



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION





# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Context

The Dundalk Local Area Plan, hereafter referred to as 'the Plan' or 'LAP' provides a spatial framework for the future growth and development of Dundalk for the next six years and beyond. This Plan has been prepared in accordance with *Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)*. It will remain in force for a period of six years from the date on which it was made, or for an extended period as provided under *Section 19(1)(d) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)*.

National and regional planning policy recognises the strategic importance of Dundalk through its designation as a Regional Growth Centre in the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)* for the Eastern and Midland Region and its location along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor in the National Planning Framework (NPF).

The Regional Growth Centre designation is a testament of the importance of Dundalk being one of the principal locations for employment and economic development in the north-east of the country. This Plan will seek to enable Dundalk to consolidate this role and will support continued population and economic growth in the town in accordance with national, regional, and county development plan policy.

A strong emphasis will be placed on consolidation, urban regeneration and the promotion of sustainable patterns of development that encourages the creation of a vibrant urban core where there is a quality and attractive living and working environment.

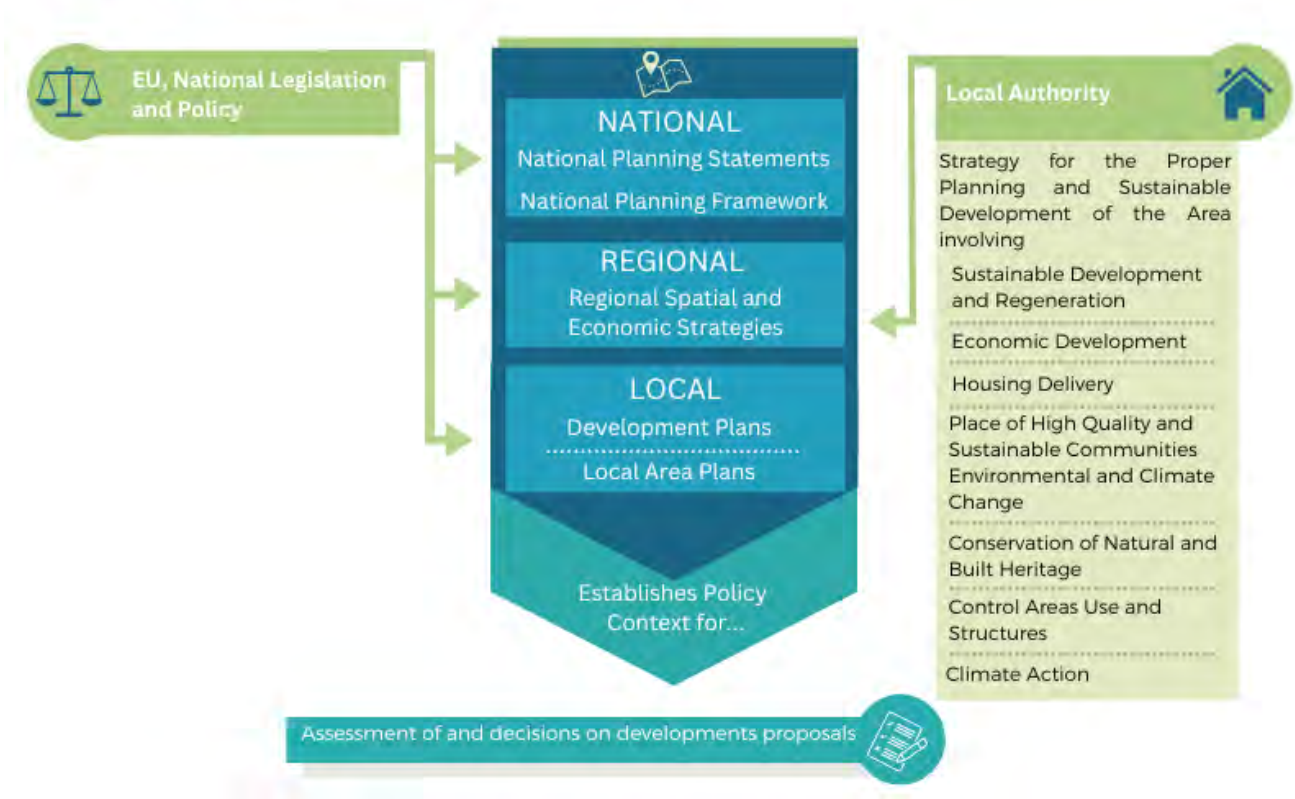
## 1.2 Relationship with Other Plans and Guidelines

This Local Area Plan has been prepared having regard to national, regional and local policy documents, in addition to ministerial guidelines issued *under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)*. The Plan has also taken account of Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) contained in Section 28 ministerial guidelines which, as set out under *Section 28 (1C) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)*, the Plan is required to comply with. Any Section 28 Guidelines referenced in this Plan may be superseded by subsequent publications and these shall be applied accordingly. The *Louth Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029* has also informed this Plan. The purpose of the LECP is to promote the local and community development within the County, act as a roadmap for the development of the County and, ensure the effective co-ordination of publicly funded programmes. This Plan is also informed by the *Louth Climate Action Plan 2024-2029*, which provides a strategy on the delivery of national climate obligations at a local level.



Figure 1.1: The Planning Hierarchy (Source: DHLGH)

## The Planning Hierarchy An Overview



### 1.3 Local Area Plan vs Urban Area Plan

Regional Policy Objective 4.19 of the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)* for the Eastern and Midland Region requires that an Urban Area Plan is to be prepared for Dundalk.

National Policy Objective 70 of the *National Planning Framework (NPF)* indicates that Urban Area Plans will be prepared under the provisions of the legislation of local area plans. In the absence of legislation that expressly provides for ‘Urban Area Plans’ this Plan is being prepared as a Local Area Plan.

### 1.4 Preparation of the LAP

The first stages in the preparation of the Dundalk Local Area Plan involved a review of the *Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied)* and the previous Dundalk Development Plan.

Background information was gathered, and discussions took place with external stakeholders and various sections within Louth County Council. The Pre-Draft Issues Paper for the Dundalk Local Area Plan was placed on public display on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 for a 4-week period until the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023, inclusive. Public ‘drop in’ events took place on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June and Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 in Dundalk Library.





Additionally, a neighbourhood walk, and a Community Mapping workshop were organised in collaboration with University College Dublin (UCD), the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); the purpose of which was to promote public engagement in the preparation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Plan.

#### Community Mapping Workshop



#### Neighbourhood Walk



A total of 45 submissions were received during the public consultation period for the Pre-Draft Issues Paper. All submissions were read, analysed, summarised and issues responded to in a Report on Submissions Received. This Report was circulated to the elected members and published on the Council website.

The draft Plan was placed on public display from Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 until Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024. 154 submissions were received during the consultation period.

The elected members, having considered the Draft Local Area Plan and Chief Executive's Report on submissions received, resolved, following a Special Council Meeting, to amend the Draft Dundalk Local Area Plan.

The proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Dundalk Local Area Plan and accompanying Environmental Reports were placed on public display from Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024 until Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025. 15 no. submissions were received during this public consultation period.

A Chief Executive's Report in response to submissions/observations received to the proposed Material Alterations was prepared and given to the elected members for their consideration. The elected members, having considered the Chief Executive's Report and the documents associated with the Draft Dundalk Local Area Plan, resolved to adopt the Local Area Plan at a Special Council Meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

#### 1.4.1 Evidence-based Planning

As part of the evidence-based approach to the preparation of this Plan data was gathered and analysed in relation to population and housing growth and socio-economic trends. This data was obtained from various sources including Census 2022 and Central Statistics Office housing completions data.

A Settlement Capacity Audit (Appendix 1 in Volume 3) was carried out to ensure there is alignment and co-ordination between the zoning of lands and the availability of infrastructure, while a Local Transport Plan (Appendix 2 in Volume 3) has been prepared to ensure the integration of land use and transport planning. A Social Infrastructure Audit of community facilities in the town was carried out, (Appendix 5 in Volume 3). A Retail Strategy was undertaken as part of an analysis of retail activity and demand in Dundalk (Chapter 7 - Retail Strategy and Tourism, and Appendix 3 in Volume 3).



## 1.4.2 Environmental Assessments

The **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** process is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. It informs the plan-making process of the likely environmental impact of alternative action and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations of the Plan. Under the provisions of the *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*, SEA is mandatory for plans for areas with a population of 5,000 persons or more; therefore, SEA is required for the Dundalk Local Area Plan.

The findings of the SEA are set out in the Environmental Report, which, while constituting part of the Plan documentation, is presented as a separate document in Volume 4.

The Environmental Report provides a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the location of development in the Plan area. The mitigation measures needed to offset the potential adverse effects of the Plan and future monitoring proposals have been transposed from the Environmental Report into the Plan.

The requirements for **Habitats Directive Assessment** for plans or projects, is outlined in *Article 6(3) and (4) of the European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC* on the conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity (Habitats Directive).

The Dundalk Local Area Plan was screened for **Appropriate Assessment (AA)**. This screening concluded that likely significant effects of the Local Area Plan on the European Sites (Dundalk Bay Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation), could not be ruled out, and therefore a full Appropriate Assessment would be required.

The mitigation measures identified in the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (i.e. Natura Impact Report, NIR) have been incorporated into the Local Area Plan. The NIR has been published as a separate document to this Plan and is included in Volume 4.

A **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)** was prepared for Dundalk as part of the Plan preparation. It is an analysis of flood risk and provides information relating to the spatial distribution of flood risk in the Dundalk area. The SFRA has taken into account a range of factors including flood related data sourced from the Office of Public Works (OPW).

The SFRA is required to be prepared in accordance with the requirements of *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009)* and is set out in Volume 4.

## 1.5 Historic Origins of Dundalk

Research indicates that when the Dundalk area was first inhabited, at the end of the last ice age, it was in the vicinity of Castletown Motte. In the Middle Ages, Dundalk established itself as a Norman stronghold and the town shifted eastward to the ford at Castletown River, which was a vital trade route. Market Square developed as the commercial and civic heart of the town and subsequently a north-south thoroughfare was formed linking the Castletown River with Market Square. This strong north-south emphasis remains readily visible today in the form of Clanbrassil Street and Bridge Street.

During the Plantation of Ireland, Dundalk endured warfare and depopulation, however towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century economic conditions improved with the development of a new harbour and reclamation of lands to the east.

Dundalk includes the urban village of Blackrock which is located to the south east of the town centre.



Blackrock initially developed as a fishing village in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and with the construction of the sea wall in the 1800's it rapidly developed as a popular visitor destination. Today, Blackrock remains a vibrant tourism destination and an attractive residential area.

With the arrival of the railway and subsequent industrial revolution, Dundalk's shipbuilding, brewing, textile and tobacco industries flourished. Dundalk's location on the border with Northern Ireland meant that the town inadvertently suffered as a result of 'The Troubles', however following the signing of the Good Friday Agreement levels of inward investment increased providing commercial and economic benefits.

## 1.6 Profile of Dundalk

Dundalk had a population of 43,112 people in Census 2022, making it the second largest town in the country. It is located along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and benefits from a strong economic and employment base. It has established itself as a centre of excellence for education and employment sectors including engineering and pharma. Furthermore, the town has a thriving arts and heritage scene, a vibrant leisure and sports culture and is located within a culturally significant landscape.

## 1.7 Overview of Core Issues and Challenges

A fundamental objective of the Plan is to create an environment where Dundalk can fulfil its potential and continue to be a focal point for population and economic growth and investment in the north-east of the country.

This Plan will place a strong emphasis on consolidation and urban regeneration and will promote sustainable patterns of development which encourage the creation of a vibrant urban core where there is a high quality, attractive and functional living and working environment.

The Plan will also have a key role in facilitating and promoting tangible actions to address climate change.

## 1.8 Dundalk Population and Housing – Key Facts and Figures

In the 2022 Census the population of Dundalk was 43,112 persons, which accounted for 30.8% of the County population.

The 2022 population represents a 10.5% (4,108 persons) increase on the 2016 population. With regards to age profile the Census data indicates that Dundalk has a higher-than-average population under 20 (28%) when compared to the average for the state (26%). The average age of the population was 37.2. This is below the average age of the County population, which was 38.2. The cohort of population in the working age category in Dundalk 20-64 (58%) is comparable to the overall percentage in the State (59%). 13.5% of the population were over the age of 65 compared to 14.2% for the County and 15.1% for the State.

### 1.8.1 Housing Stock

The total housing stock in Dundalk at Census 2022 was 17,470 units. This is an increase of 1,119 units (6.8%) on the total housing stock in 2016. The vacancy rate in 2022 was 6.5% (1,132 units) compared to 9% (1,472 units) in 2016. Of the 17,470 total housing stock (permanent dwellings), 15,936 private households were recorded. A breakdown of the private households consisted of 91% houses (14,509 units) and 9% apartments (1,402 units).


Between 2016 and 2022 the number of private households in Dundalk increased by 1,478 units, from 14,458 to 15,936, which equates to a 10.2% increase.

An average household size of 2.7 persons was recorded in 2022. This was below the average household size for the County of 2.8 persons and the national average of 2.74 persons.



Source CSO 2022

**Population**  
43,112

**Male** 49%  **Female** 51% 

**37.2 yrs**  
**Average Age** 

**15,936** Private Households



Above National Average of 8.1%

**65%** of the Population is **15 - 64** Years Old

Population increase of **10.5%** since 2016

## DUNDALK Key Facts and Figures

**17,470** Total Housing Stock



Housing Vacancy Rate **6.5%**

**9,096** Owned 

**1,402** Apartments 

**14,509** Houses 

**2.7 Persons** Household Size

**5,916** Rented 



**28.9**  
Average Travel Time  
28.9 minutes

Walked 20% 

Travelled by car 62.3% 

Cycled 36.7% 

Public Transport 6% 

### Where we Work

**Total Number of Residents in Dundalk who are working**  
19,661

Wholesale & Retail 1,963 


Manufacturing 1,367 

Professionals 3,223 

Health & Social Care 1,703 



**4,792** people - Working from Home

**80%** of the population stated their health as very good/ good 

### Childcare

Children Ages 5-14 in Childcare 1,373

Children Ages 0-4 in Childcare 1,053

Total Children Under 15 in Childcare 2,426

**3,241** - Total Children aged between 0-14 years

**2,426** - Total Children aged between 0-14 years in childcare **74.8%**



## 1.9 Vision

# VISION

To support and grow the Regional Growth Centre of Dundalk as a uniquely attractive and inclusive place to live, work, visit, invest and do business and which capitalises on its strategic location along the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor, provides a strong economy, and access to quality, affordable housing, educational, health, social and community services for current and future residents, enhances and protects the natural and built environment while transitioning to a low carbon and climate resilient society through compact growth and sustainable mobility.



The Vision for this Plan seeks to ensure Dundalk fulfils its role as a Regional Growth Centre while delivering a thriving town as an inclusive, attractive place and which enshrines the principles of compact growth, environmental, social and economic sustainability, protects and enhances the natural and built environment and which supports a strong economy while ensuring a transition to a low carbon, climate resilient society.

### 1.9.1 Strategic Objectives

The vision for Dundalk will be achieved through the realisation of the following Strategic Objectives:

#### SO 1

To promote the development and growth of Dundalk as a Regional Growth Centre along the Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor through sustainable economic development including increased and competitive enterprise and employment opportunities.

#### SO 2

To achieve sustainable growth and consolidation of the existing built environment of Dundalk through the delivery of the principles of compact growth, infill and brownfield development, the delivery of a suitable mix of quality housing in appropriate locations, the creation of neighbourhoods where there is a sense of place and where housing is supported by the requisite physical and community infrastructure.

#### SO 3

To promote and facilitate sustainable mobility, prioritising walking, cycling and public transport through the improvement of existing infrastructure, connectivity and the implementation of the Local Transport Plan.



## SO 4

Transition to a low carbon and climate resilient town, prioritising climate mitigation and adaptation measures in line with the Louth Climate Action Plan and implementing any actions identified for the Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonisation Zone.

## SO 5

To recognise, protect and enhance the character, and in particular, the built and archaeological heritage of Dundalk while facilitating regeneration and growth in an appropriate and sustainable manner.

## SO 6

To protect, conserve, enhance and sustain the natural environment of Dundalk while promoting climate adaptation and enhancing biodiversity through the protection and promotion of green infrastructure for future generations.

## SO 7

To ensure the provision of appropriate levels of community, cultural and civic amenities and infrastructure to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

### 1.10 Structure of the Plan

This Local Area Plan comprises of a written statement with accompanying maps and appendices.

The written statement shall take precedence over the maps should any discrepancy arise. Table 1.1 sets out the documents and maps associated with the Plan.

Table 1.1 – Structure of the Plan

<b>Volume 1</b>	Written Statement
<b>Volume 2</b>	Map 1 – Zoning and Flood Zones Map 2 – Composite Map
<b>Volume 3</b>	Appendix 1 – Settlement Capacity Audit Appendix 2 – Local Transport Plan Appendix 3 – Retail Strategy Quantitative Analysis Appendix 4 – Mullagharlin Masterplan Appendix 5 – Social Infrastructure Audit Appendix 6 – Architectural Conservation Areas
<b>Volume 4</b>	Environmental Reports: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Natura Impact Report (NIR) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)



### 1.10.1 Interpretation of the Plan and Development Management Guidance

As set out in the planning hierarchy in Figure 1.1 in this chapter, the Dundalk Local Area Plan sits below the County Development Plan.

It is important to note that when reading this Plan, the policy objectives of the County Development Plan are relevant and, in this regard, both documents should be read in tandem with each other.

When preparing planning applications, the Development Management Guidelines in the County Development Plan (Chapter 13) should be consulted. The standards and guidelines set out in the County Development Plan are required to be applied in the assessment of applications alongside any other policy objectives, designation or standard relevant to the application.

#### 1.10.1.1 Policy Objectives

##### DM 1

To require planning applications to be consistent with the relevant guidance and comply with the relevant standards set out in the Development Management Guidelines of the County Development Plan and any relevant policy objectives, designation, or standards set out in this Plan, the County Development Plan, or Section 28 Guidelines.

##### DM 2

To ensure the Dundalk Local Area Plan is consistent with the County Development Plan. A Variation to the County Development Plan will be required to take account of any amendments made to text, policy objectives, zoning and flood zones map / composite map and appendices relating to Dundalk during the preparation of this Plan.

### 1.10.2 Aligning the Local Area Plan with the County Development Plan

*Under Section 19(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) a Local Area Plan is required to be consistent with the objectives and core strategy of the County Development Plan.*

#### 1.10.2.1 Policy Objective

##### DM 3

To publish and adopt a Variation to the County Development Plan following the adoption of the Dundalk Local Area Plan to ensure the alignment of the Dundalk Local Area Plan with the County Development Plan.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note that until this Variation has been adopted any text, policy objectives or maps relating to Dundalk in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 shall take precedence over the text, policy objectives, maps, and appendices in this Local Area Plan.



# CHAPTER 2

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY





## 2 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter will set out the role and function of Dundalk in Louth and the wider region. The opportunities and challenges facing Dundalk will be identified, which will provide a context for the growth and development strategy for the town during the life of this Plan. The chapter will also demonstrate the alignment and consistency of the growth strategy for this Local Area Plan with national and regional policy and the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan.

### 2.2 Context

In the 2022 census Dundalk had a population of 43,112, making it the second largest town in Ireland. It is the County town and administrative centre for Louth. The town is a multi-modal settlement that benefits from its strategic location along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor which provides excellent connectivity with the two largest cities on the island. Dundalk and Greenore Ports provide access to international markets for local businesses, whilst its location on the border and proximity to Newry presents opportunities for cross-border collaboration. The town offers a broad range of retail, health, education and community services and open spaces that serve a wide catchment. It also benefits from an established base of Indigenous and Foreign Direct Investment businesses. These businesses benefit from the presence of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), which provides opportunities for collaboration and access to a talented and educated workforce.

This Plan will seek to facilitate population and economic growth in Dundalk and enable the town to compete ambitiously for jobs and investment.

This is consistent with national and regional policy, which acknowledges the importance of Dundalk as an employment hub and service centre in the north-east of the country through its designation as a Regional Growth Centre.

#### 2.2.1 Alignment with Strategic Outcomes of the National Planning Framework

The NPF identifies a set of goals expressed as National Strategic Outcomes (NSO's), which underpin the overarching vision for the country. These NSO's are significantly aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as climate action, clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, economic growth, reduced inequalities and innovation and infrastructure, as well as education and health. An overview of how this Plan aligns with the NSO's that are relevant to Dundalk are set out below.



#### Compact Growth

As part of the strategy of promoting the sustainable growth of Dundalk, this Plan will place a strong emphasis on achieving compact growth and making the most efficient use of land. Support will be given for regeneration projects and the re-use of vacant and under-utilised infill and brownfield lands that will have a positive impact on the urban core of the town. Such projects include the progression of a public realm project on Park Street and Francis Street and the rejuvenation of St. Nicholas Quarter and the Long Walk Quarter which seek to create a vibrant mixed use urban quarter and demonstrate how sustainable town centre living can be achieved.



### Enhanced Regional Accessibility

Dundalk benefits from excellent road and rail links via the M1 Motorway and the Dublin-Belfast Rail Line. There is also a strong network of regional roads from Dundalk to key service centres in the north-east of the country. This connectivity makes the town an attractive location for economic investment. This Plan will support investment in infrastructure projects that will improve connectivity within, to and from Dundalk.



### Sustainable Mobility

It is recognised that a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport is required in order to enable the delivery of more compact patterns of development in addition to supporting the wider strategy of mitigating against the impacts of climate change. This Plan will support investment in sustainable transport projects and changes in mobility options including the transition towards electric vehicles.



### A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills

Dundalk will continue to be a focal point for economic investment in the north-east of the country. This Plan will seek to maximise its strategic location and designation as a Regional Growth Centre by highlighting its strengths and identifying the infrastructure investment required to enable the town to continue to be an attractive location for investment by both foreign and indigenous companies.



### High Quality International Connectivity

The location of Dundalk along the border provides the town with direct access to the UK market. This is critical for both EU and UK based companies who want to retain strong connections to both jurisdictions. This Plan will seek to maximise Dundalk's border location and to strengthen cross border links with Newry and Belfast.



### Enhanced Amenities and Heritage

Dundalk benefits from its unique location on the Castletown River and Dundalk Bay while the Cooley Mountains provide an attractive backdrop to the town. Recreational areas and open spaces in Dundalk include St. Helena's Park and Ice House Hill Park in addition to walking and cycling trails at the Navy Bank and the Castletown River.

The built heritage of the town, which includes Georgian, Victorian, and Edwardian style buildings contribute to a distinct sense of place.

This Plan will continue to protect the natural, built, and archaeological heritage of Dundalk. It will also facilitate the sensitive and sustainable regeneration of buildings and streets of architectural and historic interest in addition to investing in new and improving existing recreational amenities in the town.



### Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society

The policy framework that will enable the objectives and targets of the Climate Action Plan and Climate Act to be achieved will be set out in this Plan. There will be an emphasis on the creation of more sustainable communities by promoting more compact patterns of development, giving greater priority to walking and cycling, and facilitating employment related development close to where people live to reduce the need for long distance commuting.

Buildings and urban spaces will need to be resilient and adaptable to any potential impacts of flooding or sea level rises whilst a reduction in waste generation and the continued shift towards a circular economy will be supported.



### Sustainable Management of Water, Waste, and other Environmental Resources

The provision of reliable and effective water services infrastructure is essential in facilitating the population and economic growth of a settlement. This Plan will support and facilitate the ongoing investment in water services infrastructure in Dundalk in order to address any quality, reliability, or capacity issues.

The Council will work closely with Uisce Éireann to address any infrastructure constraints and identify investment requirements in the network. The Plan will also seek to manage, and where necessary, improve the quality of surface water bodies and groundwater aquifers in addition to integrating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into the control and management of surface water runoff.

The transition towards a circular economy is integral to climate change targets being achieved. This Plan will, therefore, promote environmentally friendly practices in the management and disposal of waste.



### Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services

An integral element of creating a sustainable and healthy community is ensuring there is an appropriate level of social and community infrastructure available to meet the needs of the population. Support will be given to the provision of new and upgraded community infrastructure, particularly in areas where a need has been identified. As we strive to achieve more compact patterns of development and as the residential population of the urban core increases, this Plan will seek to ensure that the requisite schools, childcare, and healthcare facilities are available within the urban core.

## 2.3 Consistency with the Core Strategy

In order to ensure alignment with the County Development Plan and national and regional policy, there is a requirement for Local Area Plans to be consistent with the core strategy of the County Development Plan. This requirement is set out in *Section 19(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)*.

The Core Strategy in the Louth County Development Plan is closely aligned with the growth strategy in the NPF and RSES, which prioritises growth in the higher tier settlements and identifies the opportunity for Dundalk to develop into a centre of scale and a regional driver for population and economic growth. The population and housing projections for Dundalk up to 2027 are set out in Table 2.1.



Table 2.1: Projected Population and Housing Requirements for Dundalk in the County Development Plan 2021-2027 as varied

Settlement	Projected Population Increase to 2027	Housing Allocation 2021-2027
<b>Dundalk</b>	7,660	2,447

Taking account of the fact that the lifetime of this Plan it will be necessary to project the population and housing requirements for Dundalk beyond that set out in the Core Strategy of the 2021-2027 County Development Plan, as varied. The Settlement Strategy for Dundalk in the RSES envisages a population of 50,000 by 2031. This will be factored into the calculation for the population projection up to 2030 and is as follows:

Table 2.2: Projected Population Increase in Dundalk 2028-2030

Settlement	Projected population 2027	Projected population 2031	Difference between projected population 2027 and 2031	Projected annual population increase 2028-2031	Projected population increase 2028-2030
<b>Dundalk</b>	46,664	50,000	3,336	834	2,502

The housing allocation for Dundalk between 2027-2030 will be calculated on a pro-rata basis of the allocation between 2021-2027 and is as follows:

Table 2.3: Projected Housing Allocation for Dundalk 2028-2030

Settlement	Housing allocation 2021-2027	Annual average allocation 2021-2027	Housing allocation 2028-2030	Housing allocation 2021-2030
<b>Dundalk</b>	2,447	408	1,224	3,671

Table 2.4: Projected Population Increase and Housing Requirement for Dundalk 2016-2030

Settlement	Population 2016	Population 2022	Projected population increase to 2016-2030	Projected population 2030	Housing allocation 2021-2030	Total lands zoned New Residential Phase 1 (ha)	Total lands zoned New Residential Phase 2 (ha)
<b>Dundalk</b>	39,004	43,112	10,162	49,166	3,671	136.8	80.9

Table 2.5: Estimated Yield of Lands with Potential to Deliver Housing<sup>1</sup>

Settlement – Dundalk	A1 Existing Residential	A2 New Residential	A3 New Residential Phase 2	C1 Mixed Use
<b>Quantum of lands with potential to deliver housing</b>	40.4ha	136.8ha	78.8ha	22.4ha
<b>Potential Capacity of the lands</b>	854-942 units	2,246 – 2,817 units	1,857 – 2,650 units	750 units

<sup>1</sup> The figures in Table 2.5 are estimates and are based on a net site area of 70% and a density of 35-50 units per hectare. Other factors such as extant permissions on undeveloped lands, the densities of these permissions, and topography were also taken into account. See maps in Settlement Capacity Audit for details.



The population projection for Dundalk in 2030 is 49,166 persons. This projection is reflective of Dundalk's designation as a Regional Growth Centre and is closely aligned with the target population of 50,000 by 2031 as set out in the RSES. The 2030 population projection would represent a growth in population of 6,054 persons between the Census 2022 figure and 2030.

The annual average population increase between 2022-2030 would be 757 persons. Based on current population trends this figure is considered realistic and achievable.

In 2022 the total housing stock in Dundalk was 17,470 units, which was an increase of 6.8% (1,119 units) on the 2016 figure. During this period, the vacancy rate fell from 9 % to 6%.

This is a strong indication of the current demand for housing in the town. CSO housing completion data indicates that there were 883 units completed between 2021-2023, which is an average of just under 300 units per annum. This is below the annual average housing allocation as provided for in the Core Strategy of the 2021-2027 County Development Plan, as varied, which provides for an annual average delivery of 408 units per annum. Based on recent trends and the number of extant permissions in the Plan area it is anticipated that house completions will continue to increase.

This Plan will seek to facilitate a continued increase in the completion of residential units in line with that envisaged in the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan. This will ensure that the housing needs of the existing and future population of the town are met and will also assist in maintaining the economic competitiveness of the town, with housing availability being an important consideration when businesses are choosing where to invest.

## 2.4 Development Strategy for Dundalk

An integral element of Dundalk maximising its potential as one of the principal locations for economic and population growth in the north-east of the country is to ensure there are sufficient lands available for employment related development and housing.

The Plan has identified c.422 hectares of undeveloped land for economic investment and employment generating development.

This provides clarity as to the future location for employment related development in Dundalk and will ensure there is sufficient land available to facilitate employment generating development over the next number of Plan cycles.

In order to ensure Dundalk continues to be attractive for inward investment it is critical that there continues to be a steady delivery of housing to meet demand. This Plan has taken this into account and has zoned a quantum of land for residential use that will ensure choice in the lands available for development. For various reasons, lands in parts of Dundalk have been slow to be brought forward for development in recent years. In order to avoid a situation where the supply of housing is restricted due to a lack of available lands, the quantum of lands identified for residential use has factored in the potential for land hoarding or a prolonged timeframe in lands zoned for residential use being brought forward for development.

The Council is satisfied that, through the Development Management process, the build out of these lands can be appropriately phased to ensure that the housing allocation, as set out in Table 2.4, will not be exceeded.

This approach will facilitate the continuing momentum of the upward trend in housing completions and will enable Dundalk to play a key role in the national housing target set by the Government in 'Housing for All' being achieved.



### 2.4.1 Compact Growth

This Plan recognises the benefits of compact growth in creating a sustainable settlement pattern, including:

- A reduction in commuting times as people live closer to places of employment, services, and amenities;
- A healthier lifestyle with more opportunities to walk or cycle to work;
- A more efficient use of land;
- A critical mass of population that provides a greater return on public infrastructure investment; and
- Assisting in the transition to a low carbon society.

Within the built-up footprint of Dundalk there are significant tracts of vacant and under-utilised lands of various sizes that have the potential to accommodate mixed use or residential developments. The strategy of this Plan supports the creation of a more compact settlement and will seek to deliver at least 30% of all new homes within the existing built-up area of the town.

### 2.4.2 Density and Building Height

This Plan recognises the contribution higher densities and increased building heights can make in the creation of more compact settlements.

The recommended density in Dundalk is based on the densities set out in the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (DHLGH, 2024)*.

Table 2.6 sets out the minimum recommended densities in the central and suburban areas of the town. Applicants and developers are advised that this is a minimum recommended density.

Table 3.4 of the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (DHLGH 2024)* provides a range of densities that shall generally be applied in Regional Growth Centres.

Table 2.6: Recommended Minimum Density for Residential Development

Settlement	Recommended Density Ranges per hectare (net)	
	Town Centre and Urban Neighbourhood	Suburban area/Urban extension
Dundalk	50 units per ha	35 units per ha

Section 5.6 of the Plan provides further information on building heights. Whilst Table 2.6 above sets out the minimum recommended density, any application should take into account the character of the area and the capacity of the lands to accommodate the development proposed. In this regard, it is recognised that a balance is required in achieving recommended densities and creating quality developments and attractive, sustainable neighbourhoods.

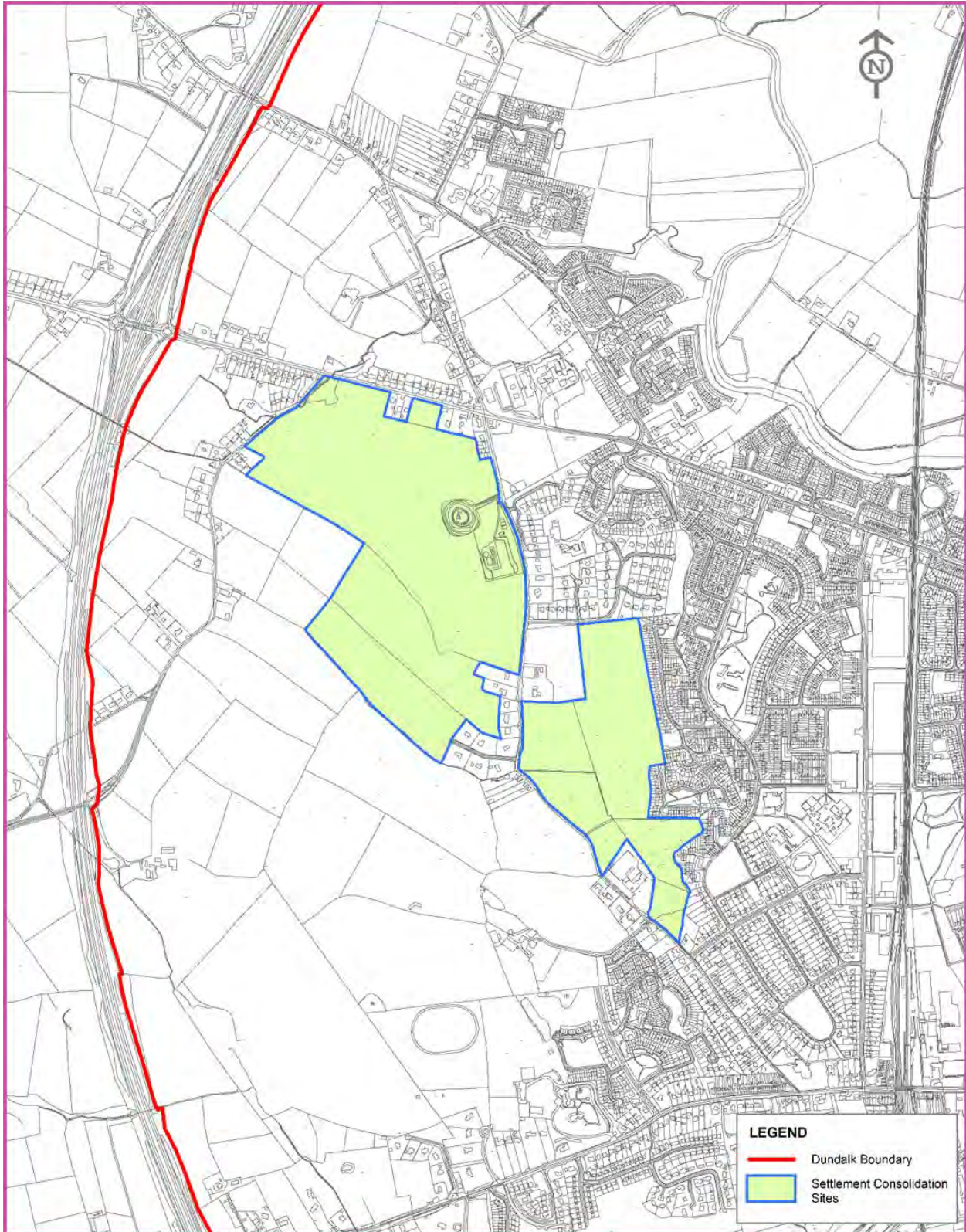
### 2.4.3 Settlement Consolidation Sites


The *Development Plan Guidelines (DHLGH, 2022)* recommend that lands, which will have a critical role in delivering the core strategy objectives, are identified as 'Settlement Consolidation Sites'. The lands in the Mount Avenue area are considered to be an important development area to the west of Dundalk town centre. There are approximately 45.5ha of land zoned A2 New Residential Phase 1. These lands have the capacity to deliver c.1,600 residential units.

The location of the lands are set out in Map 2.1 of this Chapter. Section 3.2 of Chapter 3 'Key Development Areas' provides more information on the Mount Avenue area.



Map 2.1 – Settlement Consolidation Sites in Dundalk



 Comhairle Contae Lú Louth County Council	Comhairle Contae Lú Louth County Council Email: <a href="mailto:info@louthcoco.ie">info@louthcoco.ie</a>	<b>Date:</b> March 2025 <b>Scale:</b> Not to Scale	<b>Dundalk</b> Local Area Plan 2025-2031	<b>Drawing Name / Ref.</b> Settlement Consolidation Sites
	An Roinn um Pleanáil Planning Department www.louthcoco.ie	CYAL50441422 © Tailte Éireann – Surveying		



#### 2.4.4 Sustainable Mobility

As the dominant mode of transport, private car usage accounts for up to 80% of journeys within some areas of Dundalk, highlighting the need to transition towards more sustainable modes of transport. Sustainable mobility can be described as connecting people and places in a sustainable way through safe, accessible, comfortable, and affordable journeys using active travel and public transport. It is closely aligned with facilitating compact growth and provides an opportunity to reorientate neighbourhoods, so they become more people focused, liveable places. This Plan recognises the role sustainable mobility has in creating an attractive and healthy community and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### 2.4.5 Phasing of Residential Lands

It should be noted that not all lands zoned for residential use will be available for development during the plan period. The residential land use zonings in Dundalk are as follows:

1. A1 – Existing Residential
2. A2 – New Residential Phase 1
3. A3 – New Residential Phase 2

There is also a significant quantum of lands identified as L1 Strategic Reserve. These lands will become available in subsequent plans when demand arises. It will be in these subsequent plans that the future use of these lands will be determined.

The phasing strategy for the release of residential lands focuses primarily on lands zoned 'A1 Existing Residential' or 'A2 New Residential Phase 1'. Residential development may also be facilitated on Town Centre or Mixed-Use zoned lands.

Lands zoned '**A3 New Residential Phase 2**' will only become available for development in specific circumstances as follows:

1. Where at least 75% of the lands identified as 'A2 New Residential Phase 1' in the immediate vicinity of the Phase 2 lands have been developed (immediate vicinity means approximately 500 metres from the subject lands);

or

2. The annual rate of residential completions in Dundalk is less than 50% of the projected annual average output for Dundalk. This is based on the housing allocation for Dundalk as set out in Table 2.3, being divided by a 9-year period, taking account that this housing allocation is from 2021-2030.

In addition to fulfilling criteria 1 or 2, the Planning Authority will give consideration to the following:

1. **Extant Permissions** – Consideration will be given to any extant permissions within an approximate 500 metre area of the subject lands, the date of expiration of the permission and a realistic assessment of the likelihood of the permission being implemented (applicable to criteria 2 only).
2. **Infill and Brownfield lands** – The capacity of infill and brownfield lands within approximately 1,000 metres of the subject lands and in particular larger sites with a potential to deliver in excess of 100 units.
3. **Lands zoned 'A1 Existing Residential'** – The capacity of lands zoned 'A1 Existing Residential' within approximately 1,000 metres of the subject lands and in particular larger sites with a potential to deliver in excess of 100 units.
4. **Quantum of Lands Available** – The quantum of 'A3 New Residential Phase 2' lands to be released will not result in the housing allocation as set out in Table 2.4 of this Plan being exceeded.



This shall take into consideration a realistic assessment of the likelihood of the implementation of extant permissions, having regard to the remaining duration of such permissions, in addition to the rate of household completions in Dundalk during the Plan period.

5. **Compact Growth** – The location of the ‘A3 New Residential Phase 2’ lands proposed to be released shall be in a location that is within walking distance of schools, facilities, and services and the development of the lands will contribute to a consolidated pattern of development.

#### 2.4.6 Key Development Areas

This phasing strategy will ensure the focus of growth in Dundalk will be on consolidation and the organic expansion of the town. It will prioritise the continued rejuvenation of the town centre by placing a strong emphasis on directing development towards the urban core of the town. The progression of the regeneration projects at St. Nicholas Quarter and the Long Walk will be used as exemplar projects in highlighting the benefits of town centre living. This will be strengthened further by the advancement of a public realm scheme along Park Street and Francis Street. As part of the active land management strategy the opportunity sites in the town centre area will continue to be promoted for redevelopment.

In order for the projected housing demand to be met development will also be required to be facilitated in other parts of the town.

The Mount Avenue and Castletown areas of Dundalk are to the west of the town centre. These lands are in close proximity to existing services and facilities including the railway station.

A large parcel of land has been zoned for residential use in this location. Connectivity in this part of the town has been significantly improved by the delivery of the LIHAF funded Mount Avenue Link Road, which was completed in Q4 2024.

#### Cú Chulainn’s Castle, Castletown Motte, Mount Avenue



To the east of the town centre the residential and employment lands are largely built out, however, there are infill opportunities including lands on the Red Barns Road and Point Road.

Much of the development activity in Dundalk over the past 20 years has been concentrated in the southern area of the town including the Blackrock area. This includes the construction of Industrial Estates and IDA Business and Technology Parks and the expansion of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT). These works increased the demand for residential development in this part of the town.

This area of Dundalk will continue to be the primary location for economic investment due to the availability of land in addition to the opportunities to cluster and collaborate with existing businesses and a third-level institution.

Residential development in this part of the town will continue to be supported in order to facilitate the creation of a sustainable community and enable people to live close to their place of employment.



Lands have been identified for residential and employment related development to the north of the town centre. Whilst the Castletown River limits the connectivity between the town centre and lands north of the river, there are established residential communities and neighbourhood facilities in this location. The construction of the ‘Dundalk North Business Park’ on the Armagh Road is likely to increase the demand for residential accommodation in this part of the town.

There are opportunities for infill development and the creation of new residential communities close to lands zoned for employment generating uses north of the town centre, including along the Armagh Road, Racecourse Road, and Inner Relief Road.

In summary, this development strategy takes account of the existing built envelope of the town. It seeks to prioritise development in the urban core and ensure the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the town for the future. There is an emphasis on creating sustainable patterns of development that will enable people to live and work in a way that reduces their carbon footprint; with careful consideration also given to the potential impacts of climate change.

### 2.4.7 Policy Objectives

#### DS 1

To support the orderly expansion of the Regional Growth Centre of Dundalk and enable the town to strengthen its role as a regional economic driver targeted to grow to city scale.

#### DS 2

To support and facilitate the provision of housing and the projected population increase as set out in Table 2.4 of this Plan.

#### DS 3

To capitalise on the strategic location of Dundalk along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

#### DS 4

To achieve compact growth through the delivery of at least 30% of all new homes in urban areas within the existing footprint of Dundalk, by developing infill, brownfield, regeneration, and town centre sites and redeveloping under-utilised lands in preference to greenfield lands.

#### DS 5

To support and manage the self-sufficient sustainable development of Dundalk in a planned manner, with population growth occurring in tandem with the provision of economic, physical, and social infrastructure.

**DS 6**

To support the progression and delivery of projects that would facilitate the rejuvenation of Dundalk and the creation of a vibrant and sustainable community, including any project to be funded by the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund.

**DS 7**

To apply phasing to the delivery of new residential development in Dundalk as indicated on the Land Use Zoning Map, whereby new residential development will only be considered on lands zoned 'A3 New Residential Phase 2' when lands zoned 'A2 New Residential Phase 1' are not being brought forward for development and this is impeding the housing allocation for Dundalk being achieved. In such instances consideration may be given to releasing, during the lifetime of this Plan, appropriately located 'A3 New Residential Phase 2' lands, subject to the lands contributing to compact and consolidated patterns of development and the applicant demonstrating compliance with the relevant criteria set out in Section 2.4.5 of this Plan.



# CHAPTER 3

## KEY DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTER AREAS





## 3 KEY DEVELOPMENT & CHARACTER AREAS

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will identify the key development areas in Dundalk that have the potential to deliver large scale residential, mixed use, and commercial development. These 'Key Development Areas' consist of infill, brownfield, and greenfield lands in the urban core and edge of centre. With regard to revitalising and consolidating the town centre and urban core, the areas of the town that would benefit from public realm improvements to assist in stimulating development have also been identified.

The build out of these areas will seek to connect with the physical, environmental, economic, and social fabric of the town and create sustainable neighbourhoods that meet the needs of the local community. They will also seek to integrate with established communities and neighbourhoods in the town.

As part of the strategy of promoting and supporting development in the urban core of the town, five-character areas in the vicinity of the town centre have been identified, details of which are set out in Section 3.3.

Details of Masterplans and Spot Objectives relating to specific land parcels and development areas are provided at the end of this chapter.

### 3.2 Key Development Areas

#### 3.2.1 Mount Avenue Area

Located to the west of the town centre, the Mount Avenue area of Dundalk consists of c.35ha of land zoned for new residential development and open space, with a requirement to provide associated neighbourhood and community facilities on the lands by way of a Spot Objective (see Spot Objective F in Section 3.4.2 for details).

The development of these lands will enable the creation of a new neighbourhood that will include a diverse mix of housing typologies, open spaces, community facilities and amenities. The lands are approximately 1.8 kilometres west of the town centre.



Connectivity in the area has been improved by the completion of the Mount Avenue Link Road project, which includes an upgrade to Mount Avenue and the construction of a link road and associated active travel infrastructure between the Castletown Road and the Carrickmacross Road. This Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Funded (LIHAF) project was completed in Q4 of 2024.

An important landmark in the area is Cúchulainn's Castle, which stands on top of the mound of Castletown Motte, which is a national monument, is surrounded by Trees of Special Amenity Value. There are four scheduled monuments in the vicinity of the Castle and part of the Mount Avenue lands fall within a Zone of Archaeological Potential.

In order to preserve its character and setting a buffer of land around the motte has been zoned for open space which could be developed as a heritage park.



The area will include a network of green spaces with permeable links between each of the spaces.

The Mount Avenue Key Development Area includes three Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value (Reference No. 30, 32 and 54). Their landscape, amenity and biodiversity value is recognised. Any future development of these lands should have regard to Section 10.7.2 of Chapter 10 of this Plan. The natural and built heritage features in the area contribute to its attractiveness and distinct sense of place.

Whilst the primary land use in the Masterplan area will be residential, provision shall also be made for local neighbourhood and community facilities. The neighbourhood facilities shall include a shop(s) and local services with an opportunity for a creche to cluster with these services. Lands shall also be provided for educational facilities (i.e. school or other educational use) and playing pitch, with an opportunity to co-locate the playing pitch with a future school (educational facility) and to utilise the facility for community uses in the evenings/ weekends.

#### Cúchulainn's Castle, located in the Mount Avenue Masterplan Area



To promote synergy in the masterplan area the neighbourhood and community uses shall be adjacent to each other.

On the western side of the Greyacre Road there are lands zoned for General Employment uses.



Whilst these lands have not been included within the Masterplan area, it is important that an element of connectivity is provided between these lands.

To the south of the Masterplan area there are c.26ha of land zoned A3 New Residential Phase 2. In order to ensure connectivity and permeability between the Masterplan area and these Phase 2 Residential lands, future vehicular, pedestrian, and cycle links shall be provided. If the Masterplan lands are being developed at a steady pace consideration may be given to releasing a portion of the lands zoned A3 New Residential Phase 2, subject to the relevant criteria in Section 2.4.5 of the Plan being met.

In addition to the Mount Avenue Link Road, there are also proposals to construct a new road linking the Castletown Road and the Ardee Road.

This road will be required in order to ensure the efficient movement of people and goods around the town as the population continues to grow. It will be developer driven and will include Active Travel infrastructure. The section of the road included within the Masterplan area will be constructed in tandem with the residential properties and associated amenities in the Masterplan lands.



### 3.2.2 Raynoldstown Village

On the southern fringes of Dundalk, to the west of Blackrock Village, there is c.57ha of land being developed for residential and associated uses. The lands are in proximity to the IDA Science and Technology Parks, DkIT, and the services and amenities in Blackrock.

The primary use of the land is residential however, in order to support the creation of a sustainable community, ancillary amenities, facilities and services will be required. This includes a park with an area of 12ha, a primary school, a neighbourhood centre and a community centre.

In addition to the lands currently being developed there are c.9ha of agricultural lands west of Wadman Park in Raynoldstown Village that are zoned G1 Community Facilities.

The lands have the capacity to deliver c.1,250 - 1,450 units (inclusive of existing units built and occupied). Whilst the original grant of permission on the lands was in 2005, economic circumstances curtailed development activity. Infrastructure works completed to date include a 1km road between the Clermont Road and Marlbog Road and a pumping station in the south-eastern corner of the lands.

Over 600 residential units have been completed to date, with permission granted / construction ongoing on approximately 300 units (c.900 units complete/under construction/with an extant permission). This includes Marlmount to the north of Marlbog Road, which is close to completion; Wadman Park, Green Gates Manor and Dundoogan all of which are to the south of Marlbog Road.

A substantial area of open space has been provided in Marlmount, Dundoogan and Green Gates Manor.

This open space accounts for approximately half of the 12ha linear park to be provided in the overall development.

The continued build out of these lands is supported with local services, community facilities and open spaces to be provided in tandem with residential accommodation.

It is noted however that the Raynoldstown Village area is currently lacking in a community building to meet the needs of the residential population.

In order to support the creation of a sustainable community in this part of the town, a requirement has been included in this Plan that a neighbourhood centre with associated community uses has commenced construction prior to no more than 1,000 units in Raynoldstown Village being occupied. Planning permission shall also be granted for a community building. This building shall be designed to ensure flexibility as to its future use.

A Spot Objective reflecting this requirement is included on the Maps in Volume 2. For further details see Spot Objective E in Section 3.4.2 of this chapter.

This Spot Objective shall be implemented through the Development Management process, with any planning application in Raynoldstown Village required to include details of the number of residential units complete and occupied/unoccupied and the number of units under construction at the time the application is made.

With regard to schools' provision to meet the needs of the increasing residential population, there is c.1.3ha of lands zoned G1 Community Facilities to the north of Dundoogan within the development area that is a potential location for a primary school. In addition there are c.9ha of land zoned G1 Community Facilities on the western side of the link road opposite Wadman Park, part of which could be utilised to provide a post primary school in the area. There is also the potential for these lands to be developed as a shared campus for a primary and post-primary school in lieu of the 1.3ha mentioned above.



The Council will continue to work closely with the Department of Education in the provision of schools in the area.

### 3.2.3 St. Nicholas Quarter

St. Nicholas Quarter is situated between Clanbrassil Street and the Castletown River. It consists of commercial and residential areas, and public spaces along Bridge Street, Linenhall Street, and Northgate Street.



Prior to the construction of the eastern bypass in the 1990's this was the northern gateway to Dundalk. In recent decades, the area has experienced a gradual decline, partly due to the shift in the retail core in a southerly direction towards The Marshes Shopping Centre.

The lack of investment and reduction in footfall in the area has resulted in high levels of vacancy and an increase in the number of buildings in a poor condition. At the time of writing a number of the vacant properties along Bridge Street were being redeveloped. It is anticipated that this will stimulate further investment in the area.

St. Nicholas Church located at the southern end of Bridge Street is a high quality landmark building adjacent to the project area. Overlooking the Castletown River there is a 5-storey mixed use building that is a gateway building when approaching from the north.

The commercial/office element of this building has struggled to attract tenants resulting in a number of the floors being vacant for a considerable time.

The Council is supporting the regeneration of this area through the progression of the St. Nicholas Quarter and Backland Regeneration Project.

This project is split into two phases, both of which are funded by the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF). The first phase includes public realm upgrades for the streetscape surrounding St. Nicholas Church, along Bridge and Linenhall Streets and the Peace Park as far as the river, whilst the second phase includes initial feasibility, analysis and preparation of a design concept for the re-development of the Backlands area of the St. Nicholas Quarter.

This Project seeks to re-energise the northern area of the town by creating more usable spaces, improving connectivity, and reconnecting the town centre with the Castletown River.

The Project recognises the opportunities to unlock the potential of the backlands between Bridge Street and Linenhall Street in creating new and reconfigured spaces. This may include the development of a courtyard style layout with natural surveillance from buildings over public spaces. Uses for these buildings could include commercial, cultural, recreational, community, medical/wellbeing, educational, or enterprise activities.

These spaces will give pedestrians greater priority and create a well-connected, accessible, high-quality and enjoyable environment. There are also opportunities to improve the links and the relationship between St. Nicholas Quarter and Peace Park to the east and the Castletown River to the north whilst the creation of a new focal point at St. Nicholas Church will help create a sense of arrival to the area and reinforce the importance of the historic junction.



Phase 1 of the St. Nicholas Quarter project focuses on the rejuvenation of the streetscape. Works commenced on site in Q3 2024. It is envisaged that these public realm works will uplift the perception of the area and act as a catalyst for further investment.

The progression of this Project will be used as an example in highlighting the benefits of town centre living where people can enjoy a high standard of living in an attractive environment close to existing services and amenities.

### 3.2.4 The Long Walk Quarter

Within the Long Walk Quarter, the remnants of the original demesne landscape remain. It consists of the Carroll Village Shopping Centre (now closed), the Long Walk Shopping Centre, Dundalk Bus Station, areas east of the Long Walk Road, Ice House Hill Park, and The Demesne to the south of the Long Walk Road.

Ice House Hill Park and The Demesne bring character and biodiversity benefits to the area, and any streetscape design should retain and enhance such features.

The Long Walk is a secondary shopping area to Clanbrassil Street. The Long Walk Shopping Centre first opened in 1994.

Whilst Tesco continues to trade in the shopping centre there are a large number of units vacant. The combination of the dated design and layout of the building alongside the completion of a more modern shopping centre at the Marshes has resulted in the decline of The Long Walk. The closure of the Pennys Store in the Long Walk had a particular impact on footfall in the area. The Carroll Village Shopping Centre closed in 2011 following a number of years of difficult trading, whilst the former Toymaster store has been closed since 2008.

The challenges in the retail sector cannot be underestimated, however the location of The Long Walk Quarter in proximity to the retail core and the bus and train station makes the area an attractive location for redevelopment.

The combined area of the Carroll Village Shopping Centre, the Long Walk Shopping Centre, and the former Toymaster Store is c.5 hectares. These lands represent a significant opportunity for a mixed use living and employment quarter on strategically located lands within walking distance of the town centre.

Potential uses on the land could include residential, retail, healthcare, office/professional services, community, or recreational uses.



Any proposals shall seek to maximise connectivity and improve links between the town centre, train station, and Ice House Hill public park. They shall also ensure the creation of a clear urban structure with any new spaces or buildings integrating with the town centre. The primary objective is to create an attractive, vibrant environment where people want to live, work, and socialise.

The Council has received funding for the progression of a regeneration project for the Longwalk Quarter under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund with an Urban Framework Plan for the area to be prepared.

This Framework Plan will provide for the orderly design and development of a distinctive and sustainable urban quarter in this part of Dundalk.



This funding also includes for the design of a public realm enhancement scheme along The Long Walk and The Demesne that will seek to enhance the streetscape, connectivity, and biodiversity and recreational offering in the area including Ice House Hill Park. The Framework Plan will include a landscaping strategy for both The Demesne and Ice House Hill Park.

In addition to public realm enhancements and the redevelopment of the Long Walk Shopping Centre and Carrol Village, this Plan also supports the upgrade of the bus station, which is located on the Long Walk. A more modern and accessible bus station would complement any regeneration or public realm projects on the Long Walk as any improvement in facilities or increased frequency in services would be likely to result in an increase in footfall in addition to improving the connectivity to and from the area.

### 3.2.5 Park Street/Francis Street and St. Patrick's Church

In recognition of the success of the public realm works in Market Square and Clanbrassil Street, and in accordance with national and local policy supporting the rejuvenation of town centres and their surrounding areas, Park Street / Francis Street and St Patrick's Church have been identified as a Key Development Area.

Area includes the entire length of Park Street (from its junction with Anne Street/ the Dubin Road) as far as Earl Street, the whole of Francis Street and St Patrick's Church.

These streets are an important location for the daytime economy in the town and provide a range of uses and services. The north-eastern section of Francis Street primarily consists of office-based uses.

This transitions to more retail-based uses as it merges with Park Street. Retailing uses and services on both streets include clothes and footwear stores, and hairdressers and beauticians.

Along Park Street there is a high concentration of food and beverage and entertainment uses, which include café's, restaurants, bars, and nightclubs. These eateries and entertainment venues make Park Street an important location for the night-time economy in the town.



The vacancy rate along Park Street is low, with only 4 units vacant at the time of writing. This includes the former Dunnes Stores, which has been vacant since 2009 and is identified as an opportunity site in the Retail Strategy. It is noted that an application for a 'sports entertainment centre' at this opportunity site was granted in August 2024 and works had commenced in Q4 2024. The former Bank of Ireland, which is one of the most attractive buildings along Park Street is also vacant and has significant potential to be brought back into use.

Vacancy levels are more apparent along Francis Street with vacancy at both ground floor and upper floors. This includes Williamstown Mall (identified Opportunity Site), where there are ground floor and upper floors vacant as well as a large undeveloped site immediately to the east of No. 23 Francis Street.

The potential for redevelopment in the area is apparent with a number of planning applications recently granted along Francis Street including the redevelopment of the abovementioned site and the building immediately adjacent for mixed use developments comprising of apartments, apart-hotel units, office, and retail uses.



The implementation of these permissions would have a positive impact on the character and vibrancy of Francis Street and would act as a catalyst for further development in the area.

The built heritage of Park Street and Francis Street is characterised by a mix of modern and vernacular buildings. The historic buildings are relatively uniform in height interspersed with an occasional prominent building. There are also a number of attractive shopfronts such as the Phoenix Bar which adds to the overall attractiveness of the area, some of which are identified as Protected Structures. The spire of Saint Patrick's Church is an important landmark and contributes to the distinct character of the area.

It is recognised that investment in the public realm along both Park Street and Francis Street could transform its appearance and sense of place, making it a more vibrant and appealing area of the town for businesses, residents, and visitors. There is also the potential for improving the links between The Marshes Shopping Centre and the more traditional shopping areas of the town.

The Local Transport Plan has identified a number of potential options for improving the public realm, reducing the dominance of cars, and giving greater priority to pedestrians and active travel. Details are set out in Section 5 of the Local Transport Plan.

Whilst the options for the public realm works are at an initial stage at the time of writing, this Plan will support the progression of any proposals as the options are decided, and funding applications are made.

The benefits of a successful public realm scheme in this part of the town would make a significant contribution to the daytime and night-time economy, improve permeability and connectivity, and would stimulate further investment in the area.

### 3.2.6 Dundalk Port

Situated at the mouth of the Castletown River, adjacent to Dundalk Bay SPA and SAC, and to the east of Dundalk town centre, Dundalk Port is an important economic asset to the town as a working port which offers a range of services including cargo handling, pilotage, and customs. In addition to the port services provided, there are a number of commercial premises including a public house/music venue and metal recycling company.



Whilst this Plan supports the current use of the port facility and operations and would seek to support any future upgrades or expansion of these facilities; if the current port-related activities on the site were to cease or relocate there is an opportunity for these lands to be redeveloped.

The lands associated with the port area are approximately 5.8ha in area and are zoned 'C2 Port Harbour Area'. They are accessed from both George's Quay to the west and Quay Street/Point Road to the south and are strategically located off the Inner Relief Road and within walking distance of the town centre.

This location makes the lands suitable for a range of uses including residential, employment, and tourism related uses.

The potential of the regeneration of the area is recognised in Regional Policy Objective 4.23 of the RSES.



One of the challenges in the regeneration of these lands will be to ensure any development makes a positive contribution to the streetscape and is of a design and scale that is appropriate for its waterside location.

Given the visibility of the lands from the approach roads into the town from the north, any buildings will be visually prominent and shall be designed taking this into account.

There is potential for public realm space and improved connectivity to be provided to northern section of these lands to enhance this area as a location for leisure and recreation particularly given the location in proximity to St. Helena's Park and the existing public house/music venue.

The upgrades along the Inner Relief Road proposed as part of a planned Active Travel project will provide the foundation for improved connectivity from these lands to the surrounding area for pedestrians and cyclists in particular.

The development of this area will require further assessment in relation to contamination of the lands, as well as consideration regarding flood risk.

### 3.2.7 Policy Objectives

#### KDCA 1

To support and promote the development of the following 'Key Development Areas' in Dundalk:

- i) Mount Avenue Area
- ii) Raynoldstown Village
- iii) St. Nicholas Quarter
- iv) The Long Walk Quarter
- v) Park Street-Francis Street-St. Patrick's Church
- vi) Dundalk Port

into successfully socially integrated neighbourhoods which deliver quality, functional housing, public spaces, services, amenities, and employment opportunities as applicable to each area.

#### KDCA 2

To support the implementation of any masterplans, urban design frameworks/statements, or public realm schemes prepared for lands within the Plan area, including the Key Development Areas identified in Chapter 3.

#### KDCA 3

To require the preparation of a masterplan for the Mount Avenue Area in accordance with the details set out in Section 3.2.1 'Mount Avenue Key Development Area' and Section 3.4 'Masterplans and Spot Objectives' (as relevant to the Mount Avenue Area).



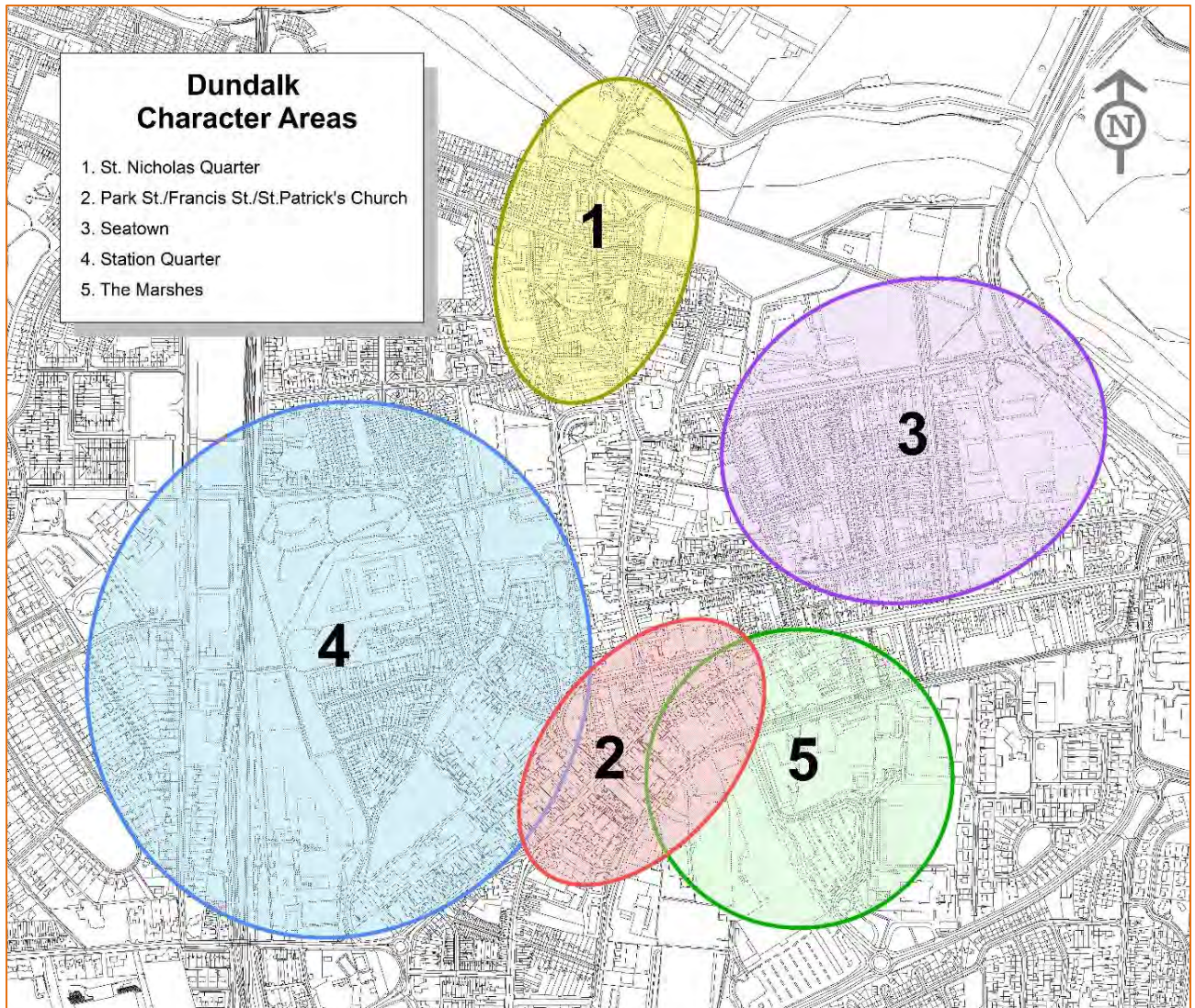
### 3.3 Character Areas

This Plan has identified five distinctive areas within and in the vicinity of Dundalk's urban core, each with their own unique and distinct character. Within these areas there are opportunities for small scale redevelopment and infill projects, public realm improvements and active travel measures:

1. St. Nicholas Quarter;
2. Park Street/Francis Street and St. Patrick's Church;
3. Seatown;
4. The Station Quarter; and
5. The Marshes.

It is considered that strengthening and enhancing these areas, as well as improving connectivity and permeability with the town centre, has the potential to increase footfall and enhance the vitality and vibrancy of Dundalk. It is acknowledged that there is an overlap between some of the Key Development Areas and the Character Areas. This overlap is a reflection of the importance of these areas in the rejuvenation of the town centre and surrounding area.

Figure 3.1: Dundalk Character Areas





### 3.3.1 No. 1: St Nicholas Quarter

#### Study Area

Primarily focused on the Bridge and Linenhall Streets and the Castletown River to the north. The Council is supporting the regeneration of this area through the progression of the St. Nicholas Quarter and Backland Regeneration Project. This project is being funded through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund. See Section 3.2.3 of this chapter for more details.

#### Key Focal Points

St. Nicholas Church of Ireland formed the heart of the 'Newtown', is a key landmark in the area and provides a vista along St. Mary's Road. St. Nicholas' Catholic Church terminates views along Clanbrassil Street. The Castletown River to the north is a key feature of the area. There is a five-storey building to the north of Bridge Street which can be viewed from a number of vantage points in the vicinity.

#### Character

The Clanbrassil Street public realm project extending as far as St. Nicholas's Catholic Church, with its environmental improvements and new civic space, has significantly improved the streetscape and brought new life to the northern part of the town. However, the area from St. Nicholas' Church to the Castletown River is in need of regeneration. The area facing the Castletown River is dominated visually by a confluence of roads, above ground utility infrastructure, vacant properties, and a general lack of ground floor animation.

The area has a tight urban grain, comprising of narrow frontages with underutilised vacant backland plots. Many noteworthy examples of traditional shopfronts are present, which contribute positively to the area's character.

#### Opportunities

**Identity:** Build on the success of the new identity for the St. Nicholas' Quarter and rejuvenate the area from St. Nicholas' Catholic Church to the river.

**Community:** Ensure a platform for a thriving, functioning town and inclusivity for all members of the community.

**Heritage:** Enhance and build upon the heritage and history of Dundalk.

**Connectivity:** Create a quality townscape which links to and mirrors other areas of the town - Market Square, Clanbrassil Street; Church Street, Castletown Road, and the Newry Road.

**Gateway:** Redefine the northern access point to Dundalk Town Centre.

**Sustainability:** Optimise the balance between users considering vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.



### 3.3.2 No. 2: Park Street /Francis Street and St Patrick's Church

#### Study Area

Area includes the entire length of Park Street (from its junction with Anne Street/ the Dublin Road as far as Earl Street, the whole of Francis Street and St Patrick's Church). It has also been identified as a Key Development Area in this Plan. See Section 3.2.5 of this Plan for more details.

#### Key Focal Points

Attractive views of the Cooley Mountains and the spire of St. Patrick's Church are available as you travel northeast along Park and Francis Street and provide a strong sense of place. The former Dunnes and bank buildings are key focal points along Park Street. When travelling eastward along Francis Street the 3-storey buildings on either side and mature treed landscape associated with 'The Crescent' and 'Kellys Monument' enhance the ambiance of the character area.

#### Character

Located south of Clanbrassil Street, Park Street is a busy vehicular thoroughfare with three significant road junctions. The street is located a short walk from the bus and train stations, Dundalk's town centre and the Marshes shopping centre. Park Street's northeast to southwest orientation allows both sides of the street to benefit from direct sunlight. The street features a wide variety of commercial uses with a notable hospitality offering.

Park Street's built environment presents an eclectic mixture of modern design and vernacular buildings, some of which retain their original shopfronts. Francis Street boasts numerous protected structures which contribute positively to its character, these are intermingled with re-development opportunities including a 'gap site' on its northern side and 'Williamson's Mall'. The area immediately in front of St. Patrick's Church is dominated by hard standing associated with surface car parking.

#### Opportunities

**Permeability:** Improving the pedestrian environment and public realm at the Earl Street, Francis Street, Magnet Road, and Anne Street/Dublin Road junctions. Enhance permeability to the bus and train stations and with the Marshes Shopping Centre either through Williamson's Mall and/or via the back lanes/ streets to the south.

**Public Realm:** Develop a cohesive public realm scheme for the entire length of Park and Francis Street and the area in front of St Patrick's Church. This should incorporate underground cabling and widening of the footpath to maximise sunlight gain as well as public realm improvements. Painting of buildings and extension of the 'SEEK' project would improve the visual amenity of the area.

**Sustainability:** Promote and encourage the re-use of the former Dunnes Site and Bank building. The Dunnes building has been vacant since 2009, it offers a substantial floor plate and surface car parking in the vicinity. The former bank building is currently for rent/ sale, located equidistant between the Arts Centre and Old Goal it provides an opportunity to introduce a community/ arts use.



Williamson's Mall is located along Francis Street and has been identified as an Opportunity Site. It has the potential to provide a vital link between the traditional town core and The Marshes Shopping Centre. The development of the gap site along Francis Street will enhance the built environment and improve vibrancy.

**Promotion:** There is an agglomeration of eateries, public houses, and night clubs along Park Street. The clustering of entertainment facilities creates synergy and is an important element of Dundalk's nighttime economy, Park Street could potentially be promoted as a 'golden mile'.

### 3.3.3 No.3: Seatown

#### Study Area

Located to the north-east of Dundalk, this study area is bounded to the north by St. Helena's Park, incorporates Mary Street and Castle Road to the west, Seatown and Mill Street to the south, the Inner Relief Road and part of the designated Key Development Area of Dundalk Port to the east. The Seatown area is largely dominated by Georgian and Victorian red brick.

#### Key Focal Points

The area is primarily defined by the established residential communities. Historically, Jocelyn Street and Seatown Place, along its southern boundary, formed an important arterial link from the town's Market Square eastwards to the Cavalry Barracks and the quay at Dundalk harbour. The windmill along Seatown Place provides a focal point.

#### Character

The area has suffered from severance because of the Inner Relief Road, a wide corridor with fast flowing traffic, which has effectively cut the town centre and residential area, from the historic quays and waterfront. When travelling along the Inner Relief Road the surrounding built form at the various junctions is ad-hoc and makes no reference or connection to the town centre or the Quays/Port area.

#### Opportunities

**Sustainability:** Optimise the balance between users considering vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.

**Connectivity:** Improve connectivity and entice visitors to the town centre and the Port/Quays area through the provision of traffic calming measures and public realm improvements

**Open Space:** Establish a network of public open spaces which have strong connections to the town centre, including St Helena's Park and the Quays area.



### 3.3.4 No.4: The Station Quarter

#### Study Area

The Station Quarter is centred on the bus and railway station and the intervening areas which includes Park Street, the Longwalk and the urban park at Ice House Hill.

#### Key Focal Points

The bus and railway stations, distillery and railway line are the key landmarks in the area. The railway line defines the character area and presents a barrier to pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles access from Cox's/Ard Easmuinn area to the town centre. Within the character area there are currently two access points that cross the railway line, one vehicular and one pedestrian.

#### Character

The presence of Clarke Train Station and the Longwalk Bus Station create a distinct and unique transport hub.

The Great Northern Distillery and Railway Station forms the eastern gateway into the town along St. Dominick's Road, providing the only vehicular crossing on the railway line in the character area. The stone railway bridge and tree lined banks on either side of the railway line below provide an attractive feature.

Ice House Hill is one of the main urban parks in Dundalk. The railway line severs the park from the mainly residential development to the west in Mount Avenue, a pedestrian underpass provides the only crossing point from the park to the residential area.

#### Opportunities

**Permeability:** Clarke Railway Station and the Longwalk Bus Station are in close proximity to Dundalk's town centre. An opportunity exists to upgrade the bus station thereby improving connectivity for those residing, working, or visiting the town. There is the potential to improve permeability between the bus and train. It is anticipated that such investment would attract additional footfall into Dundalk town centre.

**Connectivity:** Improve connectivity by delivering of a high-quality cycle route on Ard Easmuinn Road junction with Castleblayney Road (R934) to the Friary School.

**Open Space:** Establish a network of public open space which has strong connections to the town centre, including Ice House Hill urban park.



### 3.3.5 No. 5: The Marshes

#### Study Area

The area is centred around the Marshes shopping centre, bound to the west and north by the Ramparts Road, to the east by Meadow Grove Estate, to the west Hill Street and by the Long Avenue area to the south.

#### Key Focal Points

St. Patrick's Church provides the reference point between The Marshes and the rest of the town centre.

Large retail and warehouse type developments are characteristic of the area. The Ramparts River which is partially culverted runs parallel with the northern side of Ramparts Road and is an important natural feature in the area.

#### Character

The area is characterised by the Marshes shopping centre and new housing development to the west.

There are large scale warehouse and retail units along the Ramparts Road, arranged in a loose urban form and typically surrounded by large areas of surface car parking. Developments are generally set back from the public road. The Marshes area has limited linkages (through Williamsons Mall and a surface car park) with Dundalk's town centre.

#### Opportunities

**Permeability:** Enhance permeability thereby encouraging those utilising the Marshes shopping Centre to avail of the retail and services avail in the town centre, and vice versa.

**Urban Design:** Transform Ramparts Road into a boulevard, establish a new strong building line, with high quality, fine grained active frontage blocks. Introduction of buildings of height in this area may also assist in establishing a stronger sense of enclosure and improve the overall streetscape (height 2.5 - 5 storey). Surface car parking should be located behind buildings and opportunities to engage with the river should be provided.

**Public Realm:** Maximise the setting of the Ramparts River through public realm improvements.

### 3.3.6 Policy Objective

#### KDCA 4

To require any applications within Dundalk's Character Areas as set out in Section 3.3 of this Plan to have regard to the unique characteristics of the area in which it is located and to demonstrate how the proposed development will provide a responsive built form to the local streetscape.



## 3.4 Masterplans and Spot Objectives

### 3.4.1 Masterplans

The purpose of a Masterplan is to provide a vision and conceptual guide for the long-term development of a large and/or strategically located area of land and to ensure there is a co-ordinated framework for the planning, phasing, and development of the lands. The County Development Plan provides guidance on the preparation of Masterplans.

The Masterplan areas identified in this Plan are as follows:

Masterplan No.	Description	Status
1	<b>Mullagharlin Masterplan</b> – this consists of c.434 hectares of land situated between the M1 and the eastern edge of the Dublin Road c.2km south of Dundalk town centre. Approximately 267 hectares of the lands remain undeveloped. The implementation of the Masterplan is ongoing at the time of writing, with a range of businesses and educational uses situated within the Framework Plan Area including in the IDA Park, Xerox Business Park, and DkIT campus. Any future development taking place within the Masterplan Area shall comply with the requirements of this Masterplan or any subsequent updates.	Complete – see Appendix 4
2	<b>Mount Avenue Masterplan</b> – this consists of an area of c.35 hectares of land to the north-west of Dundalk town centre with frontage onto Mount Avenue, Greyacre Road and Castletown Road. The lands are zoned for residential, and open space uses, with a requirement for neighbourhood and community facilities as set out in Spot Objective F. Castletown Motte, a heritage site of national importance is adjacent to the Masterplan area. Trees of Special Amenity Value are also identified in the north-western corner of the site. The key principles of any Masterplan will be to establish a coordinated approach to the development of the lands that will include a mix of housing options that will support a sustainable community, the provision of a linear park, the provision of education facilities and local neighbourhood and community facilities. The Masterplan shall include provision for the delivery of new/upgraded road infrastructure including new Link Roads within the Masterplan area and shall demonstrate how these roads will tie in with the alignment of link roads outside of the Masterplan area. See Section 3.2.1 of Chapter 3 for more details.	Awaiting preparation



### 3.4.2 Spot Objectives

The land use zoning maps include the following Spot Objectives for specific land parcels in the Plan area. These Spot Objectives shall be complied with in the design and/or implementation of any development on these lands.

Spot Objective	Location	Objective
<b>A</b>	Adjacent to Dundalk Racecourse	To provide for the development of a retirement village.
<b>B</b>	East of Red Barns Road	To preserve the ecological value and character of the lands and to provide appropriate recreational and amenity facilities.
<b>C</b>	Xerox Junction, Dublin Road	To provide for a mixture of higher order business uses supported by cafes/restaurants, community facilities, office, health care, residential, and business units. An area of 2.5 hectares shall be utilised as playing pitches and associated facilities and shall be delivered in tandem with any residential development on the lands. If in excess of 50% of the lands are to be utilised for residential development a community building shall also be provided. The playing pitches and community building shall be delivered in tandem with any residential development on the lands. In the event that the primary use of the lands shall be for residential development the developers shall engage with the Planning Authority in relation to the potential requirement for lands to be reserved for a school on the lands. This shall be factored into the design and layout of any development at an early stage to ensure it would be appropriately located. Individual shops in excess of 350m <sup>2</sup> gross floorspace or warehousing and distribution will not be considered appropriate.
<b>D</b>	East of the Fairways Hotel, Dublin Road	Any planning application on these lands shall include an ecological assessment of the existing wetland in this location. This ecological assessment shall include measures to protect and enhance the existing wetland, any measures and recommendations of the assessment shall be incorporated into the design and development of the lands.
<b>E</b>	Raynoldstown Village	To require the provision of a neighbourhood centre with associated community uses within the Raynoldstown Village development. No more than 1,000 units in the Raynoldstown Village development shall be occupied until development has commenced on the neighbourhood centre and permission has been granted for a community building. This shall be implemented through the Development Management process with any planning application in Raynoldstown Village required to include details of the number of residential units complete and occupied/unoccupied and the number of units under construction at the time the application is made.



Spot Objective	Location	Objective
		A masterplan shall be prepared for the remaining undeveloped lands in Raynoldstown Village east of the L-7165-0 (Western Infrastructure Road). This masterplan shall set out the proposed land uses for the remaining undeveloped lands with an indicative layout of the land uses included. An outdoor play area for children shall be provided in a central location within the Raynoldstown Village development. A phasing programme shall be agreed as part of this masterplan, with the occupation of units linked to the delivery of the outdoor play area and neighbourhood centre. The masterplan shall ensure that the undeveloped lands provide for permeability and connectivity with the surrounding lands that are developed/under construction or have an extant permission.
<b>F</b>	Mount Avenue Masterplan Area	To require the provision of neighbourhood and community facilities in a centrally located part of the Masterplan area convenient for future residents. These facilities shall be adjacent to each other to promote synergy between the uses. The neighbourhood facilities shall consist of a Neighbourhood Centre consisting of a local shop(s) and services with the potential uses and floorspaces to be based on the 'Generally Permitted' or 'Open for Consideration' uses for B2 Neighbourhood Centre land use zoning as set out in the County Development Plan. Community Facilities shall consist of a 1.3-hectare site to be reserved for future education facilities (i.e. school or other educational use). A playing pitch shall also be provided, with an opportunity to co-locate this pitch with the future school (education facility).
<b>G</b>	Lands to the rear of St. Francis School	This site is zoned 'G1 Community Facilities' to potentially facilitate an extension to St. Francis Primary School. Any development of the site shall include provision for active travel links from the Old Golf Links Road in order to improve permeability and connectivity in the area.
<b>H</b>	Lands west of Hill Street Bridge	Any development within the Flood Zone in this location shall be restricted to the provision of a vehicular and active travel access and service roads and ancillary infrastructure and other 'less Vulnerable development' as set out in Table 3.1 of 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines' (2009).

### 3.4.3 Policy Objective

#### KDCA 5

To ensure any planning application and development on lands that include a spot objective as indicated on the Zoning and Flood Zone Map complies with the requirements of the spot objective as set out in Section 3.4.2 of this Plan.



# CHAPTER 4

## CLIMATE ACTION





## 4 CLIMATE ACTION

### 4.1 Introduction

Climate change refers to the long-term shift in global temperatures and weather patterns. Such changes can be natural but human activity has been the main driver primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels including coal, oil and gas and the subsequent increase in levels of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane, into the Earth's atmosphere. The impact of climate change on our environment, society and economy is becoming more frequent and severe. Some of the consequences of climate change are as follows:

- More severe storms and extreme rainfall events;
- A warmer ocean and rising sea levels;
- Higher temperatures and increased drought;
- Adverse impact on native species due to climate extremes; and
- Impact on food supply due to changes in the growing season which may affect crop yields and the availability of fodder to feed livestock.

### 4.2 Mitigation and Adaptation

Climate change can be addressed by two primary complementary responses namely, mitigation and adaptation:

- Mitigation is a human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases. Mitigation efforts include transitioning to renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, adopting sustainable land-use practices, and promoting eco-friendly transportation methods.

These actions are essential for curbing the rate of global warming and minimising its adverse effects.

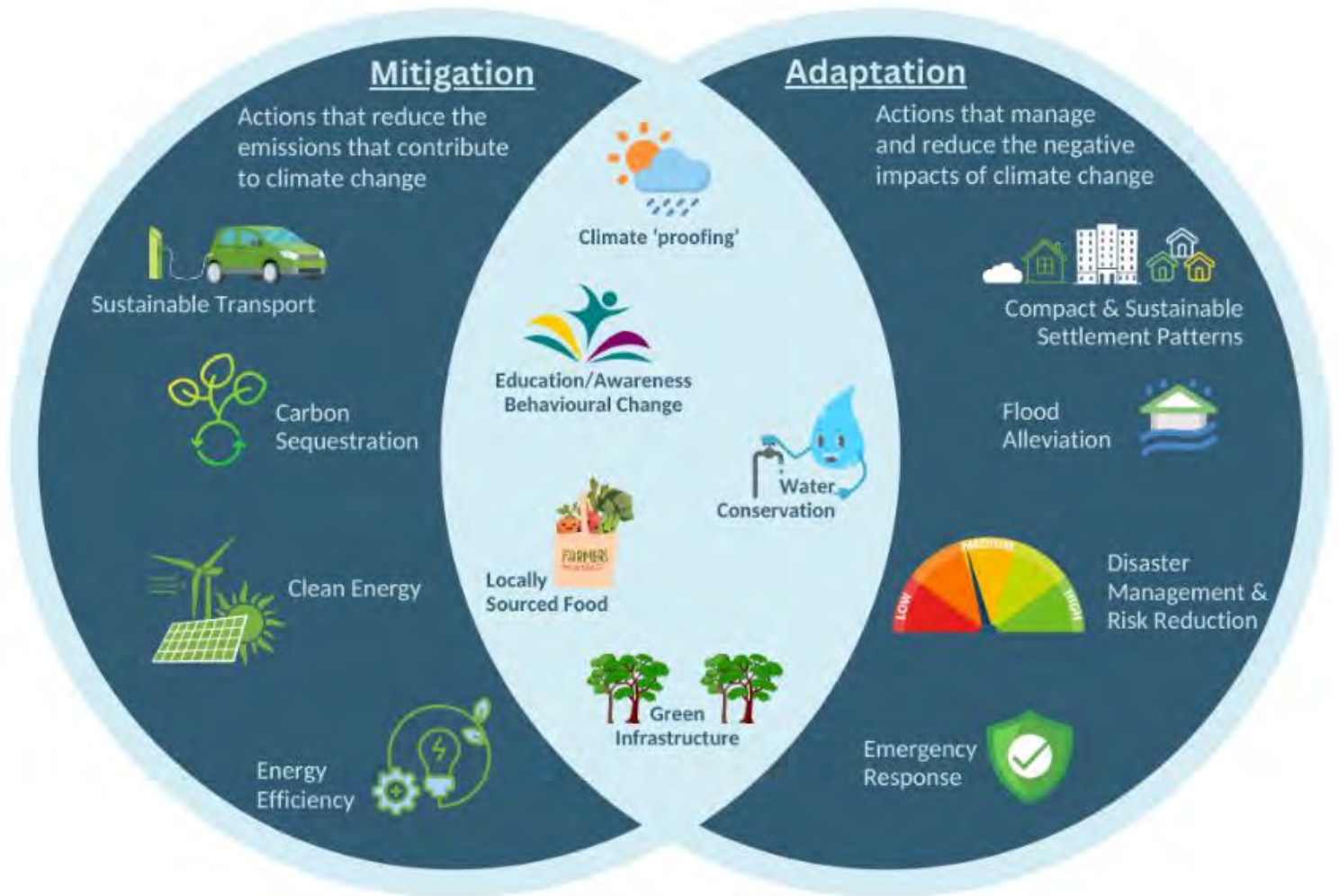
- Adaptation is the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate change and its effects. Adaptation to climate change involves making changes and preparations to minimise the negative impacts of shifting weather patterns, such as developing climate-resilient infrastructure, implementing water management strategies, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. It also includes raising awareness and educating communities about climate-related risks.

Climate Action is a cross-cutting theme of the Dundalk Local Area Plan, with climate adaptation and mitigation measures firmly embedded within the policy objectives of this document. The Local Area Plan's approach to density, land use, design, movement, green infrastructure, nature-based approaches, and renewable energy will assist in addressing climate change.





Figure 4.1: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation



### 4.3 Climate Policy

In recent years, a succession of policies and actions have been developed at global, European, national, regional, and local level to address climate change, with an increasing focus on the decarbonisation of society.

Since the adoption of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, various additional policies have been published in relation to climate action, a summary of which is set out in Table 4.1.



Table 4.1: Climate Policy

Level	Policy	Summary
National	Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP 24)	This is the third annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan. It refines and updates the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings. CAP 24 provides a roadmap for taking decisive actions to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050.
National	Draft updated National Energy Climate Plan (NECP's) Dec 2023	National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) are the framework within which European Union Member States must plan their climate and energy objectives, targets, policies, and measures to the European Commission. Member States are required to develop NECPs on a ten-year rolling basis, with an update halfway through. This document represents the required update of Ireland's 2019 NECP.
National	National Adaptation Framework 2024	This Framework sets out a whole of government and society approach to climate adaptation in Ireland, taking a sectoral approach which aims to improve the enabling environment for adaptation through on-going engagement with key sectors and local government, along with civil society, the private sector, and the research community.
National	National Sustainability Policy	The National Sustainable Mobility Policy sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is accompanied by an action plan to 2025 which contains actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing safe, green, accessible and efficient alternatives to car journeys.
National	Bio-economy Action Plan 2023-2025	Increase governance and awareness and understanding of the bio-economy as a powerful climate action tool.
Local	Louth County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (Louth CAP)	It also includes demand management and behavioural change measures to manage daily travel demand more efficiently and to reduce the journeys taken by private car.



## 4.4 Louth Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029

The Louth Climate Action Plan (Louth CAP) sets out how Louth County Council can promote a range of mitigation, adaptation, and other climate action measures, to achieve net zero emissions no later than 2050.

Louth CAP outlines the national and local impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events. A full baseline emissions inventory was calculated for 2018 identifying a breakdown of greenhouse gas emissions in tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>) for residential, social housing, commercial, industrial transport, agriculture, local authority, municipal and waste/wastewater sectors.

The baseline inventory revealed that the agricultural sector has the highest emissions at 29% (317,479 tCO<sub>2</sub>) and the residential sector is the second largest emitting sector at 21% (234,189 tCO<sub>2</sub>).

The Louth CAP details the impact of projected future climate changes for Louth for the period 2041-2060, which include increase in heat waves and droughts, decrease in cold spells and heavy snowfall, increase in coastal flooding and erosion, as well as an increase in surface water and groundwater flooding.

A total of 79 county wide actions are identified which will accelerate local climate action with the ambition of achieving the national climate neutrality objective.



### 4.4.1 Dundalk/Blackrock Decarbonising Zone

As part of the Louth CAP, the Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone has been established. The extent of the Decarbonising Zone matches the settlement boundary of Dundalk as set out in this Plan.

A baseline emissions inventory for the Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone was undertaken; industry had the largest share of emissions at 44%, with transport second at 24%. A total of 16 specific actions are cited to facilitate a reduction in baseline emissions for the various sectors within the Decarbonising Zone.

### 4.4.2 Dundalk and Climate Change

A continued dependence on fossil fuels and the subsequent emission of greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide will result in more extreme weather patterns and climate events.

The projected changes in climate for Louth outlined in the Louth CAP include a decrease in snow fall and cold spells accompanied by an increase in heatwaves, drought, and all types of flooding – i.e. coastal, river, surface, and ground water.

Given Dundalk’s coastal location, intense weather events and the consequent mean rise in sea level will bring significant challenges in terms of flood risk. A larger extent of the town is likely to be under water for a longer period (current flood maps are included on the Zoning and Flood Zones Map in Volume 2 and in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in Volume 4) which may result in damage to property and infrastructure and could cause risk to human life, as well as having a negative impact on human health and the environment.



## 4.5 Dundalk Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Measures

This Plan will continue to support and promote climate mitigation and adaptation measures which will assist Dundalk to adapt and become resilient to the effects of climate change. These measures are listed below.

### 4.5.1 Compact Growth

In accordance with national and regional policy, the development strategy of this Plan will seek to deliver a more compact pattern of development, with a strong emphasis placed on the redevelopment of infill and brownfield lands close to existing and proposed social and education amenities, employment opportunities and public transport facilities.

This pattern of development will assist in the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient settlement.

### 4.5.2 Sustainable Transport

The Council will continue to support the modal shift from private car usage towards more sustainable means of transport and will liaise with key stakeholders and agencies to facilitate and support the development of sustainable transport networks in Dundalk.



The Dundalk Local Transport Plan (Appendix 2 of this Plan) includes a series of objectives and recommendations seeking to facilitate a modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport.

This includes improving permeability throughout the town and investment in active travel and public transport infrastructure and facilities.

### 4.5.3 Electric Vehicles

This Plan is also committed to supporting the transition towards low emission and electric vehicles.

There are currently a number of EV charging points in the town including a rapid electric vehicle charger at Dundalk Tennis Club and at Clarke Station that were delivered as part of the FASTER Project under the INTERREG VA programme.

This Plan will support the expansion of the EV Charging Network in Dundalk in accordance with the recommendations set out in the National EV Charging Strategy and the Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan (when adopted) and the Louth County Council EV Charging Infrastructure and Implementation Plans once completed. These strategies alongside the requirements as recommended in the County Development Plan or any more up to date national guidance will inform the number of charging points required as part of any development proposals in Dundalk. It is noted that the building regulations together with the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive require Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure to be installed in new homes to enable future installation of EV charging points.

### 4.5.4 Renewable Energy

The Local Area Plan will support the transition away from a reliance on fossil fuels and continued movement towards renewable and low carbon energy technologies such as wind and solar energy, heat pumps, bio energy, district heating and hydro energy.



In the context of Dundalk, subject to compliance with relevant planning criteria such as residential amenity, support will be given to the progression and delivery of small, medium, and large-scale renewable energy projects, that will contribute to the overall goal of reducing carbon emissions.

Within a built-up area like Dundalk, solar energy such as photovoltaic panels and solar thermal panels can play an important role in reducing carbon emissions. These can be installed in new developments or retrofitted onto existing buildings.

#### Wind Turbine - DkIT



#### Solar Panel Installation - County Hall



#### Solar Panel installation - Dundalk Fire Station



Wind energy is a renewable source which can be harnessed in an urban setting. In Dundalk there is an existing wind turbine installation at the DkIT campus and an application for a 3-megawatt wind turbine was granted in Q1 2025 at the Science and Technology Park. Works had not commenced at the time of writing.

District heating has the potential to be an efficient and cost-effective way to heat apartments, homes, and mixed-use developments. District heating networks can be based on a variety of technologies and renewable energy sources including electricity generated from waste. A gas district heating system is presently in place at Carlinn Hall which serves 178 homes. SEAI carried out a study<sup>1</sup> of communal heating systems including Carlinn Hall.

Overall, the study found that there should be appropriate regulatory and legal framework for pricing of gas; the gas used in communal systems is charged at the higher commercial rate rather than domestic rate.

In terms of Carlinn Hall, and communal heating systems more widely, the key findings are outlined below:

- A maintenance plan should be in place for pipework, hot water system and interface units.
- Existing gas boilers should be replaced with low carbon alternatives such as ground source heat pump or a biomass boiler.
- There should be financial supports for network performance upgrades, support for upfront and operating costs, and contract periods for system operators should be extended.

The potential of utilising district heating systems will be examined as part of the implementation of the Louth Climate Action Plan.

<sup>1</sup> [SEAI Publishes Communal Heating System Study | News and Media | SEAI](#)



#### 4.5.5 Energy Efficient Buildings

Energy efficient buildings have minimal energy consumption and wastage, as such they have the potential to reduce carbon emissions as well as running costs. This Plan actively encourages new buildings to be designed and orientated with regard to passive solar gain.

It also supports the construction of new buildings and retrofitting existing buildings which utilise low energy building materials and advanced energy efficient materials such as high-performance insulation and windows.

With regard to residential properties, the Government have published the 'National Residential Retrofit Plan', which includes targets to retrofit 500,000 homes to a Building Energy Rating of B2 or equivalent and to install 400,000 heating pumps to replace older, less efficient heating systems by the end of 2030.

When possible renewable energy technologies should be integrated into the existing or proposed design to facilitate the creation of a 'net zero' property.

Whilst installation of energy efficient measures and renewable technologies into existing buildings is encouraged, careful consideration must be given to the energy efficiency upgrading of historic and traditional buildings to avoid unintended and potentially damaging consequences to the performance of the building fabric and the long-term viability of historic and traditional building stock.

#### 4.5.6 Flood Resilience and Water

Climate change is resulting in more prolonged periods of heavy rainfall and a subsequent increase in the number of flood events. It is projected that as temperatures continue to increase there will be a rise in sea levels, high tides, and storm surges that will result in coastal flooding. Given Dundalk's coastal location the implementation of flood mitigation measures are of paramount importance.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) and Louth County Council are currently progressing the Dundalk/Blackrock Flood Relief Scheme.

Chapter 9 of this Plan 'Infrastructure' sets out the specific policy objectives in relation to flooding and surface water management. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was carried out as part of the preparation of this Plan and is set out in Volume 4.

#### 4.5.7 Green Infrastructure and Nature Based Solutions

Within Dundalk there is an existing interconnected and multifunctional network of green infrastructure which contributes toward reducing flood risk and act as 'carbon sinks'.

The provision and enhancement of nature-based approaches for surface water management such as urban gardens, green spaces, green roofs and bioswales provide a natural mechanism for dealing with surface water. This approach also accommodates temporary and permanent water storage and can also filter out pollutants. The natural assets such as trees and hedgerow together with green spaces also absorb carbon from the atmosphere.

Green Infrastructure can assist Dundalk to adapt and become resilient to the effects of climate change while also playing a role in climate mitigation.

Chapter 10 of this Plan includes out a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Dundalk and identifies features of interest and the potential for green infrastructure enhancement.



#### 4.5.8 Education

Education can help people understand and address the impacts of climate change. It can also encourage people to change their attitudes and behaviour. The presence of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) in the town provides an opportunity for businesses to collaborate with a third-level facility in developing new technologies and innovations that will assist in reducing emissions and transitioning towards renewable energy and technologies.

DkIT Credit Technology Gateway, in partnership with Enterprise Ireland, provides technological expertise in the areas of renewables and energy optimisation.



#### 4.5.9 Policy Objectives

Climate Action is one of the key cross cutting themes throughout this Plan. The various policy objectives within each chapter take due consideration of climate mitigation and adaptation.

##### CA 1

To support the implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2024, the National Energy Climate Plan and the Louth Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and other relevant policy and legislation or subsequent publications.

##### CA 2

To reduce carbon emissions and create a climate resilient town by prioritising measures to address climate change by way of both effective mitigation and adaptation responses in accordance with available guidance and best practice.

##### CA 3

To promote awareness of climate change and to work in partnership with other bodies to ensure best practice with regard to use of renewable energy technologies.

##### CA 4

To support the implementation of the Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonisation Zone through the delivery of the 16 actions contained within the Louth Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

##### CA 5

To encourage the construction of new and retrofitting of existing buildings to improve energy efficiency and to support the implementation of '*National Residential Retrofit Plan*', and any subsequent plan.



# CHAPTER 5

## SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES





## 5 SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

### 5.1 Introduction

Dundalk can trace its history as a settlement as far back as the neolithic period during the Stone Age. This provides the town with a rich and diverse archaeological and built heritage. Over the centuries the town has continued to thrive and grow. The 2022 Census recorded Dundalk as the second largest town in Ireland with a population of 43,112. The RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region included a population target of 50,000 people by 2031. If the population continues to grow at the rate recorded between 2016-2022 this target will be realised on or before 2031.

This Plan is aligned with the Louth Community Economic Plan 2024-2029 (LECP) which identifies five high level goals and a series of actions pertaining to the development of diverse, healthy, climate resilient communities, which take advantage of the County's strategic location.

This Chapter will provide an overview of the existing character and urban structure of Dundalk. It will also focus on how the Plan will support the creation of quality neighbourhoods and communities and will set out the approach for the delivery of residential accommodation, neighbourhood, social, education, and community facilities which are cross-cutting themes of the LECP.

### 5.2 Overview of Dundalk

Dundalk is the county town and administrative centre of Louth. There are a broad range of public services available including outpatient and surgical procedures at Louth County Hospital, Louth County Council headquarters, a court service, social welfare office, and education facilities, including a third level institute (Dundalk Institute of Technology, DkIT).

There is a vibrant retail offering in the town centre and in particular along Clanbrassil Street, which is the primary shopping street, secondary shopping areas including the Long Walk and Park Street, and at the Marshes Shopping Centre.

The Plan area also includes the urban village of Blackrock, which is located to the south east of Dundalk town centre. Blackrock, initially developed as a fishing village, is now a vibrant tourist destination with an established and growing residential base. Blackrock provides a focus for local activities in the southern part of the Plan area, enabling sustainable urban living and allowing people access to local shops, services, community services, information, healthcare, amenities and to work locally.

### 5.3 Urban Structure and Character

Dundalk's town centre has a strong linear core with a fine urban grain comprising deep narrow plots. This pattern of development is particularly evident in the northern section of the town centre. Like many historic towns Dundalk has a network of narrow streets culminating in the wider 'high street', Clanbrassil Street. The prevailing height of buildings along Clanbrassil Street are 2-3 storey.

Dundalk's town centre enjoys the presence of a complex network of streets and back lanes. The basic structure of the historic core of the town follows a "Y" formation made up of:

- Clanbrassil Street,
- Jocelyn Street and Seatown Place, and Hill Street,
- Dublin Street and Park Street.

Parallel to these are The Long Walk and The Ramparts, which converge at Market Square - the civic core of Dundalk.



### Y' Formation of Dundalk's Historic Core



Much of Dundalk's historic housing stock is located in the vicinity of the town centre. Residential development subsequently took place to the east of the Inner Relief Road and then in the Castletown/Mount Avenue Area and between the Dublin Road and Inner Relief Road.

The Blackrock and Haynestown area has experienced considerable pressure for development in recent years, resulting in a significant increase in housing and associated residential population in this part of the town.

To the north of the Castletown River the residential areas are concentrated along the Newry Road, Armagh Road and Racecourse Road. The level and pressure for development to the north of the town centre is lower than that to the south of the town centre.

There is strong evidence of the consolidation of the urban core of Dundalk in recent years with a number of projects recently completed, ongoing or having received permission. This includes Cathedral View, a residential development adjacent to The Marshes Shopping Centre that was recently completed, and an apartment development with ancillary commercial uses at Connolly's Field adjacent to the Tesco off Hill Street which is currently under construction (see Fig 5.1).

Permissions have also been granted for infill developments along Rampart Lane, opposite the Imperial Hotel and at Seatown Place. In addition to new builds, permission has also been granted for the conversion and change of use of St. Joseph's Female Orphanage/Industrial School and St. Malachy's Convent, into residential use.

Figure 5.1 – Development at Connolly's Field



This Plan will continue to promote development of infill and brownfield sites to promote compact growth. The Settlement Capacity Audit (Appendix 1) includes a map of the larger infill and brownfield sites in the Plan area.

Recent employment opportunities have largely been concentrated to the east of the town centre on the Coe's Road, and south of the town centre at the IDA Science and Technology Park, Xerox Technology Park and Finnabair Business Park. These employment areas will be complemented by the 'Dundalk North Business Park' located along the Armagh Road to the north of the town centre, which was under construction at the time of writing.

Dundalk boasts a range of historic landmarks including Castletown Motte and the Windmill Tower. Evidence of the town's rich ecclesiastical, mercantile, industrial and rail heritage is peppered throughout. The County Museum was originally part of a distillery, the PJ Carroll's building a former tobacco factory has been incorporated into the DKIT campus, Clarke railway station was constructed in 1894 and remains in use today.



These buildings are a memento of Dundalk's industrial past. St. Patrick's Church is an important ecclesiastical landmark in the town whilst Castletown graveyard dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century.

One of the town's most prominent landmark buildings is located to the south of the town centre in proximity to DkIT. 'The Gateway Hotel' is 14 storeys high and is Dundalk's most recognised taller building.

Dundalk has a range of natural assets that contribute to the character and setting of the town. The Castletown River is an important ecological and recreational amenity. The intertidal section of the river up to the rail bridge is part of the Dundalk Bay Special Protection Area, a European ecological designation that has been made on account of various waterbird species and wetland habitats.

Dundalk estuary is designated as both a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a European ecological designation that has been made on account of various habitats and species, and a Special Protection Area (SPA). The Fane River is located just beyond and to the south of Dundalk's settlement boundary also flows into Dundalk Bay.

This Plan seeks to protect and enhance Dundalk's unique character.

Any regeneration or new development proposals will be required to respect the existing character of the town and take account of the intrinsic value of the built heritage, landscape, and natural environment.

### 5.3.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 1

To ensure that any development in Dundalk makes a positive contribution to the character, setting, and built and natural environment of the town.

## 5.4 Urban Design and Placemaking

A key element of placemaking and urban design is the creation of an environment which is attractive to live, work and visit. When designing a development, consideration shall be given to the existing character of the area and how the development will assist in creating a safe, secure, and integrated community and neighbourhood where there is a high level of permeability and connectivity and a strong sense of place and identity.

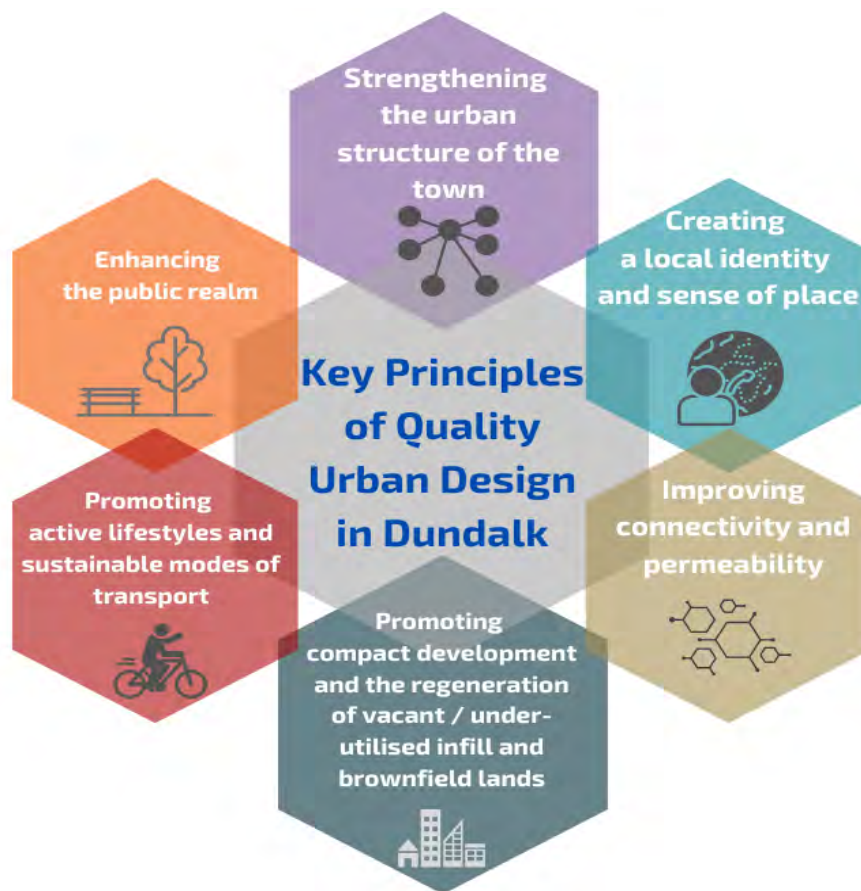
Figure 5.2 outlines the key principles of quality urban design that should be an integral part of any new development proposal.

The implementation of these design principles will assist in the creation of successful neighbourhoods and spaces where people have access to services and facilities in an attractive and safe environment.





Figure 5.2 – Key Principles of Quality Urban Design



### 5.4.1 Policy Objectives

#### SC 2

To promote and facilitate the creation of a sustainable community in Dundalk in a high-quality built environment where there is a distinctive sense of place with attractive streets, spaces, and neighbourhoods that are accessible and safe places for all members of the community to meet and socialise.

#### SC 3

To develop and support sustainable neighbourhoods and residential developments in Dundalk that facilitate the provision of the required neighbourhood infrastructure such as schools, recreational amenities, community facilities, healthcare and childcare facilities and a suitable mix of housing at an appropriate density in accordance with the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines' (DHLGH, 2024).

#### SC 4

To promote and encourage universal design for all new buildings, public realm works and changes of use or alterations to existing buildings.



## 5.5 Compact Growth

The NPF and RSES promote the principle of compact growth. The creation of more compact settlements has many benefits including more efficient use of land, a greater return on public infrastructure investment, better access to services and amenities and facilitating the transition to low carbon living. This Plan supports the creation of a more compact settlement and will seek to deliver at least 30% of all new homes within the existing built-up area of the town.

Within the built-up footprint of Dundalk there are significant tracts of vacant and under-utilised lands of various sizes that have the potential to accommodate mixed use or residential developments. The development of these lands will assist in creating a more compact settlement and achieving the 30% target set out in Policy Objective SC 5. The Settlement Capacity Audit in Appendix 1 includes a map of the larger infill and brownfield sites in the Plan area.

### 5.5.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 5

To achieve compact growth in Dundalk through the delivery of at least 30% of all new homes within the existing built-up footprint of the town, by supporting the development of infill, brownfield, under-utilised, and regeneration sites.

## 5.6 Building Heights

As part of the strategy of securing compact growth and more sustainable patterns of development, this Plan will support an increase in building heights where the design and layout of buildings can contribute to a high-quality public realm and living and working environment. This approach is consistent with national and regional policy, which is set out in greater detail in the *'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* (2018).

### 5.6.1 Prevailing Building Height

Like many towns throughout the country Dundalk has developed as a predominantly low density, low rise settlement. The majority of commercial and residential developments outside of the town centre are two-storey.

Historically, taller warehouse buildings in Dundalk were located in the vicinity of Clanbrassil Street and were mainly 3-4 storeys.



In the wider urban area of Dundalk there are buildings of height along Racecourse Road and to the north of Bridge Street, on lands zoned for employment uses and in the vicinity of the Port. The silos at Dundalk Port are readily visible from various vantage points when travelling into the town from the North and are a reminder of Dundalk's role in shipping and trade.

Today, the highest and most easily recognisable building of height in Dundalk is The Gateway Hotel, which is 14 storeys high. Located along the Inner Relief Road; it is an important landmark within the town.





More recently, there has been a trend towards higher densities and increased building heights in Dundalk. Planning permission has been granted for taller buildings at Ramparts Lane (5-storey), Francis Street (5-storey) and to the south of the Fairways Hotel along the Dublin Road (2-5 storeys), the latter of which will provide a strong urban edge as you enter the town from the south. A 4-6 storey residential development is currently under construction at ‘Connolly’s Field’.

The mixture of building heights and typologies contributes to a dynamic and varied streetscape.

For the purposes of this Plan, a building of height is considered to be a building that is 4 storeys or higher. Table 5.1 identifies the areas in Dundalk considered to be most suitable for buildings of height. Proposals outside of these locations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Table 5.1: Areas Suitable for Buildings of Height in Dundalk

Location	Reasoning
<b>Along the Ramparts and in the Marshes area</b>	Lands are in proximity to existing services and facilities which will support the consolidation of the urban core of the town thereby assisting in the delivery of a more compact settlement pattern.
<b>Lands along the waterfront</b>	There are existing higher buildings in the vicinity of Dundalk Port. These contribute to Dundalk’s wider setting and provide a sense of place. Opportunity exists to provide well designed landmark buildings which enhance the appearance of the waterfront.
<b>Public Transport Hubs, Transport corridor including existing and future bus corridors</b>	Opportunity exists to improve the visual appearance of the main arterial transport routes into and through the town, thus assisting in the creation of attractive entrance nodes and encouraging higher densities where there is access to sustainable transport.
<b>Mullagharlin Employment Generating Area</b>	Potential to provide landmark gateway buildings for employment generating uses. It is essential that any new building makes a positive contribution to the built form of the area.
<b>Town Centre and Regeneration Zoned Lands</b>	Opportunity exists to provide buildings of height on town centre and regeneration zoned lands to support the consolidation of the urban core and to realise the potential of compact growth. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis and building height design should have regard to the prevailing context of the surrounding area.

In general, larger sites offer the greatest potential for buildings of height. The grouping of higher buildings in a specific location can assist in the creation of a distinctive neighbourhood with a unique skyline, thereby improving legibility whilst also signalling regeneration. The configuration of any group of buildings of height will be dependent on the characteristics of the site and surrounding area.

There has been a discernible pattern of gradually increasing residential densities on ‘infill’ sites within the built-up area.

Many of these infill developments have been at a higher density and with a taller building height profile than the prevailing local low-rise context.



Successful examples of this form of development are often located along the waterfront, on prominent corner sites, or on sites with frontage onto a wide road. The general approach in terms of building heights in these sites has been to taper height from a high point in the centre, down to the site boundaries where the height of adjacent buildings can often be lower. In all instances a careful design and a detailed analysis is required in order to deliver a quality, attractive development.

A responsive approach will be taken to the assessment of proposals for buildings of height with each application considered on a case-by-case basis. Any application for a building(s) of height will be required to include a design statement that sets out the overall architectural design concept of the proposal and how it responds to its surrounding context and shall satisfy the following criteria:

- **Public Transport** – the site shall be located in an area well served by public transport;
- **Density/Plot Ratio** – the site shall be in an area of the town appropriate for high density development;
- **Building Typology and Use** – the use of the building(s) and the design/style of the building(s) shall positively contribute to the local neighbourhood;
- **Impact on Historic Environment** – historic environments can be highly sensitive to large scale and tall buildings, and careful consideration is required to ensure that they protect and enhance the character and setting of the existing streetscape;
- **Placemaking** – the building(s) shall positively contribute to the local streetscape by utilising height and massing to achieve density whilst also ensuring there is sufficient variety in scale and form to respond to the scale of adjoining developments and create visual interest in the streetscape;
- **Visual Impact** – the building(s) shall successfully integrate into the local neighbourhood, with the design, scale, massing, and finishes taking account of the context and setting and the relationship with any landmark building(s) or protected views. Photomontages and contextual drawings of the proposed building(s) from vantage points in the area shall be included to demonstrate how the building(s) would integrate into the local neighbourhood;
- **Residential Amenity** – an assessment of the potential impact of the development on the residential amenities of existing and proposed residential properties, with a particular focus on potential overlooking or overshadowing; and
- **Microclimate** – consideration shall be given to the potential impacts of the development on the microclimate, such as wind patterns, daylight, air temperature, and humidity.

### 5.6.2 Policy Objective

#### SC 6

To support increased building heights in appropriate locations in Dundalk. Any application for a building of height shall include a Design Statement demonstrating compliance with the criteria set out in Section 5.6.1 of this Plan and any other relevant criteria in the County Development Plan or Section 28 Guidelines.

### 5.7 Density and Plot Ratio

Density is an established method of quantifying the intensity of a development. For developments where there is a mixture of buildings (such as housing, apartments, and commercial floor space) plot ratio would be a more applicable method.



Plot ratios can determine the maximum building floor space area or volume on a given site, but on their own, cannot determine built form. The same area or volume can be distributed on a site in different ways to generate very different environments.

Traditionally, residential development in Dundalk was based on low density suburban type layouts with densities in the region of 25-30 units per hectare, however, more recent developments have tended to be of a higher density. It is recognised that higher densities have an important role in ensuring sustainable land use.

The provision of more compact settlement patterns, at appropriate locations, will support the provision of a critical mass of population which in turn will lead to greater provision of services and will support the viability of public infrastructure projects. Proximity to and the availability of a quality public transport network is an important consideration in the suitability of a site/location for higher density development. Higher density developments in Dundalk tend to be located on infill/brownfield sites within or close to the town centre. Examples of extant permissions for higher density residential developments are along Park Street (340 units/ha), and at Seatown Place (210 units/ha). It is recognised that not all areas of the town would be suitable for developments as dense as this, and in this regard proposals for higher density developments will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The recommended densities in Dundalk are based on the densities set out in the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (DHLGH, 2024)*. Table 5.2 sets out the minimum recommended densities in the central and suburban areas of the town.

Applicants and developers are advised that this is a minimum recommended density. Table 3.4 of the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (DHLGH, 2024)* provides a range of densities that shall generally be applied in Regional Growth Centres.

Table 5.2: Recommended Density for Residential Development

Settlement	Recommended Minimum Density Range per hectare	
	Town Centre and Urban Neighbourhood	Suburban area/Urban extension
Dundalk	50 units per ha	35 units per ha

High quality design with a focus on placemaking is a critical element in the development of sustainable neighbourhoods. In this regard it should be noted that whilst this Plan promotes and supports higher density developments, such proposals will only be given positive consideration where the Planning Authority is satisfied that the density is appropriate for its location and would have a positive impact on the neighbourhood and community in which it is located.

### 5.7.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 7

To promote development that facilitates a higher, sustainable density in accordance with Table 5.2 of this Plan which will be appropriate to the local context of the town and enhance the environment in which it is located in accordance with the '*Sustainable Residential and Compact Settlements Guidelines (DHLGH, 2024)*'.



## 5.8 10-Minute Neighbourhood Concept

The 10-minute neighbourhood is centred on the premise that people should be able to meet most of their needs within a short walking or cycling distance of their homes. This concept is an example of integrated land use and transportation planning and, if successfully implemented, would assist in the creation of a sustainable community and reduce dependence on the private car. It is closely aligned with the creation of a compact settlement as set out in Section 5.5 of this Plan and the Guiding Principles for Healthy Placemaking as set out in Section 9.4 of the RSES.

The Local Transport Plan for Dundalk (in Appendix 2) provides further detail on the 10-Minute Neighbourhood Concept.

### 5.8.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 8

To promote the concept of a '10-minute neighbourhood', where high quality housing and well-designed, safe and inclusive public spaces served by local services, amenities and sustainable modes of transport are available.

Figure 5.3: 10-Minute Neighbourhood Concept





## 5.9 Active Land Management

Active Land Management has an important role in achieving compact growth in Dundalk through the re-use and/or redevelopment of vacant or under-utilised buildings and land. The Council will seek to work collaboratively with landowners and stakeholders to facilitate the development of such buildings and land. The Active Land Management strategy for Dundalk includes:

- A phasing strategy to ensure the timely release of residential lands;
- Regular monitoring of development activity in the town;
- Support for the development of vacant and under-utilised buildings and land;
- The proactive implementation of the Derelict Sites Act 1990; and
- Support for funding applications under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and other government initiatives that promote regeneration.

The Government has introduced a number of fiscal measures under ‘Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland’, to address the housing shortage and ultimately increase housing supply and improve affordability:

- **Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT):** Introduced under *Section 80 of the Finance Act 2021*, the purpose of this tax is to increase housing supply by activating zoned, serviced residential development lands for housing.
- **Vacant Homes Tax:** Introduced in 2023 and is applicable to properties that can be lived in and have been stayed in for less than 30 days in the previous 12-months. Its purpose is to encourage owners to rent out empty properties.

- **Temporary Time Limited Waiver in respect of Development Contributions:** Introduced in April 2023, it was designed to incentivise the activation of pipeline residential developments<sup>1</sup>.
- **Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant:** Provides funding for the refurbishment of vacant and derelict homes to either live in or rent out.

This Plan will support the implementation of these and any future Government initiatives that seek to address issues of housing supply and promote the regeneration of urban areas.

### 5.9.1 Policy Objectives

#### SC 9

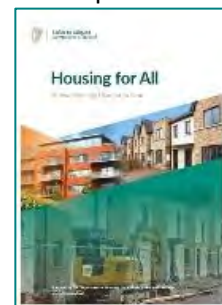
To promote through active land management, the sustainable development of vacant and under-utilised lands throughout the Plan area.

#### SC 10

To utilise the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act 1990, including the maintenance of a Derelict Site Register and CPO powers to address instances of dereliction and decay and to bring buildings back into active use.

## 5.10 Housing Mix

This Plan supports the implementation of the government’s action plan for housing ‘*Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland*’, and the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines (DHLGH, 2024) with the aim of providing a diverse and innovative mix of housing that can facilitate compact housing and provide greater housing choice.



<sup>1</sup> Residential developments commenced no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 could avail of this scheme.



In order to create a balanced community and to aid social integration, it is important that residential developments provide for a mix of house types, tenures, such as Cost Rental, and sizes, to cater for the entire community. This includes social, private, affordable, and specialist housing including housing for students, refugees and beneficiaries of temporary protection.

### 5.10.1 Policy Objectives

#### SC 11

To support the initiatives and pathways proposed under 'Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland' or any future policy document, in providing a suitable mix of housing types and tenures, such as Cost Rental, to meet the housing needs of the community.

#### SC 12

To progress the provision of social and affordable housing for a mixture of tenures such as Cost Rental, through partnership with approved housing bodies, the Land Development Agency, voluntary and co-operative organisations, the HSE and through agreements with private developers.

#### SC 13

To seek that all new residential developments on zoned lands in excess of 20 residential units provide for universally designed units in accordance with the policy objectives outlined in the Louth County Development Plan and with the requirements of the 'Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland' developed by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (National Disability Authority).

#### SC 14

To encourage improvements in the environmental performance of buildings by promoting energy efficiency and energy conservation in existing and new developments in line with best practice.

## 5.11 Social and Affordable Housing

It is recognised that social and affordable housing has an important role in housing provision. Data from Census 2022 indicates that 37% (5,916) of houses in Dundalk are rented, of which 2,211 are rented from the Local Authority.



This Plan will support the delivery of social and affordable housing in Dundalk as well as the management and maintenance of existing social housing stock in the town.

The Council has an important role in the provision of social and affordable housing, through building on local authority owned lands, and through new regeneration programmes and actions.

Examples of ongoing projects includes lands at Mount Avenue, where there is a development of 93 units under construction and at Muirhevnamor where 11 units are to be delivered over 3 separate sites. These developments are due to be completed in Q3 of 2025.



The Council will continue to work in partnership with the DHLGH, Approved Housing Bodies and other key stakeholders in the delivery of social housing and the implementation of Part V of the Planning and Development Act as part of private residential developments.

### 5.11.1 Policy Objectives

#### SC 15

To support Government policy and targets under 'Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland' or any future policy document, and Local Authority actions that contribute to the delivery of affordable housing and social housing, reduction of homelessness and building of homes on public and private lands.

#### SC 16

To support the delivery of social housing in Dundalk in accordance with Louth County Council's Social Housing Delivery Programme.

#### SC 17

To apply a social and affordable housing requirement in accordance with the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

### 5.12 Homeless Services

There are currently two homeless shelters in Dundalk; the Women's Aid Refuge along Avenue Road and the Simon Community emergency shelter 'The Gatehouse' on Jocelyn Street which provides 10 beds. The 'Community House' is another facility managed by the Simon Community and has 20 bed spaces. These facilities deliver a vital service and provide an important step for people on the path out of homelessness.

This Plan recognises the importance of homeless shelters and will support the provision of same in appropriate locations in the town.

### 5.12.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 18

To facilitate the development of emergency accommodation, including hostels for homeless individuals and families, in appropriate locations in Dundalk.

### 5.13 Housing for Older People

In 2022 13.5% of Dundalk's population (5,821 persons) were over 65. As people are living longer, it is important that there is a suitable choice of accommodation for older persons. The policy statement 'Housing Options for Our Ageing Population' (DHPLG and Dept. of Health, 2020) identifies the need to plan ahead to meet the needs of an ageing population. This Plan recognises the evolving needs of people as they progress through life.



Age Friendly Principles and Guidelines for the Planning Authority

June 2021





All new residential development shall take account of the 'Age Friendly Principles Guidelines for the Planning Authority', (Age Friendly Ireland 2021) and where feasible, be built to 'Lifetime Homes' standard. Furthermore, the Council will support new and innovative approaches to the delivery of a range of housing options including, 'Independent Living', 'Assisted Living' and 'Specialised Living'.

### 5.13.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 19

To support the implementation of the Policy Statement 'Housing Options for Our Ageing Population' and the provision of independent, assisted, specialised living for older persons such as purpose-built accommodation, the adaptation of existing properties, and opportunities for older persons to avail of 'rightsizing' within their community at locations that are proximate to existing services and amenities including pedestrian paths, local shops, parks and public transport.

## 5.14 Specialist Housing

The 'National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027' sets out the Government's vision for delivering housing and related supports for disabled people and emphasises the vision of disabled people having choice and control over their living arrangements. This Plan will support the provision of specialised housing to enable everyone in Dundalk to live safe and independent lives in central and accessible locations.

### 5.14.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 20

To support the provision of independent and/or assisted living accommodation for persons with disabilities including those with an intellectual disability, psychosocial disability or mental health difficulties.

## 5.15 Residential Care, Sheltered Accommodation, Retirement and Nursing Homes

With an increased life expectancy and an ageing population there is increasing demand for the provision of residential care, sheltered accommodation, retirement, and nursing homes.

At the time of writing there were four residential care/ retirement/ nursing homes operating in Dundalk. There is also an extant permission for a nursing home in Blackrock.



New nursing homes and age friendly accommodation will be facilitated on lands which are easily accessible to shops, open spaces, medical centres and other services, amenities and facilities.

This Plan will continue to support proposals for this type of accommodation in appropriate locations in the town.

### 5.15.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 21

To support the provision of residential care homes, sheltered accommodation, and retirement and nursing homes in appropriate locations in the Plan area.



## 5.16 Traveller Accommodation

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires that each Housing Authority adopts a Traveller Accommodation Programme for its functional area. This Plan will support the provision of Traveller Accommodation in Dundalk in accordance with the requirements identified in the Louth County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme. The Council continues to support the provision of housing for the traveller community. Ongoing projects include the provision of two units at Hoey's Lane which are due to be completed in Q1 2025. Two units are also to be provided at Clontygora. This project is anticipated to be complete by Q2 2025.

### 5.16.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 22

To support the implementation of the Louth Traveller Accommodation Programmes as they relate to Dundalk.

## 5.17 Social and Community Infrastructure

Dundalk's continued population and economic growth is dependent not only on its attractive physical environment, but also on the creation of sustainable vibrant neighbourhoods in which to live.

The provision of high quality social and community infrastructure is essential for the health and wellbeing of the population as well as the continued economic success of the town. Social and community infrastructure incorporates a broad range of services and facilities. These are broken down on a category basis in Table 5.3.

These facilities provide a platform for community and social interaction which many people rely on for wellbeing. The provision of the requisite levels of social and community infrastructure in Dundalk and Blackrock is vital to support the needs and quality of life of the existing and future residents as well as those residing in the local catchment area.

Table 5.3: Breakdown of the Typical Social and Community Infrastructure in a Town

Category	Facility Type
<b>Education and Training</b>	Primary Schools, Post-Primary Schools, Third Level Institutions and Training Facilities.
<b>Childcare</b>	Registered Childcare Facilities including Full Day, Part-Time and sessional services
<b>Healthcare Services</b>	Hospitals, medical centres, General Practitioners (GPs), Dental Practices, Physiotherapist Services, Pharmacies and Nursing Homes.
<b>Social / Community facilities</b>	Community centres and meeting halls, Libraries, Senior and Youth Centres/ Cafes and Day Care Facilities, Fire Stations, and Garda stations.
<b>Sports/ Recreation/ Open Space</b>	Parks, Playing Pitches, playgrounds, allotments, MUGAs, sports centres and clubs, leisure centres, gyms and training facilities, swimming pools
<b>Faith</b>	Churches, multi-faith centres and other places of worship.
<b>Arts and Culture</b>	Theatres, museums, galleries, performance and outdoor events spaces, other venues including dance studios, art clubs, and music schools.



## 5.18 Education and Lifelong Learning

Schools and education facilities have an important role in community development. Whilst their primary role is educating and teaching students, schools also enable the integration of students into the community through social interaction and participation in events and activities.



The Department of Education is responsible for the delivery of education facilities and schools. The Council has a role in ensuring that adequate serviceable land is available in appropriate locations, to facilitate the development of primary and post primary schools in Dundalk.

### 5.18.1 Primary and Post Primary Schools

There are currently 19 primary schools and 8 post primary schools in Dundalk. These schools cater for demand, not only within the town but also from the wider hinterland. Details of the location of existing schools are set out on Map 1 in Appendix 5.

There has been significant investment in both the maintenance and expansion of existing school buildings and facilities and the construction of new schools in recent years. The most recent new school is the Gaelcholáiste secondary school that opened in September 2023.

Figures from Census 2022 indicate that 11.3% (3,842 persons) of Dundalk's population aged 15 or over were still at school or college while 9,373 persons (21.7% of the population) were aged between 5 and 19. 6.4% (2,778 persons) were aged between 0-4.

This Plan has included provision for an additional two primary schools and one post-primary school. Lands have also been zoned to the rear of St. Francis Primary School as 'G1 Community Facilities', which could potentially accommodate an extension to the school. The potential locations for the primary and post-primary schools in the Plan area are set out in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Potential Sites for Primary and Post Primary Schools

School category	Location	Site area (ha) <sup>2</sup>
Primary Schools	Mount Avenue	1.3ha
	Haynestown	1.7ha
Post Primary School	Haynestown	8.6ha

Louth County Council will continue to work closely with the Department of Education under the 2012 nationally agreed Memorandum of Understanding relating to the proactive identification and acquisition of school sites.

This partnership approach will seek to ensure co-ordination between the various stakeholders in the delivery of education facilities to ensure that both existing and proposed schools are as accessible as possible and that the requisite walking, cycling, and public transport infrastructure is in place to encourage people to travel to school by sustainable modes of transport.

<sup>2</sup> Where the full extent of the site areas would not be required for a school alternative uses compatible with the land use zoning will be considered on the remainder of the lands.



### 5.18.2 Special Education Needs

The Council will continue to work in partnership with the relevant bodies to provide access to education for those with special educational needs, ranging from enrolment in mainstream schools to enrolment in specialist schools and further education facilities.

### 5.18.3 Lifelong Learning

Census 2022 figures show that 46.4% of Dundalk's population over 15 have a technical /vocational or 3rd level education qualification. This is an indication of the pool of talented and educated workers in the town. Continued access to education and training opportunities is an essential part of creating and maintaining a skilled and educated workforce.

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is a leading higher education institute in the north Leinster and south Ulster region. It is a diverse campus where international students from across the globe choose to study.

The college provides learning and teaching to over 5,000 full time and 1,000 part-time students across four schools at both undergraduate and postgraduate level:

- Health and Science;
- Business and Humanities;
- Engineering and Informatics; and
- Creative Arts.

DkIT is currently pursuing a trajectory to achieve technological university status. This university status would be a significant boost for third-level education provision in Louth and the north-east of the country.

The Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) is responsible for an extensive range of adult services and provide a spectrum of education and training facilities to support and promote lifelong learning.

The LMETB manages the Ó Fiaich Institute of Further Education, the Regional Skills Training Centre, and the Advanced Manufacturing and Training Centre of Excellence which offers various apprenticeships, up-skilling and pre-university courses on both a full and part-time basis.

Permission has recently been granted for an extension to the Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence at the Xerox Technology Park, thereby further supporting continued learning and development in Dundalk.

### 5.18.4 Policy Objectives

#### SC 23

To support the development of new education facilities and the improvement/expansion of existing facilities for all including those with special education needs. Where feasible multi-educational campuses will be encouraged.

#### SC 24

To promote and facilitate collaboration with various stakeholders and agencies in the development and provision of training programmes and apprenticeships, that will meet the needs of the community and employers.

## 5.19 Childcare

Childcare facilities are an important piece of social and economic infrastructure. They help to drive local economies as they facilitate parental participation in the workplace. They also promote education, healthcare, and wellbeing. Childcare facilities should be located in areas where there is a demand, thereby reducing unsustainable traffic movements.



Census 2022 recorded that 2,426 (74.8%) out of a total of 3,241 children aged between 0-14 years were in childcare in Dundalk. 1,053 of these children were aged between 0-4 and 1,373 were aged between 5-14. These figures include paid and unpaid relatives, childminders/au pairs in addition to creche's, Montessori's, and playgroups and are an indication of the high demand for childcare in the town.

Within Dundalk, childcare facilities are well distributed spatially with 31 registered childcare facilities in the town at the time of writing, two of which are managed by community/voluntary organisations. The childcare facilities provided include full day, sessional, part-time, early childhood care and education as well as school age childcare. Figures obtained from Louth Childcare Committee show that in March 2023 there were 1,553 children enrolled in childcare facilities and there were only 85 vacancies.

There is a clear shortfall in the number of childcare spaces for early years. There were no full/part time vacancies in the 0-1 age category and only three part/full time vacancies in the 1-2 age categories. Overall, childcare facilities are currently operating at 95% capacity in Dundalk.

The Louth County Childcare Committee are consulted at either pre-planning or planning application stage, depending on the scale of development, with regard to the current demands on childcare in the area and if the proposed development would assist in meeting the required childcare needs.

Whilst there is a high demand for childcare in Dundalk it is recognised that there may be a scenario where the existing level of childcare provision in a part of the town is adequate to meet the needs of the surrounding population.

Under such a scenario an evidence-based report prepared in consultation with the County Childcare Committee would be required to be prepared and included with a planning application to demonstrate that the childcare needs of the surrounding area are being met and that there is insufficient demand within the wider catchment of the area to warrant any additional childcare facilities.

### 5.19.1 Policy Objectives

#### SC 25

To require the provision of childcare facilities as an integral part of proposals for new residential or mixed-use developments. This requirement shall have regard to the 'Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)' and 'Childcare Regulations (2006)' and shall be in consultation with the Louth Childcare committee.

#### SC 26

To facilitate the provision of childcare facilities in Dundalk in locations that are compatible with surrounding land uses including in buildings/on land in proximity to community or education facilities or in residential areas, subject to complying with the relevant planning criteria.

### 5.20 Health

There are a range of healthcare facilities in Dundalk to meet the needs of the resident population and wider catchment. This includes a hospital, general practitioners, health centres, dentists, physiotherapists, pharmacies, care and other related facilities. These facilities are provided by both the public and private sector.

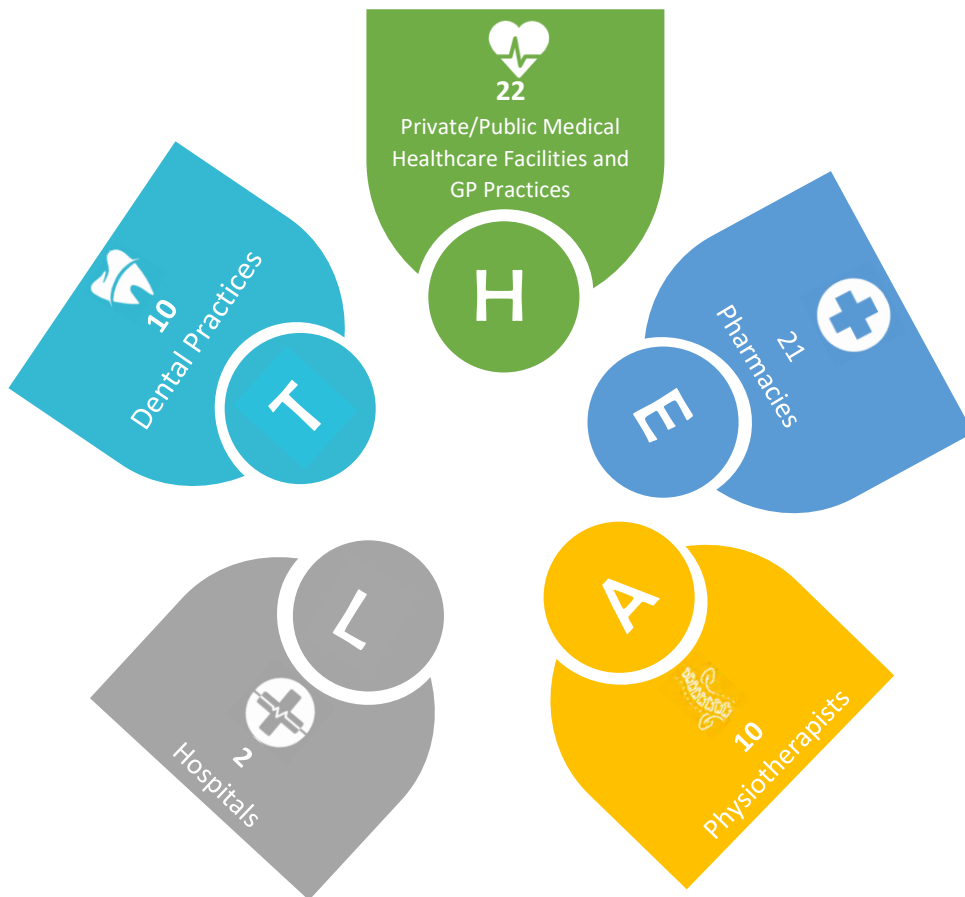
The Louth County Hospital provides acute medical services, whilst St. Oliver Plunkett Hospital offers older persons' services.



At the time of writing, there were 22 private/public medical healthcare facilities and GP practices, 10 dental practices, 10 physiotherapists and 21 pharmacies operating in Dundalk. Whilst it is acknowledged that the provision of health care services is ultimately

the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE) along with other private and voluntary agencies, the Council will continue to support the expansion of existing facilities and provision of additional healthcare facilities in appropriate locations.

Figure 5.4: Healthcare Facilities in Dundalk



### 5.20.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 27

To support provision of healthcare facilities in accessible locations and where feasible, to encourage the integration of healthcare facilities with new and existing community facilities.

### 5.21 Social and Community Facilities/Services

Social and community facilities encourage and provide opportunities for social interaction within a community as well as promoting self-development, social inclusion and public participation. These facilities are an important factor in economic and social wellbeing.



A range of projects, initiatives, activities, and events are currently managed and delivered within the various centres including local training initiatives, physical activities, and literacy and language classes.

Several groups and organisations also operate within the town providing support for the mental and physical wellbeing of the local population. There are also a range of emergency services operating within the town serving Dundalk and the wider hinterland.

The Council will support the development of research projects within Dundalk which ascertain the level of awareness amongst vulnerable members of society as to the available public services and the barriers to accessing those.

Louth County Council will actively encourage the development of adequate and safe social and community facilities and services for existing and new residents, particularly those who are marginalised, at a convenient distance from their homes and places of work. It is recognised that where there is a requirement for additional infrastructure and facilities that this should be provided in tandem with new residential development.

Details of existing facilities are set out in the Social Infrastructure Audit in Appendix 5.

The clustering of social infrastructure (such as community centres, health and neighbourhood centres, and sports facilities) and locating them within or in close proximity to residential areas can create a synergy that would encourage the optimum use of the facilities whilst also reducing the need for local residents to travel.

### 5.21.1 Community Centres

The provision of a range of high quality, fit-for-purpose and easily accessible social infrastructure in existing and developing areas is a key element in the formation of sustainable, healthy communities.

Community centres are important hubs for bringing people together and for building a stronger society. They also offer a space for the management and delivery of a range of projects, initiatives, activities, and events.

There are areas within Dundalk including Cox's Demesne, parts of Muirhevnamor and Ashling Park, which are identified as 'very disadvantaged' in the 2022 [Pobal Map of Deprivation](#). These locations experience higher levels of unemployment and people are more likely to be marginalised due to social and economic disadvantage.

This Plan will continue to support investment and improvements to community facilities in all areas including those that are classified as disadvantaged and will support initiatives which encourage capacity building and access to training and learning.

In recent years the Haynestown area of Dundalk, west of Blackrock and known as Raynoldstown Village has experienced a high level population growth associated with new residential development. In order to support the creation of a sustainable community in this part of the town it is recognised that there will be a requirement for social and community infrastructure to be delivered in tandem with future residential development.

In this regard there is a Spot Objective (Section 3.4.2 of Chapter 3) requiring that permission is granted for a community building prior to the occupation of not more than 1,000 units. This building shall be designed to ensure flexibility as to its future use.

Another key development area is in Mount Avenue, which is west of Dundalk Town Centre. The lands have an area of c.35 hectares and have been zoned for residential development with a Spot Objective on the lands requiring the provision of associated neighbourhood and community facilities.



To ensure the creation of a sustainable neighbourhood, the development of these lands shall be phased in a way that ensures that local services and community infrastructure are provided in tandem with residential development.

### 5.21.2 Policy Objective

#### SC 28

To support and encourage the provision of community and social infrastructure facilities to serve existing and future residents, and to encourage shared/dual use of existing and future facilities.

Dundalk’s open spaces are available in a variety of different forms, functions and sizes providing for both active and passive recreation, connectivity and biodiversity. Whilst there are no allotments in Dundalk at present, their importance in providing an opportunity to connect and meet as well as enabling people to grow their own produce is recognised.

This Plan will support the enhancement of existing open space and recreational facilities and will encourage the development of active and passive open space including within or adjacent to new housing developments. The existing areas of public open space in Dundalk are listed in Table 5.5.

## 5.22 Open Spaces

High quality urban open space is good for the environment, facilitates physical exercise, better mental health and can create a sense of community. It is an important element in enticing people to reside, work and visit the town.

Table 5.5: Dundalk’s Public Open Spaces

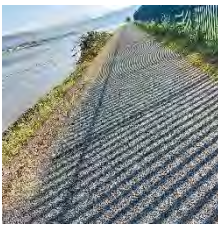
Parks/Walkways			
	Name	Description	Area (ha)
	St. Helena’s Park	Open Space, playground and river bank path	4.2
	Ice House Hill	Grassed area, pathways and lake	7.4
	Farndreg	Grassed area, pathways and skateboard park	4.9
	Muirhevnamor	Grassed area, paths, adult exercise machines, tennis court, pitches and running areas (phase 1 – ground has been levelled)	15
	The Fair Green	Landscaped green area	0.12
	Blackrock Park	Grassed area, tennis courts and play ground	2.3ha




### Play Areas

	Name	Description	Area (ha)
	St. Helena's	Play area	Area included above
	Farndreg	Play area	Area included above
	Muirhevnamor, Cox's Demesne, Blackrock Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)	Multi Use Games Areas	Various
	Play Parks	Various locations associated with housing developments	Various

### Amenity Open Spaces

	Name	Description	Area (ha)
	The Navy Bank	Greenway extends from Mountain View to Soldiers Point along the Castletown River estuary	1.6km
	Castletown River Walkway	Flat grassed area including outdoor exercise equipment.	Not applicable
	Síocháin Peace Garden	Open space to either side of Rope Walk, monuments, and pathways.	0.3
	St. Patrick's Cemetery, Dowdallshill and Castletown Graveyard	Church yards / older cemeteries / graveyards with informal public access.	6.1
	Dundalk Famine Graveyard	Small marker stones and white crosses marking some graves.	0.29
	Areas between St. Nicholas Avenue & Castletown River	Some pathways through green open space.	5.4



Civic Spaces			
	Name	Description	Area (ha)
	Market Square	Pedestrian area with paving, seating and water feature in the heart of town.	0.3
	Area adjacent to St. Nicholas Church and Green Church	Seating area with artwork, soft and hard landscaping.	0.019
	The Demesne	Tree area to the SW of Market Square.	0.27
	Area to the front of Saint Patrick's Church	Steps and hard standing. Railings along the roadside boundary.	0.13

Other External Open Space Areas			
	Club/Organisation		Area (ha)
	Dundalk Stadium	Horse and Dog Racing	4.9
	DKIT walking and running trail	Walking and Running Track	Not applicable
	Dundalk Pitch and Putt Club	Pitch and Putt Club	2.4
	Dundalk Golf Course	Golf Course	5.5
	Blackrock Beach	Beach, promenade & area containing sundial	Not applicable
	Dundalk Cricket grounds	Cricket grounds	0.96

Ideally open spaces in Dundalk should be easily connected through an integrated network of pedestrian and cyclist routes.

Where this is not possible, access to public open spaces could be assisted by way finding and signage, and improved routes to spaces and road crossings.

### 5.22.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 29

To provide a hierarchy of attractive parks and public open spaces, which are readily accessible and vary in size and nature and are at a convenient distance from people's home and/ or places of work.



### 5.23 Sports and Recreation

There are an extensive range of sports and recreation facilities in Dundalk including a swimming pool, Gaelic Games (hurling, Gaelic football, camogie and Ladies football), soccer, athletics/running, pitch and putt, boxing, rowing, chess, tennis and martial arts clubs, all of which cater for a wide range of ages, abilities and interests.

A list of indoor sports grounds is included in Table 5.6 whilst outdoor sports facilities are set out in Table 5.7.



Table 5.6: Dundalk's Indoor Sports Facilities

Name	Description
Aura Leisure Centre	Gym and swimming pool
Dundalk Sports Centre	Used for various activities
Embassy Snooker and Pool Club	Snooker Club
O'Hanlon Park Boxing Club	Boxing Club
Dealgan Boxing Club	Boxing Club
Clann Naofa Boxing Club	Boxing Club
Muirhevnamor Boxing Club	Boxing Club
Gyms and Fitness Classes	Various privately owned gyms and fitness classes throughout the town.
Marital Arts	Various clubs

Table 5.7: Dundalk's Outdoor Sports Facilities

Football Grounds		
	Club Name	Area (ha)
	Glenmuir United Football Club & Dundalk Young Irelands	Playing fields 1.7
	Bay Football Club	Playing fields 2
	Quay Celtic	Playing fields 1.5
	Oriel Park	Playing fields 2.4
	Shamrock FC	Playing fields 0.93
	St Dominic's F.C	Playing fields 1.6
	Muirhevnamor Football	Playing fields Already incl. within park
	Rampart Celtic FC	Playing fields 1.7
	Castletown Bells FC	Playing fields (check if same as Fatima) 1.6
	Rock Celtic FC	Sandy Lane Blackrock 1



Gaelic Grounds			
	Club Name		Area (ha)
	Dundalk Gaels GFC	Playing Fields	2.6
	Clan na Gael GAA Club	Playing Fields	2.7
	Dundalk Young Irelands GAA Club	Playing fields	2.7
	Dowdallshill GAA Club	Playing fields	2.4
	Na Piarsaigh Blackrock (GAA Club)	Playing Fields	2.6
	Naomh Moninne	Playing Fields	2.5
	Sean O'Mahony's GFC	Playing Fields	1.9
	Geraldines GAA Club	Playing Fields	4
Rugby Grounds			
	Club Name		Area (ha)
	Dundalk Rugby Club	Playing fields	1.8
Other			
	Name		Area (ha)
	Dundalk Stadium	Horse and greyhound racing	2.9

### 5.23.1 Policy Objectives

#### SC 30

To ensure that existing sports facilities and grounds within Dundalk are protected, retained, and enhanced.

#### SC 31

To encourage shared usage of existing sports halls and facilities.

Planning permission has been granted for a new stadium and facilities for the County Louth GAA teams along the Inner Relief Road of Dundalk.

There is Part 8 approval for the provision of playing pitches on the former landfill site north of the Castletown River. At the time of writing the site continued to be subject to monitoring by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Whilst the opportunities for this site as a recreational amenity are recognised such proposals can only be advanced when the Council and other stakeholders, including the EPA, are satisfied that the required remediation works have been carried out and the health and safety issues have been addressed.

### 5.23.2 Future Provision of Sports and Recreation Facilities

This Plan will support improvements to existing and investment in new sports and recreational facilities in the town. This will assist in creating healthy and sustainable communities whilst also promoting community development and cohesion.



An EPA Research Paper ‘Beneficial Use of Old Landfills as a Parkland Amenity’ (2017) sets out the various issues and challenges in converting a former landfill to a parkland amenity and would be an important reference point in the progression of any project or works at the former landfill in Dundalk.

Upgrades to a number of other sport and recreation facilities are also proposed. These are set out in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Dundalk Sport Facilities – Planned/Potential Upgrades or Improvements:

Dundalk’s Sport Facilities – Planned / Potential upgrades or improvements:		
1.	Louth GAA Stadium	Planning permission granted for a new stadium with a capacity for c.14,000 people at the Inner Relief Road.
2.	Running track at Muirhevnemor Park	Phase 1 site development works have taken place - site has been levelled. Partial funding available for Phase 2 – laying of track.
3.	Upgrade to the swimming pool facility at Dundalk Leisure Centre	Works include the provision of a ‘changing places’ wet changing room and improvements to the energy efficiency of the building.
4.	Tennis courts at Dundalk Sports Centre	Re-surfacing of various courts and provision of an additional spectator area.
5.	Soccer and Gaelic pitches	Support the relevant organisations to assist with the development of Soccer and Gaelic pitches.

### 5.23.3 Future Provision of Public and Private Open Space

Provision of public and private open space serving new residential development within Dundalk shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the County Development Plan. In all instances provision of new areas and upgrades to existing open space shall be easily accessible, well designed, and multi-functional, promote equality and be safe for all users.

The Council will endeavour to ensure that Dundalk’s existing and future residents have access to a variety of open spaces close to their homes that are accessible to all and that cater for their passive and active recreational needs.

It is anticipated that the enhancement of Dundalk’s Green Infrastructure will also benefit those working and visiting Dundalk, additionally it will boost biodiversity and facilitate Dundalk’s transition to a low carbon society.

A number of emerging opportunities to improve and enhance open space provision are listed in Table 5.9.



Table 5.9: Dundalk Open Spaces – Planned/Potential Upgrades or Improvements:

Dundalk Open Spaces – Planned/Potential Upgrades or Improvements		
1.	Louth Coastal Way Dundalk to Blackrock Greenway	This will provide a traffic free movement corridor enabling the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, as well as providing a local and regional tourism asset. Consideration will be given to the development of the Louth Coastal Greenway in conjunction with the Dundalk-Blackrock flood alleviation scheme.
2.	Castletown Motte	To provide a multi-functional heritage park as part of the development of the residential lands in the Mount Avenue Masterplan area, which allows for the creation of open space whilst retaining the sites intrinsic cultural heritage value.
3.	Former landfill Site	Potential for public open space incorporating walkways, pitches, enhancement of biodiversity and connections to greenway.
4.	Dundalk Famine Graveyard	To improve pedestrian connectivity with existing informal walking routes that adjoin the site and investigate the possibility of integrating heritage features as part of any future works.
5.	Balmer's Bog	There is the potential to preserve and increase the biodiversity value of this unique urban wetland.
6.	Area between Red Barns Road and Coast	Potential to create a large urban park whilst preserving the ecological value and character of the lands and providing appropriate recreational and amenity facilities.
7.	Mount Avenue Key Development Area	Provision of Heritage Park at Castletown Motte, play pitches and open space dispersed throughout the area.
8.	Mullagharlin Employment Generating Area	Open Space intertwined through the public and private domain
9.	Riverside Walk	Development of Riverside Walk to the west of the town with potential links to Castletown Cemetery and Motte / open space at Toberona. Riverside walk to the east of the town linking to the Navy Bank and Soldiers Point.
10.	Provision of pitches and the development of a public park at Toberona	Provide outdoor multi purposes pitches and a create an urban parkland.
11.	Navy Bank/ Point Road Park scheme	Development of an area of public open space.



#### 5.23.4 Policy Objectives

##### SC 32

Louth County Council will continue to work alongside government departments, the Health Service Executive, state agencies, education bodies and sports clubs to support and facilitate the provision, improvement and expansion of sports and recreational facilities.

##### SC 33

To protect and enhance existing public open space and to support the provision of additional public open space thereby meeting the passive and active recreational needs of all sections of the community whilst also improving the biodiversity potential of the town.

##### SC 34

To provide public and private open space in accordance with the provisions for new residential developments in accordance with Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHLGH, 2024).

##### SC 35

To engage and work closely with the Environmental Protection Agency and other stakeholders in determining the feasibility of utilising the former landfill at Dundalk as a recreational amenity and to support any remediation works required to enable the former landfill to be utilised as a recreational amenity.

### 5.24 Dundalk Library Service

Louth County Council is the authority responsible for delivery of the library service in Dundalk. The 'Louth Library Services Development Plan 2020-2025' outlines the strategies for strengthening and widening of the library service throughout Louth, including Dundalk.

Dundalk's library is centrally located at Roden Place and provides an important and essential service to the community. The library works closely with various groups and schools, offering a wide range of services and events to cater for various ages and needs.

Those utilising the library can benefit from free Wi-Fi access and have the opportunity to avail of 'hot desks'.

The mobile library service also visits those who are housebound and those in less advantaged areas, thereby attempting to address inequality.

Dundalk was selected as one of seven global pilot cities for the Varcities Project and is the only one in Ireland. The vision of the Varcities Project is to implement visionary ideas to improve the health and well-being of citizens. The Varcities Project for Dundalk is located in the open space area of Dundalk Library/Museum Quarter and provides an outdoor learning hub comprising of an outdoor learning pod, sensory garden with enhanced seating and public lighting and, the installation of new bike stations. The project was officially unveiled in June 2024.



### 5.24.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 36

To support, expand and promote library services in Dundalk and to encourage an integrated approach to the delivery of library, arts and other related services.

## 5.25 Emergency Services

Dundalk's Fire Station is located along the Ramparts Lane and operates on a full-time basis. Dundalk Garda station is located at The Crescent.

There is an ambulance station adjacent to the Louth Hospital. This Plan will continue to support the development, improvement, and maintenance of facilities and buildings necessary to support the provision of emergency services in Dundalk and the wider area.

### Dundalk Fire Station



### 5.25.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 37

To support the provision of efficient and effective emergency services in Dundalk and any buildings and/or infrastructure required to provide these services.

## 5.26 Places of Worship and Burial Grounds

A total of twenty-three places of worship and four funeral homes were identified in Dundalk. There is a concentration of older churches and associated buildings in the town centre area.

This Plan recognises the importance of places of worship in providing religious services and also functioning as a focal point and meeting place for the population.

The Council also acknowledges the valuable contribution that places of worship and multi-faith centres have in a community context and in meeting the diverse religious and cultural needs of Dundalk's citizens.

Planning permission has been granted for a crematorium at Dowdallshill. This Plan will support the expansion of existing or new burial grounds in appropriate locations in Dundalk where a demand has been identified. The development of appropriately sized and suitably designed columbarium walls will be considered.

Planning applications submitted for places of worship, crematoriums, graveyards, columbarium walls, and funeral homes will be assessed on their own merits in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development, regard should be had to the following issues :

- Suitability of the subject site;
- Design of the proposal;
- Traffic issues including sightline and public transport connections;
- Impact on residential amenity;
- Landscaping arrangements and boundary treatments and minimum space requirements (crematorium only);
- Water, wastewater and drainage arrangements;
- Appropriate assessment and potential Impact on European sites.



Change of use and conversion of churches shall be in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Plan and the County Development Plan.

### 5.26.1 Policy Objectives

#### SC 38

To support the development of places of worship/places of assembly and multi-faith facilities at appropriate locations in close proximity to residential communities subject to compliance with relevant planning and environmental criteria.

#### SC 39

To support the development of new or extended burial grounds, including natural burial grounds, and crematoria at suitable locations in Dundalk, subject to appropriate safeguards with regard to environmental, noise and traffic impacts, and residential amenities.

## 5.27 Arts

Dundalk has a vibrant cultural heritage with an arts centre, gallery, theatre, library, and various music venues, all of which contribute to a thriving arts and cultural scene. In addition, various festivals and events take place through the year including Frostival, Christmas Markets and Pride.

Arts and culture are essential for building community, supporting development, and nurturing health and wellbeing.

This Plan supports the progression of a strategic plan for the development of opportunities in the arts, culture and sports, specifically those aimed at and involving young people.

### 5.27.1 Policy Objective

#### SC 40

To support and facilitate the provision, development and sustainability of accessible arts and cultural infrastructure at appropriate locations in Dundalk.



# CHAPTER 6

## ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT





## 6. ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

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### 6.1 Introduction

Dundalk has a strong tradition for being an important centre of employment. This dates back to the linen industry in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the engineering and manufacturing sectors in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Examples of such employers include the Linen Halls and the weaving/manufacturing of Cambric linen, the Railway Works, where construction of locomotives, goods and services stock, carriages, rail buses, and road vehicles took place. Shoe making, brewing and the manufacture of tobacco products were also important employers during this period. Whilst these traditional industries have declined, their legacy is an important part of the economic development and industrial heritage of the town.

Today Dundalk continues to be one of the principal locations for employment in Louth. There were 14,178 jobs recorded in the town in Census 2016. This equated to 40% of the total jobs (35,451) in the County<sup>1</sup>. The potential for Dundalk to continue to attract new investment and broaden its employment base is recognised in its designation as a Regional Growth Centre in the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region.

This Plan will seek to maximise Dundalk's competitive advantage which includes its strategic location along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, its excellent connectivity via the M1 Motorway and Dublin-Belfast rail line in addition to the international connections via Dundalk and Greenore Ports.

DkIT, a leading higher education institute, is an important asset to the town as it provides opportunities for collaboration with businesses whilst also providing access to a skilled and educated workforce.

To assist Dundalk in maximising its potential this chapter will set out an economic strategy for the town. This strategy will identify its strengths and the opportunities to attract future economic investment and employment generating development. Details of how this Plan will support existing businesses and enterprises will also be provided.

The key outputs of this chapter are as follows:

- Provide an economic profile and vision for Dundalk;
- Set out a target for job creation during the life of the Plan;
- Identify key locations for economic investment and employment related development; and
- Include recommendations that will enable Dundalk to realise its economic potential.

### 6.2 Key Economic Assets

Dundalk's key economic assets can be summarised as follows:

#### 6.2.1 Strategic Location

Dundalk is strategically positioned equidistant between the two cities of Dublin and Belfast. The town benefits from ease of access to the M1 with journey times of approximately 1 hour to both Dublin and Belfast. The M1 also provides for convenient access to Dublin Airport (45 minutes), Belfast International Airport (75 minutes) and George Best Belfast City Airport (65 minutes).

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<sup>1</sup> POWSCAR Data for Census 2022 unavailable at the time of writing.



The existing road infrastructure also provides good connectivity to other towns within the northeast region including Ardee (approximately 20-minute drive via the N52), Carrickmacross, and Castleblayney (approximately 25-minute drive via the R178 and N53 respectively). Dundalk also benefits from its location along the Dublin-Belfast railway line. The intercity 'Enterprise' service between Dublin and Belfast provides 55-minute journey times between Dundalk and Dublin Connolly and 75-minute journey times to Belfast. Peak time commuter services also provide for 70-minute journey times between Dundalk and Dublin Connolly.

The port facilities at Greenore and Dundalk provide the town with access to international markets. These ports have an important supporting role in the national and regional economy through the international connections they provide for the import and export of goods and materials.

### 6.2.2 Infrastructure

Dundalk is well provided for with regard to critical infrastructure. This includes electricity, gas, water services, transport, and telecommunications. A fibre optic cable ring and associated telecoms ducting was provided in Dundalk under the Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) programme, providing the town with access to high-speed broadband.

Whilst there is available capacity in the water supply and wastewater treatment plants in Dundalk there are network constraints that will be required to be addressed in order to facilitate new development in certain parts of the town and depending on the nature and scale of development proposed. The Council will continue to work closely with Uisce Éireann in the progression and delivery of these projects.

In partnership with the Office of Public Works, the Council are advancing a Flood Relief Scheme for Dundalk and Blackrock.

### 6.2.3 Dundalk Port

Dundalk Port is one of three commercial ports in the County (along with Drogheda and Greenore) and is identified as being of Regional Significance within the National Ports Policy 2018<sup>2</sup>. The Port is an important economic asset to the town as a working port for general cargo providing a range of services including cargo handling, pilotage and customs. The extent of commercial activity at the port has decreased in recent years with the total tonnage of goods handled at Dundalk Port for 2022 being 63,000<sup>3</sup>, down from 86,000 tonne in 2021.

The primary materials being processed at the Port include timber and grain (imported) and scrap metal (exported).

While this Plan supports the current use of the Port facility and operations and would seek to support any future upgrades or expansion of these facilities; if the current port-related activities on the site were to cease or relocate there is an opportunity for these lands to be redeveloped and accordingly, these lands are identified as a Key Development Area within Chapter 3 of this Plan.

The Port will be transferring to Council ownership in the near future.

### 6.2.4 Third Level Presence

Coupled with having a young population, Dundalk is boosted by the presence of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), a third-level institution located on a 35-hectare campus located south of the town centre. DkIT is regarded as the leading higher education provider in the North Leinster-South Ulster region. The existing campus benefits from excellent facilities, with capital investment projects being progressed on an ongoing basis.

<sup>2</sup> Section 2.7 and Table 2.8 of the National Ports Policy 2013 (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)

<sup>3</sup> Statistics of Port Traffic, CSO



The campus also includes a dedicated sports facility.

DkIT is an important economic driver for the northeast region and has a significant proportion of students coming from counties Meath (17.5%), Monaghan (13%) and Cavan (6%); and North Dublin (11.5%)<sup>4</sup>.

The institute has approximately 5,400 students and employs 540 staff. A range of programmes from Level 6 (Higher Certificate) to Level 10 (Doctorate) are provided for across the School of Health and Science, Informatics and Creative Arts, Business and Humanities and Engineering.

DkIT is also seeking to achieve Technological University (TU) status and to date has made significant progress towards attainment of the required TU metrics.

### 6.2.5 Industrial Heritage

Dundalk has a rich industrial heritage that dates back to the linen industry in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries breweries, distilleries, railway engineering works, electronics, shoe making, and tobacco were major employment sectors in the town. These industries contributed to the creation of a thriving commercial centre in the town. Whilst the decline of manufacturing in Ireland resulted in the closure of these industries they remain an important part of the industrial heritage of the town, with some of the former factories and buildings still in-situ in various parts of the town today.

### 6.2.6 Existing Business Parks and Industrial Estates

Dundalk is well served by business parks and industrial estates for both indigenous enterprises and foreign direct investment companies.

The indigenous companies are primarily located in the more established industrial estates closer to the town centre on the Coe's Road and the Ardee Road. In addition to these there is also a new business park 'Dundalk North Business Park' currently under construction on the Armagh Road. In the southern part of Dundalk there is an established business and industrial area where the FDI companies are primarily located. DkIT and the IDA Business and Technology Parks are situated in this part of the town.

### 6.2.7 Availability of Lands for Employment Generating Uses

There are substantial tracts of undeveloped lands zoned for employment and business and technology uses to the north, south, and west of the town centre. These lands are suitable for a range of employment related uses. Further details on these lands are set out in Section 6.6.1.

### 6.2.8 Role of the Local Area Plan in Economic Development

Whilst the Local Area Plan cannot directly create employment, it has a critical role to play in facilitating development and supporting economic growth within Dundalk. This Plan seeks to deliver a framework for development where the projected population growth is accompanied by targeted investment to improve local services and employment opportunities. This will enable Dundalk to strengthen its role as a Regional Growth Centre.

An important consideration for businesses choosing a location in which to invest is the liveability of the settlement for employees. In recognition of this, placemaking and the creation of attractive, safe and permeable neighbourhoods are cross-cutting themes of this Plan.

<sup>4</sup> [DkIT: Our Vision to Become a Campus of a Multi-Campus Regional Technological University \(April 2021\)](#)



This will ensure that Dundalk is an attractive location for residents and workers to live, work, relax, and socialise.

There are various agencies and interest groups that have a role in supporting businesses and attracting economic investment to Dundalk.

These include:

- IDA Ireland;
- Enterprise Ireland;
- Dundalk BIDS;
- Dundalk Chamber;
- Local Enterprise Office (LEO); and the
- Louth Economic Forum.

Whilst each of these agencies/organisations has a specific role, they all share the common goal of ensuring Dundalk continues to develop as a regional driver for economic growth. This Plan promotes the continued collaboration between the various agencies, stakeholders, and interest groups in delivering a common message that will promote Dundalk as a centre for economic growth and investment.

### 6.2.9 Enterprise FabLab

The Enterprise FabLab at Creative Spark provides a 200m<sup>2</sup> facility fully equipped with digital fabrication machinery and power tools. This space allows learners, business and industry to prototype and develop products, allowing for innovation and competitive advantage in the global market. The facility is available on a membership basis or ‘pay as you go’, allowing flexibility for users. FabLab also delivers training and qualifications both on site and through e-learning to a range of stakeholders. The facility is located in close proximity to the existing Finnabair Industrial Park and has good connectivity to the Dublin-Belfast motorway.



### 6.2.10 Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence (AMTCE)

AMTCE is Ireland's leading Advanced Manufacturing Training Specialist, providing training on state-of-the-art equipment and processes to businesses within Ireland. Facilities include robotic education cells, cobot cells, CAD stations, and robotic welding cells. These facilities allow companies to pilot line training facilities, prototype capabilities for new products, and provide learners with access to real business projects. In-house instructors can deliver classroom-based training, virtual workshops, or a combination of both. AMTCE is located within the existing XEROX Business Park, with good connectivity to the Dublin-Belfast motorway.

## 6.3 Planning Policy Context

Dundalk's population in combination with its service provision, employment base and location along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor places it at the centre of planning and economic policy at a national and regional level. National Strategic Outcome 5 (NSO 5) in the NPF seeks to deliver a strong economy supported by enterprise, innovation, and skills. The NPF supports the need for a co-ordinated strategy for Dundalk at both regional and town level to ensure that it has the capacity to grow sustainably and secure investment as a key centre on the Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross-border network. It also highlights the importance of Dundalk for wider regional development.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region identifies Dundalk as a Regional Growth Centre and targets significant growth in the town to enable it to function as a regional driver, with a focus on improving the local economy and quality of life to attract investment.



Opportunities for improving cross-border links with Newry and further developing the Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross border network are identified.

The Louth Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029 (LECP) sets out goals and strategies for the County, many of which are specific to developing and fostering economic growth within Dundalk. The LECP is closely aligned with local, national, and regional planning policy.

The Louth County Development Plan provides a strategic overview of the local economy in Dundalk and includes specific policy objectives aimed at enhancing and generating economic growth within the town.

#### 6.4 Economic Context

Notwithstanding the challenges and uncertainty facing the global economy, Ireland's economy is performing strongly in 2024 and continues to be one of the fastest growing economies in Europe. Ireland's reliance on the international technology sector does represent a risk to growth; however, at present the tech sector in Ireland continues to be resilient. Unemployment remains low with certain sectors continuing to experience labour shortages. The budget surplus in recent years has enabled the Government to implement a series of measures to reduce the impact of the higher cost in living and associated reduction in disposable income available.

The UK's departure from the EU at the beginning of 2021 has resulted in a change to the market environment in which businesses operate.

This departure occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic which had impacts on supply chains, global trade, and energy costs. The combination of these two events has had an impact on businesses and their operations, with the new market rules as a result of Brexit resulting in a disruption to supply chains and changes to logistical operations.

The longer-term impacts of Brexit remain unclear however businesses continue to demonstrate resilience and are continuing to plan for growth notwithstanding the challenging trading conditions.

Dundalk's location on the border provides the town with challenges and opportunities. The challenges relate to the uncertainty and increased costs of doing business with the UK as a result of Brexit. The opportunities are for Dundalk to maximise its border location by promoting its connectivity and accessibility to both the EU and UK markets. This Plan will seek to support and facilitate businesses in Dundalk to adjust to the new trading environment as a result of Brexit and to improve cross border trade. It will also seek to support businesses to take advantage of the strategic location of the town and to facilitate growth through innovation, improve productivity through the use of new technologies and support and enable businesses to adapt to the low carbon economy.

#### 6.5 Economic Profile

Dundalk is the county town of County Louth and Ireland's second largest town behind Drogheda. The town is designated as a Regional Growth Centre in the National Planning Framework and had a population of 43,112 in 2022. Between 2016-2022 the population of the town increased by 4,108 persons (10.5%). Dundalk is ideally positioned along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, equidistant between Dublin and Belfast. The rail and motorway networks place Dundalk less than 1 hour from Dublin and approximately one hour from Belfast. This provides excellent access to three international airports, namely Dublin Airport, Belfast International Airport and George Best Belfast City Airport.

An analysis of Dundalk's demographics from Census 2022 indicates that the town has a younger population in comparison to the national average. 28% of the population is less than 20 compared to a national average of 26%.



Similarly, the population aged between 20 and 34 is higher in Dundalk (27%) versus the national average (25%). 13% of the population in Dundalk is over the age of 65 in comparison to 15% of the state’s population.

Figure 6.1: Age profile of Dundalk and State 2022

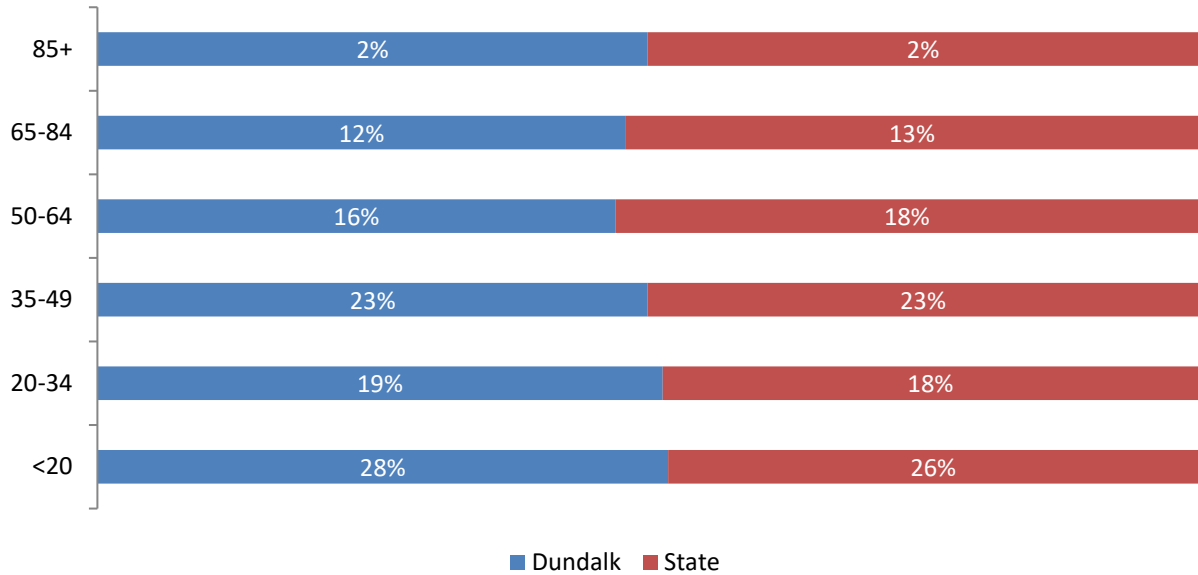
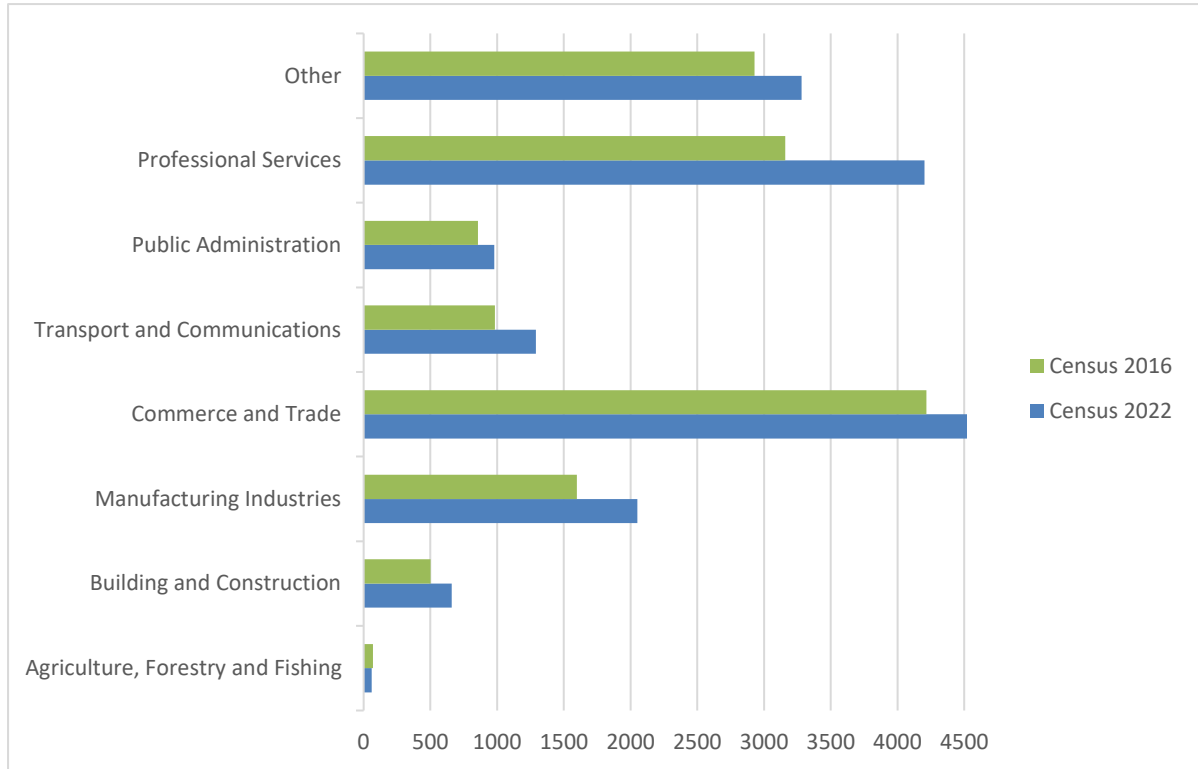


Figure 6.2: Industrial Sectors Dundalk Residents Employed in 2016 and 2022





Data from Census 2022 indicated that there were 17,314 persons in Dundalk at work. This is an increase of 21% (3,002 persons) on the 2016 figure of 14,312. The most prominent employment sectors that workers residing in Dundalk are employed include Commerce and Trade (27.7%), Professional Services (24.2%), and Manufacturing (11.9%).

At the time of writing the POWSCAR Data from Census 2022 was unavailable therefore, a figure of the total jobs in Dundalk for 2022 cannot be provided. Based on recent job announcements in Dundalk and the general performance of the town's economy, Dundalk continues to be the primary centre for employment in the County.

### 6.5.1 Existing Employment Areas

Dundalk is an employment hub of regional importance and has a well-established base of both indigenous and multinational companies.

Whilst the type of employment has transitioned over time, Dundalk has continually maintained a strong employment base. With the assistance of the IDA, in recent years Dundalk has been able to establish a track record of attracting multi-sector global investment.

This has been aided by the construction of modern business parks in an attractive setting where there is an availability of land with the capacity to accommodate business and manufacturing operations of scale. The large scale/multinational companies in the town are primarily concentrated in the IDA Business and Technology Park, Xerox Technology Park and Finnabair Business Park.

Biopharmaceutical and pharmaceutical companies such as Wuxi Biologics and Wasdell have established their European Headquarters in these locations along with IT Software companies such as Kaseya, electrical and engineering companies such as ABB Group and Anord Mardix and service-based companies such as Pens.com.

This has collectively provided a significant boost to the employment base in the town and built on the heritage of employment generating uses.

The Coe's Road Industrial Estate and Brewery Business Park on the Ardee Road are traditional employment areas in Dundalk and consist of a range of local/indigenous business operations including engineering, manufacturing, technology, maintenance, servicing, and wholesale suppliers.

These businesses range in size from small scale enterprises that serve the local market to large scale operations that export their products to international markets.

Professional services and retailing are concentrated in the town centre area. Dundalk's Retail Core stretches from the northern end of Clanbrassil Street to the Marshes Shopping Centre. The principal shopping streets include Clanbrassil Street, Earl Street, Park Street and Market Square, which primarily consists of independent retailers. High street chain stores are concentrated in the Marshes Shopping Centre. Outside of the retail core various professional services such as accountants, solicitors, and financial services are available.

### 6.5.2 Mullagharlin Masterplan

In recognition of the strategic importance of the Mullagharlin area in the future economic growth and development of Dundalk, a Masterplan has been prepared for the area. This Masterplan is set out in Appendix 4 of the Plan.

### 6.5.3 Remote Working

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the trend of remote working, with many companies forced to adjust their working models. Desk based jobs in sectors such as information technology, marketing, accounting and finance present the most opportunities for working remotely.



In other sectors such as manufacturing, construction, health, education and retail, the opportunities to work remotely are much more limited.

It is projected that the increase in people working remotely will result in an increase in the number of people working in co-working or remote working hubs.

Existing co-working facilities in Dundalk include the Creative Spark at Muirhevnamor and the Creative Spark Downtown Hub on Clanbrassil Street, both of which provide a modern and professional work environment.



This Plan supports the development of co-working facilities that meet the needs of start-up enterprises and established businesses. Support is also given for home based economic activity, subject to the scale and nature of the use/operation being appropriate for the location and not being detrimental to the amenities of the area.

## 6.6 Economic Development Strategy

The Economic Strategy for Dundalk seeks to continue to broaden and strengthen the economic base of the town by creating an environment where businesses and innovation can thrive. This can be best achieved by collaboration between businesses, the local authority, and government agencies.

A collaborative and co-ordinated approach will achieve the highest level of 'buy in' from all the stakeholders and demonstrate to investors that there is a clear direction for the future growth and development of the town.

An integral element of this Strategy is the provision of a policy framework that will provide a platform for job creation in Dundalk.

Whilst it is acknowledged that this Strategy cannot create jobs on its own it provides an opportunity to set out the economic ambitions for the town and how Dundalk will strengthen its position as one of the principal locations for employment in the north-east of the country. It is an aim of this Strategy to retain the Job:Workforce ratio in Dundalk at 0.99 during the life of the Plan with the percentage of resident workers to the total population being retained at the 2016 rate (36.3%).

To achieve this, an additional 3,506 jobs would have to be created up to 2030. This would require a high level of collaboration between key stakeholders including the Council, government agencies, and businesses.

Table 6.1: Job: Workforce Ratio Target for Dundalk in 2030

	2016	2030	Change
<b>Population</b>	39,004	49,166	10,162
<b>Resident Workers</b>	14,178	17,847	3,669
<b>No. of jobs in Dundalk</b>	14,163	17,669	3,506
<b>Job:Workforce Ratio</b>	0.99	0.99	No change

This Strategy will support the creation of employment across all industrial and employment types.

It is recognised that there are opportunities to build on the economic clusters currently present in the town by attracting new investment based on the opportunities for collaboration and the skills base available in the town.



This includes the following sectors:

- Engineering;
- Pharmaceuticals;
- Manufacturing and Technology;
- Medical Devices;
- Professional and Business Services; and
- Logistics.

There is also the potential to identify new opportunities from emerging sectors such as the green economy, energy solutions, and innovation and technology.

When choosing a location in which to invest it is recognised that there are a range of variables that businesses must consider.

There is a high level of competition between towns and regions in attracting investment. The progression and implementation of the following actions will assist in continuing the upward trajectory of economic growth of Dundalk and enable the town to realise its economic potential:

- For Dundalk to continue to develop at a scale reflective of its designation as a Regional Growth Centre in national and regional policy.
- Ensure that the necessary infrastructure is provided to enable Dundalk to attract major economic development. This includes water, wastewater, transport, energy, and telecommunications infrastructure. The Council will continue to work closely with the various infrastructure agencies in identifying the investment required and progressing and delivering these projects.
- To continue to facilitate the delivery of housing and ensure there is an adequate supply of housing to assist in attracting and retaining workers to live in Dundalk.

- Support investment in the road and rail infrastructure to ensure Dundalk continues to have a level of connectivity with the key settlements along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.
- To support investment in Port facilities at Dundalk, Greenore, and Drogheda.
- To monitor the quantum of land available for employment related development on a regular basis in order to ensure there is sufficient land available for employment related uses.
- To support investment by international and indigenous companies in Dundalk that will facilitate job creation and strengthen the economic profile of the town.
- Support regeneration and public realm projects in Dundalk that will make the town a distinctive and attractive location for doing business.
- Consolidate the existing core retail area and implement a Town Centre First approach that delivers a sustainable mix of retail, professional services, residential, and hospitality offerings.

#### 6.6.1 Key Locations for Economic Investment and Employment Generating Uses

The following locations have been identified as key areas in Dundalk for economic related development. Each of these areas are zoned with a view to facilitating a range of economic and/or employment related development.



Figure 6.3: Key Locations for Economic Investment and Employment Generating Uses





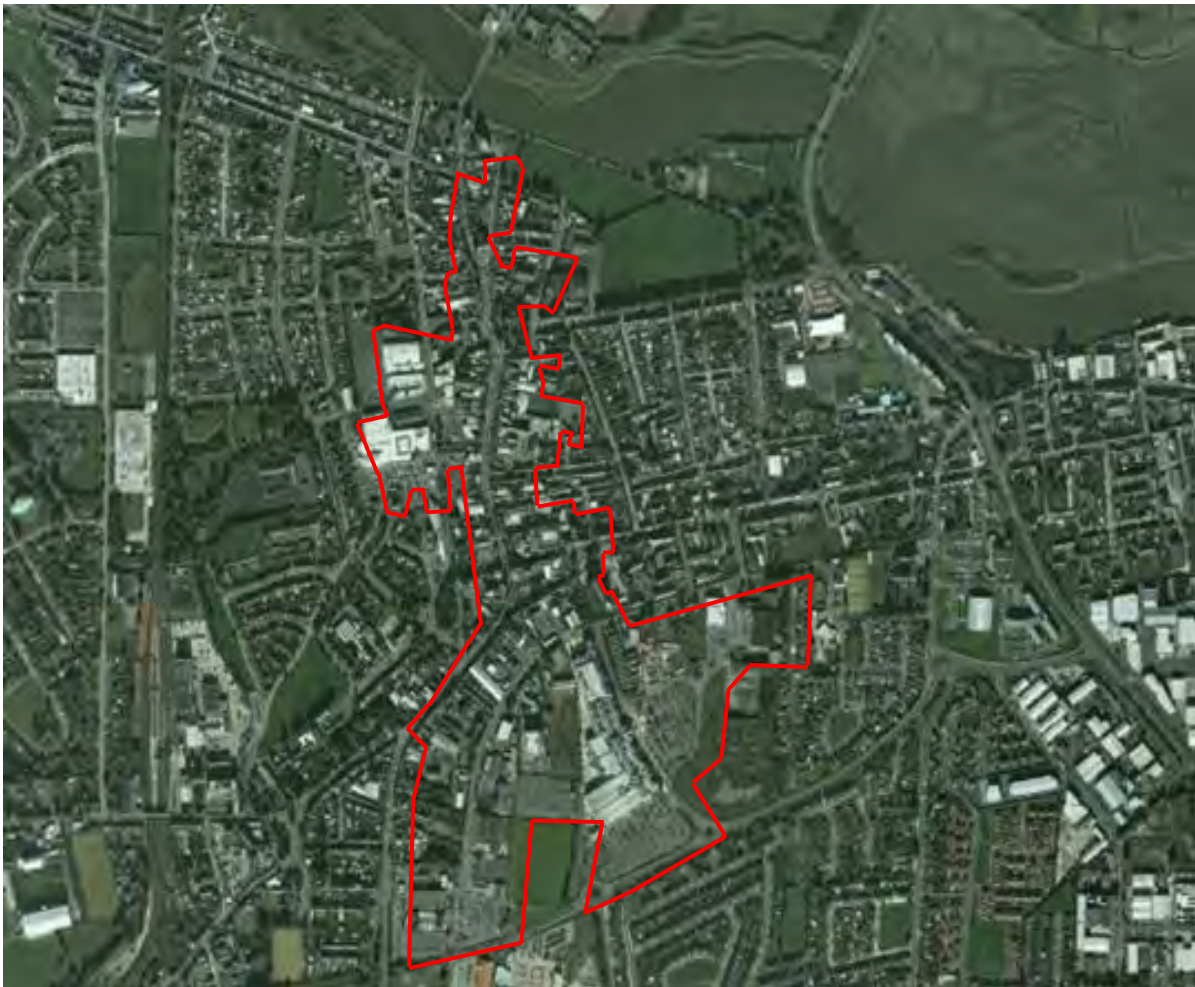
## 1. Town Centre

### Land Use Zoning:

B1 Town Centre/ D1 Regeneration

### Approximate Area:

c.55ha



Whilst the town centre is the focal point for retailing and local services it is also an important location for social and community engagement. The recent public realm investments in Market Square and Clanbrassil Street have injected a renewed vibrancy in the town centre. The town centre in Dundalk includes lands zoned for Town Centre and Regeneration uses. Further information is available in Chapter 7 Retail and Tourism.

**Future Uses:** Dundalk Town Centre has the potential to provide for a range of uses including retail, professional services, residential, and tourism/hospitality. The Long Walk Regeneration Area has the potential to accommodate retail, professional/medical services, and residential uses. This Plan has also identified Park Street-Francis Street-St. Patrick's Church as a Key Development Area and recognises the potential a public realm scheme could make to the daytime and night-time economy in this part of the town.

**Infrastructure:** There are opportunities for improvements in pedestrian connectivity between the Long Walk, Ice House Hill Park, and the town centre as part of the regeneration of the Long Walk area of the town. Connections to the water and wastewater network are available.



## 2. Dundalk North Business Park, Armagh Road

### Land Use Zoning:

E1 General Employment

Approximate Area: c.53.6ha

Undeveloped Area: c.41ha



The Dundalk North Business Park located off Armagh Road consists of 53.6ha of lands zoned for general employment uses. There is an extant permission on the site for the construction of a Business Park consisting of 14 warehouse/logistics/light industrial units with a combined floorspace of c.68,000m<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the construction of a warehouse with a floorspace of c.38,000m<sup>2</sup> is ongoing.

**Future Uses:** The lands are zoned 'General Employment'. The current permission on the site allows the buildings to be used for light industrial, logistics, or warehousing.

**Infrastructure:** The entrance to the site has been constructed and all site infrastructure and services including water, sewerage, storm drainage, telecoms, roads, footpaths, cycleways, street lighting and landscaping are in place.



### 3. Lands at the Ballymascanlon Roundabout

**Land Use Zoning:**

E1 General Employment

**Approximate Area:** c.52ha**Undeveloped Area:** c.48.2ha

These lands consist of 52ha of land to the west of the Newry Road and south of the M1 Motorway. There is an extant permission for the roads and drainage infrastructure on the lands. This enabling infrastructure could be utilised by future occupants of a business park in this location. No development has commenced on this enabling infrastructure. There is however 1no. building on the lands currently occupied by Exitex, which is a company that develops and distributes weather proofing products for doors, windows, conservatories, and joinery applications.

**Future Uses:** The lands are zoned 'General Employment' and could accommodate a range of employment/economic development related uses.

**Infrastructure:** Internal access roads are required along with pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. Foul sewerage and watermains are required to be laid in the area to serve any development. Part of the future link road from the Armagh Road to the Ballymac roundabout will travel along the southern boundary of these lands (see the Zoning and Flood Zones Map for details).



#### 4. Lands opposite Dundalk Racecourse

**Land Use Zoning:**

E1 General Employment

**Approximate Area:** c.36.7ha

**Undeveloped Area:** c.36.7ha



These lands consist of approximately 36.7ha of land between the Newry Road and the Racecourse Road. These lands are currently undeveloped. The northern section of the lands are currently being infilled which has resulted in the levels of these lands being raised.

**Future Uses:** The lands are zoned 'General Employment' and could accommodate a range of employment related uses.

**Infrastructure:** Internal access roads are required along with pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. Foul sewerage and watermains are required to be laid in the area to serve any development.



## 5. Coe's Road Industrial Estate

**Land Use Zoning:**

**Approximate Area:** c.63.5ha

E1 General Employment

**Undeveloped Area:** c.3.5ha



The Coe's Road Industrial Estate is an established business and industrial area of the town located to the east of the town centre off the Inner Relief Road. There are a range of existing businesses located here including engineering, manufacturing, servicing, and logistics. There are opportunities for the refurbishment and expansion of existing industrial units with a more limited opportunity for the construction of new units.

**Future Uses:** The lands are zoned 'General Employment' and could accommodate a range of employment related uses.

**Infrastructure:** All roads, pedestrian, and water services infrastructure are in place.



## 6. Brewery Business Park and adjoining Employment Lands

**Land Use Zoning:**

**Approximate Area:** c. 23ha

**E1 General Employment**

**Undeveloped Area:** c. 7.5ha



The Brewery Business Park and adjoining employment generating lands is an established business and industrial area situated to the south-west of Dundalk town centre off the Ardee Road and is in close proximity to the M1 and Dundalk train station. Previously home to MacArdle and Moore Brewery, and subsequently Guinness/Diageo until 2001, the lands of the former brewery and the adjoining lands now comprise of a range of existing businesses including engineering, manufacturing, servicing, and logistics as well as other businesses such as a brewery, vehicle repairs, café and other wholesale retail units. There are opportunities for the refurbishment and expansion of existing units with a number of units currently vacant as well as the opportunity for the expansion and construction of new units to the undeveloped lands immediately to the south of the Brewery Business Park.

**Future Uses:** The lands are zoned 'General Employment' and could accommodate a range of employment and economic development related uses. These lands are in close proximity to both the M1 and Dundalk train station and there is an opportunity to expand to the undeveloped zoned lands to the rear (south) of the Brewery Business Park.

**Infrastructure:** All roads and pedestrian, foul sewerage and public mains infrastructure are in place.



## 7. Mullagharlin Area

### Land Use Zoning:

C1 Mixed Use

E1 General Employment

E2 Business and Technology

### Approximate Area:

C1 Mixed Use – c.43ha (c.41ha undeveloped)

E1 General Employment – c.43.6ha (c.11ha undeveloped)

E2 Business and Technology – c.304ha (c.215ha undeveloped)



The Mullagharlin area is a strategic location in Dundalk for economic development and is the primary location for foreign direct investment in the town. The presence of Dundalk Institute of Technology and the Finnabair Business Park, Xerox Technology Park, and Dundalk Science and Technology Park provides opportunities for collaboration and clustering with existing businesses.

Within the Mullagharlin area there are approximately 267 hectares of undeveloped lands available for development. These lands are suitable for a range of employment and business-related uses including science and technology, financial, manufacturing, or knowledge oriented uses. The lands are particularly suitable for business operations that require a large floorplate. Note that the lands identified on the map above only include the lands zoned for economic and employment generating uses in the Mullagharlin Masterplan area. Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT) is also located within the Masterplan boundary as set out in Appendix 4 of this Plan.



**Future Uses:** The lands are zoned 'Mixed Use', General Employment, and 'Business and Technology' and could accommodate a range of employment and economic development related uses. These lands are particularly suited for foreign direct investment.

**Infrastructure:** Internal access roads are required along with pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. Foul sewerage and watermains are in place in the area but would have to be laid in the undeveloped lands.

## 6.7 Policy Objectives

### EE 1

To support the development of Dundalk as an attractive, vibrant, and accessible Regional Growth Centre and driver of economic growth for the wider region.

### EE 2

To promote and facilitate collaboration and partnerships between business and industrial groups and Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) that will encourage research and development and provide further education and training opportunities.

### EE 3

To support the role of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) as a centre of excellence for education, innovation and research.

### EE 4

To support Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) in achieving Technological University status.

### EE 5

To promote Dundalk as a location for Foreign Direct Investment.

### EE 6

To support the role of the IDA and Enterprise Ireland in job creation and economic development and investment in Dundalk.

### EE 7

To promote and enhance Dundalk's role as a strategic employment centre on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and the Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross border network.

### EE 8

To support proposals for foreign direct and indigenous investment on appropriately zoned lands in Dundalk.



## EE 9

To support economic investment and employment related development in the locations identified in Section 6.6.1 of the Dundalk Local Area Plan 'Key Locations for Economic Investment and Employment Generating Uses'.

## EE 10

To support economic development and regeneration at Dundalk Port in accordance with Regional Policy Objective 4.23 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 for the Eastern and Midland Region.

## EE 11

To seek to integrate the principles of the circular economy into economic development projects in Dundalk.

## EE 12

To create an environment in Dundalk that is attractive for businesses to locate and operate through the provision of quality infrastructure and public spaces and improved accessibility and connectivity both within and to and from the town.

## EE 13

To support on-site renewable energy projects and any other initiatives by businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, which will contribute to achieving national targets for net zero emissions by 2050.

## EE 14

To support proposals for home-working subject to the scale and nature of the proposal being appropriate for its location and not creating a significant adverse impact on the amenities of surrounding residents.

## EE 15

To support the provision of co-working facilities and digital hubs that promote flexible working arrangements for established businesses, self-employed persons and start up enterprises.



# CHAPTER 7

## RETAIL & TOURISM



The Táin Bó Cuailgne or cattle raid would be held in the town of...  
 The Táin Bó Cuailgne or cattle raid would be held in the town of...  
 The Táin Bó Cuailgne or cattle raid would be held in the town of...

The Táin Bó Cuailgne or the Cattle Raid of Cooley is one of Europe's oldest tales...  
 The Táin Bó Cuailgne or the Cattle Raid of Cooley is one of Europe's oldest tales...  
 The Táin Bó Cuailgne or the Cattle Raid of Cooley is one of Europe's oldest tales...

There is a legend that John Brehon highlights some of the key aspects of the Táin...  
 There is a legend that John Brehon highlights some of the key aspects of the Táin...  
 There is a legend that John Brehon highlights some of the key aspects of the Táin...

The Táin is very much associated with Dundalk and north Leath. Cooley is located just to the north of Dundalk...  
 The Táin is very much associated with Dundalk and north Leath. Cooley is located just to the north of Dundalk...  
 The Táin is very much associated with Dundalk and north Leath. Cooley is located just to the north of Dundalk...

**I Cúchulainn ar ghéibín a mháthar, Deichléine, agus é ina leannán**  
 He had to attack again in order to win...  
 He had to attack again in order to win...

**I Cúchulainn as a baby on his mother, Deichléine's knee**  
 He was raised...  
 He was raised...

There is a legend that John Brehon highlights some of the key aspects of the Táin...  
 There is a legend that John Brehon highlights some of the key aspects of the Táin...  
 There is a legend that John Brehon highlights some of the key aspects of the Táin...



## 7 RETAIL AND TOURISM

### 7.1 Introduction

Retail and tourism represent two of the major economic drivers within the local and regional economy, accounting for significant employment levels in Dundalk. This chapter sets out the strategy for retailing and tourism in Dundalk.

### 7.2 Retail and Town Centre

Town centres across the country are facing unprecedented challenges. The proportion of retail sales transacted online for all Retail Businesses in Ireland was 5.8% in January 2022 compared to 3.2% in January 2021.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the growth of online sales and subsequent decline in footfall in town centres, most retailing in Ireland still takes place in physical stores.

Shoppers are availing of an omnichannel approach whereby retailers combine a physical network of stores with an online presence or a combination of the two platforms e.g. 'click and collect'.

Whilst internet sales are likely to increase, and changes are continuing as to how people shop, an opportunity exists to improve the range of experiences available to shoppers within town centres, which will encourage them to spend more leisure time without compromising the overall retail function.

### 7.3 Policy Context

There is a wide suite of national and regional planning guidance which promote and encourage regeneration whilst acknowledging the ever-changing role of the town centre, these are outlined in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: National and Regional Planning Context

Planning Document	Guidance in Relation to Town Centre
<b>Retail Planning Guidelines and Design Manual 2012</b>	These guidelines require an evidence-based approach to be taken to the formulation of policy objectives and strategy with regard to retailing. The associated Retail Design Manual sets out key principles of urban design which may form the framework for policies to promote quality design in development plans and local area plans
<b>National Planning Framework</b>	The aim of revitalising towns and urban areas is strongly reflected in the objectives and priorities of the National Planning Framework. There is a focus on improving towns and delivering more compact settlements by prioritising population, residential and employment growth on infill and brownfield lands and in areas close to services and amenities.
<b>National Development Plan 2021- 2030</b>	Mirrors the national strategic objectives of the National Planning Framework and provides specific funding measures to support the compact growth agenda, regeneration, strengthening rural/urban economies and communities, and sustainable transport.

<sup>1</sup> Retail Sales Generated Online January 2022 (Provisional) - CSO - Central Statistics Office



Planning Document	Guidance in Relation to Town Centre
<b>Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region</b>	The RSES includes a Retail Hierarchy for the Region (Table 6.1 in the RSES). Dublin City Centre is identified as a Level 1 Metropolitan Centre. Major Town Centres, including Dundalk, are identified as Level 2 Centres in this Hierarchy. The RSES seeks to co-ordinate land use and to provide for sustainable retail development in Dundalk.
<b>Climate Action Plan</b>	Promotes extensive retrofitting of existing premises and housing stock and the prioritisation of brownfield and compact development.
<b>Town Centre First-Policy Approach for Irish Towns</b>	Recognises the importance of towns in enabling social, economic, and environmental development. Acknowledges that there is a need to reverse the pattern of stagnation, which may require the identification and establishment of new roles and new functions, including the enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities or a greater emphasis on services, hospitality, and social interaction.

## 7.4 Dundalk's Historical Context

Commerce and trade have played a significant role in the overall development of Dundalk. In medieval times, the Castletown River, located to the north of the town was a vital trade route. To facilitate the transport of wares, the town developed in a linear manner along Clanbrassil Street toward Market Square which was the settlements' commercial heart. Many of Dundalk's traditional shopping streets are located within Architectural Conservation Areas reflecting their role in Dundalk's development as a historic market town. Today, Clanbrassil Street remains Dundalk's primary shopping street along its Core Retail Area.

Blackrock is located to the southeast of Dundalk and developed as a fishing village in the early 19th century. The construction of a wall along the beach and several lodgings in the mid 1800's marked Blackrock's rapid development as a popular holiday resort.

Today it is a vibrant Urban Village and continues to function as an attractive residential and tourism destination.

### 7.4.1 Town Centre and Core Retail Area

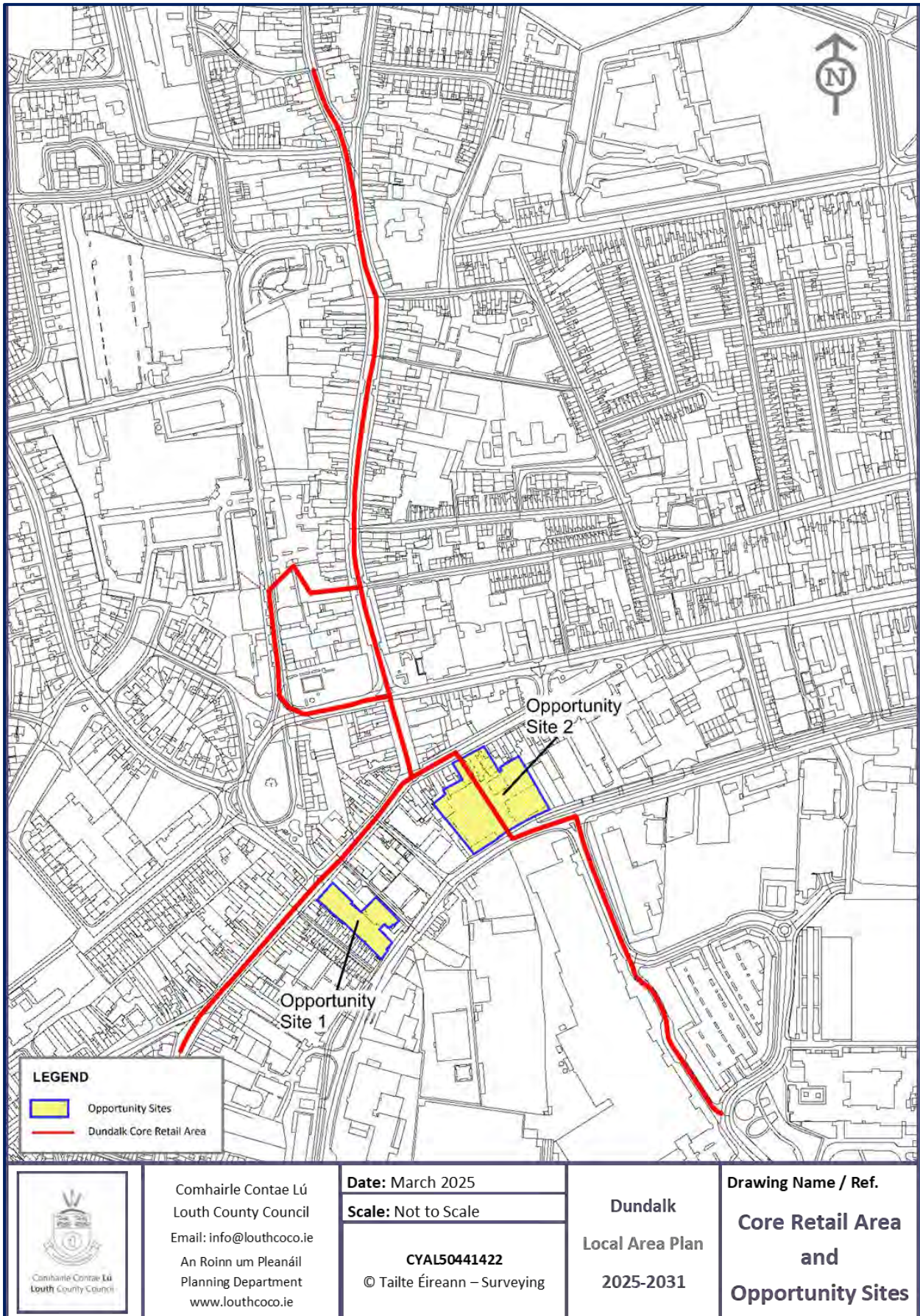
Dundalk's Core Retail Area is set out in Map 7.1. It stretches from St. Nicholas Church of Ireland southward along Clanbrassil Street incorporating the Clanbrassil Street Shopping Centre and its surrounds as well as Market Square. It continues southward extending through Williamsons Mall and encompasses the Marshes Shopping Centre. The Core Retail Area also extends westward along Park Street.

The function of Dundalk's town centre and indeed Core Retail Area has evolved and developed over time with an increase in the provision of service and leisure facilities as well as cafés, bars, and restaurants.

Whilst the primacy of the core shopping areas retail function ought to be retained it is considered that the increasingly 'blended' role of the town centre has the potential to generate additional footfall and improve its overall vitality and viability.



Map 7.1: Dundalk's Core Retail Area





## 7.5 Dundalk’s Retail Hierarchy

In the County Retail Hierarchy Dundalk is identified as a Level 1 Centre. This is reflective of the retail provision in the town, its status as

the County Town and its designation as a Regional Growth Centre. Within Dundalk there is a sub-retail hierarchy as follows:



### 1. Level 1 – Dundalk Town Centre

Dundalk Town Centre is located at the top of the retail hierarchy providing (in conjunction with Drogheda), the predominant shopping destination for the County. There is a broad range of comparison shopping available that includes high street brands and higher order independent stores. It also provides a significant quantum of public office and civic functions including the Town Hall, court service, public library, and museum. Dundalk is also an important transport hub for the County; The Longwalk Bus Station is located along the core shopping area and Clarke Train Station is only a 3-minute walk away. In addition, the town centre offers a range of tourist accommodation and attractions, refer to Section 7.8 of this chapter for further details.



### 2. Level 2 – Blackrock Village and District Centres

At Level 2 there are two different typologies of centres: Blackrock Urban Village and Ard Easmuinn District Centre. The District Centres provide an appropriate range of retail and non-retail functions to serve the needs of the community and their respective catchment areas. The urban village at Blackrock comprises of a medium sized convenience store, a comparison goods store, pharmacy, and a number of art/gift shops as well as, retail services, and food / beverage outlets.



### 3. Level 3 – Neighbourhood Centres

The next level down comprises of the Neighbourhood Centres at Hoey’s Lane, the Fairways and at the Castletown and Avenue Roads. They provide an important economic, social, and physical focal point for their community. Additionally, there is undeveloped land zoned as a Neighbourhood Centre along the Old Golf Links Road. The planned expanded population increases in the Haynestown and Mount Avenue areas could support further local retail provision in accordance with the growth strategy of this Plan.



### 4. Level 4 – Corner/Local Shops

The lowest level of the hierarchy relates to small corner / local shops. Such local retail facilities provide a valuable local function to the communities that they serve.



### 7.5.1 Vacancy

The vacancy rate of a town is a clear indicator of the economic and social health. In Dundalk, the vacancy rate for commercial properties (which includes retail properties) in Q4 2023 was 19.1%, which is 4.8% higher than the national average (14.3%), and 6.5% higher than the average for Leinster (13%). Between Q4 2022 and Q4 2023 the commercial vacancy rate in Dundalk was unchanged at 19.1%.<sup>2</sup>

The current rate of vacancy in Dundalk is thought to be associated with the increasing costs of doing business in terms of energy costs and food inflation as well as interest rate increases which are generating pressure for commercial owner occupiers and tenants. It is also considered that trends such as working from home, sustainability and energy efficiency have resulted in an increase in commercial vacancy.

Along Dundalk's Core Shopping Area there is a concentration of vacant properties on the western side of Clanbrassil Street at its junction with Yorke Street, to the north of Earl Street on both sides; and the former Dunnes building along Park Street has remained vacant for some time. A map indicating vacant properties in the Core Shopping Area of Dundalk in Q1 2024 is set out in Map 7.2.

The level of vacancy in Dundalk is an indication of the challenges facing the retail sector and businesses in the town. In response to these issues this Plan recognises the need to create attractive, vibrant spaces in the town centre area.

It will support an expansion or diversification in the range of uses in the town centre, particularly in vacant or under-utilised buildings and spaces, that takes account of the changing nature of retail and the need to provide shoppers and visitors with an 'experience' that will encourage them back on a regular basis.

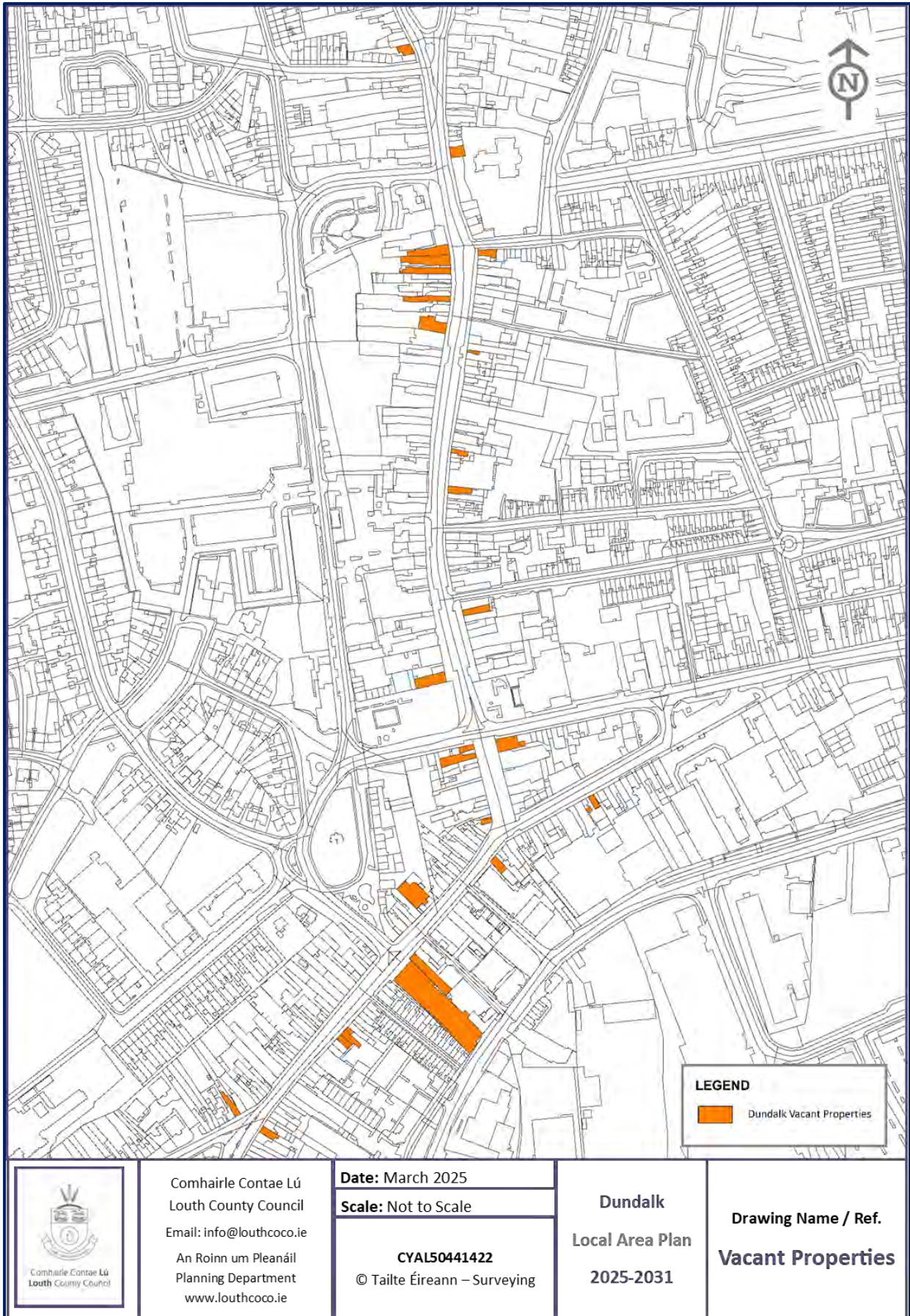
Such uses include the provision of a mix of shopping, leisure, office, and residential uses in an attractive and family friendly environment. This approach will ensure that the town centre can adapt to change in the retail sector and is consistent with the Government's Town Centre First policy.

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.geodirectory.ie/news/geodirectory-commercial-buildings-report-q4-2023>



Map 7.2: Dundalk Vacant Properties (Survey January 2024)





## 7.6 Strategy to Support the Town Centre

To ensure Dundalk's long-term sustainability, viability and vitality it is important that the town centre can adapt to changing consumer demands and behaviours, and the challenges posed by online retailing. To attract the shopper to the town centre there must be a vibrant mix of shopper experiences and additionally, it must function as a business, service, social, cultural, and recreational hub for the local community. Ongoing and new measures to achieve this are detailed below.

### 7.6.1 Development of Brownfield/Infill Sites and Adaptive Reuse of Vacant Properties

The town centre is Dundalk's commercial hub, its function and role is constantly evolving. This on-going transition has resulted in a number of infill/brownfield sites and vacant properties within the town centre and surrounding streets.

This Plan strongly encourages the development of brownfield/ infill sites and the re-use and/ or change of use of vacant and underutilised properties including historic buildings. It also advocates for developers, landowners and the Council to coordinate and work together in relation to site assembly.

It is recognised that there may be instances where a developer or the Council may purchase a group of buildings or plot(s) of land to ensure a co-ordinated, integrated approach to a regeneration project. This Plan promotes such initiatives and, where required, will support the Compulsory Purchase Order process to facilitate the progression of these projects.

Whilst it is acknowledged that there can be challenges in adapting older and historic buildings, their re-purposing can contribute positively to the character and uniqueness of the town centre and surrounding area.

*Examples of vacant and under-utilised sites*



Two examples of vacant and under-utilised sites close to the Core Shopping Area of the town are No. 2 and 3 Anne Street, the backland areas of No.'s 44-50 Park Street and the former warehouse to the rear of No. 65 Anne Street. Both sites have been vacant for a considerable period of time and have significant development potential given their proximity to the town centre. Whilst it is recognised that there can be challenges in developing such lands, this Plan shall seek to facilitate any proposals that would be compatible with surrounding land uses and make a positive impact on the local streetscape.

The re-purposing of buildings (including historic assets) and development of infill/ brownfield sites such as those referred to above can inject new life into an area by increasing the footfall and social and economic activity, addressing vacancy and dereliction, as well as improving permeability and overall connectivity with the town centre. Furthermore, such projects can also have a multiplier effect within an area.



### 7.6.2 Encourage Redevelopment of Opportunity Sites

This Retail Strategy has identified two opportunity sites in Dundalk’s Core Shopping area: The Former Dunnes at Park Street and Williamsons Mall. It is considered that the development of these sites provides an excellent opportunity to reinvigorate the areas in which they are located and improve permeability.

#### Opportunity Site 1 (OS1) – Former Dunnes Stores, Park Street

The former Dunnes Stores premises occupies a highly prominent and extensive retail façade along Park Street. Dunnes Stores traded from the premises from the late 1960’s up to 2009. The premises have remained vacant since the closure of the store, and this has contributed to a reduction in footfall and vibrancy along Park Street.

#### Opportunity Site 1 – Former Dunnes at Park Street



The building also accesses onto River Lane and the rear of the premises backs onto the Ramparts. The site provides an opportunity to reinvigorate this area of Park Street and provides a further opportunity to improve linkages to River Lane and the Ramparts. It is noted that an application for a ‘sports entertainment centre’ at this opportunity site was granted in August 2024 and works had commenced on site in Q4 2024.

#### Opportunity Site 2 (OS2) – Williamsons Mall

This site boasts a double frontage onto Francis Street to the north and onto the Ramparts to the South, via ‘Williamsons Mall’. The site is used for surface car-parking and is enclosed by buildings which are primarily commercial/retail in nature extending to approximately 0.648 hectares. The site provides an opportunity to improve linkages and legibility between the traditional town centre area and the Marshes Shopping Centre.



### Opportunity Site 2 – Williamson’s Mall



#### 7.6.3 Creation of an Attractive Public Realm (streets, spaces, and parks)

The regeneration of Market Square and Clanbrassil Street in conjunction with the painting of properties and implementation of the ‘SEEK’ project have assisted in the transformation of Dundalk’s town centre. Future projects including the regeneration of The Longwalk and St. Nicholas Quarter will encourage regeneration, improve permeability and strengthen the attractiveness of the town by enticing people to meet, mingle and dwell. This Plan has also identified Park Street, Francis Street and St. Patrick’s Church as a ‘Key Development Areas’ and recognises the potential benefits of environmental and public realm improvements in providing a sense of place and stimulating investment.

#### 7.6.4 Provide a Range of Cultural, Recreational and Community Spaces (that includes scope for periodic events and festivals)

Cultural attractions including the Oriel Centre at Dundalk Gaol, An Táin Arts Centre and the County Museum, as well as activities such as ‘Frostival’ and the Saint Brigid’s festival play a key role in attracting additional day and evening footfall as well as bringing people together and attracting visitors/tourists. The Council will continue to support, develop, and promote cultural activities in Dundalk.



### 7.6.5 Realising Dundalk's Cultural and Heritage Assets

The conservation, adaptation and enhancement of historical buildings and streetscapes assist in providing the town with its own unique identity. The Council will continue to seek to capitalise on Dundalk's heritage potential and generate additional footfall through enhanced placemaking.

### 7.6.6 Supporting Residential Use in the Town Centre

An increase in the residential population within the town centre would assist in providing the essential critical mass required to support shops and services, a night-time economy, and an overall safer environment. The Council will encourage, support, and promote more residential units as part of mixed-use developments or through the reuse/retrofit of the upper floors of existing buildings. Consideration will also be given to the change of use of vacant/under-utilised ground floor units in certain circumstances where it would not compromise the retail function of Dundalk's core shopping streets. The provision of residential accommodation in the town centre should seek to provide a mix of housing typologies and tenures to cater for diverse communities in terms of age, income, and mobility.

### 7.6.7 Improved Connectivity and Sustainable Transport

Louth County Council recognise, and support, active travel modes and sustainable movement in Dundalk enabling a high proportion of journeys to be made by foot and/or bicycle (e.g. the '10-minute neighbourhood' concept). The Council will support any investment or upgrades to the Longwalk Bus Station and improved connectivity between the bus and train stations.

This Plan will encourage and promote the roll out of EV infrastructure to support more sustainable travel associated with retail and tourism.

The public realm improvement scheme at St Nicholas Quarter will improve permeability in the area as well as providing a vital connection between the town centre and the Castletown River. It is also anticipated that any public realm improvements along Francis Street and Park Street would have the potential to improve connectivity between the town centre and the Marshes shopping centre to the south.

### 7.6.8 Business Improvement District

The purpose of a Business Improvement District (BID) is to enable the ratepayers within its boundaries draw up a scheme of projects, services and works which are additional to those provided by the Council and which will benefit the area.

Dundalk was the first town in the State to successfully implement a BID scheme and appoint a town centre manager.

The key objective of the Dundalk BID, is to enhance the cultural identity of the town, boost its international profile and image and further promote and improve the trading environment of the town. To date the BIDs Office has been proactive in various initiatives to enhance the streetscape and attract visitors to the town. This includes projects such as SEEK Urban Arts Festival, the painting of building facades, and the Christmas Lighting Festival Frostival. The Council will continue to support the work of the Dundalk BIDs office.

### 7.6.9 Restrictions on Uses

There is a need to maintain the vibrancy, vitality, and integrity of the town centre area. As such, an over-concentration of certain uses will be discouraged.



The Council will seek to ensure that the quantum of bookmakers, fast food outlets, public houses, off-licences and amusement and gaming arcades is not disproportionate to the overall size and character of the area.

Applicants proposing such uses will be required to demonstrate that there is not an over-concentration of these uses within an area.

The supporting documentation with any application shall include a map detailing all such facilities within 500 metres of any proposal within the core retail area of the town.

#### 7.6.10 Shopfronts

Shopfronts are one of the most important features in the character and perception of Dundalk's town centre. The Council are committed to promoting high quality shopfront design.

Dundalk boasts a number of traditional shop fronts which contribute significantly and complement the historic character of the town. This Plan seeks to protect traditional and original shopfronts and ensure that any alterations do not detract from their overall integrity. The use of reproduction traditional style shopfronts on buildings ought to be avoided and instead a modern, high quality contemporary shopfront should be utilised. Applications for shopfronts shall be in accordance with the 'Shopfront Design Guidelines' for Louth County Council or any subsequent updated guidance.

#### 7.6.11 Food Clusters

Distinct clusters exist in Dundalk which are linked to food and beverage provision including Park Street and the urban village of Blackrock. These food clusters support shopping and destination experiences as well as playing an important role in the night-time economy. The on-going development and enhancement of these areas is supported by this Plan.

## 7.7 Need and Location of Future Retail Floorspace

The data from the Retail Strategy in the 2021-2027 County Development Plan has been used to inform the Retail Strategy for this Plan.

A qualitative assessment of future retail floorspace requirements has been undertaken, this exercise has updated the quantitative retail analysis in the Louth Retail Strategy (see Appendix 3 for more details).

Table 7.2 sets out the indicative potential for additional convenience, comparison and bulky comparison floorspace in Dundalk up to 2030.

Table 7.2: Indicative Floorspace Potential for Dundalk up to 2030

	Indicative Floorspace Potential sq. m - 2030
<b>Convenience</b>	2,649
<b>Comparison</b>	970
<b>Bulky Comparison</b>	1,818

In accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012, the indicative floorspace requirements set out in the tables above are only intended to provide broad guidance as to the additional quantum of floorspace provision. The quantum of floorspace should not be considered as upper or lower limits, merely as indicative of the scale of new floor space required to meet the needs of existing and future population and expenditure within Dundalk.

Any additional new floorspace proposed could replace some existing, outdated or poorly located retail floor space. In the event that a planning application is submitted for retail development which does not conform to the scale outlined in this Retail Strategy the onus is on the applicant to prove to the Planning Authority that the development will not detract from the vitality or viability of the town centre.



### 7.7.1 Convenience Retail Floorspace

Dundalk’s convenience offer has remained consistent since 2020. In terms of convenience shopping there are five large grocery retailers presently operating in Dundalk.

Table 7.3: Large Grocery Retailers in Dundalk

Convenience Operator	Location
<b>Tesco x2</b>	Tesco Extra and the Longwalk Shopping Centre
<b>Dunnes x3</b>	Ard Easmuinn, Marshes Shopping Centre and Hoey’s Lane
<b>Aldi x2</b>	Ramparts and Newry Road
<b>Lidl x2</b>	St. Helenas and Avenue Road
<b>Super Valu</b>	The Fairways Centre

In total, the above operators trade from approximately 20,740.sq.m. of grocery floorspace, with Dunnes Stores holding the highest percentage share within the town.

Permission has been granted for a new Lidl at Tom Bellew Avenue; this is to replace the existing Lidl at Avenue Road. The new store at Tom Bellew Avenue will have a net retail floor area 229m<sup>2</sup> greater than the store at Avenue Road. At the time of writing, it was unclear if the future use of the existing Lidl Store at Avenue Road will be for convenience retailing or an alternative use. In Q4 2024 works commenced on the change of use of the former Dunnes on Park Street to a sports entertainment centre.

An application for a Lidl store at Knockshee Avenue was under consideration at the time of writing (net retail sales area of 1,499m<sup>2</sup>), if permitted it is anticipated that this will serve the existing and future residents of Blackrock and Haynestown.

This Plan will continue to promote the development of appropriately scaled convenience retail development in the town, particularly in new residential areas where a demand is identified, or in areas identified for regeneration and where such development can provide an important anchor to secure the vitality and viability of urban villages and neighbourhood centres.

### 7.7.2 Comparison Retail Floorspace

There has been no significant change in Dundalk’s comparison retail offer since 2020. The Marshes Shopping Centre is the main destination for comparison shopping within Dundalk. The centre is anchored by Penneys and Dunnes Stores (which includes a significant clothing and homewares offer). The centre also includes a number of other national and international comparison retailers including Carraig Donn, Clarks, H&M, Jack & Jones, River Island and Lifestyle Sports. Dundalk’s historic town core offers a range of high-end independent clothes and household retailers.

Tesco (convenience only) continues to be the anchor store for the Long Walk Shopping Centre. It is noted that an application for the redevelopment of a number of units within the Long Walk Shopping Centre was under consideration at the time of writing. Along the northern section of Dundalk’s Core Shopping area there is a larger concentration of vacant properties.

The Council will continue to promote the core shopping area as the primary location for comparison retailing.

### 7.7.3 Bulky Comparison Floorspace

The overall quantum of bulky comparison floorspace in Dundalk has increased since 2020. A range of bulky comparison retailers are located within Dundalk Retail Park, located on the Inner Relief Road.



The Retail Park is anchored by Woodies and includes operators such as Homestore & More, Smyths Toys, Right Price Tiles and Currys PC World.

North Link Business Park, also located on the Inner Relief Road houses a number of bulky comparison operators including, Franks Furniture, Wogan Interiors and The Bed Store.

The North Link Business Park has expanded the range of uses therein to include leisure and business whilst the Coes Road has seen an expansion in the volume of bulky comparison floorspace.

#### 7.7.4 Policy Objectives

##### RT1

To affirm and maintain the status of the Dundalk's retail core as the premier shopping area in the town, affording a variety of shopping, cultural and leisure attractions. In line with the Retail Planning Guidelines, 2012, the core shopping area should be the key location for supporting competitiveness and choice and in turn promoting vitality and viability.

##### RT2

To promote town centre and urban village vitality through the sequential approach to retail development, enable good quality development in appropriate locations, and facilitate a modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport.

##### RT3

To promote and support omni-channel retail such as 'Click and Collect' services which can reduce e-commerce deliveries and bring footfall to the town centre.

##### RT4

To acknowledge the unique attraction/distinctiveness of specialist shops/independent/indigenous retail in the town centre which contribute to its overall character and attractiveness.

##### RT5

To support and ensure the resilience of Dundalk Town Centre by facilitating retailers and businesses adapt to changing trends in retail demand and developing appropriate opportunities to further diversify the Town Centre as a place to live, work and socialise.

##### RT6

To encourage sensitive reuse, refurbishment and change of use of existing buildings including historic assets, thereby contributing to the continued revitalisation of Dundalk's Town Centre.

##### RT7

To support and encourage developers, landowners and the Council to co-ordinate and work together in relation to site assembly and to support the engagement of the Compulsory Purchase Order process to acquire buildings and land thereby ensuring an integrated approach to regeneration projects.

##### RT8

To promote and facilitate existing and emerging food clusters in the town including Park Street and the urban village of Blackrock and support their role in making the town more attractive for residents, workers, and visitors and in creating employment.

##### RT9

To support and facilitate evening / night-time economy uses that contribute to the vitality of the town centre and that support the creation of a safe, balanced and socially inclusive evening / night-time economy without adversely impacting on residential amenity.

**RT10**

To protect and enhance existing traditional shopfronts and to encourage development of high quality contemporary new shopfronts in accordance with the 'Louth County Council Shopfront Design Guidance' or any subsequent guidance published.

**RT11**

To support and promote Dundalk's Business Improvement District (BID).

## 7.8 Tourism

Nationally, the number of full-time equivalent employees working in tourism was estimated to be 284,800 in 2019 and these employees worked in almost 46,000 tourism-related enterprises.

Dundalk's location in proximity to key destinations along Ireland's Ancient East such as Carlingford, the Cooley Mountains, Slieve Gullion and Faughart provides opportunities to attract visitors into the town.

A major issue facing tourism in Dundalk is the short dwell time, with a high number of visitors to the town and surrounding area taking day trips.

Increasing the time visitors spend will have a significant benefit to tourism in Dundalk and the surrounding area. In terms of tourist accommodation in Dundalk there are three hotels:

- The Imperial,
- The Fairways and
- The Gateway Hotel.

There is also a strong supply of bed and breakfasts, and short term lets.

### 7.8.1 Dundalk's Tourism Offering

**Ireland's Ancient East** - showcases Ireland's living culture and ancient heritage and brings it to life through stories that create unique visitor experiences, unite stakeholders and supports vibrant communities.

Louth plays a central role in this living and ancient culture with Dundalk ideally located to service visitors to many of these unique attractions.

In 2019, tourism in Ireland's Ancient East was worth €1.7bn to the regional economy, supporting approximately 55,000 jobs.

**Tourist Attractions** - As a medieval town located on the banks of the Castletown River, at the foot of the Cooley Mountains and the gap of the North, Dundalk has a significant potential to grow and capitalise on its tourism product.

Dundalk has a wealth of natural and built heritage assets with the Castletown River flowing into Dundalk Bay, Castletown Motte and the rich architectural heritage within the town.

A successful local tourism product creates resilient and indigenous revenue which has benefits for many other sectors such as agriculture, hospitality, transport, and retail. As a result, tourism is a vitally important industry for the economic prosperity of Dundalk.

This Plan will support and promote tourism in Dundalk through maximising assets, facilitating improvements to the public realm and the provision of additional accommodation and visitor facilities.

Dundalk has a vibrant nightlife and hospitality sector. In particular, Park Street has a range of eateries and bars featuring outstanding food and music.

The town also has a range of tourist attractions which have both national and international appeal.

Many attractions feature a distinct local narrative, archaeology, architectural and urban heritage associated with the town and the immediate surrounding area.



Within Dundalk, many attractions celebrate the archaeology and architecture within the historic town core, while the town benefits from its close proximity to the Cooley Mountains, Hill of Faughart, Castle Roche and many other nationally significant assets.

The principal assets within Dundalk include:

- **Castletown Motte:** The ruin of a late 18<sup>th</sup> century castellated house known as 'Byrne's Folly' stands on top of the mound of Castletown Motte. It was built by Patrick Byrne, a well-known pirate, in 1780 AD. The motte is built on the site of a pre-Christian fort called Dún Dealgan, meaning 'The Fort of Dealga'.

This site is important in Irish mythology as it is said to be the birthplace of the legendary warrior – Cú Chulainn.



- **The Oriel Centre:** based in Dundalk Gaol, is one of eight strategically placed regional resource centres under the auspices of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann ([www.comhaltas.ie](http://www.comhaltas.ie)) servicing the five north-eastern counties of Cavan, Monaghan, Louth, Meath, and Armagh. The Oriel Centre combines the role of a resource centre, a visitor attraction, a social and a performance space, and provides facilities for teaching, archives, recording, rehearsal, performance, and session playing.

- **Urban Art Murals:** The hugely popular SEEK murals illustrate Dundalk's story, highlighting aspects of the town's rich heritage and culture. Some of the world's best outdoor muralists and urban artists have taken part in the festival and left behind a colourful legacy, and outdoor art gallery, for all to enjoy.



Image Courtesy – Martin McElligott

- **An Táin Arts Centre:** is an independent arts space based in the former Táin Theatre, Town Hall, Crowe Street. An Táin Arts Centre houses a 350-seat main theatre, a 55-seater studio theatre, a visual arts gallery and two workshop spaces.

The programme includes a diverse collection of local arts, national tours, workshops, exhibitions and in house productions.

- **Louth County Museum:** The County Museum is located in a beautifully restored late 18th century warehouse at Roden Place in Jocelyn Street.





The museum opened in 1994 and offers an extensive programme of permanent exhibitions, temporary displays, drama presentations, music recitals, lectures, and film. The strength of the Museum nonetheless resides in its collection. Chronicling the historical development of County Louth from the Stone Age up to the present, the museum, through a combination of artefacts and computer interactives, presents this story over three galleries of permanent exhibition.

- **Dundalk Stadium** is Ireland's only floodlit all-weather horse track and the world's only dual-purpose horse and greyhound track.

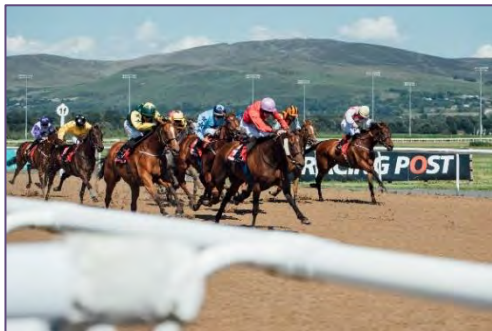


Image Courtesy Dundalk Stadium

- **St. Patrick's Pro Church:** a splendid example of a late-Georgian Gothic type. Designed by Thomas Duff under the influence of King's College Chapel, Cambridge, it contains some of Ireland's finest perpendicular Gothic windows, further enhanced by stained glass by the Mayer of Munich and beautifully executed mosaics by Oppenheimer.



Image Credit: Fáilte Ireland – Courtesy Selena Clarke

- **Blackrock** is a vibrant urban village in the south-east of Dundalk, with a busy promenade that features many popular bars, restaurants, and cafés. Its beaches are Blackrock's main attraction for swimmers, families, and water sport enthusiasts.

Its protected and world-renowned wetlands and bird sanctuaries are a huge attraction for all nature lovers.



Image Courtesy: Blackrock Tourism

The promenade is unique in its proximity to the main beach as well as to artisan shops, boutiques, coffee shops and restaurants. The village boasts award winning recreational facilities including its park with facilities for the young and old to enjoy.

The principal tourism assets located in the area surrounding Dundalk include:

- **The Cooley Mountains:** approximately 10km from Dundalk, feature two parallel mountain ridges running southeast. These mountains provide visitors with breathtaking views of the Ring of Gullion, Carlingford Lough and Dundalk Bay.



Image Credit: Tourism Ireland



- **The Hill of Faughart** is located approximately 4.5km north of Dundalk. Faughart is the traditional birthplace of St. Brigid.



Image Credit: Chris Hill Photographic for Tourism Ireland

The hill is of historical and archaeological significance and includes the ruins of a 12<sup>th</sup> century church, an ancient graveyard, St. Brigid's Holy Well, St. Brigid's Pillar, possibly the base for a high cross and St. Brigid's Bed, a horse-shoe shaped enclosure which may have been a small building and was used until recent times as a penitential station.

- **Castle Roche:** approximately 7km from Dundalk, is one of the most striking Anglo-Norman castles in Ireland and can be viewed for miles around. Located on a rocky hilltop, it commands wonderful views of the surrounding countryside. The site of the castle marked the boundary between the Gaelic province of Ulster and the Anglo-Norman 'Pale' and overlooked an ancient route into what is now South Armagh.



- **The Táin Way:** at 365miles in length the Táin Trail is a circular route which runs from Rathcroghan in Co. Roscommon to the Cooley Peninsula in Co. Louth and back again. It is fully signposted with distinctive brown bull finger post signs, as well as striking pictorial maps located in key towns along the route. The modern version of the trail was initially set up in 1985-86 to incorporate the Cooley Peninsula and was later extended to encompass the route followed by the rampaging armies of the legendary Queen Maeve of Connaught.
- **Sea Louth Scenic Food Trail** is an interactive food experience that encourages participants to register for a food passport. Using the food passport participants visit different locations throughout the County and receive a stamp to demonstrate that the participant has completed that particular location.



Dundalk Bay - Copyright Sea Louth



## 7.8.2 Lands Identified for Tourism Related Uses

In recognition of the potential opportunities for the continued growth of the tourism sector in Dundalk, lands have been identified for tourism related uses.

To the north of Dundalk Racecourse there is an extensive area of land zoned for tourism uses. Whilst a large proportion of these lands are within the flood zone and only suitable for water-compatible development there are approximately 16 hectares outside of the flood zone that would be suitable for a range of uses including visitor attractions/activities or accommodation.

Along the Newry Road the former Carnbeg Hotel and associated golf course, which is located on lands with an area of approximately 40 hectares has significant redevelopment potential for accommodation or recreational/leisure uses.

## 7.8.3 Policy Objectives

### RT12

To support Dundalk's tourist potential, in particular, its cultural heritage tourism and promote uses which activate and enhance the existing historic environment, including buildings, public realm, industrial and maritime heritage.

### RT13

To support the implementation of the Fáilte Ireland 'Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan', specifically with regard to objectives which pertain to tourism initiatives in Dundalk.

### RT14

To develop and enhance the tourism, recreational and amenity potential of the town's waterways and coastal area, while not compromising the ecological importance of these areas.

### RT15

To recognise the significant contribution that national and international tourism makes to the local economy and the vitality of the town and facilitate, in partnership and Fáilte Ireland and key stakeholders, the sustainable development of associated infrastructure, attractions, festivals and events.

### RT16

To co-operate with all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the Louth Tourism Strategy.

### RT17

To continue to work with Bord Fáilte and other agencies to promote Dundalk as a tourist destination.

# CHAPTER 8

## MOVEMENT





## 8 MOVEMENT

### 8.1 Introduction

As a Regional Growth Centre with an increasing population and an expanding employment base, Dundalk will continue to experience increasing travel demands during the life of this Plan. To ensure the integration of land use and transport planning and that a plan led approach is taken, a Local Transport Plan has been prepared alongside the Local Area Plan (see Appendix 2 for details). Continued investment in active travel and public transport infrastructure and services will be required to ensure Dundalk develops as an accessible, compact and connected town in accordance with national and regional policy.

This Plan supports the principles of sustainable development to meet the current and projected transport requirements that will enable the continued growth of Dundalk. Data from Census 2022 indicates that 67.2% (9,234 persons) of those usually resident in Dundalk travel to work by car or van while 34.3% (3,406 persons) walk, cycle or use public transport.<sup>1</sup> Promoting a modal shift away from high car dependency, particularly single passenger journeys, towards sustainable modes both through active travel and utilising public transport is a key objective of this Plan.

Within the wider context of tackling climate change and to achieve national, regional and local policy objectives, any investment in public transport infrastructure should also provide for a transition to lower emission vehicles.

### 8.2 Context

This chapter has been informed by national and regional policy documents and strategies including the *National Planning Framework* and *National Development Plan*, the *Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoECLG, 2012), *CycleConnects* (published by the NTA), the *TII National Cycle Network Plan*, the *National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI)*, the *National Sustainable Mobility Policy*, the *National EV Charging Strategy 2022-2025*, the *National EV Charging Network Plan* and, the *Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan*.

The *National Sustainable Mobility Policy and associated Action Plan*, published in 2022, sets out a strategic framework for active travel and public transport encouraging a reduction in journeys made by private vehicles.

Sustainable mobility is promoted within the *National Planning Framework (NPF)* and the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)* for the Eastern and Midland Region through policy objectives relating to the integration of alternatives to cars, reducing our carbon footprint and land use and spatial planning that supports public transport, walking and cycling as more favourable modes of transport to the private car. The *National Road EV Charging Network Plan* published in 2024 focuses on a charging network for motorway and primary and secondary roads, whilst the *Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan* focuses on neighbourhood and destination charging needs.

The Local Transport Plan for Dundalk has identified opportunities for further investment in sustainable transport projects and infrastructure.

<sup>1</sup> A more detailed analysis of modal split based on the most recent (2016) POWSCAR data is set out in the Baseline Assessment of the Local Transport Plan. In the analysis of Census data respondents answering, 'Work mainly at or from home' and 'Not Stated' have been removed from the calculations above to remove any statistical ambiguity.

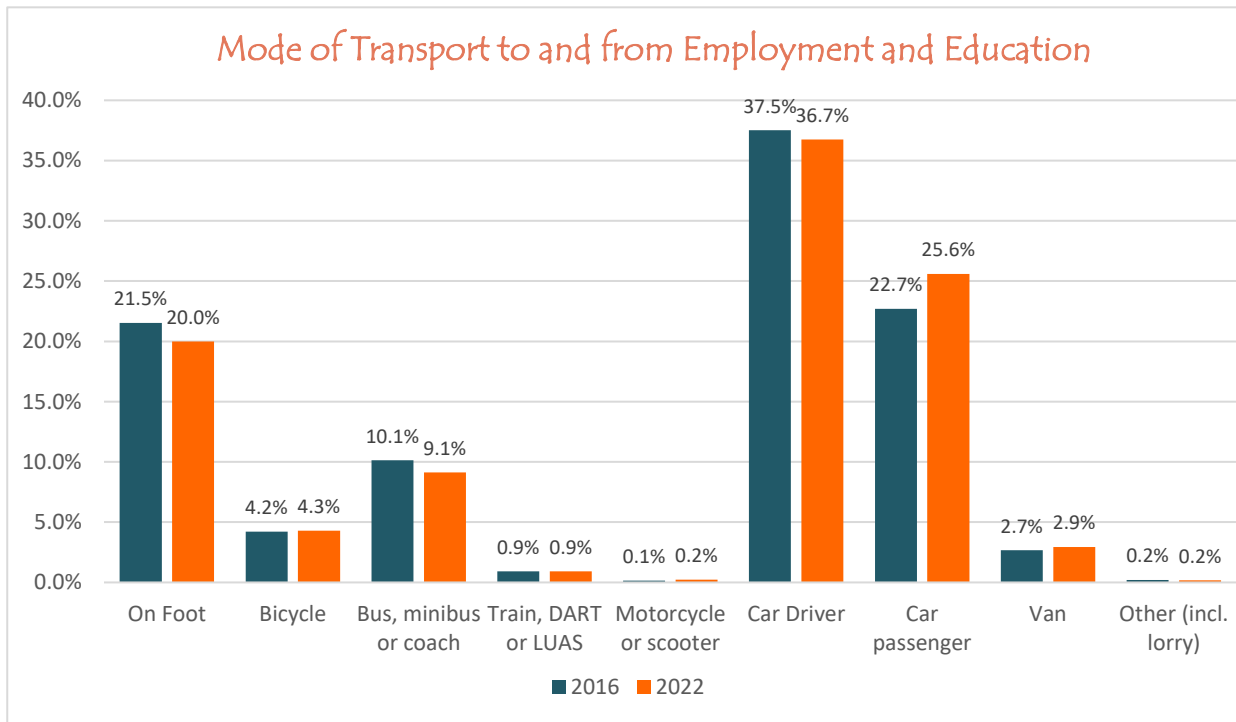


### 8.3 Current Travel Patterns

Figure 8.1 provides a comparison of modes of travel by students and workers in Dundalk in 2016 and 2022. As expected, the car is the dominant mode of travel, however it is noted that the percentage of residents driving decreased by 4.2% from 35% to 30.8%. This may be partially related to the number of persons working from home, which increased by 5.6% (from 1.2% to 6.8%), as there was no corresponding increase in public transport use.

There was a slight decrease in the percentage of residents utilising sustainable modes of travel, with the largest decrease recorded in the number of people walking, which fell by 4% between 2016 and 2022. These figures highlight the challenges faced in encouraging a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

Figure 8.1: Modes of Transport to and from Employment and Education in 2016 and 2022 (CSO)



### 8.4 Local Transport Plan

The purpose of the Local Transport Plan is to guide the future transport and mobility needs of Dundalk, taking into account the transport demand from existing and projected development both within the Plan boundary and surrounding area.

#### 8.4.1 Local Transport Plan Methodology

The Dundalk Local Transport Plan was carried out in consultation with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and in line with the NTA and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) guidance. The ABTA process carried out for Dundalk is recorded in the Local Transport Plan (LTP), which is in Appendix 2 of this LAP. The terms Local Transport Plan and ABTA can be used interchangeably, however, for ease of reference Local Transport Plan is used in this Plan.



### 8.4.2 Local Transport Plan Baseline Assessment

The Baseline Assessment establishes the baseline conditions within Dundalk and its environs that influence travel patterns and behaviour. This included an analysis of population and demographics, a review of the transport network for all modes of transport, a summary of travel demands and characteristics, and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints (SWOC) analysis. Full details of this Baseline Assessment are set out in Section 2 of the Transport Plan.

### 8.4.3 Objectives of the Local Transport Plan

The objectives of the Local Transport Plan are as follows:

- Increase the share of sustainable transport modes;
- Improve the coherency, safety and reach of Dundalk's cycle network;
- Develop an attractive public transport network for all users;
- Prioritise walking and cycling by providing a safe environment to access schools and other parts of the network;
- Align with the Climate Action Plan and reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions;
- Integrate land use and transport to support the shift to sustainable modes and reduce travelling distance;

### 8.4.6 Policy Objectives

#### MOV 1

To support the continued integration of land use and transport planning in accordance with national and regional policy.

#### MOV 2

To support investment in sustainable transport infrastructure that will make walking, cycling and public transport more attractive and appealing, and facilitate accessibility for all, regardless of age, physical mobility, or economic status.

- Protect the strategic function of the national road network; and
- Strengthen the attractiveness of Dundalk for economic development.

### 8.4.4 Forecasting Future Travel Demand

The Local Transport Plan has forecasted future travel demand in Dundalk. This will assist in understanding current and future travel demands in Dundalk. One of the outputs of the modelling exercise is that the total number of trips within the town by car, public transport, walking or cycling will increase by 24% up to 2030 and without intervention the modal share will remain the same, with 65% of trips continuing to be made by car. See Section 4.4 of the Local Transport Plan for further details.

### 8.4.5 Options and Recommendations

The Local Transport Plan includes a series of project options and recommendations on each of the following modes:

- Active Travel;
- Public Transport;
- Road; and
- Multimodal.

Full details of these options and recommendations are set out in Section 5 of the Local Transport Plan.

**MOV 3**

To support the implementation of the Dundalk Local Transport Plan and the projects identified therein.<sup>2 3</sup>

**MOV 4**

To encourage a modal shift from use of the private car towards more sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling, and public transport and to support any initiatives that would assist in the attainment of the Climate Action Plan 2024 mode share targets for 2030: 53% (Car), 19% (Public Transport) and 28% (Active Travel).

**MOV 5**

To promote sustainable higher density development along public transport corridors.

**MOV 6**

To promote and support the principles of universal design ensuring that all environments are inclusive and are accessible to and can be used to the fullest extent possible by all users regardless of age, ability or disability.

## 8.5 Active Travel



Active travel such as walking, cycling and wheeling are modes of transport that provide individual and community benefits.

They can improve physical and mental health, save money and create more reliable journey times for the individual whilst also reducing traffic congestion, emissions, and car parking

requirements thereby providing a wider community benefit. The relatively flat topography of Dundalk makes walking and cycling viable modes of transport for people of all ages.

The level of active travel in Dundalk is encouraging, with data from Census 2022 indicating that around 1 in 4 (24.3%) students and workers in Dundalk, walk or cycle to work or school. This is significantly higher than the national average of 9%.

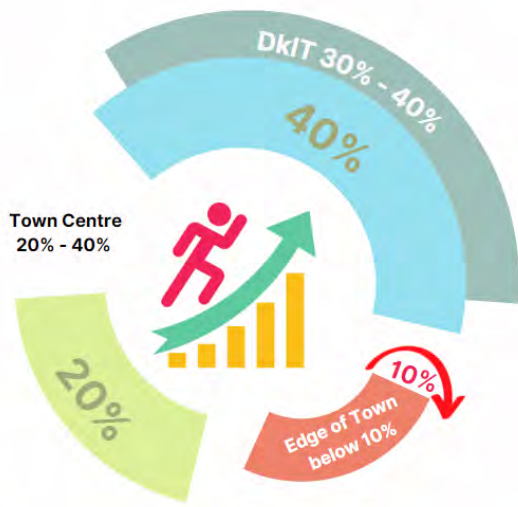
The Local Transport Plan included an analysis of active travel share at the Small Area Level. This analysis indicates that the level of active travel is higher closer to the town centre and DkIT.

<sup>2</sup> The detail associated with new transport infrastructure projects referred to in this Plan and associated Local Transport Plan, including locations and any associated mapping, that are not already permitted or provided for by existing plans/programmes/etc. is non-binding and indicative. Such new projects shall be subject to feasibility assessment, taking into account the environmental constraints and the objectives of the Plan relating to mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken for such projects where appropriate. Proposed interventions will be required to demonstrate that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements.

<sup>3</sup> The provision of active travel routes within new developments may act as 'greenways' if they contribute to effective connectivity to the proposed greenway network.



Figure 8.2: Percentage of People Commuting by Active Travel to Work in Dundalk



Permeability and connectivity are key elements of quality urban design. New developments shall be designed to maximise the opportunities for walking and cycling.

This Plan will support continued investment in walking and cycling infrastructure that makes it safer and more accessible.

This will assist in the implementation of the '10-Minute Neighbourhood' concept, whereby people will be able to meet most of their needs within a short walk or cycle from their homes. See Section 5.8 of Chapter 5 for more details on this concept.

Chapter 5 of the Local Transport Plan includes a list of projects and recommendations relating to active travel.

### 8.5.1 Walking and Wheeling

This Plan recognises the benefits of walking and wheeling as part of an active and healthy lifestyle and supports the delivery of projects that will encourage more people to walk or wheel.

The highest levels of pedestrian footfall are in the town centre area, which is the primary shopping area of the town. The Coast Road in Blackrock and the Point Road are also well utilised for recreational purposes. There are several active travel projects that the Council are progressing that involve improvements for the pedestrian. See Tables 8.1-8.3 below and Chapter 5 of the Local Transport Plan for details.

Table 8.1: Proposed Active Travel Connectivity Measures

LTP Option ID	Name	Description
14	Improve Active Travel Crossings	Improve the quality of pedestrian and cycle crossings in order to facilitate safer active travel for all users regardless of age, ability or disability.
38	Improve Permeability	Reduce active travel door-to-door distances by overcoming natural barriers and/or removing artificial barriers.
44	Castletown River Active Travel Crossing	Construct another crossing over the Castletown River to better facilitate active travel.
49	Improve link from Park Street to Marshes Shopping Centre	Improve access from the town centre to the Marshes Shopping Centre and increase permeability.



## 8.5.2 Cycling

Cycling has the opportunity to provide a healthy, sustainable and time reliable commute to and from work. Cycling is a less common mode of transport than walking with approximately 4.3% (1,035) of those usually resident in Dundalk cycling to work, school, college or childcare in 2022.

The cycle infrastructure within Dundalk is currently fragmented as areas that have cycle lanes are not connected in a legible network (see Map 8.1).

For example, the R215 is a relatively popular route for cycling but has no unbroken link to the Town Centre.

As part of the strategy of increasing the modal share of cycling, the Council are actively progressing several cycling projects within Dundalk. These active travel projects will seek to make cycling more attractive. See Tables 8.1-8.3 in this Chapter, and Chapter 5 of the Local Transport Plan, for details of these projects.

Table 8.2: Proposed Active Travel Infrastructure Measures

LTP Option ID	Name	Description
30	CycleConnects	Currently proposed network developed by the NTA: Primary routes along major radial/arterial routes, secondary routes interconnecting primary routes and residential estates, Greenways/interurban routes connecting surrounding areas. This option highlights which sections to prioritise from a transport demand perspective.
2	Upgrade Táin Trail	Develop and enhance the existing trail and make it an appealing active travel route.
20	New Line Blackrock Nature Trail	Upgrade existing New Line pathway in Blackrock.
52	Active Travel Enhancements along R132	Improve footpaths, cycle lanes and junctions from R132 / R215 junction (south) up to the Castletown River (Táin Bridge) (Active Travel Scheme LH/21/0010 allocated NTA funding in 2024)
53	Ard Easmuinn Rd to Train Station/Friary School and Dundalk Bus Station to Rail Station Active Travel Scheme	Dundalk Clarke to the Long Walk and adjacent areas. Improving footpaths, cycle lanes, crossings and junctions with the addition of one-way traffic only zones. Combines with the Red Route to improve interchange.
54	Ard Easmuinn Rd to Train Station/Friary School and Dundalk Bus Station to Rail Station Active Travel Scheme	Dundalk Clarke to the Castletown Road and the railway line underpass. Improving footpaths, cycle lanes crossings and junctions. Connects with Yellow route outside Clarke Station and at Pearse Park. The two routes combine to improve interchange.
55	Hill Street Active Travel	From Stapleton Place to Rampart Road via Stapleton Drive. Improvements to footpaths, cycle lanes, crossings and junctions.



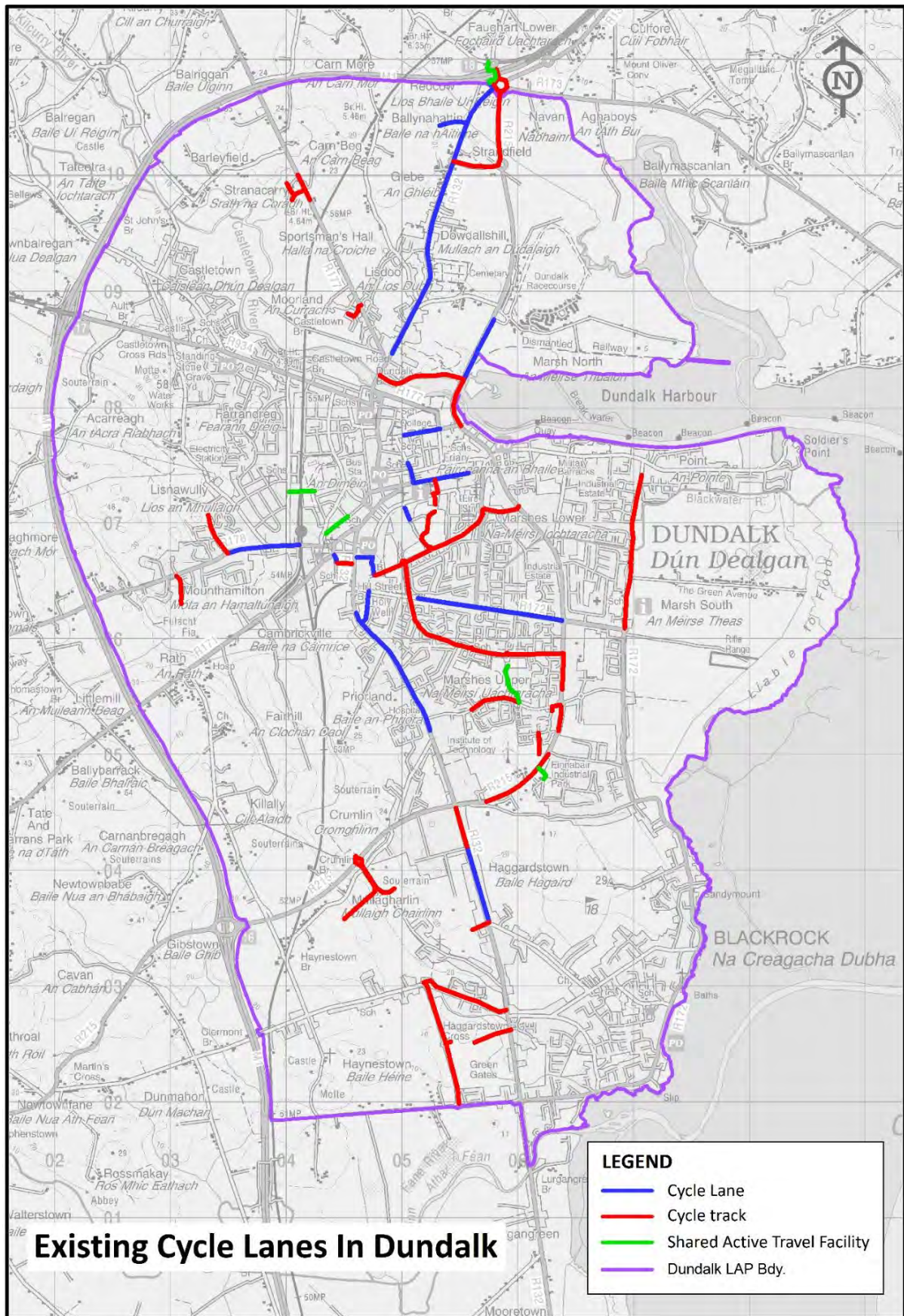
LTP Option ID	Name	Description
56	Hoey's Lane Active Travel	Along Hoey's Lane from R132 to R215. Improvements to footpaths, cycle lanes, crossings and junctions.
57	R132 Active Travel	Along the R132 from Xerox to Greengates. Improvements to footpaths, cycle lanes, crossings and junctions.
66	Transport Corridor connecting Tom Bellew Avenue to Hoey's Lane	New Transport Corridor including pedestrian link from Woodville Manor to Rockfield Court.
68	Coastal Greenway from Dundalk to Blackrock and infrastructure on both sides of the Castletown River.	Development of the Coastal Greenway from Dundalk to Blackrock in co-operation with the Office of Public Works will include the delivery of such infrastructure on both sides of the Castletown River through the Louth Coastal Defence Projects. This greenway could then potentially link to a future greenway heading south towards Castlebellingham and beyond.
69	Dundalk to Castleblayney Greenway	Development of the Dundalk to Castleblayney section of the Dundalk- Sligo Greenway.
79	Carrickmacross Road from Clarke Train Station entrance to Mount Hamilton Housing Estate	Active Travel scheme on the Carrickmacross Rd from Clarke Train Station entrance to Mount Hamilton Housing Estate.

Table 8.3: Proposed Active Travel Complementary Measures

LTP Option ID	Name	Description
41	Cycle Share Scheme	Work towards the implementation of a cycle share scheme in Dundalk.
50	Improve Walking Environment	Improve, extend and widen footpaths and add more lighting where necessary across the study area. Implement the principles of the NTA Infrastructure Equality Guidance.
51	Additional Cycle Parking	Provide increased cycle parking facilities across the study area to facilitate active travel for all types of bicycles (including cargo bikes, trikes, family bikes, and adapted bikes).
76	Mapping and Listing Public Rights of Way	To commence the process of mapping and listing public rights of way in the Study Area during the lifetime of this Plan under the provisions of <i>Section 14 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)</i> .

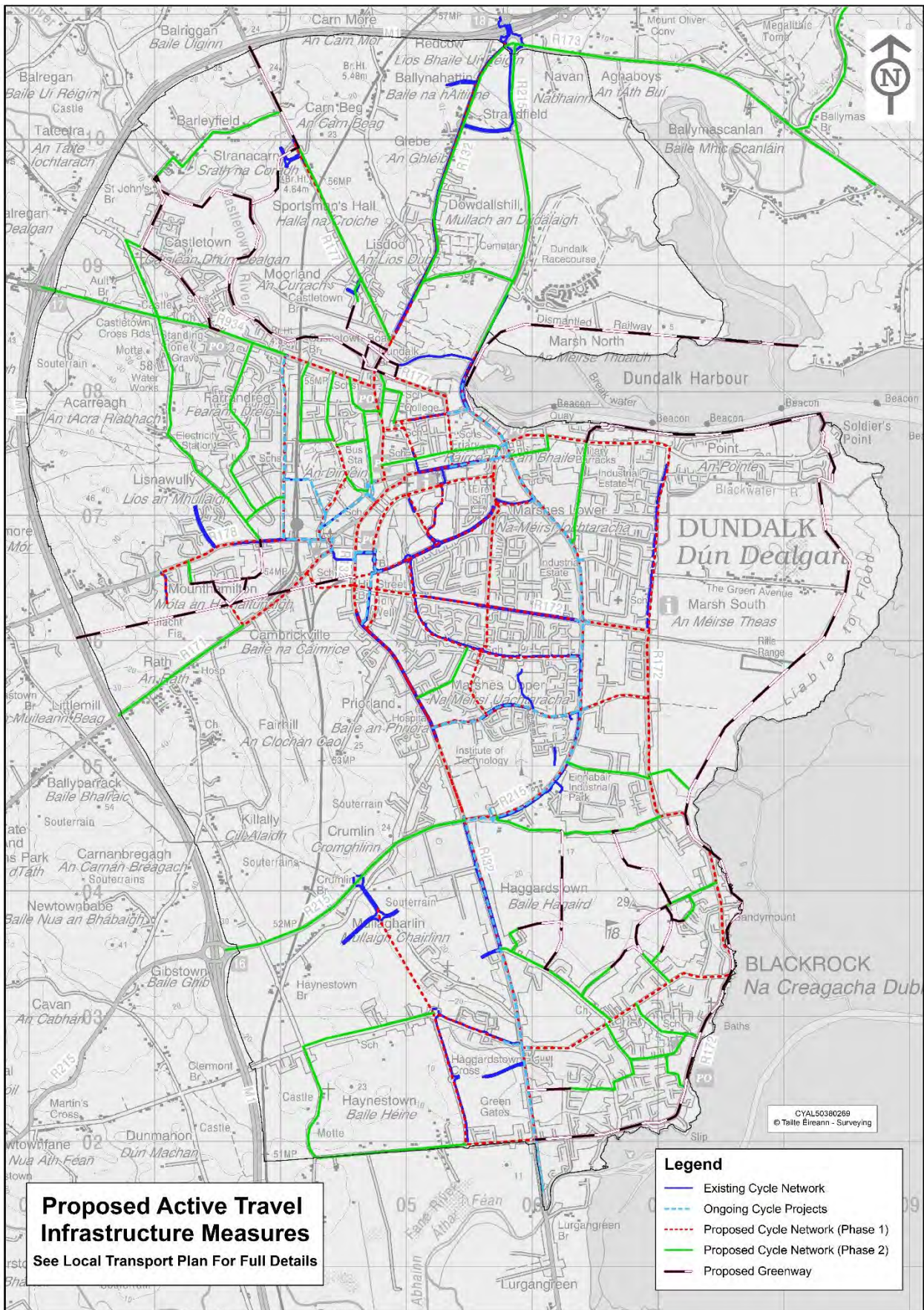


Map 8.1: Existing Cycle Lanes in Dundalk





Map 8.2: Proposed Active Travel Infrastructure Measures





### 8.5.3 Policy Objectives

#### MOV 7

To support the progression and implementation of the NTA CycleConnects Programme as it relates to the Plan area, the active travel projects as set out in Chapter 5 of the Local Transport Plan (and listed in Tables 8.1-8.3 of this Plan), and any other active travel projects proposed by the Council.

#### MOV 8

To support the retrospective provision of walking and cycling infrastructure, where feasible, to achieve growth in sustainable mobility and strengthen and improve the walking and cycling network.

#### MOV 9

To review the feasibility of implementation (where deemed necessary) of the 30km/h zones in Dundalk and Blackrock in creating attractive, low speed environments in accordance with the Department of Transport's 'Our Journey Towards Vision Zero: Ireland's Government Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030'.

#### MOV 10

To provide, where possible, traffic free pedestrian and cyclist routes particularly where such routes would provide a more direct, safer, and more attractive alternative to the car.

#### MOV 11

To encourage the provision of secure bicycle parking provision for all types of bicycles (including cargo bikes, trikes, family bikes, and adapted bikes) within the Plan area, including on/off street parking and at key public transport interchanges.

#### MOV 12

To support the design and implementation of public realm projects within the Plan area that will make Dundalk and Blackrock more attractive and liveable spaces which are climate resilient, promote sustainable transport, and facilitate accessibility for all, regardless of age, physical mobility, or social disadvantage.

#### MOV 13

To support permeability and connectivity throughout the Plan area that will improve connections within existing and between existing and new neighbourhoods. This includes vehicular and/or active travel connections between developed and undeveloped lands. Where such a connection would traverse an area of open space it will only be facilitated where the functionality of the open space will not be undermined. The principle of 'Filtered Permeability' will also be considered throughout the Plan area where considered appropriate/feasible.



## 8.6 Greenways

A greenway provides an off-road trail for non-motorised transport that can be utilised for walking, wheeling and cycling. Greenways are a valuable recreational amenity that can promote an active and healthy lifestyle and are also an important tourism asset. They also act as safe active travel commuter routes linking rural areas with urban centres. The Council will continue to support investment in new and existing greenway networks in Dundalk and the surrounding area including the following:

- **Castletown River:** There is a small section of well utilised greenway along the northern boundary of the Castletown River between the R215 and the Inner Relief Road. The greenway continues on the southern boundary of the river, west of Mountain View; this section is referred to as Navy Bank. This Plan will seek to support proposals that will connect the sections of existing greenway to create a continuous greenway along the Castletown River.
- **Dundalk Bay to Carlingford:** This greenway will seek to connect into the existing Carlingford Lough Greenway and provide a continuous cross-border greenway from Dundalk to Newry. It would significantly improve recreational infrastructure in the area. At the time of writing the project was at the Initial Concept and Feasibility Stage.
- **Louth Coastal Way - Dundalk to Blackrock:** As a part of the Louth Coastal Defence Project, it is envisaged that part of the Dundalk to Blackrock greenway can be incorporated into this flood defence scheme. It is anticipated that there will be an opportunity for this greenway to extend in a southerly direction towards Castlebellingham and beyond; and

- **Dundalk to Sligo Greenway** is intended to form part of the national cycle network, running approximately 176km through 5 counties. The Council will continue to work in collaboration with Monaghan County Council to progress the section from Dundalk to Castleblayney.

### 8.6.1 Policy Objectives

#### MOV 14

To continue to support the development of a network of greenways in Dundalk and the surrounding areas including those set out in Section 8.6 of this Plan, and to continue to engage and work with stakeholders including Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the National Transport Authority (NTA) and the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the progression of these projects.

#### MOV 15

To engage in the Compulsory Purchase Order process when required in order to facilitate the timely delivery of greenways and active travel/transport related projects.

## 8.7 Green Schools Travel Programme

The journey to school is an ideal way for children to take part in regular physical activity, to interact with their peers, and to develop the road sense children need as pedestrians and cyclists.

Travel is a key theme within the Green Schools programme, where schools set travel targets, with the ultimate aim of increasing the number of pupils walking, cycling, scooting, carpooling, using public transport or using park 'n' stride instead of the private car on the school run.



By promoting these sustainable transport modes, schools will improve pupils’ safety, health, and fitness. The schools will also lessen their overall impact on the environment, by reducing emissions and pollution.

The following schools within Dundalk were registered in the NTA programme ‘Safe Routes to School’ at the time of writing:

- St Louis Secondary School Dundalk;
- Dundalk Rehab and Care
- St. Malachy’s GNS Dundalk;

### 8.7.1 Policy Objective

#### MOV 16

To support the Green School Travel and Safe Routes to School Programmes and any other sustainable transport initiative developed by schools.



### 8.8 Public Transport

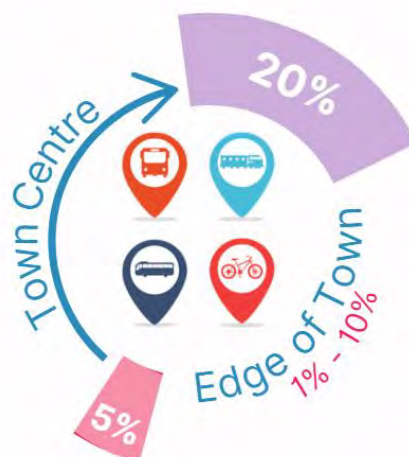
Public transport in Dundalk currently includes a bus and rail service. This Plan aims to strengthen existing and support the improvement of the public transport provision to, from and within Dundalk.



Data from Census 2022 indicates that 5.8% of the resident population use public transport to get to work while 12.3% of students travel to school or college by bus or train. The relatively low level of the population using public transport is an indication of the dominance of the car as the primary means of travel.

The Local Transport Plan analysed public transport use at Census Small Area level. Similar to the active travel figures, public transport commutes to work are less common at the edge of the town but moving towards the town centre the percentage of public transport users grows from 1% in parts up to 20% at its highest.

Figure 8.3: Percentage of People Commuting by Public Transport to Work in Dundalk





The Blackrock area has a lower share on average than the centre of Dundalk town with only 1% - 3% of trips being made on public transport. Areas in proximity to the bus and railway stations generally have a public transport usage of over 10% and in some cases over 15%.

### 8.8.1 Bus

Three of the six intra-town bus services in Dundalk are provided by Bus Éireann:

- 174 Long Walk – Muirhevnamor;
- 174A Long Walk - Fatima; and
- 174B Long Walk - Bay Estate.



A private bus company also operates routine services including:

- 169 St Patrick's Church – Main Street;
- 916 St Patrick's Church Loop; and
- 918 St Patrick's Church – Willow Grove.

Bus Éireann together with private bus operators, under licenses awarded by the National Transport Authority (NTA), also provide high frequency connections to Newry, Drogheda and Dublin. This includes connections to the IFSC and third level institutions in Dundalk and Dublin. These connections include:

- 100 Dundalk (Long Walk) Drogheda (Skerries) running hourly from 6.45am to 6pm;
- 100X Dundalk (Long Walk) Dublin (Hollis Street) hourly from 3.30am to 9.30pm;

- 168 Dundalk (Long Walk) Drogheda (Bus Station) every 90mins to 2 hours from 7.10am to 11.30pm;
- 900 Dundalk (Marshes) Drogheda-Dublin every 30mins or hour from 5.30am to 9.30pm;
- 901 Dundalk-Drogheda-DCU every 30mins or hour from 5.30am to 9.30pm; and
- 904 Dundalk-Drogheda-IFSC/UCD 6.30 and 7.00am, and 4.10pm and 5.10pm.

The Local Transport Plan has identified the following options to assist in encouraging a modal shift towards public transport:

#### • Bus Station Improvements

The existing Bus Station at the Long Walk is well located in the town centre within walking distance of a range of services and amenities, making it an excellent location for people travelling to/from the town centre. The constrained size of the site provides a challenge in improving/ expanding the number of services due to the limited number of bus bays.

This Plan supports any investment in and improvements to bus station infrastructure in the town that would facilitate an expansion of bus services, promote shared mobility, and improve the customer experience for passengers, particularly disabled users.

#### • Review of the Town Bus Network

This would involve amending the current bus network for Dundalk in order to increase the catchment population in addition to increasing the frequency of services and the provision of better facilities such as bus shelters and real time information.

See Table 8.4 overleaf and Section 5.4 of the Local Transport Plan for details of public transport measures this Plan would seek to progress.



Table 8.4: Proposed Public Transport Measures

LTP Option ID	Name	Description
21	Main Bus Station Improvement	Design a central bus station that is attractive, functional and capable of accommodating higher number of bus routes than the current Long Walk station. Facilities to include bicycle parking, upgraded lights and signage, improved pedestrian access and more public space.
24	Smart Ticketing	Allow passenger to use Leap Cards on all services.
25	Real Time Information	Provide passengers with live departure times for all services.
26	Bus stops improvement	Seating, shelters, uniform design.
31	Network overhaul	New bus network with emphasis on core spine along the R132/ R215.
72	Local Link rural bus transport service	Support the 'Local Link' rural transport service and to encourage operators to improve the service to meet the social and economic needs of the rural communities in the County.

### 8.8.1.1 Policy Objectives

#### MOV17

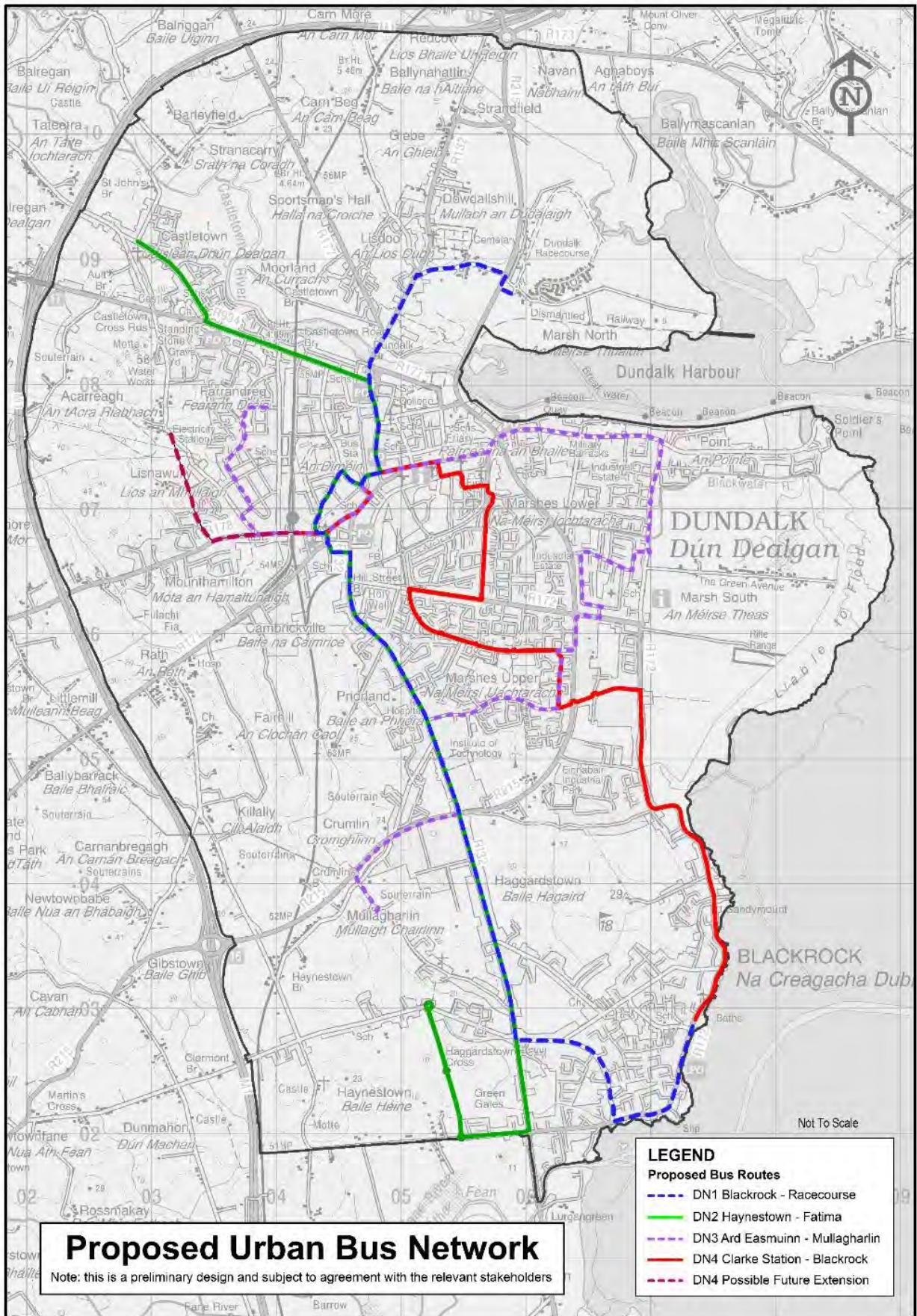
To support any investment, maintenance, improvements or upgrades to bus services and/or bus infrastructure and, to work with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and other stakeholders in delivering such projects and shared mobility hubs.

#### MOV18

To support and work with the National Transport Authority in implementing the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan in order to improve public transport connectivity and sustainable mobility between Dundalk and towns and villages in its catchment and wider area.



Map 8.3: Proposed Urban Bus Network





## 8.8.2 Rail

Dundalk Clarke Railway Station provides for intercity and commuter rail services. The intercity Enterprise services between Dublin and Belfast provides 55-minute journey times between Dundalk and Dublin Connolly and 75-minute journey time to Belfast.



The total number of daily rail passengers recorded at Dundalk Clarke in 2022 was 1,281, which was an increase of 111 passengers over the 2019 figure.

The majority (71%) of passengers travel on the Enterprise, with the remainder using commuter services. This is due to faster journey times, as the Enterprise is 25-minutes faster than the commuter service to Dublin.

81% of passengers boarding or alighting at Dundalk are travelling to or from the direction of Dublin, with 19% travelling to or from a Belfast direction.

There continues to be strong support at a national level to improve rail services between Dublin and Belfast. This includes funding of €165 million received in April 2024 which will be used to purchase eight new train sets. This investment will assist in reducing journey times and improve passenger experience. It is anticipated that the train sets will be delivered by 2030.

In October 2024 an hourly Enterprise Service was introduced between 05.50 and 18.50 departing Dublin, and 06.00 and 19.00 Monday to Saturday departing Belfast.

These additional services will significantly improve the connectivity between the cities and will benefit commuters, business travellers, and tourists travelling to Dublin and Belfast from Dundalk.

This Plan will support continued improvements to rail services to and from Dundalk and any associated investment in infrastructure that would facilitate an improvement to the level of services and/or customer experience.

### 8.8.2.1 Policy Objective

#### MOV 19

To support the ongoing investment in rail services and associated infrastructure in Dundalk including the provision of a higher speed rail service between Dublin and Belfast.

#### MOV 20

To examine the feasibility, in partnership with Irish Rail, the National Transport Authority and any other stakeholders, in providing additional access points to Dundalk Clarke Railway Station, and the provision of additional bicycle parking in the station and its environs.

## 8.9 Road Network

The accessibility of Dundalk provided by its proximity to the motorway, in addition to the connectivity provided by the national primary, secondary, regional, and local road network is a fundamental part of the attractiveness of the town for economic investment. The continued upgrade and investment in the road network is therefore critical in maintaining the economic competitiveness of the town.

### 8.9.1 National Road Network

The national road network provides the basis for Dundalk's inter-regional and national connectivity and is critical for the movement of goods.



Maintaining the capacity and efficiency of national roads is key to the functioning of the area and to support the economy.

While there are no national roads within the Plan boundary the regional roads in the town connect to national primary and secondary roads.

### 8.9.2 Regional Roads

Local and regional roads provide important links between Dundalk and the smaller towns, villages and dispersed rural communities across the County.

Maintaining the economic competitiveness and attractiveness of Dundalk is interconnected with a high quality and well maintained regional and local road network connecting businesses with customers and employees. A list of regional roads serving Dundalk is provided Table 8.5 below.

Table 8.5: Regional Roads in Dundalk

Road	Description
<b>R132</b>	Bypasses the centre of the town providing access to Dunleer, Castlebellingham, and Drogheda.
<b>R171</b>	Links Dundalk with Ardee via Louth Village.
<b>R172</b>	Links Blackrock with the town centre.
<b>R177</b>	Links Dundalk with Northern Ireland.
<b>R178</b>	Connects Dundalk with Carrickmacross, Shercock and Bailieborough to the west.
<b>R215</b>	Runs north-south through the centre of Dundalk from junction with the R132 at Racecourse Road roundabout to the Xerox Junction.

This Plan will support the ongoing investment in the regional road network of the town including the east-west link road from Dundalk to Cavan, which is part of proposed improvements in the road infrastructure between Dundalk and Sligo.

At the time of writing this project was at the preliminary design stage.

### 8.9.3 Local Road Projects

As the population and employment base of Dundalk continues to grow it is important that people, vehicles and goods are able to move efficiently around the town.

To facilitate this growth the Council has identified a requirement to construct a number of link roads, which are also referred to as transport corridors. These transport corridors will have the dual benefit of reducing congestion in the more central areas of the town whilst also releasing undeveloped lands for residential and employment related uses. Walking, cycling and public transport (bus) infrastructure will be integrated into the design of these roads ensuring that public transport and active travel measures will complement the provision of these roads thus enabling the expansion of the cycling and pedestrian and public transport network in the town.



The Mount Avenue transport corridor is one such project. This road, which was completed in Q4 of 2024 has improved connectivity between the Castletown Road and the Carrickmacross Road.



The project involved the upgrade of the northern section of the Mount Avenue Road and the construction of approximately 700 metres of new road. This project was part funded by the Government under the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF).

This road will also release a large parcel of strategically located lands that will enable the creation of a new neighbourhood with associated housing, neighbourhood, community facilities and services.

A full list of link road/transport corridor projects in the town are listed in Table 8.6.



Table 8.6: Proposed Link Roads/Transport Corridors in Dundalk

Location (Townlands)	Description
Haynestown	Link between the L-3161 Marlbog Roundabout and L-7163 Chapel Road Roundabout (Option 5 in Local Transport Plan).
Haynestown	Link from R132 through Belfield Estate to the Marlbog Roundabout (Option 62 in Local Transport Plan).
Carnbeg / Ballynahattin / Dowdallshill	Link from R177 Armagh Road to R215 Newry Road (Option 23 in Local Transport Plan).
Castletown / Lisnawully	Link from R934 Castleblayney Road to R178 Carrickmacross Road (Option 60 in Local Transport Plan).
Mounthamilton	Link Road from R178 Carrickmacross Road to R171 Old Ardee Road (Option 61 in Local Transport Plan).
Hill Street	Removal of Hill Street Bridge and new junction layout with Millenium Road (Option 65 in Local Transport Plan).
Castletown / Newtownbalregan	Link from upgraded Mount Avenue Road to the proposed link from R934 Castleblayney Road to R178 Carrickmacross Road (Option 63 in Local Transport Plan).

#### 8.9.4 Environmental, Junction, and General Improvements

Environmental improvements play an important role in the efficiency and attractiveness of the transport network as well as creating a better space to live and work.

The Local Transport Plan identified several environmental and public realm improvements that would support active travel and improve the flow and efficiency of traffic in Dundalk.



The options include improved traffic management measures on Crowe Street and Park Street, as well as a goods delivery strategy. The improvements to Crowe Street and Park Street include lane realignment and footpath widening. The goods delivery strategy will be aimed at controlling heavy good vehicles and other delivery vehicles to reduce congestion and the promotion of more sustainable delivery systems.

Details of the road improvement and maintenance projects for consideration during the lifetime of this Plan are identified in Tables 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9. All other proposed projects are set out in Chapter 5 of the Local Transport Plan.

Table 8.7 – Environmental, Junction, and General Improvements

Location	Proposed Works
Smarter Travel Projects Dundalk	Refurbishment
Carrick Road / McEntee Avenue	Junction Upgrade Works
Navy Bank Open Space	Public Realm Scheme
Dundalk Library Quarter	Environmental Improvements
Connector Road from Hoey's Lane to Tom Bellew Avenue	New Local Street Construction

Table 8.8 – Proposed Road Improvement Measures

LTP Option ID	Name	Description
3	Chapel Street One Way	Implement a one-way system on Chapel Street to reduce congestion along the road and make it more attractive for active travel. The scheme will be supported by traffic management measures to accommodate diversion routes.
17	Sandy Lane Upgrades	Reconfigure Sandy Lane and improve the footpaths.
18	Rock Road Footpaths	In order to improve safety for pedestrians, lighting should be installed, and the current footpath should be extended to cover the entire length of the road.
40	Residential Parking Review	Define a zoning system for residential parking to prevent usage of retail spaces.
71	Provide EV charging infrastructure both on street and in new developments	Provision of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles both on street and in new developments.
75	Dundalk- Sligo Road	To support the progression of the Dundalk-Sligo Road, as per the Louth County Development Plan.



Table 8.9 – Proposed Multimodal Measures

LTP Option ID	Name	Description
9	Road Space Reallocation	Reduce private vehicle use and through traffic in urban spaces through the reallocation of road space.
32A	Mobility Hub 1 (North)	Mobility hub 1km from the town centre with potential to facilitate active travel.
32B	Mobility Hub 2 (Northwest)	Mobility hub on the Castletown Road (indicative location)
32C	Mobility Hub 3 (West)	Mobility hub on the Carrickmacross Road (indicative location)
32D	Mobility Hub 4 (Southwest)	Mobility hub on the Inner Relief Road (indicative location)
32E	Mobility Hub 5 (South)	Mobility hub close to Greengates (indicative location)
34	30km/h Zones	Provide mixed traffic streets with speed limits of 30km/h where cycle lanes may not be possible - LCC County Development Plan MOV27. Note: implementation of these zones would be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the Department of Transport's Speed Limit Review.
37	Promote Travel Plans	Collaborate with major trip generators (e.g. DkIT) and prepare mobility management plans.
39	Safe Routes to School	Programme developed to increase walking and cycling to school. Measures to support the programme. St. Louis Secondary School, RehabCare, St. Malachy's GNS all included.
47	Francis Street and Park Street Public Realm	Remove one lane of traffic and widen the footpaths to make the area attractive and to support night-time economy. Continuity with the people-focused Earl St and Market Square.
48	Crowe Street Public Realm	Improve public realm along Crowe St. Currently two lanes of traffic and parking on both sides, potential for road space reallocation, in particular in front of An Táin Centre. Continuity with the people-focused Earl Street and Market Square.
58	Mill Street Active Travel and One Way System	Conversion of Mill Street to be one-way westbound. Improvements to footpaths, cycle lanes, crossings and junctions on Mill Street and the adjacent Seatown Place.
70	Improve Parking Facilities at Dundalk Clarke Station	Install EV charging points at the station, encouraging commuters to park there and travel and complete their journey via active travel or public transport.



LTP Option ID	Name	Description
77	New active travel access to Dundalk Clarke train station on the North side, connecting to Pearse Park.	Active Travel access on the north side of Dundalk Clarke car parking lot, via Pearse Park.

### 8.9.5 Policy Objectives

#### MOV 21

To protect the strategic transport function of national roads, including motorways through the implementation of the *Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and, any subsequent guidelines.

#### MOV 22

To support investment and improvements to the public road infrastructure in the Plan area including bridges and other ancillary structures, taking into account both car and non-car modes of transport and road safety requirements.

#### MOV 23

To support improvements and upgrades to the road network in Dundalk and the surrounding area including those projects set out in Tables 8.7-8.9 and any other project identified by the Council or included in any future updated Road Works Programme.

#### MOV 24

To require the preparation of transport and traffic assessments for new developments in accordance with the requirements set out in the TII publication, *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines*.

### 8.10 Development at Motorway Interchanges

The location of Dundalk adjacent to the M1 motorway is a major catalyst for economic development in the town and wider region by providing high quality road infrastructure and connectivity to both air and seaports enabling access wider to domestic and international markets.

Motorway interchanges are strategic locations much sought after by developers due to the desirability and benefits of having immediate access to the primary road network. However, uncontrolled and poorly regulated development at interchanges can often be problematic.



This can be due to such development being exclusively dependent on road transport, the possibility of traffic congestion on national routes, the impact on rural landscapes and environments, and the costs involved in the provision of other infrastructure such as piped services, electricity and gas. In order to maximise the benefits accruing to Dundalk from the motorway and to regulate development in a sustainable and effective manner along its route, the following policy objectives will be applied:

### 8.10.1 Policy Objectives

#### MOV 25

To promote and facilitate development at the Dundalk South (Junction 16), Castleblayney Road (Junction 17) and Ballymascanlon (Junction 18) Motorway Interchanges in accordance with the land use zonings as set out in the Zoning and Flood Zones Map of the Local Area Plan. Any large-scale development proposal in proximity to these interchanges will be required to prepare a traffic and transport assessment in accordance with the requirements of the TII publication, *Transport and Traffic Assessment Guidelines*.

#### MOV 26

To protect the strategic transport function of national roads, including motorways through the implementation of the *Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and, any subsequent guidelines.

### 8.11 Park and Share Facilities

There is a Park and Share facility off Junction 16 on the M1, on lands west of the plan boundary, that was opened in 2021. The facility is well utilised and is close to capacity at peak times.

It is maintained by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and has the potential to be expanded in the future.

The Local Transport Plan for Dundalk has identified the potential to provide additional park and share facilities to be known as Mobility Hubs. Five possible areas in the town have been identified as follows:

- Newry Road/Armagh Road;
- Castletown Road;
- Carrickmacross Road;
- Ardee Road; and
- Dublin Road (Greengates).

Further details are set out in Chapter 5 of the Local Transport Plan.

### 8.11.1 Policy Objective

#### MOV 27

To work with the National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), landowners and other stakeholders in progressing park and ride and park and share projects for the Dundalk area including those recommended in the Local Transport Plan.

### 8.12 Car Sharing

Car sharing is based on the principle of a communal car being available to several users when needed. There are several private companies providing car sharing services in Dundalk. Car sharing benefits both the users and the environment through less congestion, reduced emissions and associated fuel costs, fewer parking spaces and improved air quality. This plan recognises the potential role of car sharing can provide to residents and visitors to Dundalk.

### 8.12.1 Policy Objective

#### MOV 28

To facilitate provision of car sharing infrastructure and facilities in appropriately located areas in Dundalk.



### 8.13 Car Parking

Whilst this Plan supports and advocates a change in travel behaviour towards more sustainable modes of transport, it is also recognised that there continues to be a requirement for car parking.

There are currently ten public off-street car parks in the town as follows:

- Linen Hall Street;
- Griffith Court;
- Longwalk Long stay;
- Longwalk Short stay;
- Town Hall;
- Roden Place;
- Dundalk Library;
- The Rampart Road Long stay;
- Rampart Lane at River Lane; and
- Rampart Road Dundalk Credit Union

The Council provides additional town centre parking with 'pay and display' parking available at Dundalk Town Hall on Saturdays and Sundays. There is also a generous provision of car parking within large private car parks at the Longwalk, the Marshes Shopping Centre, Coes Road and Dundalk Retail Park.

In creating a sustainable community, particularly in the town centre and surrounding residential streets it is recognised that there is a need to achieve balance between meeting the parking demands for businesses and residents and creating an attractive environment where greater priority is given to public realm and active travel improvements.

The car parking standards in the County Development Plan are applicable in the assessment of the car parking requirements for developments in Dundalk. Any proposals for a reduced level of parking will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For residential developments proposing a reduction in car parking consideration will be given to the location of the development, availability of public transport, number of units proposed (including number of bedrooms in each unit), and anticipated occupants.

#### 8.13.1 Policy Objectives

##### MOV 29

To recognise the importance of on-street parking in Dundalk for businesses, residents and visitors and where appropriate, to facilitate the re-organisation and/or loss of spaces to facilitate the delivery of public realm and/or active travel projects.

##### MOV 30

To discourage long term/commuter parking and ensure there is adequate parking provision in Dundalk for shopping, business, and leisure uses.

#### 8.13.2 Parking Along Residential Streets

The streets in the older, established areas of Dundalk adjacent to the town centre are primarily residential and consist of a mix of house types including detached, semi-detached, and terraced properties. Car parking along these streets varies between in-curtilage and on-street and is largely dependent on the house type. There are a number of streets that were designed to provide parking on street with a hardstanding or front garden between the footpath and the front door.

As the demand for car parking in the urban core has increased, there have been proposals to provide in-curtilage parking along such streets. The implementation of such proposals could result in traffic safety issues due to the vehicular movements to access and egress the spaces and could also result in the loss of on-street parking, depending on the location of the development.

It can also impact on the character and setting of the street. Whilst these proposals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis this Plan would generally not be in favour of the provision of in-curtilage parking in such locations due to issues relating to traffic safety and the loss of on-street parking.



### 8.13.3 Policy Objective

#### MOV 31

To avoid the use of gardens and/or hardstanding areas to the front of residential properties along the older residential streets in Dundalk for parking, particularly in the urban core of the town, where such proposals would result in the loss of on-street parking and/or would result in the creation of a traffic hazard.

### 8.14 Electric Vehicles

As transportation transitions away from combustion engines, electric vehicles will play an increasingly important role in reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality, particularly, in urban environments. There are currently charging points in various locations in the town. Under the FASTER Project charging points were installed at Dundalk Tennis Club whilst the ESB has installed a high-powered charging point on the Dublin Road.

In May 2024 the Department of Transport published the Draft Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan 2024-2030, which sets out a pathway in expanding public charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. This Plan will support the ongoing investment and installation of charging points and associated infrastructure and support the provision of an *Electric Vehicle Strategy*.

#### 8.14.1 Policy Objective

#### MOV 32

To facilitate the switch to electric vehicles through the roll-out of additional electric charging points at appropriate locations within Dundalk in association with relevant agencies and stakeholders and facilitate the provision of electricity charging infrastructure within Dundalk in accordance with the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 and any subsequent strategy.



# CHAPTER 9

## INFRASTRUCTURE





## 9 INFRASTRUCTURE

### 9.1 Introduction

The provision of high-quality infrastructure and environmental services is pivotal to enabling growth, securing investment, creating sustainable, attractive and safe places, safeguarding community health and wellbeing, and protecting the environment.

Enabling infrastructure that can facilitate growth includes water services, surface water management, energy, telecommunications, and broadband infrastructure; whilst waste management ensures the potential impacts of waste on the environment and human health are reduced.

Proper planning of infrastructure and utilities is critical so that they can support development, in a manner that is environmentally sensitive, cost and resource efficient, and protects public health and wellbeing.

### 9.2 Policy Context

National, regional, and county development plan policy recognises the critical role of infrastructure and service provision in the implementation of plan led development, enabling population growth and attracting economic investment.

It is also recognised that in planning for future infrastructure a key policy approach will be ensuring that mitigating against and adapting to the impacts of climate change has been factored into the design, location, and construction methods to be utilised in the delivery of infrastructure.

### 9.3 Water Supply and Wastewater

Uisce Éireann has statutory responsibility for the national provision of public water services, which includes the supply and treatment of drinking water and the disposal of wastewater.

It is a strategic aim of Uisce Éireann to ensure there is adequate water and wastewater treatment and network capacity available to facilitate growth in accordance with national and regional economic and spatial planning policy. Louth County Council continues to work closely with Uisce Éireann in the operation and maintenance of the public water supply and wastewater collection and treatment systems in Dundalk. The Uisce Éireann Capital Investment Plan identifies the priority projects for water services infrastructure and investment. At the time of writing the 2025-2029 Capital Investment Plan was under preparation. Recently completed, ongoing and future investment proposals for Dundalk include the following projects:

- Dundalk East Wastewater Network (ongoing);
- Dundalk Water Supply Scheme - Water Treatment Plant Upgrade (Completed August 2022);
- Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)/ Major Urban Development Sites (MUHDS) Growth Programme (Water and Wastewater) - Mount Avenue, Dundalk (to be complete in 2025); and
- St. Helena's Pumping Station and Rising Main - Assessment & Replacement (completed July 2023).

#### 9.3.1 Water Supply

Water supply in Dundalk is sourced from Cavanhill and Greenmount Water Treatment Plants. Works to the Cavanhill Water Treatment Plant have recently been completed which will assist in safeguarding the water supply for businesses and homes in Dundalk.

The Uisce Éireann National Water Resource Plan (NWRP) was adopted in Spring 2021. Following on from this, regional plans have been prepared.



Louth falls within the Eastern and Midland, and North-West Regions with Dundalk being located in the North-West Region. The Regional Resources Plan for the North-West was published in 2023. This Plan aims to enable secure safe, reliable and sustainable drinking water supplies in Dundalk for the next 25 years.

The Castletown Water Network Upgrade works involve upgrading and upsizing 1.7km of water mains and is part of a project to improve the capacity of the existing water network and operational performance in the area. This project is being delivered to support existing and future developments in the Castletown area.

### 9.3.2 Water Conservation

Water conservation has a major role in reducing the demand for and leakage of potable water in Dundalk through measures such as active leakage detection, demand management and pressure management.

The National Leakage Reduction Programme, implemented by Uisce Éireann, commits to investing €250 million every year until 2030 to fixing leaks to provide a more reliable water supply.

Some of the leakage reduction programmes recently completed in Dundalk include the replacement of ageing water mains in Muirhevnamor, Quay Street, Dublin Road and Ecco Road. These projects have helped improve the reliability of supply, eliminated existing leaks and improved water network operation that will require less maintenance in the future.

### 9.3.4 Policy Objectives

#### INF 1

To liaise and work in partnership with Uisce Éireann in identifying, prioritising and progressing the implementation of water and wastewater projects and policies over the lifetime of this Plan that will enable Dundalk to achieve the projected population target and housing allocation set out in Table 2.4 in the Development Strategy (Chapter 2) of this Plan.

### 9.3.3 Wastewater

Wastewater in Dundalk is directed to the wastewater treatment plants located on the Point Road and a second in Blackrock on Mooretown Lane. An upgrade to the Blackrock Wastewater Treatment Plant was completed in 2020 and provided additional capacity. At the time of writing capacity was available in both the Dundalk and Blackrock Wastewater Treatment Plants.

Several pumping stations in Dundalk have been upgraded or are subject to planned upgrades to address capacity issues including the following:

- St. Helena's WWPS (completed July 2023);
- Cocklehill WWPS (completed Q4 2023);
- The Square WWPS (completed Q2 2024); and
- Coes Road WWPS (to be completed during the life of the Plan).

Whilst capacity issues have been identified in the existing wastewater network, design solutions will be set out in the Dundalk-Blackrock Strategic Drainage Study, which was being prepared by Uisce Éireann at the time of writing. The progression of these recommended projects will ensure the wastewater network will have the capacity to cater for the projected population and economic growth during the plan period.



#### INF 2

To support the delivery of essential infrastructure, incorporating appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, concurrent with the future residential, commercial and employment growth of Dundalk.

#### INF 3

To support the provision, extension and upgrade of high-quality water and wastewater services infrastructure for both existing and future developments within the plan area, consistent with the principles of sustainability.

#### INF 4

To require all new developments to connect to the public supply where public water and wastewater infrastructure is available, or likely to be available, and which has sufficient capacity.

#### INF 5

To discourage the use of pump stations for conveyance of sewage unless the proposed pump station will cater for a significant catchment of zoned development lands that otherwise cannot be serviced. Where deemed appropriate, in consultation with Uisce Éireann, temporary pumping arrangements may be considered as an interim measure, pending the provision of more permanent arrangements within a reasonable timeframe. All arrangements for same will be as per the requirements and agreement of Uisce Éireann.

#### INF 6

To promote the sustainable use of water and water conservation (such as rainwater harvesting) in existing and new developments within Dundalk and to support the commitment to water conservation and leakage reduction in accordance with best practice, and through the implementation of the National Leakage Reduction Programme.

### 9.4 Surface Water Management and Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS)

In recent years surface water management in Louth has moved away from the more traditional interventions such as piping, culverting, and the use of underground attenuation towards a focus on nature-based solutions such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

The use of SuDS will improve the management of surface water run-off and the provision of green infrastructure in new developments can help mitigate the effects of flooding, through the utilisation of nature-based SuDS.

Such measures are an essential part of managing the effects of climate change and creating a more climate resilient urban environment.



The Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS) produced several policy documents, which include:

- Environmental Management;
- Drainage of New Developments; and
- Climate Change.

These documents focus on the design approach and criteria for drainage infrastructure within new development to ensure it does not continue the trend of pollution and flooding of waterways.



The publication 'Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas – Best Practice Interim Guidance Document' prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in 2022 provides best practice advice for the use of nature-based solutions.

#### 9.4.1 Policy Objectives

##### INF 7

To require the use of sustainable drainage systems to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of SuDS measures be incorporated in all new development (including extensions to existing developments). All development proposals shall be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment including run-off quantity, run off quality and impacts on habitat and water quality and should have particular regard nature based solutions and Section 3.5 of the accompanying Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in Volume 4, 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Surface Water Guidance and Strategy'<sup>1</sup>.

Nature based SuDS include ponds and basins, wetlands, planted filter strips and swales, permeable surfaces, green facades, and green roofs.

Such drainage systems can assist in the delivery of water sensitive urban design which is an approach to design that delivers greater harmony between the water cycle, the environment, and communities. The benefits are wide ranging, including a reduction in pollution from urban run-off, reduced flooding, and reduced loading of combined sewer systems. They can be positive landscape features within the urban environment, providing amenity benefits and contributing to biodiversity.

All new developments in the Plan area shall incorporate SuDS into their design proposals and shall be designed in accordance with the best practice guidance set out in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS) and the Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas – Best Practice Interim Guidance Document.

<sup>1</sup> Because of the infinite range of land use types and associated developments and designs that could occur on sites under this Plan, the full range of SuDS available should be considered, taking into account the recommendations and information provided in Section 3.5 of the SFRA report.



#### INF 8

To require that all development proposals meet the design criteria, (adjusted to reflect local conditions), and material designs contained in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDS) and demonstrate how runoff is captured as close to source as possible with subsequent slow release to the drainage system and watercourse.

#### INF 9

To seek to avoid the discharge of additional surface water to combined sewers and promote Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and solutions to maximise the capacity of Dundalk's combined drainage system.

#### INF 10

To ensure all new developments provide for separated drainage systems.

#### INF 11

To promote rainwater harvesting and grey water use in all developments and in particular for larger developments, as an alternative to attenuation.

#### INF 12

To encourage in all buildings, and particular in buildings of increased height, the provision of green roofs and green walls as an integrated part of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), wherever possible.

#### INF 13

To encourage the use of Nature based Sustainable Urban Drainage System (NbSUDS), when feasible, where streetscape enhancement programmes or resurfacing programmes are planned.

## 9.5 Water Quality and River Basin Management Plan

The Water Framework Directive was adopted in 2000. It requires that all waters are protected and that measures are put in place to ensure the quality of these waters is restored to at least 'good' status or 'good' potential by 2027. This is carried out through the implementation of a River Basin Management Plan (RBMP). In Ireland there is a single River Basin District. A Draft River Basin Management Plan for the country was published in Q1 2022.

This Plan sets out the measures necessary to protect and improve the quality of our waters.

The RBMP was finalised in Q4 2024. There are several waterbodies within Dundalk with all monitored waterbodies designated with an ecological status of moderate.

The unmonitored waterbodies have been modelled and assigned a poor ecological status. This Plan will aim to support the improvement of waterbodies throughout Dundalk.

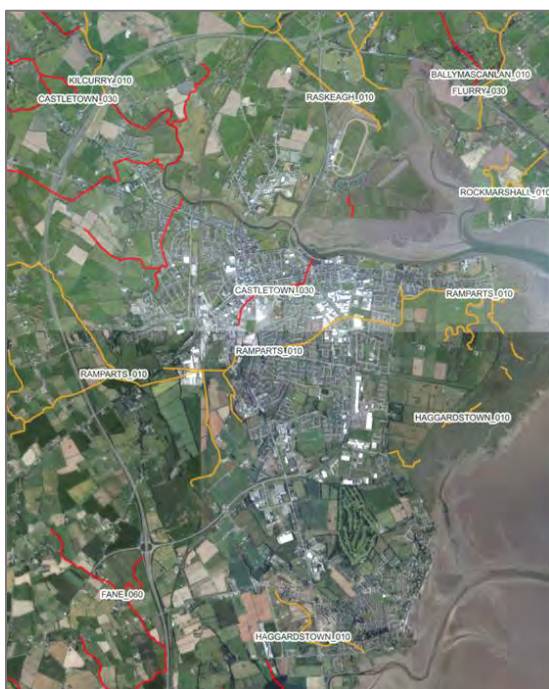


Table 9.1: Monitored and Unmonitored Sites

Monitored	Unmonitored
Raskeagh 010	Haggardstown 010
Castletown 020	Haggardstown 010
Castletown 030	
Fane 060	
Ramparts 010	

Groundwater is used to supply water for drinking, agriculture, and industry. It helps maintain healthy water ecosystems flowing into wetlands and rivers. Human activities can lead to pollution of groundwater, if not managed properly. In the most recent reporting period 2016-2021, the EPA has designated status of the groundwater catchments for Dundalk as ‘Good’.

If land is not appropriately managed there is potential for contaminants to be introduced into water sources.



This can create challenges at water treatment plants that result in higher treatment costs.

### 9.5.1 Policy Objectives

#### INF 14

To implement the EU Water Framework Directive through the implementation of the appropriate River Basin Management Plan and Programme of Measures to protect and improve water bodies and to ensure developments shall not, individually or cumulatively, adversely impact on the status of waterbodies, subject to Water Framework Directive exemptions.

#### INF 15

To ensure all new development incorporates appropriate measures to protect existing water bodies, through appropriate treatment of runoff. In particular, discharges from car parks shall be appropriately treated so as to remove pollutant materials.

#### INF 16

To protect any groundwater resources in Dundalk and to implement the recommendations included in any Groundwater Protection Scheme prepared under the EU Groundwater Directives.



## 9.6 Flood Risk Management

Preventing and mitigating the impact of flooding through Flood Risk Management is an important role in proper and comprehensive spatial planning.

'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2009) provides for an integrated and standardised approach to flood risk management within the planning system and acts as the principal guidance document for dealing with flood risk. This guidance requires an examination of flood risk as part of the preparation of this Plan. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was undertaken for Dundalk to inform the preparation of this Local Area Plan, details of which are set out in Volume 4.

The land use zoning maps published as part of this Plan include flood zones. It should be noted that these flood zones may be updated during the life of this Plan. Applicants and developers are therefore advised to consult the OPW Flood Information Portal <https://www.floodinfo.ie/> or contact the Planning Authority to confirm the most up to date flood maps that are available. All Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessments shall be based on the most up to date flood maps.

### 9.6.1 Dundalk and Blackrock Flood Relief Scheme

Louth County Council, in partnership with the Office of Public Works (OPW) are advancing the Dundalk and Blackrock Flood Relief Scheme to improve flood risk management for the town.

The OPW recommended the development of the scheme as a result of the work completed in the Neagh Bann Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study. It forms part of the National Development Plan 2030 with €1.3bn announced by the Government for Flood Relief Schemes throughout the country.

At the time of writing background and preparatory work was ongoing with regard to the preliminary design of the Dundalk and Blackrock Flood Relief Scheme.



Whilst the flood defences for this scheme have yet to be finalised, they may include a series of hard defences, including flood embankments and walls, rock armour coastal protection, demountable barriers, road raising, a sluice gate and tanking of two properties, and channel conveyance improvements.

The defences would be required along with improvement of channel conveyance on the Blackrock River and Dundalk Blackwater River, along with storage on the Castletown River.

These proposed measures are expected to provide protection to the 0.5% coastal events and the 1% AEP fluvial flood event. On completion, it is anticipated that it will afford protection to approximately 450 properties, both residential and non-residential, from 1 in 100-year flood events. This Plan supports the ongoing co-operation between the Council, the OPW and other stakeholders in progressing the Dundalk and Blackrock Flood Relief Scheme.

### 9.6.2 Benefitting Lands

New developments proposed on lands benefitting from drainage district measures shall preserve access for maintenance. Applications for development on land identified as benefitting land may be prone to flooding, and as such site specific flood risk assessments may be required in these areas.



### 9.6.3 Policy Objectives

#### INF 17

To support the progression of the Dundalk and Blackrock Flood Relief Scheme and the delivery of associated infrastructure critical to the implementation of the Scheme; and to prohibit development that could prejudice the future delivery of the Scheme.

#### INF 18

To work closely with the OPW, property owners and other stakeholders in the progression and delivery of the Dundalk and Blackrock Flood Relief Scheme.

#### INF 19

To require all proposals for development falling within or adjacent to an identified flood zone(s) to submit a site-specific flood Risk Assessment, based on the most up to date information available, that demonstrates that the proposal identifies all sources of flood risk to and from the proposed development, can adequately manage and mitigate any flood risk arising from the development including details of any structural and non-structural risk management measures (e.g. floor levels, flood-resilient construction etc.), and will not exacerbate flood risk elsewhere<sup>2</sup>.

#### INF 20

With respect to climate change, Flood Risk Assessments shall apply the precautionary approach recommended in the Guidelines and shall consider climate change impacts and adaptation measures, including details of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures, such as those relating to floor levels, internal layout, flood-resistant construction, flood-resilient construction, emergency response planning and access and egress during flood events. The Local Area Plan SFRA datasets and the most up to date CFRAM Programme climate scenario mapping, together with the allowances to be provided for future flood risk management provided in the OPW's (2019) Flood Risk Management Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan and the guidance on potential future scenarios contained therein, should be consulted by prospective applicants for developments in this regard and will be made available to lower-tier Development Management processes in the Council.

<sup>2</sup> More information on requirements in relation to Structural and Non-Structural Risk Management Measures are provided in a footnote to this Policy Objective at Table 5 of the accompanying SFRA report in Volume 4.



## INF 21

Uses under all zoning objectives (apart from where the Justification Test outlined in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines has been passed or where the uses comprise minor development in existing developed areas, as outlined in Section 5.28 of the Guidelines as amended by Circular PL 2/2014) shall be limited to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A, and less vulnerable or water-compatible uses in Flood Zone B<sup>3</sup>. Detailed, site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required in these areas.

This limitation shall take primacy over any other provision relating to these land use zoning objectives. The Justification Test has been passed for the following Land Use Zonings:

- Lands east of Bellews Bridge Road and north of Castletown Road, zoned A1 Existing Residential and A2 New Residential Phase 1 (Site 10 on SFRA Report Table 6 'Justification Tests');
- Dundalk Central Map 1, zoned A1 Existing Residential, B2 Neighbourhood Centre, B4 District Centre, C1 Mixed Use, E1 General Employment and G1 Community Facilities (Site 11 on SFRA Report Table 6 'Justification Tests');
- Dundalk Central Map 2, zoned A1 Existing Residential, B1 Town Centre, C1 Mixed Use, C2 Port Harbour Area, E1 General Employment, and G1 Community Facilities (Site 12 on SFRA Report Table 6 'Justification Tests');
- Lands built out north of Castletown River, zoned A1 Existing Residential and E1 General Employment (Site 13 on SFRA Report Table 6 'Justification Tests'); and
- Lands along the Point Road, zoned A1 Existing Residential (Site 14 on SFRA Report Table 6 'Justification Tests');
- Main Street, Blackrock, zoned B1 Town Centre (Site 17 on SFRA Report, Table 6 'Justification Tests');
- Lands west of Hill Street Bridge, zoned C1 Mixed Use (Site 18 on SFRA Report, Table 6 'Justification Tests');

## 9.7 Coastal Erosion

Coastal protection from erosion and flooding is becoming a prominent issue for many coastal cities and towns across Ireland. The impact of climate change on coastal processes has had a pronounced impact on how we think about development along the coast. Rising sea levels and increased storm events presents a real concern for coastal towns like Dundalk.

Climate change is expected to increase storm frequency and intensity and with this will likely result in increased storm surges which could potentially cause considerable damage to people and property. Managing coastal processes and mitigating against coastal flooding plays an important role in living with the effects of climate change.

Implementation of coastal erosion management measures can be categorised into two categories; hard and soft.

**Hard Engineering** typically involves the construction of the physical infrastructure such as groins, breakwaters, rock armouring /gabions and sea walls. However, the impact of groins on coastal process can have an adverse impact on the coastline elsewhere.

The construction of sea walls is expensive and should be reserved for places in which the benefit to existing properties outweighs the construction cost and, similar to groins, sea walls can reduce accretion and create and exacerbate erosion elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> Any amendments to extant permissions in Flood Zones A or B that have commenced development and construction is ongoing will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will require an updated site-specific flood risk assessment to be carried out.



**Soft Engineering** typically involves the use of natural, sustainable solutions to control coastal processes. Reprofiling involves the redistribution of sediment from the lower part of the beach which distributes the energy of the waves.

Dune nourishment involves planting vegetation, typically marram grass, to stabilise dunes and trap more sand. Beach nourishment involves pumping sand onto the existing beach.

In order to fully assess the potential impact of coastal erosion, there will be a requirement for planning applications for certain developments within 100 metres of the coastline to include a Coastal Assessment Report.

The requirement for such a report will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be determined as part of the Development Management process at either pre-planning or application stage.

### 9.7.1 Policy Objectives

#### INF 22

To require, on a case-by-case basis to be determined by the Planning Authority at either the pre-planning or planning application stage, the preparation of a Coastal Erosion Assessment Report for development within 100 metres of the coastline. New development will be prohibited unless it can be established based on the best scientific information at the time of the application, that the likelihood of erosion at a specific location is minimal taking into account, inter alia, any impacts.

#### INF 23

To ensure that Dundalk's natural coastal defences (beaches, salt marshes and estuary lands) are protected and to ensure they are not put at risk by inappropriate works or development.

#### INF 24

To explore, where coastal erosion is considered a threat to existing properties, the technical, environmental, and economic feasibility of coastal adaptation and coastal retreat management options.

#### INF 25

To employ soft engineering techniques as an alternative to hard coastal defence works, wherever possible.

#### INF 26

To identify, prioritise and implement necessary coastal protection works subject to the availability of resources, whilst ensuring a high level of protection for natural habitats and features, and ensure due regard is paid to visual and other environmental considerations in the design of any such coastal protection works.



## 9.8 Riparian Corridors

The importance of protecting and enhancing the environmental and ecological quality of rivers and streams within the Dundalk urban area is recognised. Given the nature of the existing pattern of development within Dundalk, the provision of a riparian buffer zone on both sides of a watercourse may not always be achievable. However, new development will be encouraged to adopt a best practice approach.

The provision of riparian corridors will be assessed through the Development Management process. Inland Fisheries Ireland have produced supplementary guidance titled 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' in 2020.

This guide seeks to provide a template for the protection and enhancement of rivers in urban areas.



Table 9.2: 4 Steps to Good Riparian and River Planning

4 Steps to Good Riparian & River Planning for Urban Areas	
Step	Description
1	<b>Protect Streamside Zone &gt;10m</b> Ensure sufficient space is set-aside with vegetation only.
2	<b>Construct Middle Zone 15m-30m</b> Ensure sufficient space set-aside with vegetation and amenity uses.
3	<b>Construct Outer Zone &gt;8m</b> Ensure sufficient space set-aside incorporates SUDS and wider amenity uses.
4	<b>Rehabilitate Instream Channel</b> Using appropriate habitat restoration techniques.

### 9.8.1 Policy Objective

#### INF 27

To ensure that, where feasible, no development, including clearing or storage of materials, takes place within a minimum distance of 10m measured from the bank of any river, stream, or watercourse unless the development is water compatible. New developments shall seek to incorporate the 'Four Steps to Good Riparian and River Planning for Urban Areas' as set out in 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' (Inland Fisheries Ireland, 2020).



## 9.9 Pollution and Environmental Services

One of the cross-cutting themes of this Plan is to create an attractive, climate resilient and healthy living and working environment for residents, businesses, and visitors to the town. Air quality, noise, lighting, and an effective waste management policy are contributing factors in delivering and maintaining environmental quality.

This Plan will promote the implementation of best practice in the management of waste, achieving good air quality, and mitigating against any potential adverse impacts relating to noise or lighting.

### 9.9.1 Waste

The approach to the management of waste is based on a hierarchy of prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycle and energy recovery with the level of waste going to landfill kept to a minimum. This Plan supports the move to a more circular economy, where materials are retained in use at their highest value for as long as possible and are then re-used or recycled, leaving minimum residual waste. This approach will conserve resources, increase resource efficiency, and help reduce carbon emissions whilst also creating employment opportunities.

In terms of waste management/recycling facilities, Dundalk is currently served by a recycling centre at Newry Road which accepts a range of materials including cardboard, glass, plastics, batteries, scrap metal, green waste, white goods and other electrical appliances.



There are seven bring/bottle banks within Dundalk which accept glass and aluminium drinks cans. See Table 9.3 for details.

Table 9.3: Bring/Bottle Bank Locations Dundalk

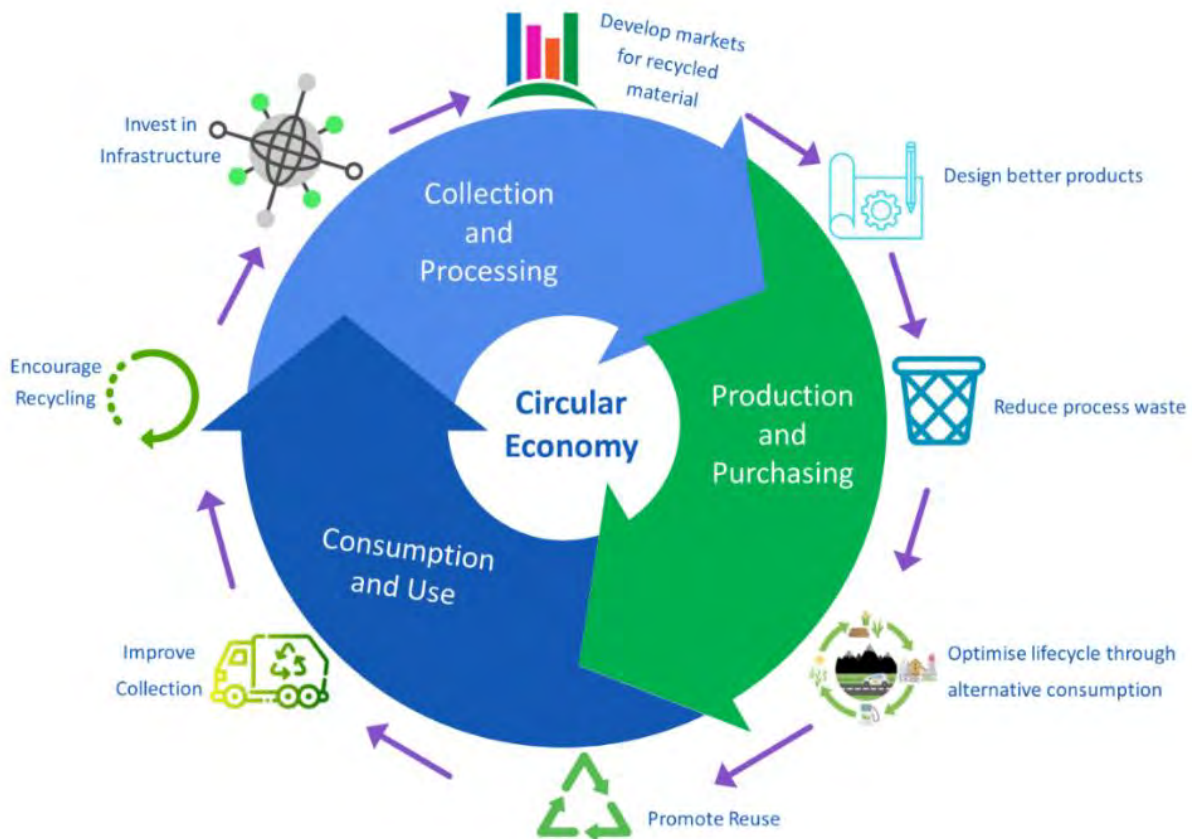
Ref.	Location	Eircode
1	Tennis Club, Meadow Grove	A91 H5F9
2	St. Gerard's Square, Barrack Street	A91 DE06
3	Long Walk Shopping Centre	A91 KX70
4	Car Park at Harp	A91 P8W9
5	Castletown Service Station	A91 AE72
6	De La Salle School Castletown Road	A91 FC91
7	Main Street, Blackrock	A91 Y0H7

This Plan will continue to promote awareness of the need to increase the amount of waste that is re-used and recycled and ensure that adequate facilities are provided over the plan period and beyond.

It will facilitate the provision of additional recycling facilities and services at appropriate locations in the town where a need is identified.



Figure 9.1 Circular Economy



### 9.9.2 Air Quality

Poor air quality within an urban environment has the potential to lead to significant environmental problems and is linked to poor health amongst the general population. The primary responsibility for monitoring air quality, as well as the nature and extent of emissions is assigned to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) whereas the responsibility for addressing local instances of air pollution is assigned to local authorities, as per the Air Pollution Act 1987.

The *Clean Air Strategy*, published by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications in 2023 provides the strategic policy framework necessary to integrate measures across government policy that are required to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner ambient air, and deliver national objectives.

The first annual Progress Report was submitted to Government in July 2024. This report provided a high-level overview of progress to date.

The EPA has introduced the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme (AAMP) which will see a greater number of monitoring locations established across the country. The EPA Air Quality Index for Health indicates that since the adoption of the Plan the Air Quality in Dundalk was generally Good.

The most recent data from 2022 stated that there were 3 Fair, 1 Poor and 2 Very Poor air quality instances.

This Plan will support the provision of air quality real time monitoring stations at appropriate locations in Dundalk.



### 9.9.3 Light

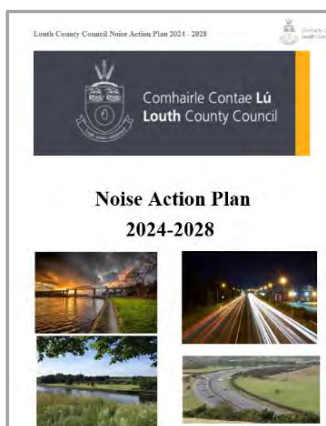
Whilst artificial light is important in creating a safe and secure environment it is acknowledged that light pollution, glare, and spillage can have an adverse impact on the visual, wildlife and residential amenities of surrounding areas. There is therefore a need to strike a balance between the desire for illumination and security with the control of light pollution and the avoidance of light spillage and glare.

### 9.9.4 Noise

It is recognised that there is potential for persons/properties to be affected by uses/operations that are noise intensive. Such operational noise will be assessed as part of a planning application and may require the preparation of a Noise Assessment to analyse and assess the potential noise levels generated by the use or operation, in addition to the potential impacts it may have on the amenities of surrounding properties or residents.

This will be particularly pertinent where the use or operation is in close proximity to a residential area. Where necessary, development should provide appropriate sound proofing and noise mitigation.

Louth County Council have prepared a Noise Action Plan (2024-2028), in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations (SI 140 2006).



This Action Plan is largely transport based and seeks to address the long-term management of traffic noise. The 2024-2028 Noise Action Draft Plan was finalised in Q4 2024.

The overall aim of managing environmental noise within the framework of the regulations is to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects due to long term exposure to environmental noise.

### 9.9.5 Contaminated Land and Soil Remediation

There are brownfield lands in Dundalk that have a history of industrial use which may have resulted in a contamination of the land due to spillages, leaks, and seepages of oil or other industrial products or materials. Any lands that are known or suspected of contamination will require detailed investigative works to be carried out as part of a planning application to identify the source and extent of contamination.

A risk-based approach in accordance with best practice techniques, in consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency and any other relevant bodies (as required or necessary), shall be taken to the remediation of contaminated lands to ensure works are completed to the highest standards.

### 9.9.6 Policy Objectives

**INF 28** 6

To protect and maintain environmental quality in Dundalk through the implementation of relevant European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management.



## INF 29

To support the ongoing investment and maintenance of existing waste disposal and recycling facilities within the Plan area and to facilitate the provision of additional facilities in appropriate locations in accordance with the requirements of the current National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2020-2025 or any subsequent plan.

## INF 30

To encourage and support the expansion and improvement of the three-bin system (mixed dry recyclables, organic waste and residual waste) in order to increase the quantity and quality of materials collected for recycling in conjunction with relevant stakeholders.

## INF 31

To support circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, to support a healthy environment, economy and society and to enhance employment opportunities.

## INF 32

To ensure that all external lighting whether free standing or attached to a building shall be designed and constructed so as not to cause excessive light spillage, glare, or dazzle motorists, and thereby limiting light pollution into the surrounding environment and protecting the amenities of nearby properties, traffic and wildlife.

## INF 33

To implement the Noise Action Plan for Louth County Council in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure.

## INF 34

Developments for noise sensitive uses shall have regard to the noise maps contained within the Louth Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 or any subsequent plan and developers shall be required, where deemed necessary by the Planning Authority, to produce a noise impact assessment and mitigation plans, for any new noise sensitive development within these areas.

## INF 35

To ensure that development on contaminated lands includes appropriate remediation measures.

## 9.10 Energy Supply and Infrastructure

The provision of secure, reliable, flexible and efficient energy transmission supply and distribution infrastructure to power and heat homes and businesses, and fuel transport, is of critical importance to the continued economic, social and cultural development of Dundalk. The electricity and gas network in Dundalk has a vital role in carrying and distributing this energy throughout the town.



To ensure the electricity and gas network has the capacity to meet growing demand this Plan will support proposals by energy providers that will strengthen and support the network and associated transmission infrastructure, increase capacity and improve security of supply.



It is recognised that there will be an increased demand for electricity as part of the decarbonisation of the economy and transition to net zero. This increased demand will be across all sectors but is likely to be particularly apparent in transportation, due to the electrification of vehicles, in addition to the residential and commercial sectors, due to the use of electricity for the heating of homes and businesses.

As part of the decarbonisation of electricity generation further investment in the grid infrastructure and distribution network will also be required to facilitate the connection of renewable energy projects.

In accordance with national and regional policy this Plan will support the increase in use of renewable energy and development of renewable energy infrastructure and initiatives to provide a viable alternative to the burning of fossil fuels.

The Plan will also promote innovative designs that help improve the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings and encourage the installation and retrofitting of renewable energy technologies, where appropriate.

### 9.10.1 Policy Objectives

#### INF 36

To support investment in the electricity and gas transmission and distribution network to ensure there is resilience in the network and security of supply, thus enabling population growth and economic investment to occur in the Plan area.

#### INF 37

To require that in all new developments, local services such as electricity be undergrounded where possible and appropriate.

### 9.10.2 Renewable Energy

The generation of electricity from renewable sources will be a fundamental part of the decarbonisation of the economy and society and improving security of supply.

This Plan supports the transition towards renewables and will support and facilitate large and small-scale projects, subject to complying with the relevant planning and environmental criteria. Examples of such projects include, but are not limited to, solar, on and offshore wind, heat pumps, district heating, and geothermal.

The progression and delivery of renewable energy projects in Dundalk will support the objectives of the Dundalk-Blackrock Decarbonising Zone, as set out in the Louth Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, being achieved.

### 9.10.3 Policy Objectives

#### INF 38

To support initiatives for limiting and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development and progression of renewable energy projects at suitable locations, utilising the natural resources available in Dundalk, in an environmentally acceptable manner subject to normal proper planning considerations in particular the impact on areas of environmental or landscape sensitivity.

#### INF 39

To support initiatives aimed at reducing the level of energy consumption within Dundalk.



## 9.11 Communications Network and Digital Infrastructure

*Harnessing Digital - The Digital Ireland Framework (2022)*, advocates positioning Ireland as a digital leader, driving and enabling digital transformation across the economy and society. It is fully acknowledged that digital infrastructure that delivers better connected services is vital for continued growth, supporting businesses and enhancing our communities. In particular, the availability of a high-speed broadband network that provides homes and businesses with high levels of connectivity is critical in attracting inward investment.

The urban area of Dundalk is currently well serviced by high-speed broadband with some small pockets of intervention required. Dundalk benefits from the open access fibre optic infrastructure known as Metropolitan Area Networks. This open access means all licensed operators can have access, which provides for increased competition in the market and improves value for consumers.

This Plan will continue to support businesses and commercial operators in enhancing and upgrading their services to improve access to high-speed broadband in Dundalk. Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 6.30 of the RSES seeks to support the development of 'Smart City' programmes in Athlone, Drogheda, and Dundalk.



While there is no universal definition for a 'Smart City', this term generally refers to a city or town that uses technology to provide

services and solve city/town problems such as improved access to transport services, reducing waste and inconvenience and increasing public safety.

It involves a systematic integration of ICT in the planning, design, operations and management of cities, towns, and villages for the benefit of the citizen and can help boost a location's attractiveness for people and business.

This Plan will support and promote opportunities for greater innovation in digital technology across all urban functions in order to foster the development of secure, smart solutions for Dundalk.

### 9.11.1 Policy Objectives

#### INF 40

To promote and facilitate the sustainable delivery of a high-quality ICT infrastructure network throughout Dundalk in the interests of promoting economic growth, competitiveness and social inclusion whilst ensuring there is no adverse impact on the urban environment.

#### INF 41

To co-operate with the relevant agencies to facilitate the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone, and television cables within Dundalk wherever possible, in the interests of visual amenity.

#### INF 42

To support and promote the development of Smart City Programmes within Dundalk through the implementation of the *National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation* and, maximising the opportunities for industry-academic collaboration between DkIT, businesses and industry located in the town.



# CHAPTER 10

CULTURE &  
HERITAGE





## 10 CULTURE AND HERITAGE

### 10.1 Introduction

The term 'heritage' refers to everything that we have inherited from previous generations. This inheritance can be either tangible or intangible, and it is reflected in both the natural and built environment.

Much of Dundalk's character derives from its geographical setting. Dundalk is a liminal place, where the land borders the sea. The town sits on a wide, flat, open plain but also benefits immensely from its backdrop of the picturesque Cooley and Ring of Gullion mountain ranges.

The Anglo-Norman port town of Dundalk was initially established, in the late 12<sup>th</sup> Century, on high ground to the west, at the ancient Irish 'fort' of Dún Dealgan, which (much later) became Castletown Motte. This location provided clear views of the surrounding lands, including the ford at Toberona, and was easily defended. It was however difficult to access by ship.

In the mid-13<sup>th</sup> Century, the town shifted eastward (downstream), near the harbour of Athlon, closer to the Irish settlement of Baile an Tráigh (now 'Seatown'). St. Nicholas' Church formed the heart of the 'Newtown', which was fortified and developed southwards, extending in a linear manner along a ridge of glacial sediments that stood above the surrounding marshy land. The Medieval town was full of castles and towerhouses and surrounded by a high town wall and moat. Dundalk's medieval character is evident today in its curved layout and underground remnants of the town wall. Key features include the reconstructed St. Nicholas' Church and the streetscape of Seatown, located to the east of the medieval core. This area contains notable landmarks such as the remains of St. Leonard's Hospital and the bell tower of the Franciscan Friary.

In the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Lord Limerick initiated the large-scale redevelopment of Dundalk. South Marsh was drained (800 acres) and the rubble from the demolition of the Medieval town was used to build a coastal defence embankment to the east.

Lord Limerick built a town house (across from St. Nicholas' Church) and established a demesne to the west of the town. A new market square was laid out, which shifted the town's commercial heart south.

A new harbour and a linen factory (now Aiken Barracks) were also constructed. Within the medieval core, numerous manufacturing and industrial buildings were erected, while residential expansion occurred primarily to the east and southwest, dominated by Georgian and later, Victorian red-brick architecture.

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century housing was built on the landscaped demesne. The remnants of the original demesne landscape remain, including Ice House Hill Park, the Long Walk Avenue and the green area near the Demesne Shopping Centre.

The concentration of archaeological sites in the vicinity of Castletown Motte and Clanbrassil Street reflects the town's early origins.

The town has a rich array of built heritage assets including Zones of Archaeological Potential, Architectural Conservation Areas and a wide range of protected structures, many of which reflect the town's role in the industrial revolution.

This Plan recognises the unique character and importance of Dundalk's natural environment and built heritage.



It is acknowledged that these contribute significantly to Dundalk's attractiveness as a place in which to live, work and visit, by providing a strong sense of character and identity. Dundalk's natural and built heritage assets create a sense of place and local distinctiveness.

This Plan seeks to protect and strengthen Dundalk's heritage assets thereby ensuring that they continue to contribute positively to the overall quality of life, biodiversity, recreation and tourism.

This chapter is divided into three sections:

- Natural Heritage.
- Green Infrastructure; and
- Built Heritage.

The **Natural Heritage** section presents details in relation to European Sites, proposed Natural Heritage Areas; Landscape Character Assessment, Sites of Geological Interest;

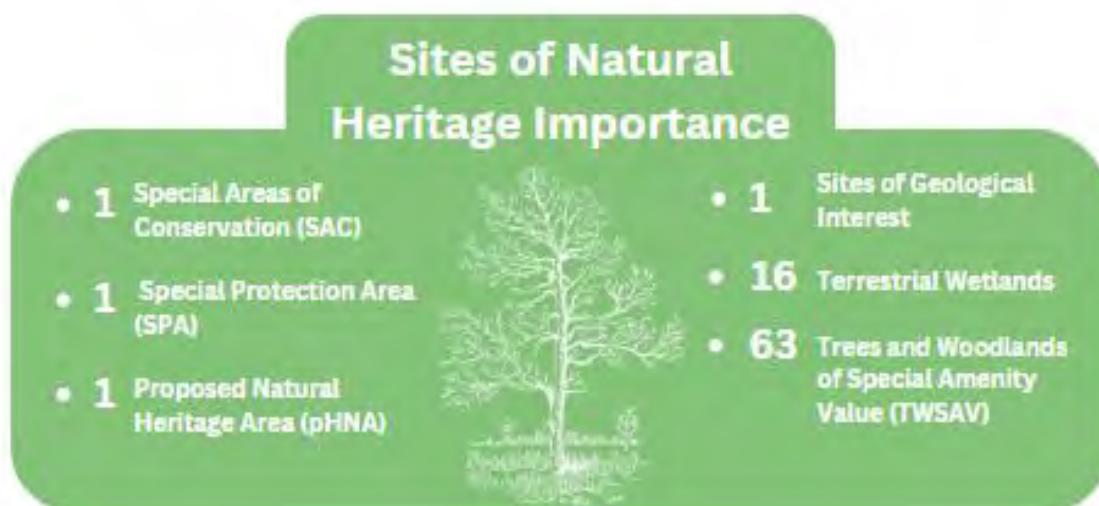
Wetland Surveys; Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows, as well as Views and Prospects.

The **Green Infrastructure** section provides a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Dundalk, it identifies features of interest and their potential for Green Infrastructure Enhancement.

The **Built Heritage** section offers details in relation to the Zones of Archaeological Potential, Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas, Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes, and Vernacular Heritage.

Additional details regarding the various sections and specific objectives in relation to Invasive Species and Protected Plant and Animal Species are available in the County Development Plan.

## 10.2 Sites of Natural Heritage Importance



### 10.2.1 European Sites

Two European sites; a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Areas (SPA); which form part of the Natura 2000 Network, have been designated to conserve habitats and species of European

importance pursuant to the EU Habitats and Birds Directives in the Plan area. Details of these are set out in Tables 10.1 and 10.2 and illustrated on Maps 10.1 and 10.2.



### 10.2.2 Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Table 10.1: Special Area of Conservation in Dundalk

Site Code	Name	Synopsis
000455	Dundalk Bay SAC (Map 10.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site is selected for the following habitats/species listed in Annex I/II of the EU Habitats Directive: Estuaries, Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats, Perennial Vegetation of Stony Banks, Salicornia Mud as well as Atlantic and Mediterranean Salt Meadows.</li> <li>Saltmarshes occur in four areas and two types are presented. Shingle beaches are well represented and support a range of species. There are over 4000ha of sandflats and mudflats. The site is internationally important for waterfowl because it regularly holds over 20,000 birds.</li> </ul>

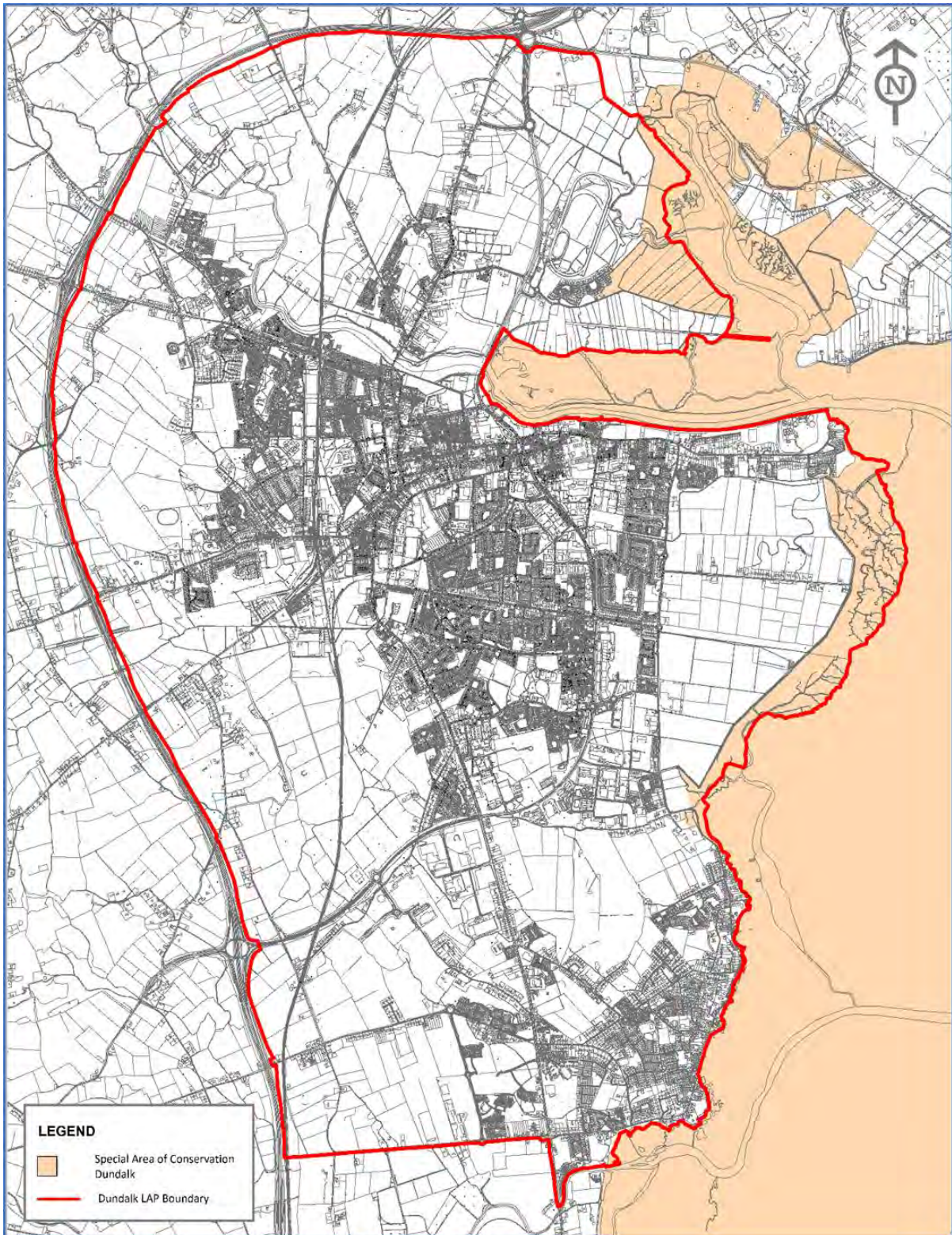
### 10.2.3 Special Protection Area

Table 10.2: Special Protection Area in Dundalk

Site Code	Site Name	Synopsis
004026	Dundalk Bay SPA (Map 10.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Great Crested Grebe, Greylag Goose, Light-bellied Brent Goose, Shelduck, Teal, Mallard, Pintail, Common Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Lapwing, Knot, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull and Herring Gull.</li> <li>The site is of international importance because it regularly supports an assemblage of over 20,000 wintering waterbirds. It also qualifies as a site of international importance for supporting populations of Light-bellied Brent Goose (370), Knot (9,710), Black-tailed Godwit (1,100) and Bar-tailed Godwit (1,950) – all figures, unless stated otherwise, are five-year mean peaks for the period 1995/96 to 1999/2000. A variety of other species occur in numbers of national importance</li> </ul>



Map 10.1: Dundalk SAC:



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An Roinn um Pleanáil  
Planning Department  
[www.louthcoco.ie](http://www.louthcoco.ie)

**Date:** March 2025

**Scale:** Not to Scale

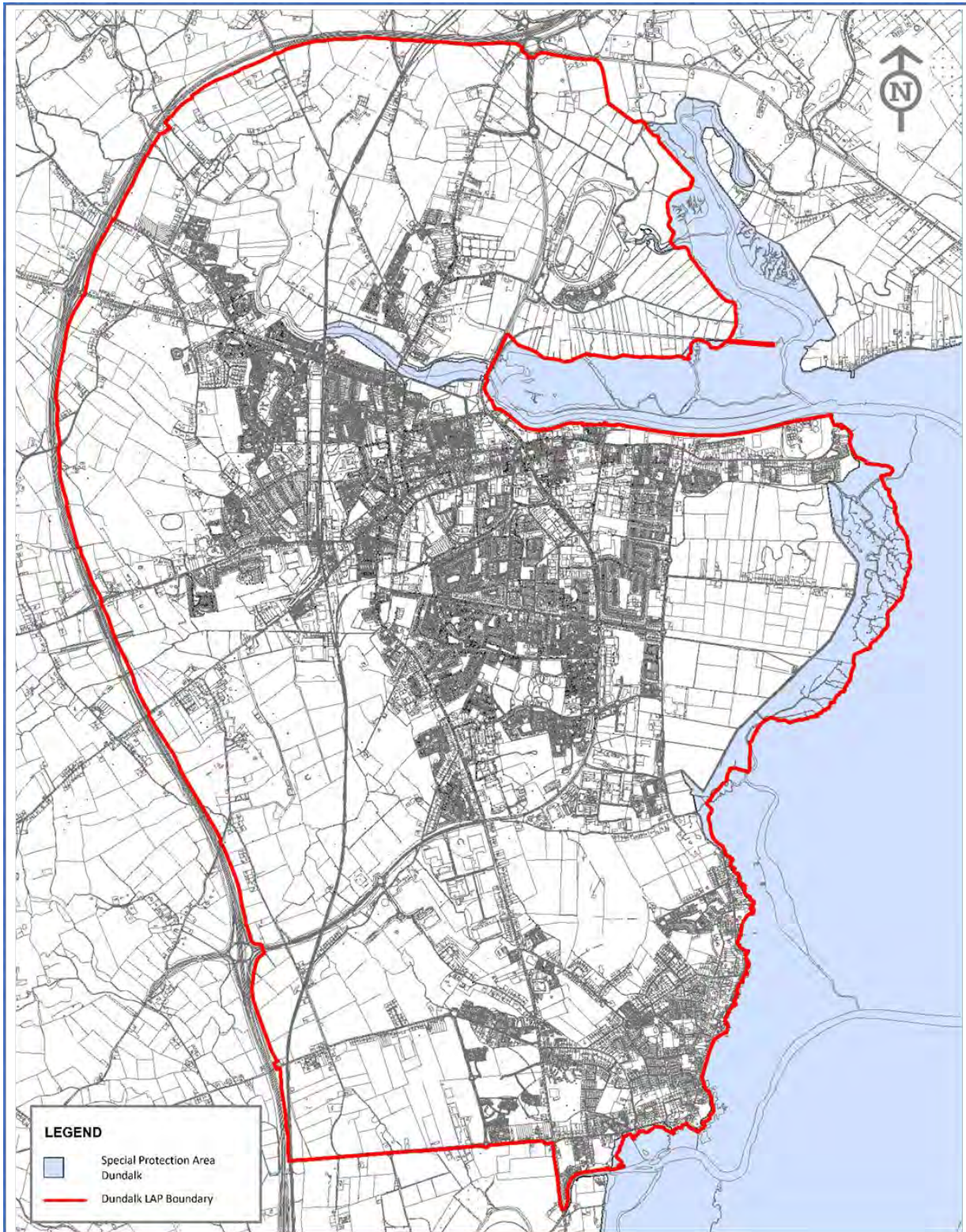
**CYAL50441422**  
© Tailte Éireann – Surveying


**Dundalk**  
Local Area Plan  
2025-2031

**Drawing Name / Ref.**  
**Special Area of Conservation**



Map 10.2: Dundalk SPA



 <p>Comhairle Contae Lú Louth County Council</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@louthcoco.ie">info@louthcoco.ie</a></p> <p>An Roinn um Pleanáil Planning Department</p> <p><a href="http://www.louthcoco.ie">www.louthcoco.ie</a></p>	<p><b>Date:</b> March 2025</p>	<p><b>Dundalk</b></p> <p>Local Area Plan</p> <p><b>2025-2031</b></p>	<p><b>Drawing Name / Ref.</b></p> <p><b>Special Protection Area Dundalk</b></p>
	<p><b>Scale:</b> Not to Scale</p>		



### 10.2.3.1 Policy Objectives

#### CH 1

To protect and conserve the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.

#### CH 2

To ensure that all proposed developments comply with the requirements set out in the DECLG 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities 2010'.

#### CH 3

To ensure that no plan, programme, or project giving rise to likely significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Local Area Plan, either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes or projects<sup>1</sup>.

#### CH 4

All masterplans, and the objectives therein, being implemented by the Council for the Plan area shall have regard to the requirements under Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

#### CH 5

To co-operate with the Regional Planning Assembly and adjoining local authorities, public agencies and community interests to protect regionally significant heritage assets, environmental quality, and to identify threats to existing environmental quality in a transboundary context throughout the region including Northern Ireland.

## 10.3 Natural Heritage Area

The term 'Natural Heritage' covers wildlife (plants, animals and their habitats), in addition to geological and geomorphological sites. Wildlife sites of national importance including marine, ecological and geological sites are designated as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000.

Sites identified but not yet designated as NHAs are known as 'proposed Natural Heritage Areas' (pNHAs) and these are protected from development only by inclusion in a Development Plan. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has proposed one Natural Heritage Area in Dundalk: the Dundalk Bay proposed Natural Heritage Area.

### 10.3.1 Policy Objective

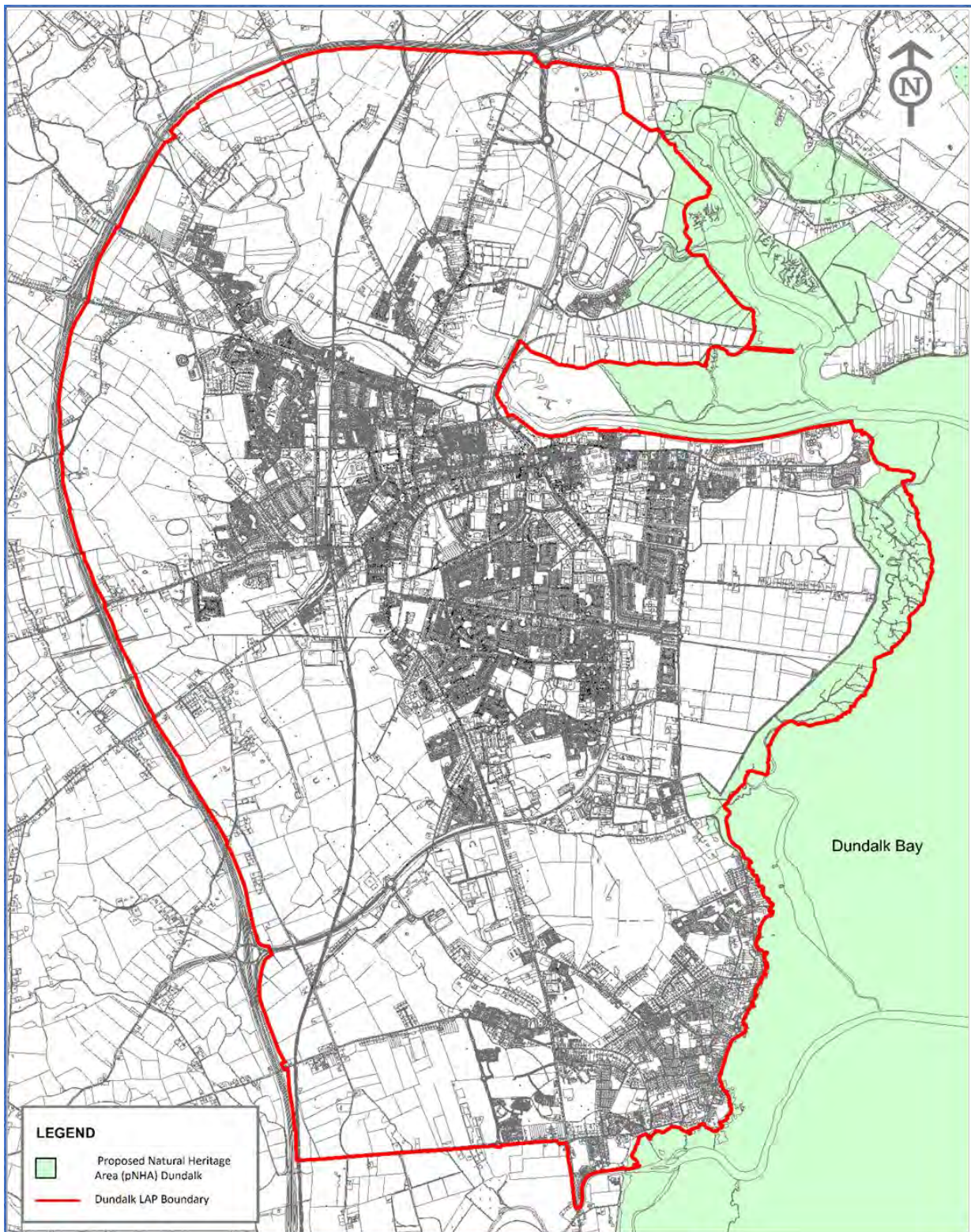
#### CH 6


To ensure that any development within or adjacent to a pNHA is designed and sited to minimise its impact on the ecological value of the site and to resist development that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats or a disturbance of species.

<sup>1</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, where there must be no alternatives, imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed and adequate compensatory measures are in place.



Map 10.3: Dundalk pNHA



 <p>Comhairle Contae Lú Louth County Council</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@louthcoco.ie">info@louthcoco.ie</a></p> <p>An Roinn um Pleanáil Planning Department</p> <p><a href="http://www.louthcoco.ie">www.louthcoco.ie</a></p>	<p><b>Date:</b> March 2025</p>	<p><b>Dundalk</b> Local Area Plan 2025-2031</p>	<p><b>Drawing Name / Ref.</b> <b>Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA)</b></p>
	<p><b>Scale:</b> Not to Scale</p>		



## 10.4 Landscape

Landscapes provide vital locations to connect with the natural world and built environment. They also offer important opportunities for learning about our natural and cultural heritage, as well as providing essential insights into our ancestors and the places they lived. Moreover, landscapes have an important role in placemaking and the promotion of active and healthy lifestyles.

Dundalk's landscape character is formed by the built environment, and its coastal and riverside location. The town is mainly located at sea level and is surrounded by an arc of hills including Faughart to the North, and Castletown Mount and Ballybarrack to the west. Dundalk falls within three landscape character areas:

- Dundalk Bay Coast;
- Lower Faughart, Castletown and Flurry River Basins; and
- Muirhevna Plain.

The Dundalk Bay Coast landscape character area is of Regional Importance whilst the remaining landscape character areas are of Local Importance.

The Landscape Character Assessments highlight the importance and vulnerability of Dundalk's landscape and in particular the lands that remain undeveloped.

### 10.4.1 Policy Objective

#### CH 7

To ensure the preservation of the uniqueness of Dundalk's sensitive landscape setting by ensuring that new development meets high standards of siting and design and does not unduly damage or detract from the character of a landscape or natural environment.

## 10.5 Sites of Geological Interest

An audit of Geological Sites in Louth was undertaken in 2013 and a number of 'County Geological Sites' were identified. One site of 'Geological Interest' was identified in Dundalk – Dundalk Bay. This designation seeks to provide a level of protection to the site so that it is not inadvertently damaged.

Table 10.3: Sites of Geological Interest

Dundalk Bay		
Site Description and Geological Interest	Management	Location
<p><b>Wide coastal embankment, flanked on either side by bedrock headlands and incorporating wide expanses of coastal flats.</b></p>	<p>The location of the features of interest makes them easily accessible, and Dundalk Bay is a popular recreational area given the number of fine beaches around its perimeter. Information boards at the Port and Blackrock are worthy additions to the site, and explain the features associated habitats, flora and fauna. The geological formation of the feature could be highlighted in future on literature produced.</p>	



### 10.5.1 Policy Objectives

#### CH 8

In consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland – protect from inappropriate development and maintain the character, integrity and conservation value of those features or areas of geological interest.

#### CH 9

To promote awareness, where appropriate, of sites of geological interest including the provision of access and interpretation where desirable and feasible.

### 10.6 Wetlands

A Wetland Survey was carried out in Louth over a three-year period between 2011-2014, this identified wetland sites throughout the County and in Dundalk, Dundalk Bay SPA and SAC are international important wetlands however there are also a number of terrestrial wetland sites in Dundalk, details of which are set out in Table 10.4. The number of wetlands in the town is reflective of its low-lying coastal location. The wetlands of the highest conservation value, 'A - Internationally Important', are associated with Dundalk Bay SPA and SAC.

#### 10.6.1 Policy Objective

#### CH 10

To ensure that any development proposals protect and enhance the wetland sites in Dundalk.

Table 10.4: Wetland Sites

Site Code	Name	Description	Importance
WHI_LH195	Ballynahattin and Redcow	This site contains no significant wetland habitat; a deep hollow was excavated to build the railway embankment, and this floods seasonally. Spring within site damaged by cattle	D Rating: Local conservation value (moderate value)
WHI_LH245	Balrigan	Small depression in the landscape with degraded reed swamp vegetation surrounded by improved agricultural grassland. Cattle have access to this area.	E Rating: Local conservation value (low value)
WHI_LH227	Redcow	Small area of dense mixed plantation with willow, ash, and pine. Drainage ditch along roadside with common reed. No wetland interest.	E Rating: Local conservation value (low value)
WHI_LH244	Ballynahattin	No significant wetland habitat remains on this site which has been mostly infilled under a waste permit licence.	E Rating: Local conservation value (low value)



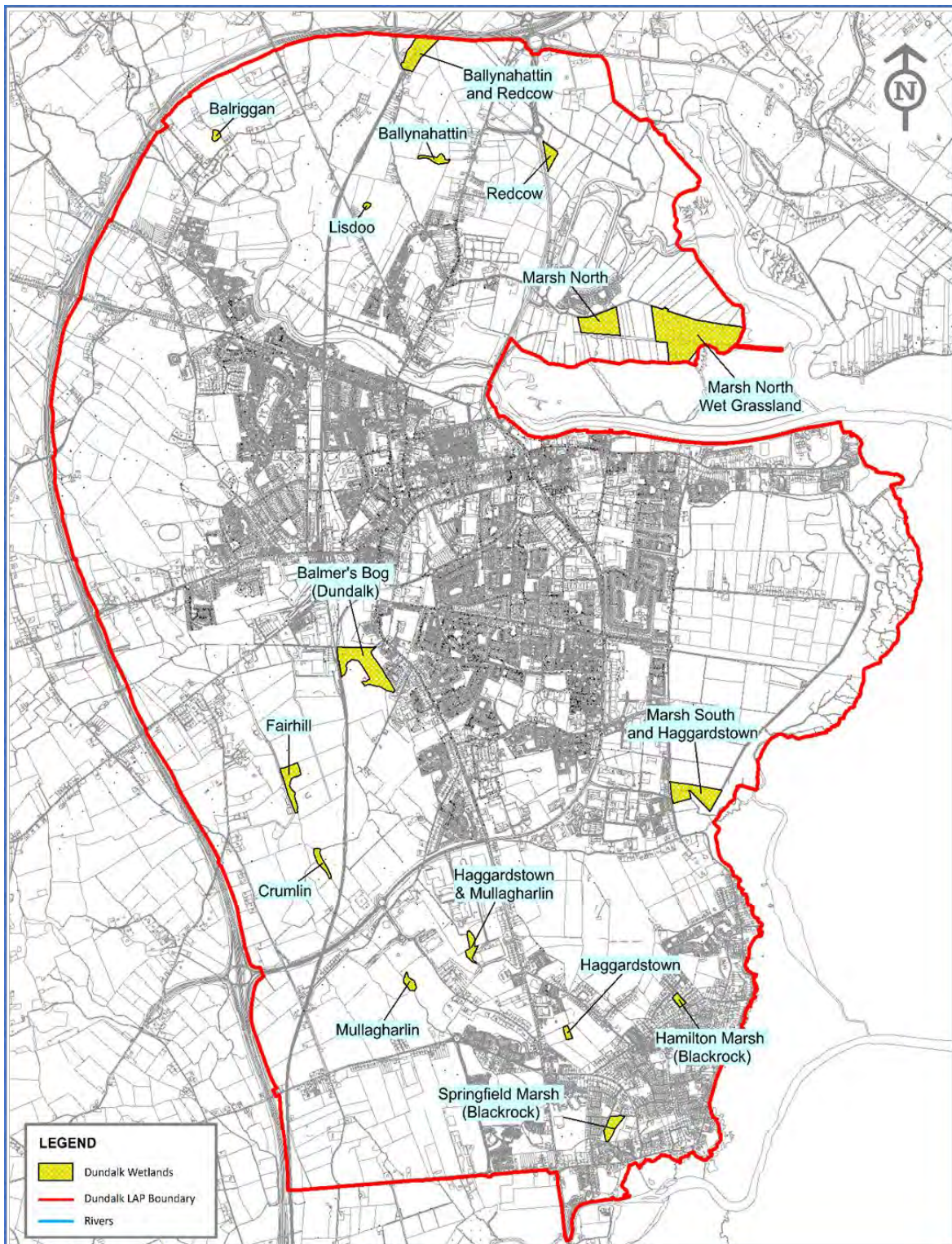
Site Code	Name	Description	Importance
WHI_LH298	Lisdoon	Small depression in the landscape with degraded reed swamp vegetation surrounded by improved agricultural grassland. Cattle have access to this area.	E Rating: Local conservation value (low value)
WMI_LH302	Marsh North	Site consists of a series of Juncus wet grassland areas.	E Rating: Local conservation value (low value)
WMI_LH220	Marsh North Wet Grassland	Wet grassland which has been improved through drainage, fertilisation and reseeded. Bounded by deep drainage ditches and hedgerows.	E Rating: Local conservation value (low value)
WHI_LH177	Balmer's Bog	Dense stand of Phragmites reed swamp which is rather species poor. Main interest ornithological. Location in town does provide a valuable biodiversity area in otherwise built-up urban environment	D Rating: Local conservation value (moderate value)
WMI_LH281	Fairhill	Small isolated site with Phragmites dominated reed swamp, with Typha latifolia. Scrub and a small ash dominated woodland also occurs within the site.	C Rating: Local conservation value (high value)
WHI_LH202	Crumlin	Depression between low hills, with narrow reed bed and wet willow woodland. Southern end grazed by cattle. Marginal areas grazed by cattle. Drain runs through centre.	E Rating: Local conservation value (low value)
WMI_LH307	Mullagharlin	Eutrophic lake with band of Phragmites reed swamp. Lake is surrounded by arable crops with abrupt edge containing a thicket of Urtica dioica	E Rating: Local conservation value
WMI_LH287	Haggardstown and Mullagharlin	Eutrophic lake with floating aquatic vegetation. Lake is surrounded by narrow Typha reed swamp along the northern margins. Small willow woodland adjoins southern part of site	D Rating: Local conservation value (moderate value)
WMI_LH303	Marsh South and Haggardstown	No wetland interest at this site. Area of dry unmanaged grassland that may be occasionally grazed or cut for hay.	E Rating: Local conservation value (low value)



Site Code	Name	Description	Importance
WMI_LH173	Haggardstown	Area of former marsh that has been heavily impacted by infill and drainage. Small remnants of wetland vegetation restricted to drainage ditches and a small, degraded marsh area in southern part.	E Rating: Local conservation value (low value)
WMI_LH153	Hamilton Marsh	Eastern part of site is freshwater marsh with <i>Typha latifolia</i> , <i>Equisetum fluviatile</i> and <i>Iris pseudacorus</i> . Site grades into wet grassland to the west. Site used as amenity – signage has been erected and a well-maintained path borders northern side	D Rating: Local conservation value (moderate value)
WMI-LH155	Springfield Marsh	There is only a small, isolated wetland area remaining which comprises <i>Phragmites australis</i> reed swamp and <i>Typha latifolia</i> reed swamp. Elsewhere a mosaic of dry meadow and recolonising bare ground has established on areas of spoil.	E Rating: Local conservation value (low value)



Map 10.4: Wetland Sites



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**Dundalk**  
**Local Area Plan**  
**2025-2031**

**Drawing Name / Ref.**  
**Wetland Sites**



## 10.7 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

Woodlands, trees and hedgerow are an environmental, amenity and landscape resource of great importance to Dundalk. There are individual trees interspersed throughout the town within private gardens, on areas of public open space and along roads including the Inner Relief Road. Woodlands are mainly concentrated in existing urban parks; Ice House Hill, St Helena's, Farndreg and Muirhevamor. There is also a grouping of trees close to Castletown Motte.

Any development that, in exceptional circumstances, requires the removal of trees or groups of trees shall include proposals that replace the trees to be removed with semi-mature, native trees at a ratio of five new trees per single tree felled (5:1). On smaller, more constrained sites, where the ratio of 5:1 trees cannot be provided, consideration may be given to reducing this ratio.

Where trees and/or hedgerows are required to be removed in order to facilitate development, this shall be done outside the nesting season (1<sup>st</sup> of March to the 31<sup>st</sup> of August each year).

### 10.7.1 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's)

There are presently no Tree Preservation Orders in effect in Dundalk.

### 10.7.2 Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value (TWSAV)

There are many trees and woodlands of special amenity value in Dundalk which make an important contribution to the town's landscape setting, biodiversity, amenity and natural heritage, see Table 10.5 for details.

Table 10.5: Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value in Dundalk

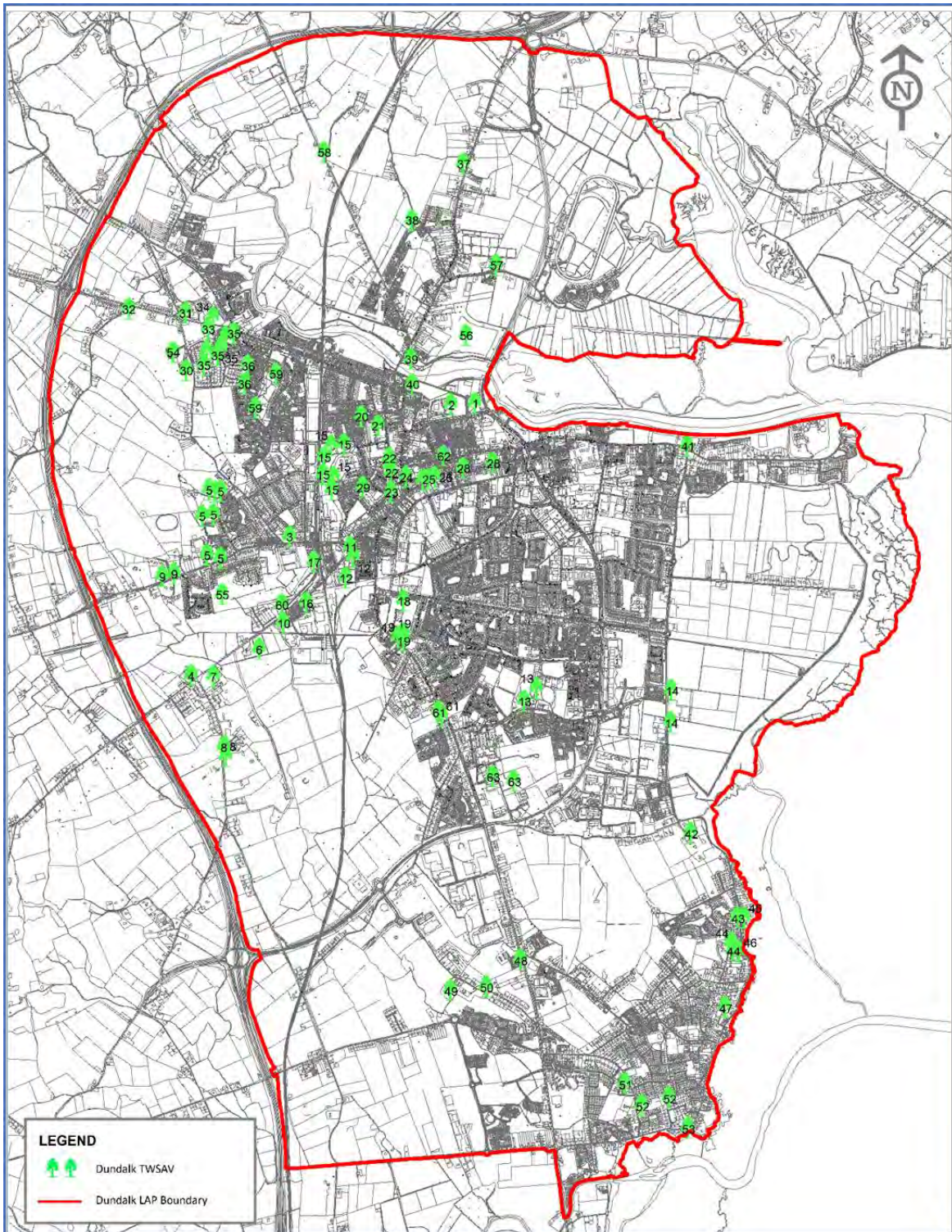
Reference DLK No.	Location	Reference DLK No.	Location
1	St. Helena's Park	2	Marist Grounds, St. Mary's Road
3	Derryhale Hotel, Carrick Road No. 6 Carrickmacross Road	4	In the curtilage of Rath Knockbridge Rd/Ardee Rd
5	Lisnawully House Carrick Road	6	Brookfield House, Ardee Road
7	St. John of God (Hilltop services) and lands to the SW (site of former Workhouse)	8	St. Oliver Plunkett Shrine and lands to the south of the entrance Ardee Road
9	North side of Carrick Road, Rucky Hill either side of entrance to Deer Park	10	St. Margaret's
11	The Crescent/ Crescent Park	12	Grammar School, The Crescent
13	Hoey's Lane and Muirhevnamor Park	14	Blackrock Road
15	Ice House Hill and including lands to the west of Pearse Park.	16	Brook Street/ Ardee Terrace
17	Louth Disability Services/ Mounthamilton House, Carrick Road	18	To the rear of Dunmore, Avenue Road




Reference DLK No.	Location	Reference DLK No.	Location
19	Ladywell Shrine, and surrounds, Dublin Road	20	The Laurels
21	Carroll Village – Old De La Salle Field	22	Long Walk
23	Demesne	24	Courthouse Square
25	Kelly's Monument	26	Entrance to library, Roden Place
27	Douglas Place	28	Northern side of Jocelyn Street and Seatown Place
29	Park View	30	Trees on Mount Avenue
31	De la Salle, Mill Road	32	Entrance to Grey Acre, Castletown Road
33	Castletown Cemetery	34	St. Louis Convent/ Castletown Castle
35	Castle Park, Castle Heights, Headford House, The Paddock, Mount Avenue	36	Between Farndreg Estate and Marion Park
37	Newry Road: Red Cow	38	Motte and Bailey, Doylesfort Road
39	South of Riverside Crescent	40	Fairgreen, Fairgreen Row
41	Point Road - The Towers and two adjoining properties to the west	42	The junction of Bóthar Maol and Blackrock Road
43	Within curtilage of Bunker Lodge, Sandymount	44	In the vicinity of Field House, Sandymount
45	Sandymount/ Rockmount	46	The Crescent, Blackrock
47	Catholic Church, Blackrock	48	Bellfield, Dublin Road
49	Church Road, Haggardstown	50	Marl House, Church Road, Haggardstown
51	Seafield House, Seafield Road	52	Fairy Mount, Seafield Road
53	Cockle Hill Road (Coast Road close to bend)	54	Cú Chulainn's Castle (Castletown Mount)
55	Lands to the south of Willow Grove, area known as 'The Gut'	56	Former landfill site, Newry Road
57	Farm buildings and house. South of graveyard / north side of Racecourse Road (west)	58	Carnbeg Hotel and Spa
59	Ashling Park	60	Lands to the rear/ in the vicinity of Texaco Station, Ardee Road
61	Lands north of Langsfield, Dublin Road	62	Louth Meath Education and Training Board Grounds St. Leonard's Garden
63	Along the stream within the grounds of DkIT		



Map 10.5: Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value



 <p>Comhairle Contae Lú Louth County Council</p>	<p>Comhairle Contae Lú Louth County Council</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@louthcoco.ie">info@louthcoco.ie</a></p> <p>An Roinn um Pleanáil Planning Department</p> <p><a href="http://www.louthcoco.ie">www.louthcoco.ie</a></p>	<p><b>Date:</b> March 2025</p>	<p><b>Dundalk</b></p> <p>Local Area Plan</p> <p>2025-2031</p>	<p><b>Drawing Name / Ref.</b></p> <p><b>Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value</b></p>
		<p><b>Scale:</b> Not to Scale</p>		



## 10.8 Hedgerows

Deciduous hedgerows provide food, shelter and habitat for many of our native flora and fauna, acting as important wildlife corridors, connecting species and spaces that would otherwise be isolated. They can also improve water quality by reducing sediment and nutrient loss by slowing water flow.

This Plan will seek to protect and retain hedgerows of visual and ecological value. Where hedgerows cannot be retained as part of a development, a new hedgerow consisting of native species shall be planted when feasible.

### 10.8.1 Policy Objective

#### CH 11

To protect Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value except in exceptional circumstance where it can be demonstrated to the Planning Authority their removal is warranted.

#### CH 12

Where in exceptional circumstances, trees and or hedgerows are required to be removed in order to facilitate development, this shall be done outside the nesting season. There shall be a requirement that for each tree felled in Dundalk, replacement trees will be required at a ratio of 5:1 where the removal of trees is required in order to facilitate development. On smaller, more constrained sites where there is limited space/opportunities for planting new trees, consideration may be given to reducing the ratio of trees to be planted on an application site if an alternative location for the shortfall of trees to be planted is identified and the consent of the landowner, on whose lands the trees are to be planted, is provided as part of a planning application.

## 10.9 Views and Prospects of Special Amenity Value

Dundalk contains many sites, areas and vantage points from which views of expansive areas of natural beauty, streetscapes and local landmarks can be obtained.

The scenery and streetscape of the town and scenic views of the surrounding area is of

immeasurable amenity value to tourists and residents alike, contributing to well-being and constituting a valuable economic asset. It is important that development is appropriately managed, so it does not negatively impact on the highly sensitive views and prospects, which are set out in Table 10.6.

Table 10.6: Views and Prospects in Dundalk

LAP Reference	Location of Viewpoint	Direction of View
<b>DLK VP 1</b>	Navy Bank and open space along Point Road	Views of the Ring of Gullion, Cooley Mountains and Dundalk Bay
<b>DLK VP 2</b>	Castletown Motte	Dundalk Bay, Cooley Mountains and Ring of Gullion
<b>DLK VP 3</b>	Ardee Road	Views of the town



LAP Reference	Location of Viewpoint	Direction of View
<b>DLK VP 4</b>	Old Racecourse Road	Ring of Gullion and Cooley Mountains
<b>DLK VP 5</b>	Soldiers Points	Views of the Cooley Mountains
<b>DLK VP 6</b>	Shore Road	Dundalk Bay and Cooley Mountains
<b>DLK VP 7</b>	Coast Road	Views of Dundalk Bay and the Cooley Mountains
<b>DLK VP 8</b>	The Crescent to Main Street	Views of Dundalk Bay and Cooley Mountains
<b>DLK VP 9</b>	From the Cockle Hill Road	Views out to sea
<b>DLK VP 10</b>	Car park at St. Fursey's Church, Haggardstown	Views of the Cooley Mountains
<b>DLK VP 11</b>	The Quays	Views of Dundalk Bay and Cooley Mountains
<b>DLK VP 12</b>	Dundalk House/ Green Church/ St Mary's	Cooley Mountains
<b>DLK VP 13</b>	Market Square	Crowe Street, Roden Place, Seatown Place, Barrack Street
<b>DLK VP 14</b>	St Patrick's Cemetery Dowdallshill	View of Ring of Gullion and Cooley Mountains
<b>DLK VP 15</b>	Newry Road Bridge	View of Castletown River, Castletown Motte, Ring of Gullion, Cooley Mountains and views into Town.
<b>DLK VP 16</b>	Táin Bridge	View of Dundalk Bay, River, Castletown Motte, Ring of Gullion, Cooley Mountains
<b>DLK VP 17</b>	The Blackrock Road (east of Bóthar Maol junction).	View of Dundalk Bay and Cooley Mountains

### 10.9.1 Policy Objectives

#### CH 13

To protect views and prospects listed in Table 10.6 from inappropriate development that would either obstruct the view/prospect from the identified vantage point or form an obtrusive or incongruous feature in that view/prospect.

#### CH 14

To improve, where necessary, access to viewing points, subject to availability of resources.



## 10.10 Scenic Routes

Dundalk's coastal location and natural surrounds contributes positively to its setting. In association with this high quality landscape, one scenic route has been identified which is of amenity and tourism value, and which requires protection.

There is one designated scenic route in Dundalk :

Table 10.7: Scenic Route in Dundalk

Reference No.	Route
<b>DLK SR 1</b>	Coastal Road, Blackrock Village

Applications for development must carefully consider the siting, design and landscaping of the proposed development to ensure that there are no significant alterations to the character of the area. Any development proposals, which would interfere with or adversely affect this Scenic Route, will not be permitted. Refer to Map 10.7.

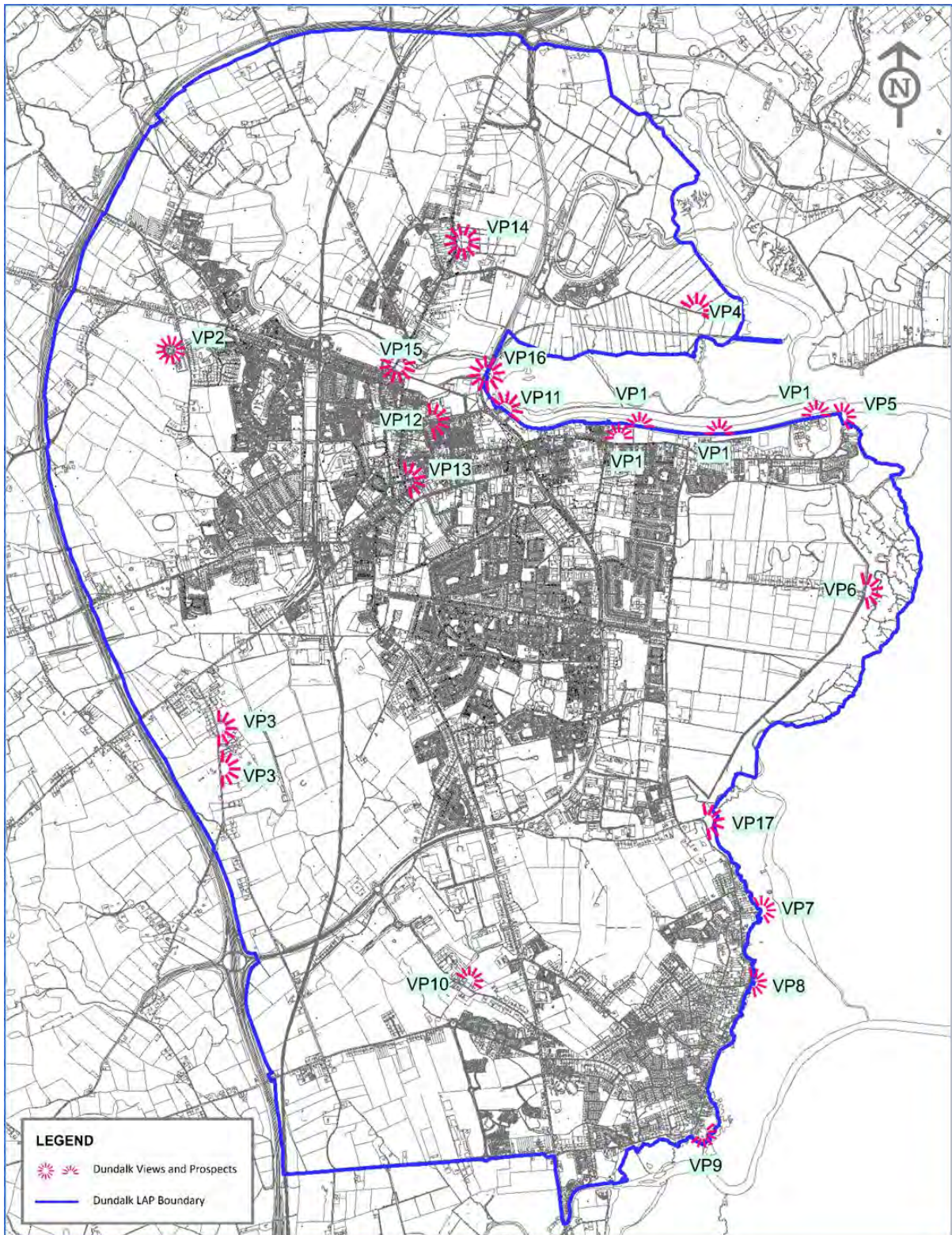
### 10.10.1 Policy Objective

#### CH 15

To prohibit inappropriate development which would interfere with or adversely affect the Coastal Road scenic route.



Map 10.6 – Views and Prospects, Dundalk



**LEGEND**

- Dundalk Views and Prospects
- Dundalk LAP Boundary



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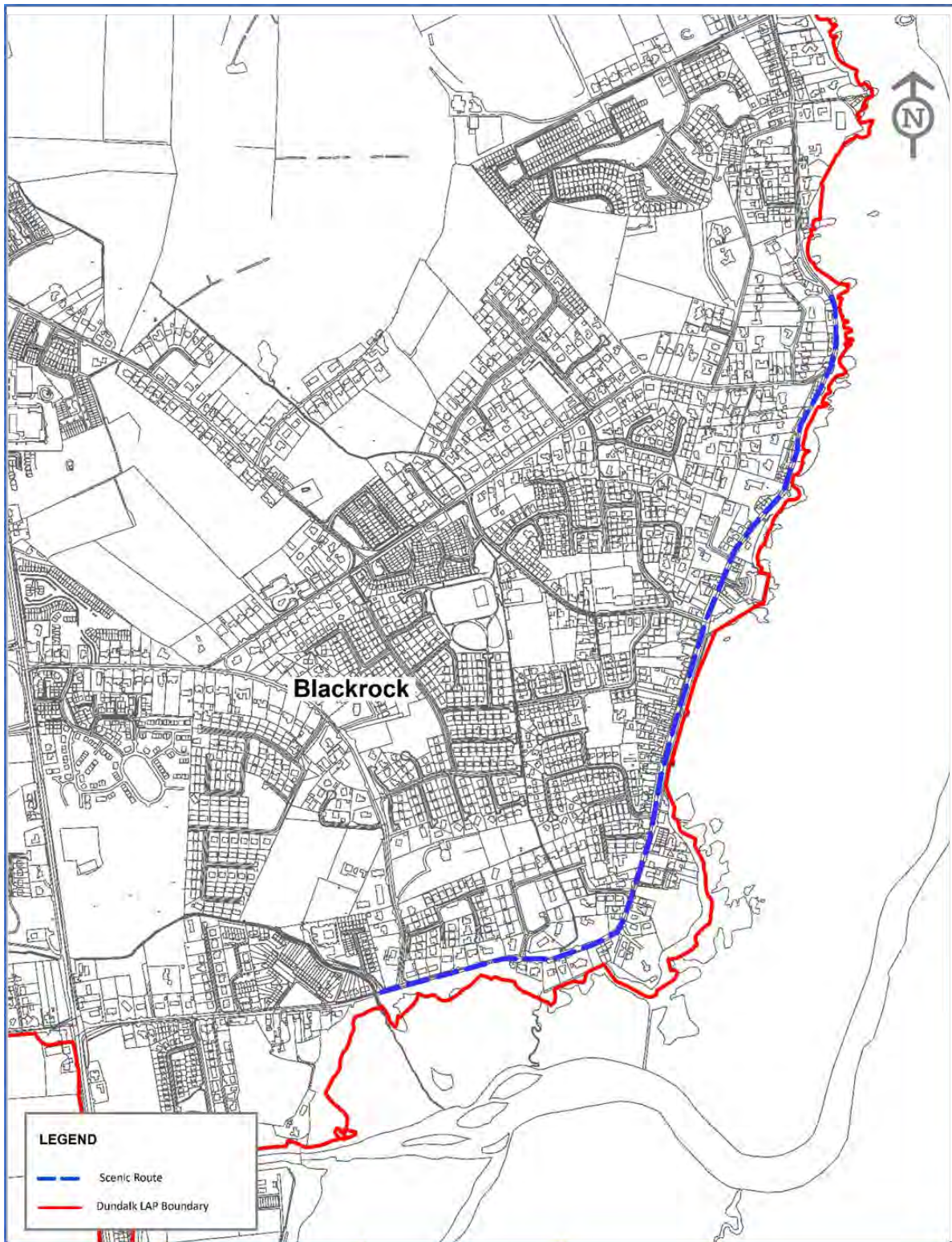
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**Local Area Plan**  
**2025-2031**

**Drawing Name / Ref.**  
**Views**  
**and Prospects**



Map 10.7 – Scenic Route, Dundalk



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	<p><b>Scale:</b> Not to Scale</p>		
	<p><b>CYAL50441422</b> © Tailte Éireann – Surveying</p>		



## 10.11 Protecting Biodiversity Value in Non-Designated Sites

There are numerous non-designated sites of biodiversity value which have an immense ecological value and form an essential part of Dundalk's ecological network. These include hedgerows, marshland, small wooded areas, ponds, streams and riverbanks. These non-designated sites are an essential part of Dundalk's green infrastructure network and are important for foraging, migration, dispersal, habitat and genetic exchange of wild species. An ecological assessment may be required to ensure that any development proposal does not adversely impact upon the ecological value of such sites.

### 10.11.1 Policy Objective

#### CH 16

To ensure that development proposals protect and conserve the biodiversity value of non-designated sites, and to require an ecological assessment by a suitably qualified person in instances where development proposals are likely to impact upon such sites.

## 10.12 Species Protected by Law

Dundalk's green infrastructure network provides an important habitat for both protected and non-protected wildlife. In all instances, the protected species and their habitat ought to be safeguarded unless in exceptional circumstances or where an alternative habitat can be provided.

The presence of species such as otters, pine martins, badgers, frogs, newts, bats and swifts which are protected by law is a material consideration when the Council is considering any development proposal.

### 10.12.1 Policy Objective

#### CH 17

To protect and enhance features of interest in Dundalk's Green Infrastructure network thereby ensuring that sensitive habitats and protected species are safeguarded, unless in exceptional circumstances or when an alternative habitat can be provided.



## 10.13 Green Infrastructure



### 10.13.1 Introduction

Green infrastructure is a term used to describe the network of natural spaces and corridors in a given area. Green infrastructure assets include open spaces, such as, parks and gardens, woodlands, fields, hedges, playing fields, coastal habitats, as well as footpaths, cycleways and/or rivers. Assets involving water are often referred to as ‘blue infrastructure’, but these are all included in the overarching term of ‘Green Infrastructure’.

Green Infrastructure assets offer areas for recreation and education, habitats for wildlife and also provide environmental services such as flood defences and/or absorption of air pollution. Green Infrastructure is now considered to be essential to the success of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures through nature-based solutions.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy in the following section follows the ‘Guiding Principles for the preparation of Green Infrastructure Strategies’ in Section 7.7 of the RSES.

This Plan will support the integration of green infrastructure into new and existing developments in order to support the creation of attractive urban spaces and recreational areas whilst also ensuring they are climate resilient.

The Regulations on Nature Restoration (Nature Restoration Law) came into effect in August 2024, the purpose of which is to restore Europe’s biodiversity and to prevent any further biodiversity loss. Each member state is to develop its own National Restoration Plan. Ireland’s National Restoration Plan is to be in place by 2026. Once adopted consideration shall be given to any requirements/recommendations of the National Restoration Plan, as applicable.

### 10.14 Dundalk’s Green Infrastructure Strategy

Dundalk’s two European sites (Dundalk SPA and Dundalk SAC), cover Dundalk Bay. Habitats protected by these include mud banks, sand banks and salt meadows. Dundalk SPA and SAC are considered to be the town’s most biodiversity-rich ecological areas and are the core areas for the movement and flow of species. Other natural and man-made habitats in Dundalk, whilst not formally protected by legislation, nonetheless act as vital green passageways.

Dundalk’s watercourses, tributaries and associated riparian strips form a major and unique element of the town’s green infrastructure network.



The Castletown, Blackwater and Fane rivers flow into Dundalk Bay and are vitally important biodiversity corridors for a range of protected and non-protected species. The Castletown River is also an important recreational facility.

The Dublin to Belfast Railway line runs through the town on a north-south axis. There is an undeveloped vegetated strip on either side of the track along the majority of its route through the town.

Another significant man-made ecological feature in Dundalk is the Inner Relief Road with an almost continuous network of trees, hedges and grass verges for its length through the town. Tree provision along this corridor has been augmented in recent years.

The railway track and road are important green passageways, facilitating the movement of flora and fauna, and linking the town with the wider rural landscape to the north and south.

It is anticipated that a new green corridor will be developed in Dundalk, in association with the provision of the Dundalk-Blackrock Flood Relief Scheme which will incorporate a series of biodiversity and ecological enhancing measures.

It is acknowledged that the ecological features in the town do not operate in a vacuum. There are also a range of local and neighbourhood parks interspersed throughout the urban area of Dundalk including St. Helena Park as well as treed/open space areas at Ice House Hill, Farndreg, Muirhevnemor, and at the former landfill site.

They all make a significant contribution to Dundalk's green infrastructure network.

A total of 63 'Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value' have been designated within Dundalk. These, along with all other individual trees and groups of trees, form essential connecting features and stepping stones, facilitating the movement of flora and fauna between various habitats. Other important habitats include open space/amenity areas, semi-natural grasslands, hedgerows, private gardens, graveyards and grass verges, which perform as essential linkages between habitats.

Man-made features such as stone walls, bridges and older buildings also play a considerable part in Dundalk's green infrastructure. This Plan will seek to enhance and protect the wildlife corridors and habitats throughout Dundalk.

Any new development shall strive to identify existing features of ecological importance and, where possible, should incorporate and utilise these to facilitate the building of a coherent network of rich biodiversity sites and linkages. All development proposals should seek to enhance biodiversity and make a positive contribution to the overall green infrastructure network of Dundalk. It is considered that the augmentation of Dundalk's green infrastructure through the provision of ecological enhancement, will make a positive contribution to Dundalk's ecological value and also climate change mitigation.

Table 10.8: Dundalk's Green Infrastructure Features and Potential for Enhancement

Features of Interest	Potential for Green Infrastructure Enhancement
<p><b>Two European sites: Dundalk SPA/SAC and associated coastlines</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance and, as appropriate, achievement of 'favourable conservation status' of habitats and species within SACs and SPAs as per the requirements and obligations of the Habitats Directive Council Directive 92/43/EEC and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC;</li> <li>• Remove litter from coastline and inland environments; and</li> <li>• Promote protection of habitats and support education and research.</li> </ul>



Features of Interest	Potential for Green Infrastructure Enhancement
<b>Rivers: Including the Castletown, Fane and their tributaries</b> <b>Cont'd.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove culverting, if possible, 'daylighting' the stream;</li> <li>• Provision of a graded system of planting that mimics the natural succession of species from open water to dry land;</li> <li>• Retention and appropriate augmentation of suitable bank side vegetation along the course of the river/stream/ watercourse; and</li> <li>• Appropriate aquatic planting.</li> </ul>
<b>Coastlines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance and as appropriate, achievement of 'favourable conservation statuses of habitats and species within SACs and SPAs as per the requirements and obligations of the Habitats Directive Council Directive 92/43/EEC and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC.</li> </ul>
<b>Rivers: Including the Castletown, Fane and their tributaries.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of River Basin Management Plans;</li> <li>• Incorporation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems into developments;</li> <li>• The integration of nature-based solutions into the management of surface water such as attenuation ponds, swales and reed beds;</li> <li>• Facilitate the rewilding of streams, where this can be done without increasing the risk of flooding of property;</li> <li>• Provision of riparian corridors where possible (minimum set back of 10m from each bank of any river stream or watercourse where feasible);</li> <li>• Maintenance of rivers/ streams/ other watercourses in an open state capable of providing suitable habitat for fauna and flora, including fish;</li> <li>• If culverting is necessary, provide mammal passes which maintain connectivity for species such as otters and badgers;</li> </ul>
<b>Railway Lines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance of buffer zone on either side of the Belfast to Dublin railway line, except in exceptional circumstances; and</li> <li>• Retention of trees and other vegetation save for exceptional circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Individual trees and woodlands including the 63 designated as 'Trees and Woodlands of Special Amenity Value (TWSAV)'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of trees will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and replaced at a ratio of five new trees per single tree removed where this is feasible;</li> <li>• Protection and enhancement of existing linear tree lines;</li> <li>• Provision of additional tree planting along roads, streets and within urban spaces where feasible. Native species suitable for streets and confined places include birch, rowan, whitebeam and wild cherry;</li> <li>• Planting small cluster of trees within new developments mimicking woodlands; and</li> <li>• Do not over-manage or "tidy" the tree understorey area. Allow the ground flora to evolve naturally and allow a build-up of natural debris on the woodland floor.</li> </ul>



Features of Interest	Potential for Green Infrastructure Enhancement
<b>Hedgerows</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and enhance existing hedgerows where possible;</li> <li>• Where retention is not possible provide an appropriate length of native species hedgerow within any proposed development. Native species include hawthorn, hazel and blackthorn;</li> <li>• Enhancing connections and additional provision of hedgerows where possible;</li> <li>• Only cut hedgerows outside nesting season; and</li> <li>• Hedgerow management plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Sites of Geological Interest:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of information signboards.</li> </ul>
<b>Wetlands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a buffer zone, where considered necessary;</li> <li>• Remove any illegal dumping and discourage same;</li> <li>• Removal of invasive species and non-native plants; and</li> <li>• Creation of areas of open water, scrapes and meandering channels, if appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Existing and proposed urban spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancement of biodiversity by ensuring native trees and other forms of planting are included in any public realm improvement scheme;</li> <li>• Provision of additional native street trees in appropriate locations. Native species suitable for streets and confined places include birch, rowan, whitebeam and wild cherry;</li> <li>• Provision of comprehensive landscaping scheme for any new development/ public realm proposals;</li> <li>• Creation of informal and formal flower beds which will attract insects;</li> <li>• Provision of bat and bird boxes;</li> <li>• Provision of dead wood piles;</li> <li>• Less intensive and frequent management of grass cutting; and</li> <li>• Provision of interpretation panels.</li> </ul>
<b>Gardens / amenity grassland/ parkland, playing fields/ church and graveyards / recreational and informal walkways /road verges/ laneways/ allotments / roundabouts/fields</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Native shrub planting and allowing natural flora to develop;</li> <li>• Plant trees of native provenance to diversify gardens, new grassland area and road verges;</li> <li>• Diversify grasslands by altering the mowing regime to provide areas of tall grass thereby providing habitat for invertebrates including butterflies and other pollinators;</li> <li>• Use wildflower seeds of local provenance where possible;</li> <li>• Creation of habitat patches connecting new and existing hedgerows/ trees;</li> <li>• The planting of native blue bells, fox gloves and primroses;</li> <li>• Provision of bat and bird boxes;</li> <li>• Leave any older walls and headstones untouched; and</li> <li>• Install Signage /Interpretation panels.</li> </ul>



Features of Interest	Potential for Green Infrastructure Enhancement
<p><b>Areas within/adjacent to existing housing developments.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave margin of grass uncut;</li> <li>• Planting of new hedgerow and encourage growth of existing hedgerows;</li> <li>• Provision of bird feeders;</li> <li>• Pollinator planting;</li> <li>• Set up compost heaps;</li> <li>• Provision of bat and bird boxes;</li> <li>• Interpretation panels; and</li> <li>• Encourage community involvement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stone walls, bridges, and older buildings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain existing features and incorporate into overall design proposal, where possible; and</li> <li>• Consult with National Parks and Wildlife Service regarding licensing requirements for protected animals such as bats.</li> </ul>

### 10.14.1 Policy Objective

#### CH 18

To protect and enhance Dundalk’s Green Infrastructure in accordance with the details and recommendations included in Table 10.8 ‘Dundalk’s Green Infrastructure Features and Potential for Enhancement’.

## 10.15 Built Heritage



### 10.15.1 Introduction

The first important settlement in the Dundalk area was situated around the Motte Castle at Castletown. ‘Dundalk’ was later relocated downstream and a ‘Newtowndundalk’ was

established further east, at the Castletown River, now the site of Dundalk Bridge, while the original Dundalk became known as Castletown.



The Castletown River provided a vital trade route and was instrumental in the establishment of the town.

Market Square, to the south, became the heart of Dundalk's civic and commercial life in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The strong linear emphasis created by the new north-south thoroughfare is still present today in the main artery of Bridge Street, Church Street and Clanbrassil Street.

During the late Middle Ages Dundalk became the northernmost outpost of 'The Pale', it was essentially a frontier town and heavily fortified due to frequent attack. During the seventeenth century, the town was burned several times and endured warfare and depopulation. However, economic conditions improved with the development of a new harbour and the reclamation of several hundred acres of former marshland, hence today the main part of the town lies at sea level.

In the 1840's the development of the town was boosted by the arrival of the railway and the success of local agriculture-based industries; textile, boot manufacture, tobacco, brewing and distilling. These created a significant link with the contemporaneous manufactories in Belfast and Dublin and strengthened export markets. All railway engineering services for the Great Northern Railway were concentrated in the town, with ship building and maintenance companies established at the harbour area.

By the close of the century, Dundalk had become an industrial town which flourished as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Dundalk's rich industrial legacy is evident today in many historic industrial structures and buildings.

During the 20th century growth in the town was hindered to a certain degree by Partition and the Troubles. Over the past few decades Dundalk has continued to experience an influx of investment and industrial development.

### 10.15.2 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeological heritage is an intrinsic part of Dundalk's heritage and provides an opportunity to learn about the past and reinforce the town's sense of place. Archaeological heritage consists of various types of known and as yet unidentified sites, monuments, objects and environmental evidence.

Dundalk benefits from a range of archaeological sites, monuments, places, areas, and objects which are protected by the following means:

- Sites and monuments included in the Sites and Monuments Record as maintained by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- Monuments and places included in the Record of Monuments and Places, established under the National Monuments Acts;
- Historic monuments and archaeological areas included in the Register of Historic Monuments as established under the National Monuments Acts;
- National monuments, subject to Preservation Orders under the National Monuments Acts and national monuments which are in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage or the local authority;
- Archaeological objects, within the meaning of the National Monuments Acts and Wrecks, protected under the National Monuments Acts or otherwise included in the Shipwreck Inventory, maintained by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; and
- National Monuments, such as Walled Towns, under the National Walled Towns Policy 2008.



In all instances, development should be designed and carried out in a manner that protects archaeological heritage and avoids adverse impacts on sites, objects or features of significant archaeological interest. In accordance with the recommendations of the Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (1999), in-situ preservation of archaeological features is preferred.

Regard shall therefore be had in relation to potential impacts on archaeological heritage before commencement of development, and any known or discovered features or sites should be sensitively incorporated where possible.

### 10.15.3 Zones of Archaeological Potential (ZAP)

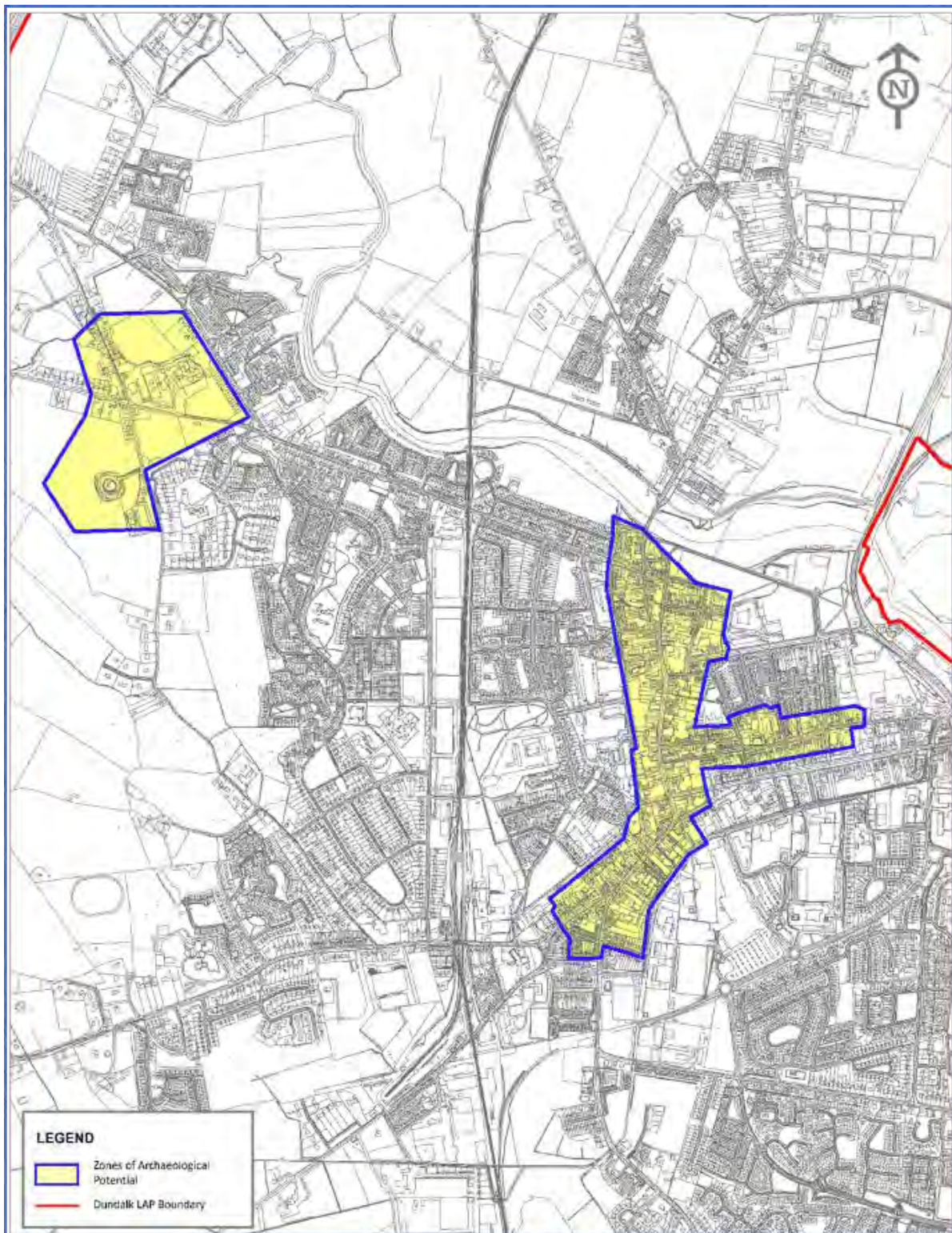
There are two large Zones of Archaeological Potential in Dundalk. The extent of the Zones of Archaeological Potential is detailed in Table 10.9 and Map 10.8.


Table 10.9 Zones of Archaeological Potential

ZAP No.	Description
1	The historic core, which essentially extends from the Castletown River to Market Square, where it bends south-west to cover the roads to Ardee/Carrickmacross and to Dublin, with an extension to the east (Seatown).
2	Castletown, the site of the original Dundalk.



Map 10.8: Zones of Archaeological Potential



	Comhairle Contae Lú Louth County Council Email: <a href="mailto:info@louthcoco.ie">info@louthcoco.ie</a>	<b>Date:</b> March 2025 <b>Scale:</b> Not to Scale	<b>Dundalk</b> <b>Local Area Plan</b> <b>2025-2031</b>	<b>Drawing Name / Ref.</b> <b>Zones of</b> <b>Archaeological</b> <b>Potential</b>
	An Roinn um Pleanáil Planning Department <a href="http://www.louthcoco.ie">www.louthcoco.ie</a>	<b>CYAL50441422</b> © Tallte Éireann – Surveying		



#### 10.15.4 Policy Objectives

##### CH 19

To protect known and unknown archaeological areas, sites, monuments, structures and objects, having regard to the advice of the National Monuments Services of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage including the guidance and principles set out in 'The Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage' (1999).

##### CH 20

To protect the archaeological assets of Dundalk and ensure they are managed and preserved in a manner that does not adversely impact on the intrinsic value of these assets whilst supporting economic renewal, tourism and sustainable development.

##### CH 21

To require applicants seeking planning permission to utilise a licensed archaeologist, as required, to undertake archaeological impact assessments, geophysical surveys, test excavations and monitoring.

#### 10.16 Protected Structures

Dundalk's historic built environment encompasses fine examples of built heritage and historic streetscapes, which make a vital contribution to the visual amenity and character of the town. Protected Structures have a key role to play in place-making and contribute significantly to Dundalk's sense of identity and cultural heritage. The re-use, repair and energy upgrading of protected structures is therefore an important consideration for sustainable development and urban regeneration.

Full details of the Protected Structures in Dundalk are set out in the Record of Protected Structures published as part of the County Development Plan.

The range of Protected Structures varies from medieval structures, churches and public and civic buildings to more modest buildings and elements of streetscape.

The variety of historic building stock contributes to Dundalk's unique character. The value of Dundalk's rich built heritage is recognised.

A key challenge is to safeguard the integrity of protected structures, whilst at the same time facilitating their rehabilitation, renovation, incorporation and appropriate use and reuse.

Proposals to extend, alter or refurbish a Protected Structure(s) shall be sympathetic to their special character and integrity (including historic curtilage and visual setting) of the Structure(s) and should be appropriate in terms of architectural treatment, character, scale and form. All such proposals shall be consistent with the *Architectural Heritage Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)* and in accordance with good conservation practice.

#### 10.16.1 Policy Objectives

##### CH 22

To preserve, enhance and promote the reuse of buildings identified in the Record of Protected Structures and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) and to carefully consider any proposals for development that would affect the special value of such structures, including their historic character. Such proposals will include Architectural Heritage Impact Statements and Conservation Methodology Statements.



CH 23

To address dereliction and vacancy by encouraging and supporting creative approaches to adaptive reuse, which adhere to conservation principles and practice.

### 10.17 Architectural Conservation Areas

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or a townscape that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures.

The buildings and spaces found within the ACAs represent a unique aspect of Dundalk’s built heritage and contribute to its attractiveness and character. Dundalk’s ACAs can also contribute to revitalisation, as they provide the town with a distinctive identity and can make a positive contribution to local economies and tourism.

There are eight Architectural Conservation Areas in Dundalk:

1. **St. Mary’s Road:** Red brick Victorian and Edwardian housing with original railings.
2. **Roden Place:** Contains buildings of national importance. Largely Georgian in character with some Victorian additions. Many of the buildings display original features.
3. **The Crescent:** Mainly red brick two storey buildings with slated pitched roofs dating from the end of the nineteenth century.
4. **Clanbrassil Street:** Extending from St Nicholas’s Church of Ireland to Market Square. Contains a large number of protected structures.

5. **Jocelyn Street/ Seatown Place:** Wide streets laid out in the 1740’s containing Georgian and Victorian properties also comprising regionally important buildings.
6. **Soldiers Point – Coastguard Houses:** Row of 9 terraced houses, two storey, 3 bay properties.
7. **Magnet Road/ Demesne:** Comprises both buildings and open space. Consists of 1&2 Park Villas, 1&2 The Demesne, former revenue commissioner’s office and the former Adelphi cinema building.
8. **The Crescent/ Blackrock:** Consists of a terrace of six houses, four of these being in a straight row, and the larger two, on the southern end, angled to enclose a space around a communal green to the front.

Full details of the Architectural Conservation Areas are available in Appendix 6 of this Plan.

#### 10.17.1 Policy Objective

CH 24

To require that all development proposals within or affecting an Architectural Conservation Area preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that area, protect architectural features of special interest and ensure that the design respects the character of the historic architecture in terms of height, scale, layout and materials. Development proposals should not adversely impact upon views into or from an Architectural Conservation Area.

### 10.18 Vernacular Heritage

Buildings of vernacular architecture primarily consist of homes and workplaces built by local people using local materials. Vernacular buildings are an intrinsic and finite part of Dundalk’s urban landscape, their unique character provides historical depth and a strong sense of identity.



Protection and enhancement of vernacular buildings is an important aspect of place making.

Vernacular buildings by their very nature are often the most sustainable forms of construction, built with local materials in a style responding to local conditions, with a low energy use.

It is acknowledged that alterations and adaptations to vernacular structures may be required to ensure their continued use however any proposals should be sympathetic to their special features and character.

This Plan will therefore encourage and promote the rehabilitation and re-use of vernacular buildings, while ensuring their continued use. Furthermore, the re-use of buildings minimises the depletion of non – renewable resources and is therefore essential to sustainable development.

### 10.18.1 Policy Objectives

#### CH 25

To promote, where feasible, the protection, retention, sympathetic maintenance and appropriate revitalisation and use of Dundalk's vernacular buildings and heritage, which contribute to the streetscape and to discourage the demolition of these structures.

#### CH 26

To encourage the re-use and adaption of existing historic buildings, both designated and non-designated, in a manner compatible with their character, and which enhances their vernacular heritage or contribution to the ACA within which they are located.

## 10.19 Dundalk Style Architecture

A distinctive feature of Dundalk's built heritage and elevating the architectural merit of the Clanbrassil streetscape is the presence of buildings, executed in an exuberant Italianate style known as 'Dundalk Style', coined by the 'Dublin Builder' (a contemporary publication). These facades typically encompass elaborate window surrounds, heavy bracketed cornices and decorative keystones.

This style developed in the mid to late 19th Century, reflecting the commercial wealth and confidence of the town, and many of the facades of the earlier buildings on the street were remodelled to incorporate elements of this style.

Render is the predominant facing material, but a number of red brick buildings punctuate the streetscape, in particular, along the mid-section on the west side of Clanbrassil Street. The intrinsic irregularity of the building fronts pleasantly conflict with the attempt to create a more refined classical appearance to the buildings in the form of parapet walls and window size gradations.

This Plan recognises the important contribution that 'Dundalk-Style' architecture makes to the built and cultural heritage of Dundalk.

### 10.19.1 Policy Objective

#### CH 27

To recognise the unique characteristics of the 'Dundalk Style' of architecture and the contribution it makes to the built heritage of the town.



# CHAPTER 11

## IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING





## 11. Implementation and Monitoring

### 11.1 Introduction

The Dundalk Local Area Plan sets out the Council's strategy and vision for Dundalk at a local level. The successful implementation of this Plan is dependent on collaboration and an effective partnership between the Council, government departments and agencies, and the private sector in achieving the vision for Dundalk.

The Council is committed to monitoring the progress of this Plan and it is a key objective of this Plan to conduct effective monitoring and evaluation of the policy objectives contained within.

### 11.2 Data Sources

The preparation of this Plan utilised information from a variety of sources to produce an evidence-based policy document. Data from the Central Statistics Office, Department for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and publications for other statutory and non-statutory authorities will be used to monitor and review the implementation of this Plan.

These data sources can be monitored through regular updates, reports, and publications provided by the relevant authorities. The County Council, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Central Statistics Office, and other relevant agencies are responsible for collecting, analysing, and disseminating this data. Regular reviews and assessments of the data can help track progress, identify trends, and inform future investment decisions and infrastructure requirements in Dundalk.

### 11.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring procedures are being developed in line with the Louth County Development Plan. The Planning Department will be the lead section for the implementation and monitoring of this plan, primarily through the application of the development management process. The Plan will be used by each directorate to guide decision making and investment throughout the Dundalk area.

### 11.4 Policy Objective

#### IM 1

A Progress Report, the structure of which shall be based on that set out in the 'Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DHLGH, 2022) for the monitoring and implementation of Developments (as relevant to Local Area Plans), shall be prepared within 6 months of all Census publications for Census 2027 (or the date of the next Census) and shall set out the progress achieved to date in realising key projects and objectives of the Local Area Plan.