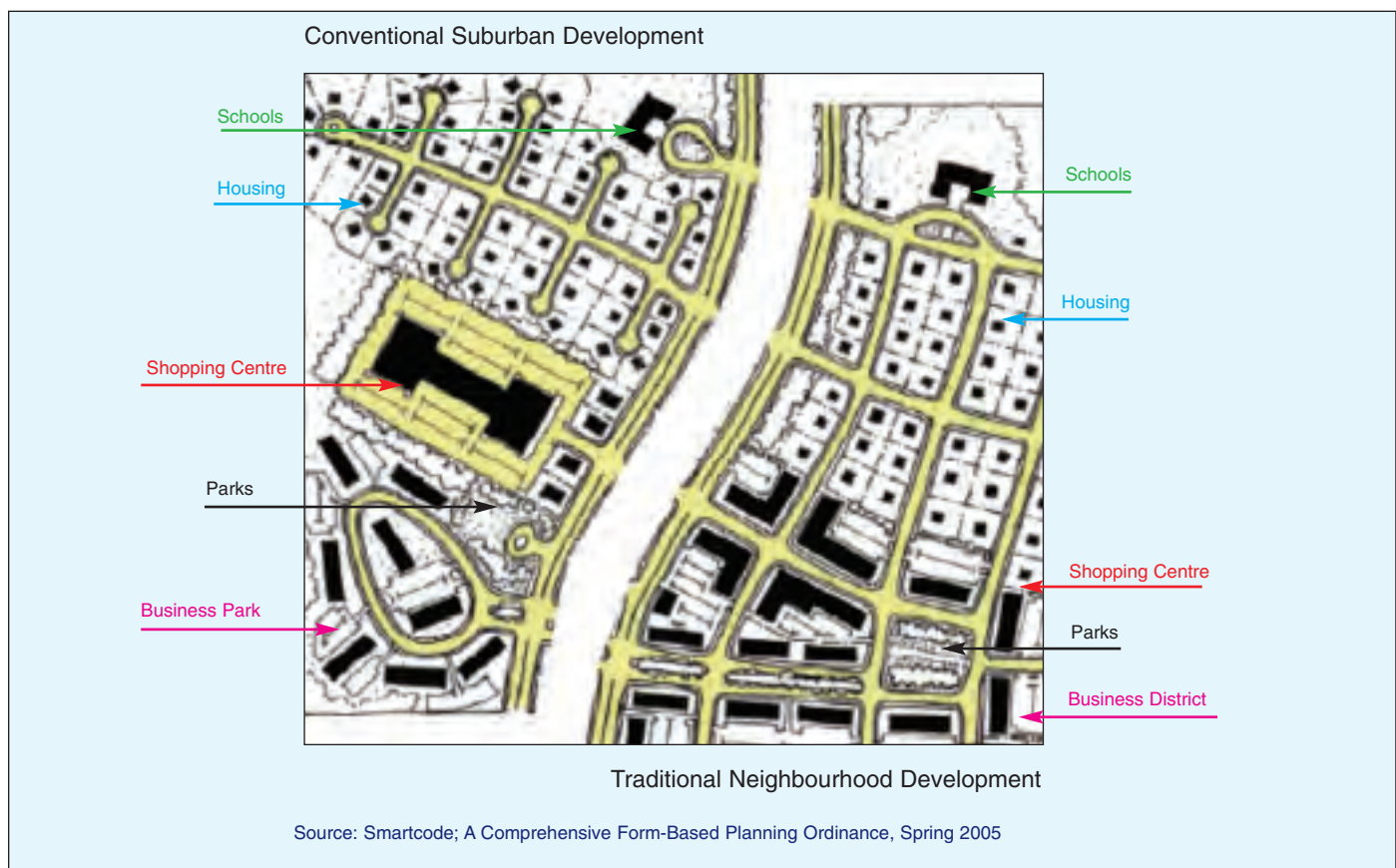
Development of this nature is focussed on the road network and car parking provision, rather than focussing on providing links between places.

The integration of planning and transport as espoused under this Strategy seeks to break down unnecessary barriers to movement. Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance, allowing independence to those who do not drive, especially the elderly and the young. Interconnected networks of streets should be designed to encourage walking, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, and promote energy conservation.

The integration of uses seeks to encourage the linkage between areas, in order to support neighbourhood, village and district centre facilities in the study area by:

- encouraging layout design that promotes walking, cycling and the use of public transport, and
- promoting linkage to basic local facilities (schools, shops, crèches, workplace, public transport stations/stops).

Figure 6.5 Conventional Suburban Development vs. Traditional Neighbourhoods



Residential Layout

Cul-de-sac residential developments, or indeed gated apartment schemes are typical of 'pod' developments that prevent ease of movement. Their layouts result in journeys that are generally more extensive, and do not allow for easy pedestrian access to neighbouring facilities. Pedestrian routes introduced to overcome poor connections often result in routes which are not overlooked, unattractive and unsafe.

It must be noted that encouraging high-density development in itself does not support sustainable transport. On the contrary poorly laid-out high-density schemes increase congestion.

Built Form Recommendations

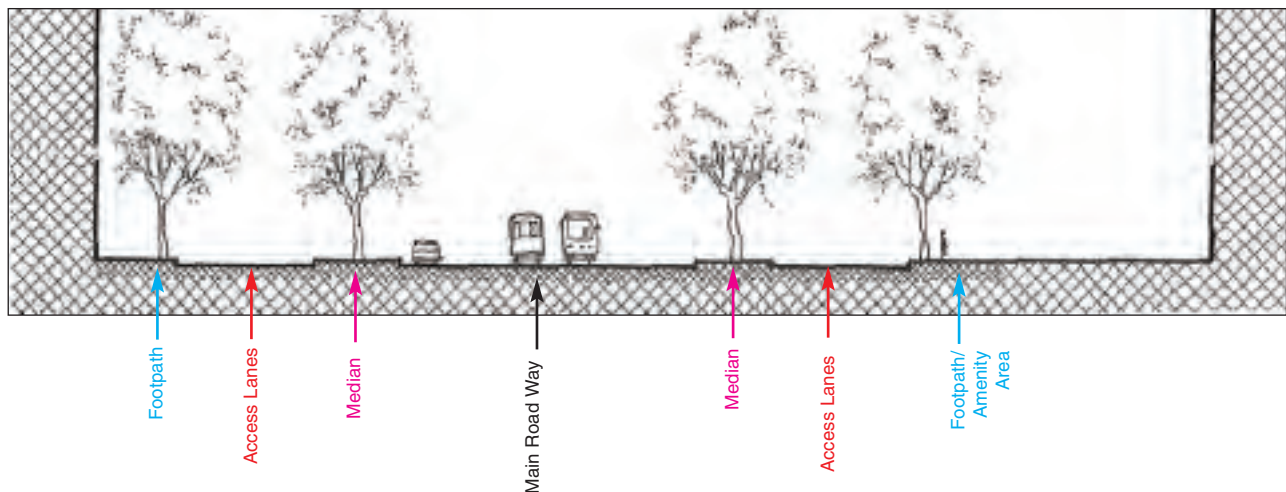
The foregoing highlights some of the key issues pertaining to movement, mobility, and built form. This Strategy does not attempt to provide a blue print for urban design in the Study Area, but highlights principles and objectives that developments should adhere to. The following recommendations should be incorporated into any large development scheme or masterplan occurring in the study area.

- Developments should adhere to neighbourhood development principles and seek to promote mixed-use development, and the provision of daily/ weekly activities within 5-7 minute walking distances (approx. 400m-450m).
- The layout of all schemes should provide for short, legible and direct journeys and encourage pedestrian trips to local facilities as the preferred option.
- Streets should be laid out in a network, so that there are alternate routes to most destinations. This permits most streets to be smaller with slower traffic as well as having parking, trees, footpaths and buildings. They are equitable for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- Cul-de-sacs and one way streets should be minimised,

as they can create blockages in the street network, making absorption of all types of traffic difficult thus overloading the rest of the network through increased congestion, leading to gridlock.

- The public character of roads and streets within the town should be safeguarded, particularly within housing estates, and ensure that wherever possible, one street leads into another street.
- Buildings should be laid out so as to create continuous frontages around the perimeter of a block, wherever appropriate. This makes a clear distinction between private spaces on the one hand, and streets and public spaces on the other. This avoids the creation of dead areas of land which no one uses or cares for.
- Civic buildings (schools, meeting halls, theatres, churches, clubs, museums, etc.) are often placed on squares or at the termination of street vistas. By being built at important locations these buildings serve as landmarks.
- Open space should be provided in the form of specialised squares, playgrounds, and parks and, in the case of villages, greenbelts.
- Buildings and places should be capable of being used for a range of activities at different times of the day. The buildings are diverse in function but compatible in size and in disposition on their plots. The occupation of ground floors by uses that relate directly to pedestrians in town and neighbourhood centres should also be encouraged.
- Consideration should be given to ways of improving access through existing cul-de-sacs for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.
- New residential areas should be easy to serve by bus, either by providing direct walking routes to bus stops, or by allowing bus operations to penetrate the residential development. High-density development is of course inextricably linked to design quality and such schemes should demonstrate that the layout delivers ease of pedestrian access and movement.

Figure 6.6 Examples of Avenue Layout



6.4.3 Urban Design Opportunities

A Vision of Drogheda 2005 - 2025

Four key elements must be considered in working towards a new vision for the urban structure of Drogheda for 2025 and beyond: opportunities, constraints, linkages and barriers.

Opportunities

The greatest opportunity is Drogheda itself; its strategic position, its riverside location, its historic fabric and its vibrant and dynamic town centre. The Strategy recommends building on these elements by focusing on innovative measures to enhance the townscape, promoting the town centre as a place to live, and encouraging the indigenous businesses and services that give a town the critical mass necessary to become an attractive urban destination. There are a number of key opportunity areas identified which can provide the catalyst for change and improved utilisation of space. In addition, the town should fully exploit its position as a gateway to the many urban and rural attractions that surround it, such as Newgrange, Brú na Boinne, and the seashore around Bettystown and Laytown.

Constraints

Traffic management can pose a constraint to developing Drogheda as an exciting place to live, work and do business. However, this Strategy puts forward several proposals to improve traffic flows in the town which will contribute to an improved environment and facilitate growth and development. Access to the town centre by car should be facilitated but not allowed to dominate all considerations for the centre. A more considered parking strategy for the town that maximises the use and efficiency of car parks while reducing on-street parking is required and this in turn will provide more space for pedestrians to enjoy the town.

A more strategic view needs to be taken of the design and style of new additions to the townscape, particularly along the vital waterfront and in areas such as Old Abbey Lane and The Backlanes. This is highlighted, for instance, by the varying levels and style of the boardwalks currently being developed at various schemes along the river, which suggests a lack of overall vision or coherence.

Linkages

Drogheda's network of thoroughfares, streets, and lanes calls for a distinctive design response to ensure that individual places within the town integrate in such a way as to maximise and promote movement throughout the central area. Of particular emphasis should be the waterfront as a central axis through the town; West Street-Laurence Street as the principal thoroughfare of the town; and the north-south axis from West Street through The Backlanes and South Quay to the train station.

Barriers

Consideration needs to be given to future links across the river to the east as the town centre develops. The new pedestrian bridge at Scotch Hall and a planned traffic link further down river should help to open up this eastern portion of the town. A concerted effort to sensitively develop derelict sites that currently hinder movement through the town is also required.

Key Opportunity Areas

Five key opportunity areas have been identified in the town as a basis for the future expansion and development of Drogheda. These are illustrated in Figure 6.7 and are described in detail overleaf.

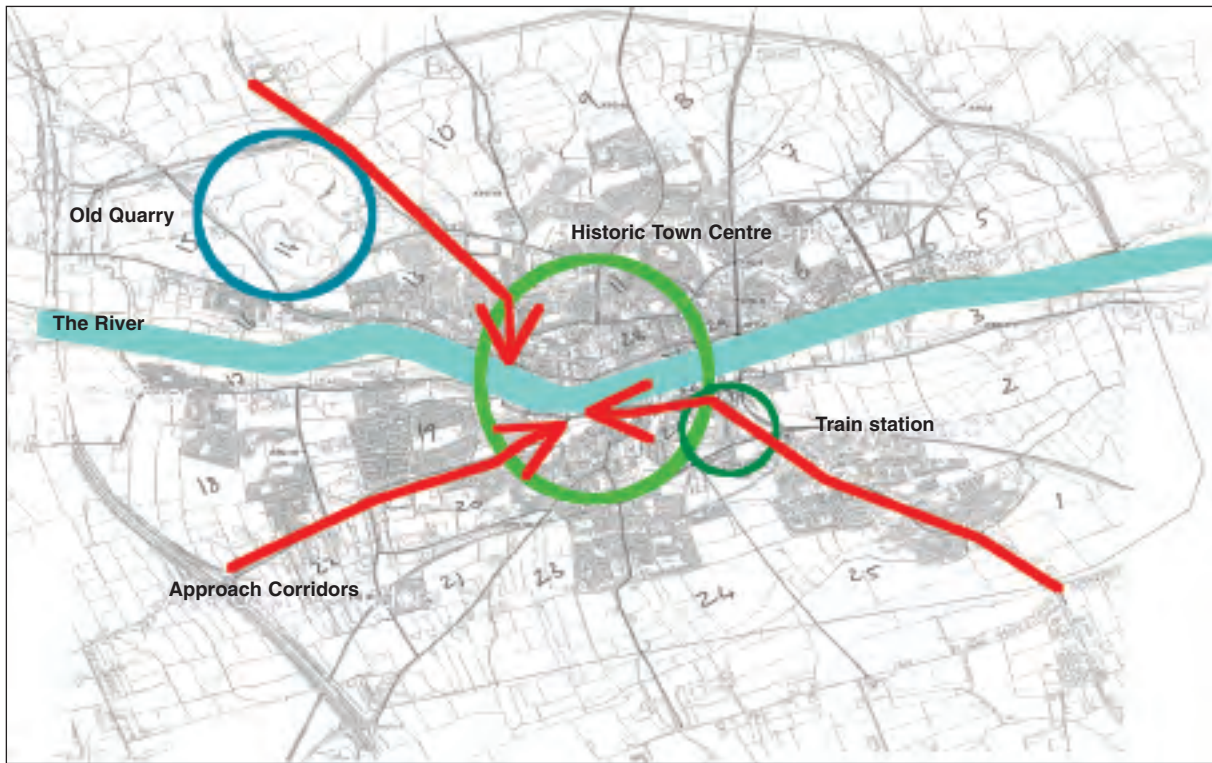


Figure 6.7 Drogheda - Key Opportunity Areas

Area 1: The River

The River Boyne is perhaps the most important asset of the town. The Borough Council recognises the future strategic value of the inner quays and has therefore designated the area from St Mary's Bridge to the Viaduct as the Inner Quays Development Area (IQDA). Future strategies should address three distinct areas along the river: the North Quays, South Quays and Boyne Valley area.

commercial uses”; and that “ultimately the area might be better utilised as an extension of the Town Centre containing as it does, potentially attractive streetscapes, protected structures and features”. The relocation of Drogheda Port to a new location east of the town opens this area to new opportunities which can be progressed by future development plans.

A vision for the North Quays would see the development of a 'maritime village' with its existing warehouse-style buildings reinvented for residential and high-value commercial uses developing the area into a major new residential and economic quarter for the town.



The River Boyne: Drogheda's Past, Present and Future

North Quays

The North Quays area between Constitution Hill and the Viaduct offers the potential for a major new urban quarter for the town. The current development plan points out that *“long-term expansion of town centre type activities is envisaged towards the railway viaduct on both the north and south sides of the river”, that “this area is currently characterised by port related industrial and*



A 'maritime village' at North Quays creates a new residential and commercial quarter for Drogheda based on the existing streetscapes and urban form.

The provision of a major new visitor attraction for Drogheda is also envisaged to draw people down the river towards the Viaduct. Development of this area should build upon its existing streetscape and form to provide an urban district of quality and character and an important waterfront destination for the town.

South Quays

The South Quays are currently undergoing significant redevelopment with the creation of the new landmark residential, retail and entertainment quarter of Scotch Hall. The second phase of this development is currently under consideration by the planning authority, and together both phases will raise the marker for urban design standards in Drogheda and enhance the current retail, residential and entertainment provision in the town. The scheme will also promote greater integration between the North and South Quays with the provision of two new bridges; a pedestrian link to the Backlanes area and a traffic bridge providing an important new link for the eastern section of the town.



Scotch Hall will raise the standard of urban design in Drogheda and stimulate future development of the South Bank area.

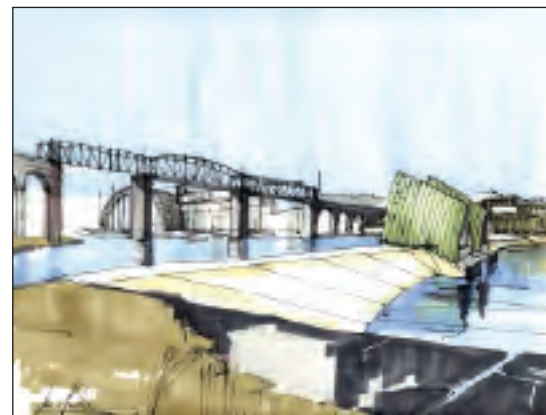
There remains a significant amount of land between Scotch Hall and the Viaduct, currently used for light industry and port-related activity and a small amount of low density residential. Future development of this area should take advantage of its strategic location between the emerging transport hub of McBride Station and the town centre. The historic Ship Street needs to be respected but this should not conflict with the opportunity for higher density accommodation that makes use of the escarpment dip.

For the quays areas, both to the north and south, it is important to marry design intent and vitality with pleasant new public domain areas. The Strategy does not intend to set absolute height caps for new development along

the quays. However the predominant heights particularly on the North Quays area should reflect a common scale derived from older port buildings. To the south side the height of the raised escarpment is a relevant source of scale for certain development sites and may allow for increased scale subject to design quality and amenity standard thresholds.

Boyne Valley Area

The River Boyne is the most important natural amenity of Drogheda and must be central to any future strategy for the town. Enhancing and developing the existing parklands and open space to the west of the town will provide an important new link to Brú na Boinne and beyond and allow the recreational value and leisure uses of this area to be maximised. One future project that might be considered to enhance the river area would be the provision of a river barrage beyond the Viaduct to regulate tidal activity and allow for a broader range of river activities.



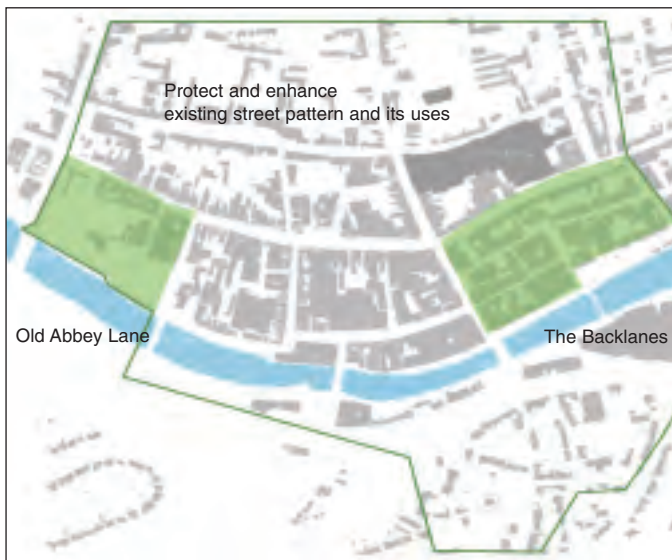
A river barrage will regulate tidal activity and allow for a broad range of leisure uses on the river.

Area 2: Historic Town Centre

Drogheda Borough Council recognises the historic town centre as “the jewel in the crown of Drogheda” and calls for its continued development as “a place where people should have the widest variety of shopping, entertainment, cultural and leisure facilities, a place where people can walk safely and feel secure, while enjoying a pleasant environment and experiencing the heritage of architecture and urban space” (Drogheda Borough Development Plan).

Any consideration of future urban form within the town must therefore complement this aim. In addition the current development plan identifies two Urban Opportunity Areas which, it states, “have the potential to

act as catalysts for area-wide redevelopment and regeneration". These areas are Old Abbey Lane, bounded by Georges Street, West Street, Dominick Street and the river; and The Backlanes, bounded by Shop Street, Laurence Street, Constitution Hill and North Quay-The Mall. The development plan also recognises the huge potential in developing existing 'backland' areas of the town centre, particularly north of West Street. Future development plans should seek to enhance and consolidate these areas.



Historic Town Centre

The vision for the historic town centre involves the implementation of a number of strategies designed to protect the town centre, to build on the potential of its existing fabric and urban structure, and to offer its inhabitants an inviting and dynamic place to live, work, shop and meet:

- The existing commercial centre based around **West Street and its environs** should become the focus of regeneration and improvement to ensure that it retains its dominant retail and commercial position in the town. This area of streets, lanes and courts needs to be simplified and enhanced through greater pedestrian priority, a more effective parking strategy, and the development of an improved public domain, including paving, landscaping, street furniture, lighting and signage. The potential for redevelopment of unsightly and dated elements in the streetscape and the enhancement of landmark structures is acknowledged. In addition it is important to incentivise owners to improve the public face of their buildings and establish a set of design guidelines for new shopfronts in order to protect and improve the streetscape.



Traffic-dominated streets give way to greater pedestrian priority to enhance and improve the historic centre and retail core

- **Old Abbey Lane** offers great scope for the development of a cultural quarter for the town. The Strategy sees greater pedestrian permeability provided to the area, to improve its accessibility from the main commercial centre. The area surrounding the ruins of the Old Abbey should be enhanced to provide a focal point for the quarter, while the existing surface car parks and the outdated Abbey Shopping Centre offer opportunities for redevelopment. The quarter should also make maximum use of its riverside location in line with the development of a walkway along this stretch of the Boyne.



Old Abbey becomes the focal point for a new cultural quarter

- Imaginative regeneration is also fundamental to ensuring **the Backlanes** fulfils its potential to effectively link the existing commercial centre with the new developments on South Quay and the railway station beyond. The network of lanes and small streets that comprise this area provide an ideal basis for an entertainment district for the town with restaurants, bars, cafes and retailing complemented by a strong residential presence over shops. Robust, natural and simple surface treatments and landscaping to enhance the “character” feel of this area are recommended.



The Backlanes provides an ideal basis for a vibrant and lively entertainment district for Drogheda.

Area 3: Approach Corridors to the Town

The development of the M1 motorway and its effect of removing major traffic flows from the town centre has opened up new opportunities for the main approach corridors to the town; the traditional Dublin Road - North Road (N1) axis through the town centre and increasingly the Donore Road, which is developing into an important gateway to Drogheda. Future planning must give consideration to how best to develop these approach corridors in order to enhance the 'sense of arrival' for commuters and visitors alike to Drogheda.



Future Planning Strategy should focus on enhancing and consolidating the key approach routes to the town.

Central to any Strategy for these routes must be the principles of protecting and enhancing vistas of the town through thoughtful development. The vision for the approach corridors would see the consolidation of the streetscapes along these routes to reinforce their roles as gateways to the prime urban centre. High-density schemes with strong architectural presence and the provision of good quality open space are important. Vistas to the riverfront need to be maintained. In particular, redevelopment of currently underused sites at the junction of Donore and Dublin Roads are vital to provide a proper entrance to the town, with the McDonalds and filling station site earmarked for a signature building on the western side of the bridge.



A possible design solution to converging traffic flows at Donore Road

Area 4: Drogheda Train Station

The Drogheda Development Plan places particular emphasis on promoting greater use of public transport both to and from the town, and in the town itself. With this in mind, a clear recognition of the importance and potential of McBride Station is vital. It is apparent to residents and visitors alike that the station domain is currently poorly used, surface parking dominates and the potential of the land surrounding the station is under appreciated. The station also suffers by its relative distance from, and poor links to, the town centre. The current development plan has designated the station and its environs as the Drogheda Transportation Development Area (DTDA), based on the concept of promoting high-density, mixed-use developments defined by their proximity to transport hubs. Among the land uses the Borough Council makes provision for in the DTDA are high capacity transport facilities, high-density residential and mixed-use schemes, and leisure, tourism and recreational facilities such as exhibition and conference venues.



McBride Station develops into a major transport interchange for Drogheda. The Strategy calls for a masterplan to promote and direct future of development of the station lands.

Future planning strategies for this area should focus on the development of public transport facilities for Drogheda with McBride Station becoming the focus of a major transport interchange involving rail, national and local bus services. Growing demand will see the provision of metropolitan rail services to Dublin, Navan and Dundalk, as Drogheda realises its potential as a prime urban centre. A masterplan for the station lands should be developed to maximise the development potential of this area; multi-storey car parking should be considered (with a potential increase in capacity) and signature buildings should be considered to reflect the area's important function. Enhancing links to the town centre is

vital and the Viaduct offers a natural opportunity for a new pedestrian route making use of its stunning views over the town. Higher density residential and commercial activity along Marsh Road should also be encouraged in tandem with improvements to the infrastructure and road capacity of the area, to better integrate this area with the centre.

Area 5: Old Quarry

The Old Quarry land, strategically located in the Northern Environs of the town and very close to the historic town centre, covers approximately 80 hectares.

Future uses of the area should have a strong public dimension to enhance the perception that this is a positive part of the town. To this end it is recommended that it forms the core of a major leisure and amenity area for Drogheda and the region. A separate masterplan should be produced for the site.



Old Quarry Lands 1.5kms from the Town Centre

6.5 Summary of Key Elements of the Recommended Strategy

In summary, the Recommended Strategy comprises of the following key elements:

Urban Form and Urban Expansion

- Prioritisation of development in 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 the river banks.
- New expansion areas to north and south to provide for primarily residential use, local employment and district scale recreation and amenity facilities.
- Promote urban expansion in a managed, sequential manner.
- Examine specific opportunity on current industrial complex beside river on Rathmullen Road to provide for mainly residential development. This would reflect any future change to the operator at the site and would require in conjunction with any redevelopment, a clear delivery on amenity access to the river valley area at this location.
- Promote the street as the basic element of the urban area.
- Ensure that road infrastructure is related to, appropriate to, and subservient to the roll out of development land.
- Change the relationship of roads and development areas, so that development and movement are directly related and not segregated.
- Ensure key services are in place before development of an area begins; avoid temporary solutions introduced by developers.

Transport and Access

- Ensure early and full completion of the Port Access Road.
- Promote phasing of development of Northern and Southern Environs with transport corridors.
- Ensure good east-west internal penetration (linked to neighbourhood centres and to north-south connections) through new Northern and Southern Environs areas.
- Secure 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 to East Meath.
- Access to railway station from Marsh Road to be explored.
- Plan for a new bridge crossing to accommodate

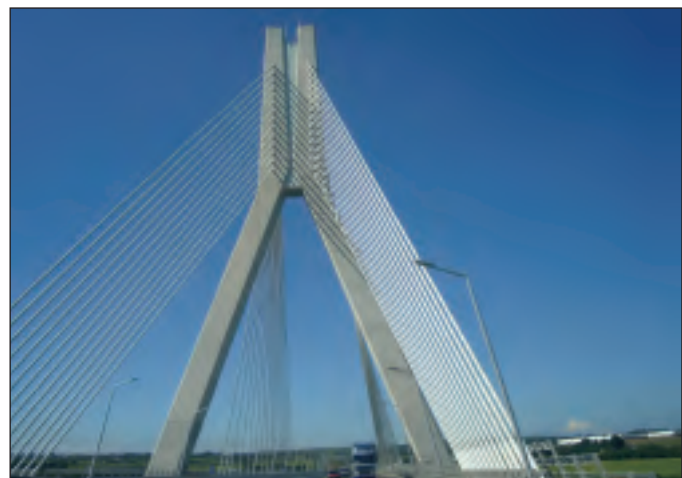
anticipated growth in local based movements, as new residential and employment populations are secured within the Core Study Area.

Economic Development

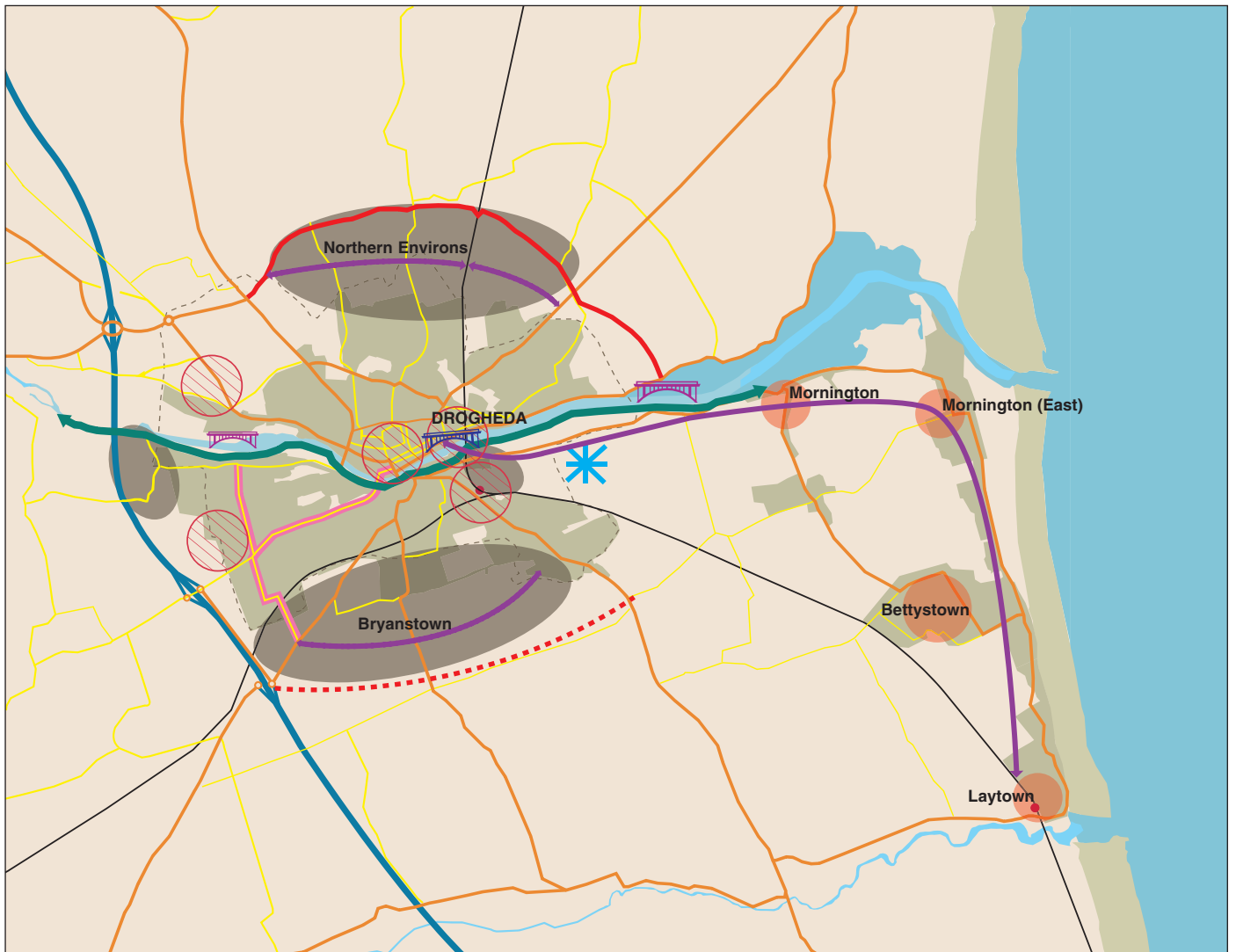
- Promote development of the old port area to provide for future employment.
- Secure intensification of employment at Donore Road
- Provide for an employment focused mixed-use hub to the east of the train station.
- Examine potential for a mixed use core at Collon Road (R168) area.
- Consider a regional 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 a stronger linkage for the East Meath area to Drogheda.
- Direct economic orientation of settlements in East Meath to Drogheda for employment and opportunity.
- Provide for organic local growth in the surrounding villages.



Boyne Cable Bridge



Map 6.2 - Preferred Scenario Map

