

Skibbereen

Town Development Plan 2009-2015

August 2009

Skibbereen Town Development Plan

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Variation No.3	



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PART 1

INTRODUCTION



1.0 FUNCTION + PURPOSE OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The principal mechanism by which development takes place in a planned and coordinated manner is through the preparation of the Development Plan. This Development Plan for Skibbereen puts forward ideas and proposals to guide the physical land use development of the town over the next six years. The process of making the Plan, including a number of statutory objectives is guided by the framework that is set out within the Planning and Development Act, 2000. This Plan will replace the Skibbereen Town Development Plan 2004 - 2010.

This Plan is the main public statement of local planning policies for Skibbereen and from it you will be able to find out:

- Where the preferred locations for development are in the town;
- Where certain types of development should take place within the town; and
- The standards and requirements for new development proposals within the town.

The Plan consists of a written statement, maps and other supporting graphics and images. The written statement contains analysis of statistics, projections and development policy and objectives. General development and design guidance is provided by design guidelines and development briefs where appropriate. Where conflict arises between the written statement and the maps, the written statement takes precedence.

The plan is set out in broad and general terms around five key sections:

- Part 1: Introduction
- Part 2: Strategic Context - summarises some of the "big picture" issues facing Skibbereen in the future from the national, regional and local perspectives and outlines an overall strategy for the town.
- Part 3: Policies and Objectives - sets out broad policies and more detailed objectives and proposals for achieving a high quality living, working, investment and physical environment for Skibbereen
- Part 4: Development Management - includes a 'Development Management and Development Guidelines' section, which establishes criteria for the assessment of individual planning applications. It also explains the roles of local and central government and the private sector in delivering aspects of the plan.
- Part 5: Strategic Environmental Assessment – contains a separate report on the environmental effects of implementing policies and objectives in the Plan and contains further environmental policies and objectives which must be considered in implementing plans and programmes within the plan area.

These parts are supplemented by a number of appendices that set out additional material of a technical or detailed nature, including mapping at a larger scale of 1:1,000.

1.1 LEGAL REQUIREMENT

Section 9 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (the Act) places a statutory obligation on Skibbereen Town Council, acting through its public representatives, to prepare a development plan for Skibbereen every six years. Planning policies and objectives contained in this Plan articulate the vision for the future of the town and are influenced by national, regional and county policy and guidance as well as the aspirations and views of the community of Skibbereen as articulated through public consultation exercises held in March / April 2008.

The policies and objectives set out in this Plan remain in effect for a six year period but can be subject to amendment or review during this time where Skibbereen Town Council consider relevant in the interest of proper planning and sustainable development. It is a requirement under section 15 of the Act for the Manager to give a report to the Members on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Plan not more than two years after making this Plan.

1.2 PLAN AREA

The extent of the Development Plan boundary is determined by the Town Council administrative boundary as detailed on Map 1.1 and the statutory functions of the Plan apply to all of the lands located within the development plan boundary.

Although not forming a legal part of the Skibbereen Town Development Plan, in the interest of consistency and integrated planning, regard is had and reference is made to those lands located outside of but adjoining the Town Council Boundary (plan boundary) and in the functional control of Cork County Council. In this regard, specific reference is made to the Skibbereen Electoral Area Local Area Plan and the land use zonings contained therein.



Map 1.1 Development Plan Boundary

1.3 PLAN TIMEFRAME

Although development plans are prepared to cover a six year timeframe, it is important that this Plan is set within a longer-term strategic perspective for the next twelve years in line with the North and West Cork Strategic Plan 2002 – 2020. This strategy focuses on areas of County Cork outside of the Cork Area Strategic Plan, examines in detail and establishes a framework between Skibbereen and its surrounding hinterland. Thus, this Plan attempts to set out, as concisely as possible, Skibbereen Town Council's current thinking on planning policy looking towards the horizon year of 2020.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Development Plan is to take a long-term view of the future development of Skibbereen in order to manage change in the physical environment and provide for new development that contributes to and enhances the existing qualities of the town thereby ensuring that development is planned in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

Skibbereen as a county town and growth/development centre performs an important employment, service and social function for an extensive rural hinterland. Continued development is a key determinant of socio-economic prosperity and an indicator of the town's vibrancy and significance in maintaining and attracting necessary investment. Limited progress in the town to date now makes it necessary to ensure that a dynamic and innovative development plan is put in place in order to achieve a number of objectives.

The main purpose of this Plan is to:

- Identify key development issues informed by statutory requirements and community and stakeholder participation;
- Develop policy objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town that are consistent as far as possible with the Cork County Development Plan 2009–2015, the Skibbereen Electoral Area Local Area Plan, National and Regional Plans, Strategies and Guidelines;
- Provide a detailed and consistent framework for the use of land and the control and regulation of development that will guide planning decisions;
- Provide a basis for coordinating public and private investment throughout the area; and
- Inform local communities on how their interests will be affected.

The main objective of this Plan is to:

- Ensure that there is a transport framework to co ordinate the development process.
- Balance new development and additional traffic movements in the town with the provision and management of infrastructure and housing in a sustainable manner.
- Facilitate and encourage public and private investment in the town, by providing supportive development policies and encouraging rather than restricting development.
- Focus development on the town centre with an adequately flexible approach to attract key operators to the town.
- Capitalise on Skibbereen's comparative advantage by protecting and enhancing the town's unique setting.

1.5 RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS AND STRATEGIES

There is a long list of plans and publications at national, regional and local level, which inform and will influence the overall strategy of this Plan, including

- The National Development Plan 2007-2013, Transforming Ireland - A Better Quality of Life for All
- The National Spatial Strategy 2002- 2020
- Ceantair Laga Ard Riachtanais (CLAR) 2002
- The South West Regional Planning Guidelines 2004
- The Integrated Strategy for the Economic, Social and Cultural Development of County Cork 2002-2011
- North and West Cork Strategic Plan 2002 - 2020
- Joint Cork Retail Strategy March 2008- Preliminary Consultation Draft
- Cork County Development Plan
- Skibbereen Urban Study, 2002

1.5.1 The National Development Plan 2007- 2013 (NDP)

The National Development plan is a seven year plan which sets out to achieve a "Better Quality of Life for All" through investment in economic and social infrastructure, enterprise, science and innovation priority; human capital and social inclusion. The Plan aims to decisively tackle structural infrastructure deficits that continue to impact on competitiveness and regional development within the framework of the National Spatial Strategy. The NDP is important to towns such as Skibbereen as it funds significant infrastructure programmes such as the new sewerage scheme for the town.

1.5.2 The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS)

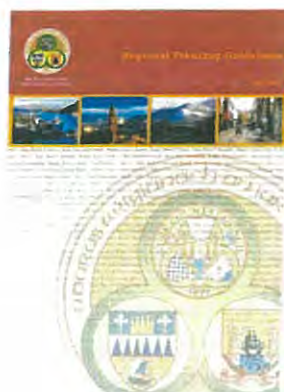
The National spatial strategy is a twenty year planning framework designed to achieve balanced social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions throughout the country. Within the NSS Cork is designated as national/international gateway, which has the capacity to drive development in the southwest region. It proposes that towns such as Skibbereen, Clonakilty and Dunmanway be promoted as self-sustaining towns which build up their employment and service functions through the implementation of the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP), in particular through enhancing their road, rail and bus links to Cork city.

The NSS identifies Skibbereen as an "*urban strengthening opportunity*" located on an access route to peripheral areas that plays an important economic and service function to remoter parts of the coastline in the southwest. For Skibbereen to reach its potential the NSS recognises the critical role that accessibility and effective local planning frameworks and initiatives play in releasing capacity in terms of land and services for sustainable growth. It states that Skibbereen must become a focus for the settlement policies of local authorities as incorporated in county development plans.

1.5.3 Ceantair Laga Ard- Riachtanais- CLAR

Clár is an investment program, which targets disadvantaged rural areas. It provides funding to agencies to accelerate investment in priority developments. Clár includes parts of the twenty two counties and all of Co Leitrim. Skibbereen is included within Clár's targeted areas. Its schemes cover a variety of developments including village, housing and school enhancement, electricity conversion, roads, water supply, sewerage disposal, health, sports and community projects. The scheme facilitates development and if necessary, provides supplemental funding to Government Departments and State Agencies to assist in accelerating investment in selected priority developments.





1.5.4 The South West Regional Planning Guidelines 2004

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the South West region (RPG) is a sixteen year plan which aims to steer sustainable growth and prosperity of the regions people. The RPG's is the implementation tool for the NSS and it aims to achieve and sustain critical mass in the region including towns outside gateways and hubs, through employment and services so that they can in turn service the surrounding rural hinterland.

The RPG's recognise that tourism is an important industry in the region. It states that local authorities need to put polices in place which will facilitate development, while protecting the core assets which attract tourists to the area. It is recognised that educational and health facilities must be provided for in town centres to maintain and allow for the critical mass of surrounding areas to support them. Other services and facilities such as childcare, libraries, leisure and sports should also be located in town centres for accessibility and sustainability reasons.

The RPGs recognises Skibbereen as a town with a good local employment base and potential for future indigenous growth. The RPG's detail a settlement framework for the development of the region and locate Skibbereen within Zone 3 of the settlement framework which is characterised by a very weak urban structure and with a low-density rural population. Skibbereen is identified as a "Local Service Town" that plays an important role as a "service/retail/ residential centre". It continues to state that Skibbereen needs to be developed to support rural regeneration.

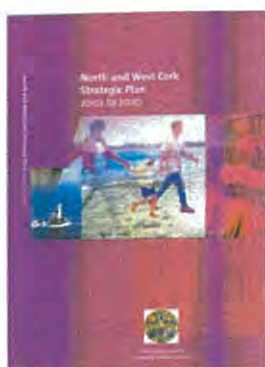
From a strategic point of view the RPG's consider that the following must be implemented to ensure maximum sustainable development of Zone 3 including

- Planning policies should be put in place to focus and target growth toward towns and villages, with policies that ensure adequate public infrastructure, in terms of water and sewerage services;
- Policy in development plans should ensure holiday development is contained within towns and villages to maximise the economic benefit to the local community;
- New residential areas should be designed at a scale, density, layout and design that enhances the local fabric of the town;
- Prevent suburban style dwellings;
- Promote greater levels of uniformity in housing design and types;
- Improve public transport to local service towns;
- Planning policy must protect scenic and environmental areas from unsustainable development;
- It should be an objective of development plans to prevent urban sprawl, there may be a need for a mini greenbelt around some towns; and
- Policies need to be provided from which will encourage hotels and other tourist related facilities in towns

According to the RPG's the region should maintain rural population, support key service towns and work as a network to drive development in the area. The strategy also builds "on niche strengths of towns and encourages polycentric and synchronised development" by linking towns. Skibbereen is linked to Bantry, Catletownbere, Dunmanway and Kenmare. The provisions of the economic development strategy of the RPG's indicates that industry should be located in key service town and linked local service towns such as Skibbereen. Each local authority within the region will have a major role in the coordination and implementation of the RPG's and according to the RPG's this should be carried out through the development plan process.

1.5.5 Integrated Strategy for the Economic, Social and Cultural Development of County Cork 2002-2011

This strategy aims to offset the natural concentration of development in and around Cork City by improving the potential of all areas of the County ensuring *“balanced sustainable development through investment in infrastructure, job creation, education and social and cultural activities”*. Goals to achieve this include the provision of infrastructure systems which support sustainable development throughout Cork, the spreading of employment opportunities and economic growth, improving quality of life for all, providing equal access and opportunity to education and training; and achieving higher education abilities. The County Development Board who prepared this strategy does not implement the strategy. Instead it has involved over three hundred public, private and voluntary agencies who are committed to achieving its aims and goals.



1.5.6 North and West Cork Strategic Plan 2002-2020

In 2002, Cork County Council adopted the North and West Cork Strategic Plan that sets out a twenty year strategy to address the structural socio-economic and infrastructure issues of North and West Cork. At the heart of the strategy are proposals to rebalance the population structure of the area by allowing the villages and rural areas to maintain healthy growth levels. The strategy encourages a greater proportion of the new population in the area to locate in the towns such as Skibbereen so that they will develop a more effective critical mass of population that will allow the development of their shops, employment, services and other facilities to become self-sustaining, to the benefit of the area as a whole.

The strategy suggests that the main opportunity to strengthen the permanent population structure of the area is by strengthening the economic and employment base of the towns and larger villages and by promoting a stronger tourism and leisure economy through the protection of the assets of the area's natural and built heritage.

1.5.7 Cork Strategic Retail Study 2008

Cork County Council and Cork City Council came together to prepare a new joint CRS for the County and City area. It is a requirement that the adopted strategy is implemented and included within the development plan for all town and county councils. The purpose of the strategy is to set out a clear policy on retail provision in the city and county and to guide planning authorities when assessing retail planning applications.

The CRS identifies a hierarchy of retail locations that establishes the quantity and location of new retail development. Within the retail hierarchy Skibbereen is identified as a *“County Town”* which requires the growth of retail provision *“in line with the current and planned population levels”* for the area. Policy RS7 of the CRS states that the strategic role of county towns is to acknowledge the importance of county towns in *“providing a wide range of both convenience and comparison shopping in locations close to centres of population and larger, more remote rural hinterlands”*. Within the CRS Skibbereen is detailed as requiring *“expanded retail capacity to overcome potential isolation from higher order markets and a tendency to leakage to other competitive centres”*.

The CRS states that core retail areas need to be identified within each areas development plans. It states that such core areas should be based around a compact retail core, which includes other services and facilities. It is important to ensure that such cores are compact to ensure that all retail and commercial developments within the core can benefit from each others footfall. These core areas shall be the focus for all retail development. The CRS identifies that there is a need for 26,360 sqm of new retail

space in all County Towns. It continues to detail that an appropriate mix of convenience and comparison is required within County towns and this should be enforced through objectives in the relevant development plans.

The preferred location for retail warehouses and retail parks as detailed within the CRS is within core shopping areas of city, town and district centres and sometimes on the edge of town or district centres. The CRS provides for an allocation for 28,030sqm of new retail warehousing floor space for ring and county towns, it suggests that individual units could easily assimilate into town or edge of town locations in these towns.

Policy RS13 states that planning authorities will implement the provisions of the retail guidelines through the development plan and that the agreed location for retail development is in the city centre, suburban district centre, town centre, or designated neighbourhood centre/local centre.

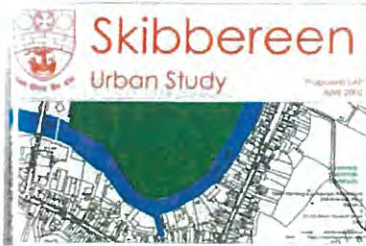
1.5.8 Cork County Development Plan 2009 - 2015

The Cork County Development Plan 2009 (CDP) provides an overall strategy guiding the growth and development of County Cork for the next six years. Although Skibbereen town is administered by its own Town Council, it is important that the overall strategic development of the town has regard to the wider hierarchical structure outlined in the CDP 2009 in order to ensure coordinated and integrated development throughout the county.

The CDP divides the County into four strategic planning areas. Skibbereen is located within the "West Strategic Planning Area" and is identified as a "County Town". The CDP acknowledges that although the West Strategic Planning Area has been associated with declining socio-economic indicators, its' attractive county towns, coastal and upland scenery have helped offset the impact of declining agricultural and fishery employment. This area has a relatively strong tourism tradition that has provided a degree of protection from some of the worst effects of decline in more traditional sectors. However, improved road links to Cork, linked to the opportunities for an attractive coastal and rural lifestyle, have lead to a reversal of the declining population trend in many areas over more recent years. The main opportunity to strengthen the permanent population structure of the area is by strengthening the economic and employment base of the towns and larger villages and by developing the tourism and leisure economy through the protection of the assets of the area's natural and built heritage. However, notwithstanding population growth in the area in the last inter census period the relatively small proportion of growth in the towns is a concern for their future

The CDP objective for Skibbereen is to "*strengthen the role of Skibbereen as an important centre for population, employment, services and tourism which would also serve the wider rural area*". The town is designated, as a "District Employment Centre" which is a centre that serves the employment needs of the urban area and the surrounding rural hinterland. The CDP states that an appropriate quantity of land needs to be designated within the urban area to accommodate a range of employment uses including office based industry and manufacturing. The main priority is to strengthen the permanent population of Skibbereen by strengthening the economic employment base of the town. Objective ECON 2-6 states that it is important to support the role of Skibbereen as a district employment centre so that it may in return meet the employment need of the urban and surrounding rural hinterland.

1.5.9 Skibbereen Urban Study 2002



The Skibbereen Urban Study 2002 considered future options for the physical development of Skibbereen town, within a study area defined by the derelict riverfront lands to the south, the Marsh area and those lands just north of the relief road. The study examined the potential of these lands to accommodate future development uses having regard to the flood risk posed by the Ilen River.

Pedestrian linkages were a key factor in developing a design approach to those lands located alongside the riverfront thereby ensuring that the riverfront areas become a focal point in the town. The Marsh area was deemed to be unsuited to commercial development given the restrictions on site size and location due to the recommended flood relief measures, poor soil conditions and the availability of more suitable space elsewhere. Thus, it was recommended that the land be used for car parking and amenity purposes. To the north of the relief road, some of the land was prone to flooding and it was recommended that this land be used for amenity purposes. The remainder of the land was identified for industrial use.

A lot of the key recommendations of this study have been realised today including the provision of a pedestrian bridge linking the Marsh land with the town centre and development of some of the key riverfront sites. The Marsh lands are also under construction works. Recommendations from the study not realised to date will inform the preparation of this Plan.

PART 2

PLAN STRATEGY



2.0 SKIBBEREEN TODAY

Set in the heart of West Cork, Skibbereen as a county town and growth/development centre performs an important employment, service and social function for an extensive rural hinterland. Located 85km west of Cork city and 32km from the town of Clonakilty, Skibbereen has direct access to Cork Airport and Seaports via the N71.

Skibbereen's locational context and the influencing factors guiding development in the town provide a very clear direction in setting out a planning and development framework for the next six years that also fits comfortably within a twelve year strategic horizon. These factors include:

- Skibbereen's strategic position and socio-economic function within County Cork having regard to the Cork County Development Plan.
- The spatial manner in which Skibbereen is currently being developed and the requirement for additional development in the town.
- The unique physical setting of Skibbereen and its importance as a cultural, economic and physical asset.
- Skibbereen's socio-economic performance and the key strengths, issues and opportunities that arise.

An assessment of all these factors is critical to producing a comprehensive and robust planning strategy for the town.

2.1 NATIONAL + REGIONAL SPATIAL CONTEXT

Nationally Skibbereen is recognised as being located on an access route to peripheral areas that plays an important economic and service function to remoter parts of the coastline in the southwest. For Skibbereen to reach its potential the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) recognises the critical role that accessibility and effective local planning frameworks and initiatives play in releasing capacity in terms of land and services for sustainable growth.

The Regional Planning Guidelines and the Cork County Development Plan translates the national objectives of the NSS to the regional and local level. Regionally the development of Skibbereen is promoted to support rural regeneration whilst the environmental and tourism strengths of the town must be protected and developed to encourage polycentric and synchronised development with other centres such as Clonakilty and Dunmanway.



Figure 2.1 Locational Context (National Transport Network)

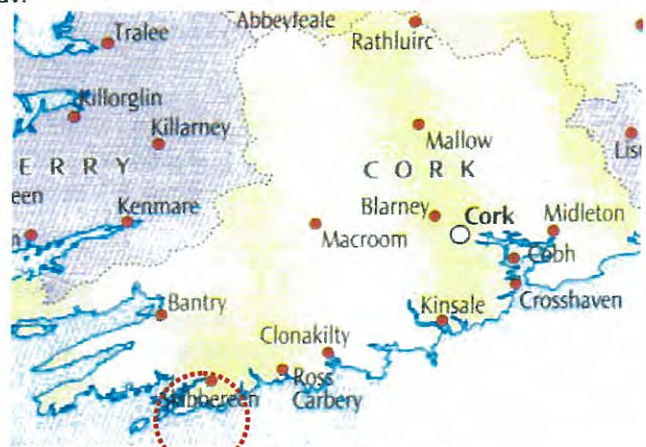


Figure 2.2 Locational Context (county)

Locally Skibbereen's spatial position is recognised as being capable of energising a wider area encompassing the rural hinterland of Baltimore, Schull and Union Hall. Due to the links and relationships between Skibbereen and its wider rural hinterland along with the topography of the area, Skibbereen is the natural gateway through which the urban and rural strengths of the locality can be accessed.

Skibbereen is served by a wide range of social and economic infrastructure. It is a focus for local, regional and national road networks, road based public transport, energy and communication networks and key health, education, cultural and other facilities.

Skibbereen is located on the national primary route (N71) which links Cork city to the south west and links Skibbereen with Clonakilty. Other regional and local routes connect Skibbereen with the local towns of Baltimore, Schull, and Union Hall and carry significant tourist traffic during summer months. There is no rail provision in the town but nine daily bus services link Skibbereen with Clonakilty and Cork city. The road network and bus services provide a solid infrastructural base and the opportunity to expand further with provision of enhanced transportation infrastructure on the N71 transport corridor seen as a critical economic link with other centres.

The NSS places much emphasis on the importance of "critical mass" or achieving a key threshold of development in terms of scale and function – to further drive development. Building on Skibbereen's important economic and service function the boosting of the town's critical mass, will be essential in delivering the Government's objective for regional development and in fulfilling the settlement strategy as detailed in the Cork County Development Plan. Planning for growth in a sustainable quality-based way will be vital to enhancing the position of Skibbereen in west Cork. This can be achieved through marshalling public and private investment with local development potential to generate better local employment prospects and better access to amenities and services.

2.2 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Within the plan area, development has primarily taken place along the radial routes extending from the town (See Appendix 1, Map 1 Existing Landuse). It is considered that there are three main development categories within the plan area, including the retail area, the mixed use commercial area, residential area and industrial clusters. Detailed consideration of these uses informs the overall strategy for the Draft Plan.

The retail area is that area within the town centre which is dominated by retail use and where retail development should be encouraged. The general retail area within the town has been defined in the Joint Cork Retail Strategy whilst Figure 2.3 below provides a detailed survey of the operators within the town centre identifying convenience and comparison traders, medical practices, office use, financial institutions, public houses, residential use and vacant units. The survey provides an overview of the health and vibrancy of the town centre and will inform delineation of a new retail area for the town.

The mixed use commercial area primarily extends in a southern direction and clusters around the Castletownsend / Baltimore Road roundabout junction. This area comprises a mixture of light industrial, retail and retail warehousing with car showrooms taking advantage of the visually prominent position located off the R595 Baltimore Road. To the north located between Market Street and Townshend Street there is a diverse mix of commercial activity including a Builder Provider's, medical centre, pharmacy and retail use. This area forms a natural extension of the town centre, but future development at

this location needs to be carefully considered to ensure continued protection of the retail area.



Figure 2.3 Building Use Survey of Town Centre

Residential development has primarily radiated out along the transport routes into the town. The established nature of linear residential development along the R595 Baltimore Road at the southern extremity of the town has generated more modern in-depth residential interventions at this location. Development of the Gortnaclohy Link Road has resulted in a significant level of new residential development on the eastern side of the town, in particular between High Street and the Link Road. Limited development has occurred to the north east of the town due to extensive educational uses at this location and the significant level of agricultural zoned land. Similarly the western environs of the town have predominantly remained undisturbed having regard to the agricultural zoning afforded to same and the elevated nature of the land. Established residential development along Upper Bridge Street has resulted in some new in-depth housing, with the most significant residential development on the north western side of the town occurring off the Schull Road.

There are three industrial/enterprise clusters located to the north (Marsh Road), west (Upper Bridge Street) and south east (Castletownsend Road) of the town. Well dispersed throughout the town a significant proportion of the commercial/industrial zoned land in the town has been developed to date. Regard must be had to Skibbereen's designation as a District Employment Centre in the Cork County

Development Plan in consideration of such land use and recognition must be given to the fact that the town, with its recent improvements to water and sanitary infrastructure, will cater for all future developments including industrial, tourism and educational needs.

The areas that mostly benefited from development are biased towards the south and eastern extremities of the town. To the west the elevated nature of the land acts as a constraint on development and to the north the Ilen River and its floodplain has also restricted development. However, to the north west and south there still remains significant tracts of undeveloped zoned land within the plan boundary, whilst extensive areas of agricultural zoned land characterises the western, south eastern and north eastern peripheries of the town. An opportunity is now afforded to review the existing land use zonings (See Figure 2.4 Landuse Concept Map Identifying Undeveloped Areas) in the context of recent development and to promote the development of a compact town in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The Landuse Concept Map provides an overall indication of the availability of undeveloped land within the plan area.

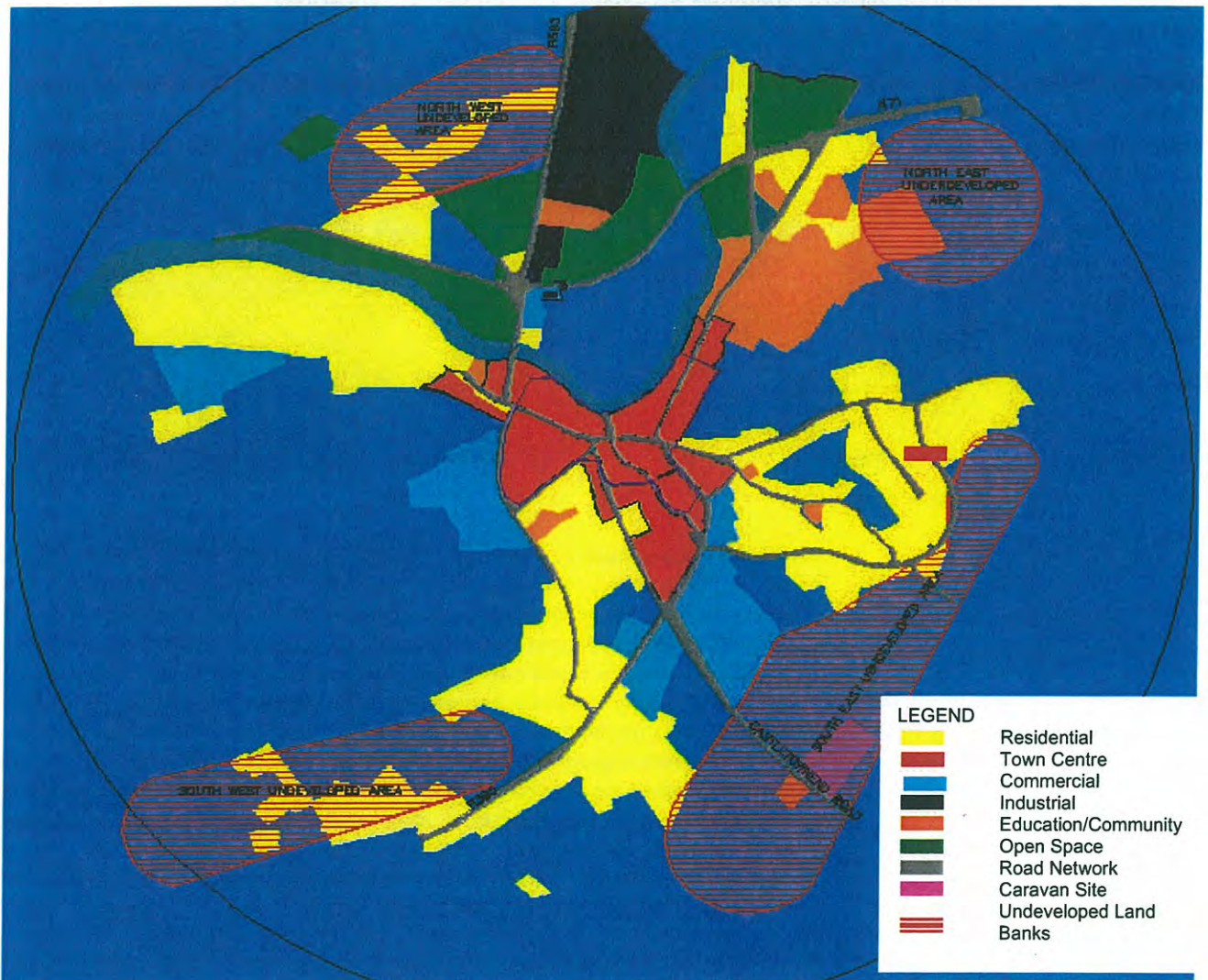


Figure 2.4 Landuse Concept Map Identifying Undeveloped Areas

2.2.1 Land Availability / Opportunities

Sound baseline data is required in order to inform the plan and to identify potential development opportunities within the plan area and in this regard an urban audit of the town is necessary. The urban audit is based on a land use survey undertaken in early 2008 and provides information on the extent of different land uses as zoned in the 2004 Town Plan within. An existing land use map of the town is detailed in Appendix 1, Map 1).

Urban Audit (hectares)

Land Use Characteristics

Land Use Characteristics	Total Area within Town Council Boundary	
	Developed	Undeveloped
Total Area within Town Council Boundary	603.4 hectares	
Residential Zoning	117.4	45.5
Town Centre Zoning	16.59	4.24
Commercial Zoning	9.8	1.4
Industry / Enterprise Zoning	12.2	1.0
Educational/Institutional/Civic Zoning	13.9	2.2
Open Space/Sports/Recreational/Amenity	33.3	33.3
Agriculture	171.4	171.4
Tourist Related	1.9	-

2.3 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



Figure 2.5 Urban Form 1842

In 1601 Skibbereen was only a little hamlet and far less important than the town of Baltimore. It grew in importance, however, in the seventeenth and in particular the eighteenth century. Figure 2.5. is based on the Ordnance Map of 1842 and shows the layout of the town as it began to grow. This nineteenth century layout is still evident today and provides a distinctive urban structure to the town. The settlement extends along the arterial route network and is physically defined by the Llen River to the north, the elevated land surrounding Mardyke House to the west and the elevated area known as The Rock and identified as a Fair Green to the east.

The traditional street pattern remains centered on North Street and Main Street, extending along Bridge Street as far as Kennedy Bridge. The importance of the Llen River and quays is immediately obvious as the built form extended along the southern bank of the river before moving southwards. The court house and national school were located at the northern end of North Street and this pattern continues today where most of the civic buildings remain and operate. The Square still remains a focal point and information hub in the town today and accommodates the Town Hall. Perhaps the most significant change in the traditional street pattern has been the movement of the town in a southern direction along Townshend Street and Market Street, away from the river which was once the mainstay of life in the town.

There are many fine buildings of note in the town and these buildings have been listed in the Record of Protected Structures for Skibbereen and are also protected by virtue of their location within the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) designation. In addition to architectural and social heritage, the town is also of archaeological note having

regard to its partial inclusion within a Zone of Archaeological Potential and its archaeological sites which dominate the eastern side of the town.

The significance of the Ilen River has today come full circle and presently forms an integral part of the town's environment. The townscape is reversing past trends and rather than turning its back on the river is beginning to recognise that it is this natural feature that contributes to the town's enduring character. As well as the river corridor itself the associated floodplain is a natural feature which must be recognised. The town is surrounded by elevated land to the east and west, providing a sense of enclosure and backdrop to development in the town. As well as being elevated this land provides excellent scenic views over the townscape and the amenity/development potential of this land needs to be explored. The main heritage and environmental features of Skibbreen town are identified in Figure 2.7 (see Appendix 1 Map 2 for large scale A3) and need to be factored into any proposed plan strategy. The extent of functioning floodplain has been inherited from the Skibbreen Development Plan 2004 whilst the area subject to historical flooding has been sourced from the OPW National Flood Hazard Mapping and identifies those areas which have in the past experienced occasional flooding as far back as 1969.

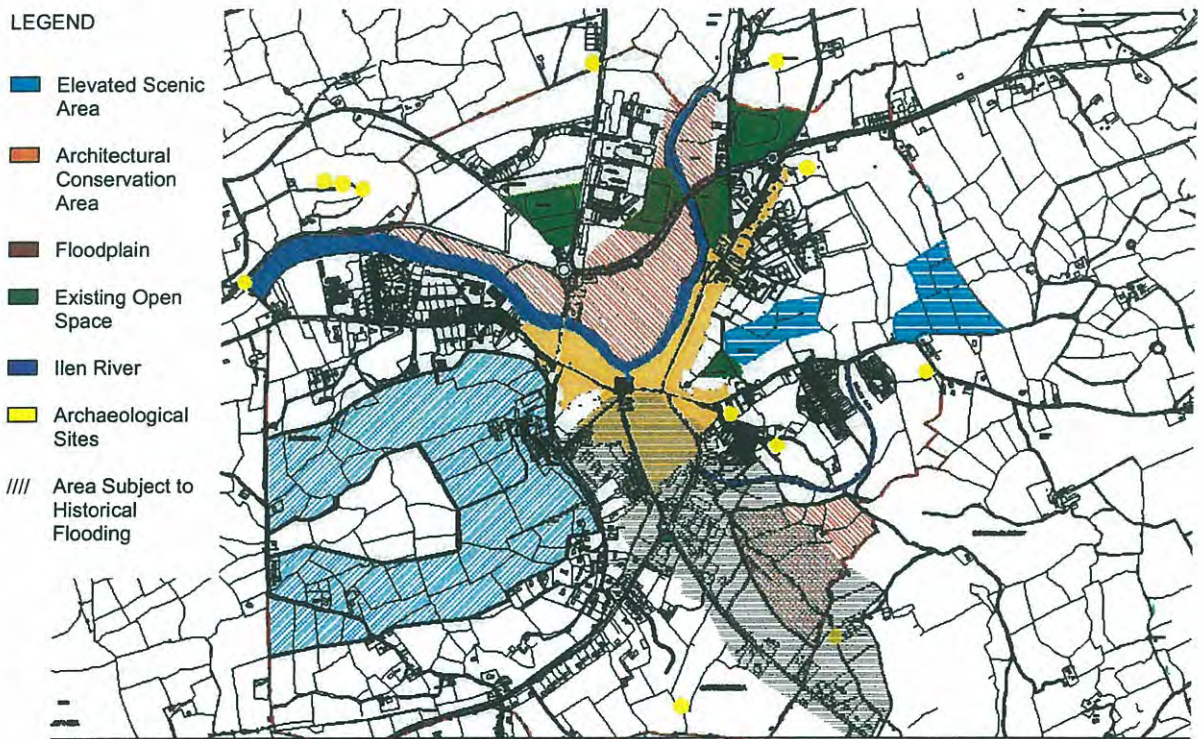


Figure 2.6 Heritage & Environmental Features

2.4 SOCIO ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

2.4.1 Economic and other Functions

Skibbreen serves as an administrative, employment, commercial, health, recreational and educational centre for a large hinterland area. The town has a limited manufacturing base consisting of light engineering, food and dairy products and furniture manufacturing. Industrial development is primarily concentrated on the Marsh Road where Fastnet Candles, CH Marine, Union Hall Fish and Cork Marts are located

and additional industrial land has been zoned in the county area outside of the development plan boundary. Other economic operations are located on Upper Bridge Street and Castletownsend Road. The position of Skibbereen serving a large hinterland has been recognised by the Cork County Development Plan as the town has been designated as a District Employment Centre.

The town has an important role in retail provision as it serves a large hinterland for goods and services. The commercial centre is locally significant particularly in convenience shopping and is quite significant for speciality homeware shops. The town is well served by educational establishments with five primary schools (current enrolment of 507 pupils) and three post primary schools (current enrolment of 909 students). All schools are located in the same general area to the north east of the town on North Street and the extensive network of schools in the area signals the importance of the town in providing an educational role to the surrounding hinterland.

Skibbereen Community Services Campus although located outside the development plan boundary, provides a key health service to the town and surrounding hinterland. Comprising part of the Community Hospital, the Community Services Campus includes an ambulance base, mental health services and a day care centre.

Apart from functioning as an important employment and service centre, the town of Skibbereen seeks to enhance its tourism base. The tourist office, Heritage Centre and attractive setting and townscape all combine to make Skibbereen an attractive tourist destination. It is recognised that one of the main opportunities to strengthen the permanent population structure of the area is by not only strengthening the economic and employment base of the towns but also by promoting a stronger tourism and leisure economy through the protection of the assets of the town's natural and built heritage.

2.4.2 Occupational and Employment Profile

According to the 2006 Census of Population Skibbereen town had a workforce¹ of 1,911 persons and of the total workforce some 57% were in gainful employment. Of those in employment some 55% fulfilled managerial and professional roles. This demonstrates the high skilled nature of the workforce in the town. An examination of travel to work² patterns provides an indication of where these jobs are located and the level of employment provision within the town/locality itself. Some 53% of the workforce travel less than 4km to work whilst 19% travel in excess of 10km to work. Thus, there would appear to be a significant level of work available within Skibbereen and the immediate environs such that only 19% of the workforce in the town is traveling over 10km to their place of work.

Thus analysis of Skibbereen's workforce in terms of the sectors, which people are employed in, coupled with their educational attainment, indicates that:

- There is considerable scope for strengthening the high technology and professional skills base as an educated workforce is available.
- The traditional strengths in the manufacturing areas need to be diversified.
- Strengthening the capacity for learning, innovation and flexibility and retraining are vital to sustaining and extending past progress.

¹ Persons aged 15 years and over.

² Includes workforce and students

2.4.3 Population

According to the Census of population carried out in 2006 Skibbereen Urban District (plan area) has a population of 2,338, which accounts for a 16.9% population increase from the 2002 census of population figure of 2,000. The Skibbereen Rural District also experienced a 4.7% population increase in the last inter census period increasing from a population 1,146 in 2002 to 1,200 in 2006. From a review of Census 2002 and 2006 it is evident that overall Skibbereen urban and rural district had a population growth of 16.4% which is significant and well above the national average.

What is interesting to note is that unlike other towns throughout the country, Skibbereen town experienced a greater level of growth than its surrounding hinterland which indicates one of two things. Either the town of Skibbereen is seen as an attractive and vibrant place to live or alternatively planning controls in the surrounding rural area are working effectively such that people are forced to live in the town. Either way, it is necessary that adequate land is made available to accommodate future population growth in the town.

Key issues of relevance for this plan that emerge from this analysis include:

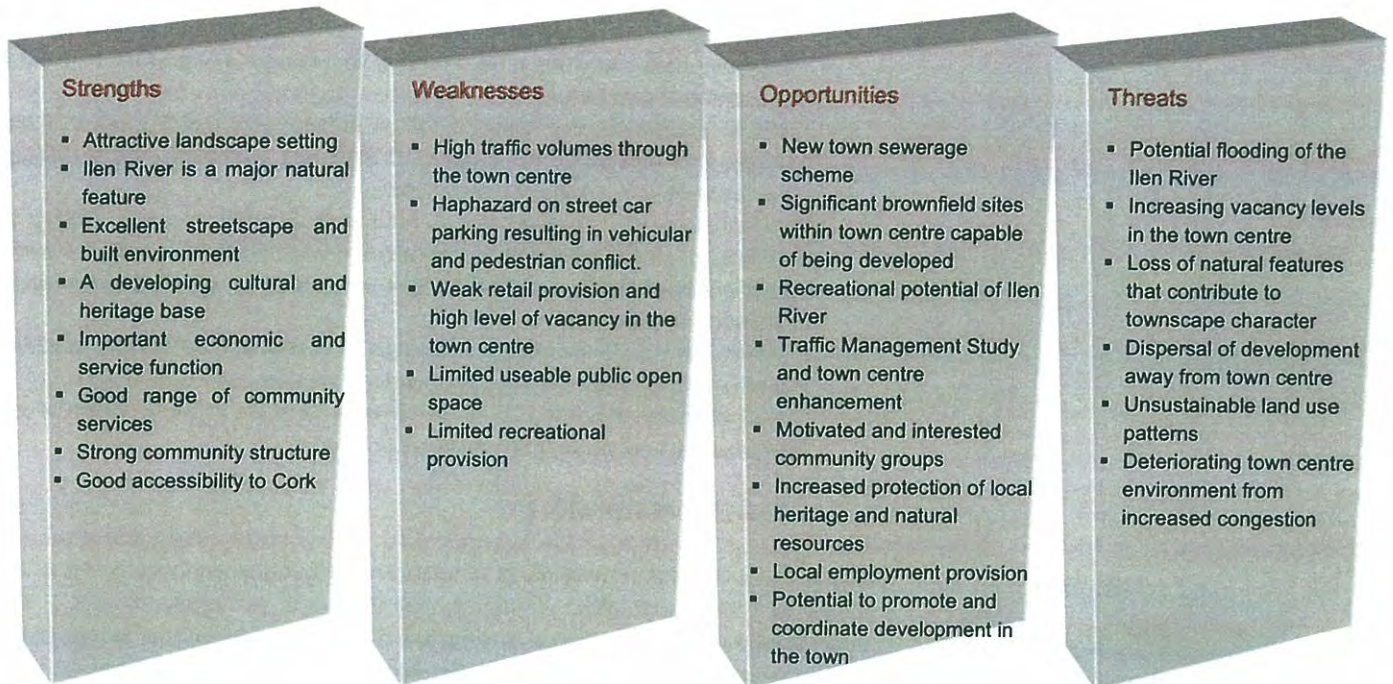
- Population in the town is anticipated to grow in excess of the national rate of population growth over the last inter census period.
- The town displays a young, dynamic population structure with 32% of the population under twenty four years of age and 64% under the age of forty four.
- The average household size in Skibbereen is smaller than the national average as 72% of all households in the town comprise of three people or less whereas the national average stands at 58%.

2.4.4 Future Population

There are a number of strategic regional and local plans guiding future population growth in County Cork and Skibbereen town. The South East Regional Guidelines provides a broad framework guiding future development in the county whilst the North and West Cork Strategic Plan establishes a strategy to address declining trends in key demographic and economic sectors. The recently drafted Cork County Development Plan 2007 is perhaps the most relevant as it provides population projections for the West Strategic Planning Area and indicates a population target of 3,035 persons for 2020 in Skibbereen. In the interest of consistency and proper regional planning, this plan will have regard to population forecasts in the county and adopt the projected growth figure of 3,035 for 2020 as set out in the Cork County Development Plan, thereby resulting in a projected population increase of 2.3% per annum which is slightly above the current national average of 2.05%.

2.5 OPPORTUNITIES and CONSTRAINTS

Arising from the foregoing assessment it is very clear that the town of Skibbereen has many strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The emerging strategy for the town needs to ensure that the identified strengths and opportunities need to be encouraged, protected and developed, whilst the weaknesses and threats need to be addressed as an integral part of the overall strategy and detailed policies and objectives of the Plan.



SWOT Analysis

3.0 SKIBBEREEN : A STRATEGIC VISION

The previous chapter has highlighted a number of themes that need to be considered in developing a strategic vision for the town of Skibbereen, including:

- The national and regional policy context is favourable to positioning Skibbereen as a key urban driver and growth centre to a large rural hinterland population in West Cork.
- There is considerable potential for development within the town in three strategic directions, with the centre of Skibbereen emerging as a significant focus for retail, cultural and tourist functions.
- Skibbereen must capitalise on its attractive environmental setting and streetscape if it is to offer a distinctive place in which to live, work and recreate and this will become a key feature in promoting and further developing Skibbereen's tourist base;
- Public and private investment will be required to realise Skibbereen's potential and will be enabled by clear development frameworks such as this plan.
- Overall consideration needs to be given as to how the implementation of the Plan would impact on its receiving environment.

3.1 THE WAY FORWARD



Compact Self Contained Town

Skibbereen's vision is to develop as a compact and self contained town, acting as an economic and service provider for the surrounding rural hinterland, with a strong combination of industry, services, arts, culture and tourism. This vision would capitalise on the considerable infrastructural investment that has already taken place in the town and would exploit its natural and cultural environment, its strategic position on a key transport corridor (N71) and its diverse heritage and tourism base. For this vision to be achieved the approach taken in this draft Plan is very much a 'plan-monitor-manage' approach that ensures Skibbereen can fulfill its function as a county town and key economic and service provider and provides for constant monitoring of the plan to ensure the town is achieving critical targets.

At a practical level, the 'vision' entails creating a centre with the level of population and critical mass that will support key services and economic functions and that will drive Skibbereen to a level that will support the surrounding rural hinterland. The projected population increase outlined in section 2.6.3 should therefore drive actions and inform decisions on a daily basis over the plan period. It is recognised that employment can have a major impact on population trends, as people are attracted to employment growth spots and thus increase population. Thus enhancing, encouraging and facilitating additional employment opportunities over the plan period will be critical to the success of Skibbereen's vision. However, in order for Skibbereen to achieve this status, the town needs to reinvent itself and grow in confidence such that it remains desirable both for attracting inward investment and population growth.

Therefore a primary aim will be to ensure that Skibbereen remains as a desirable place to live. A liveable town needs a healthy, high quality, accessible, legible and green environment with an adequate provision of affordable housing. Achievement of these qualities can be secured through the active implementation of this development plan. The Council is committed to delivering these qualities through working in partnership with local people and organisations and through promoting the objectives and policies contained in this plan.

3.2 THE VISION FOR SKIBBEREEN

In order to achieve the vision as detailed in section 3.1 above the following five strategy objectives have been established to underpin the Plan.



A Vibrant & Strong Economy

Objective 1 A STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMY

- To identify sites within the retail core suitable for town centre/retail uses;
- To designate lands for employment uses;
- To encourage a range of business uses by zoning land for the development of an office/enterprise park; and
- To encourage tourism related development where appropriate and to protect existing tourist related uses.

Objective 2 AN ACCESSIBLE + LEGIBLE TOWN

- To implement the findings of the Skibbereen Traffic and Transport Study;
- To provide for a more pedestrian friendly environment in the town;
- To promote the concept of walkable communities and a walkable town centre; and
- To promote the provision of amenity walks within and through the town, along the Ilan River and through the elevated amenity sites.

Objective 3 A POSITIVE PHYSICAL + NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- To ensure sufficient land is zoned for development so as to strengthen and consolidate urban form and support the long term viability of the town;
- To protect and enhance the Ilan River and its environment;
- To protect the elevated lands enclosing Skibbereen town and to enhance their amenity/ recreational potential;
- To introduce land designations where necessary to protect important structures, natural features and views;
- To link open space and amenity provision throughout the plan area in so far as possible; and
- To protect water quality and maintain biodiversity.

Objective 4 A VIBRANT + BALANCED SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

- To promote a range of house types and sizes to cater for all ages, household sizes and income groups;
- To coordinate the provision of new development with the provision of infrastructure;
- To ensure that additional local services and facilities in terms of recreational, educational, community and retail provision are provided in tandem with new housing development; and
- To work with community groups and voluntary associations in further developing resources and facilities in the town.

Objective 5 STRONG LOCAL SERVICES + AMENITIES

- To facilitate the role of Skibbereen as a key service and economic centre serving a large rural hinterland;
- To explore options for open space provision south of the town centre; and
- To support the provision of new community and educational facilities.

3.3 DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

Sustainability is now the key cornerstone of government policy and the issue of sustainability must be addressed when deciding upon the future development of a town. The strategy for development therefore is assessed on its sustainability credentials, which subsequently affects the type of strategy implemented and significantly influences the location of future development in the town. The detailed Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) contained in Part V of this Plan significantly contributed to the overall strategy in this regard. In addition to sustainability criteria, Development Plan Guidelines have been published under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and these guidelines also influence and shape a strategy for the town as planning authorities are required to have regard to them when preparing and implementing their development plans. For example the guidelines require a sequential approach to the zoning of land in order to maximise the utility of existing and future infrastructure provision and promote the achievement of sustainability. Thus in developing a strategy for the town of Skibbereen, the provision of a compact and sustainable town is a key driving component.

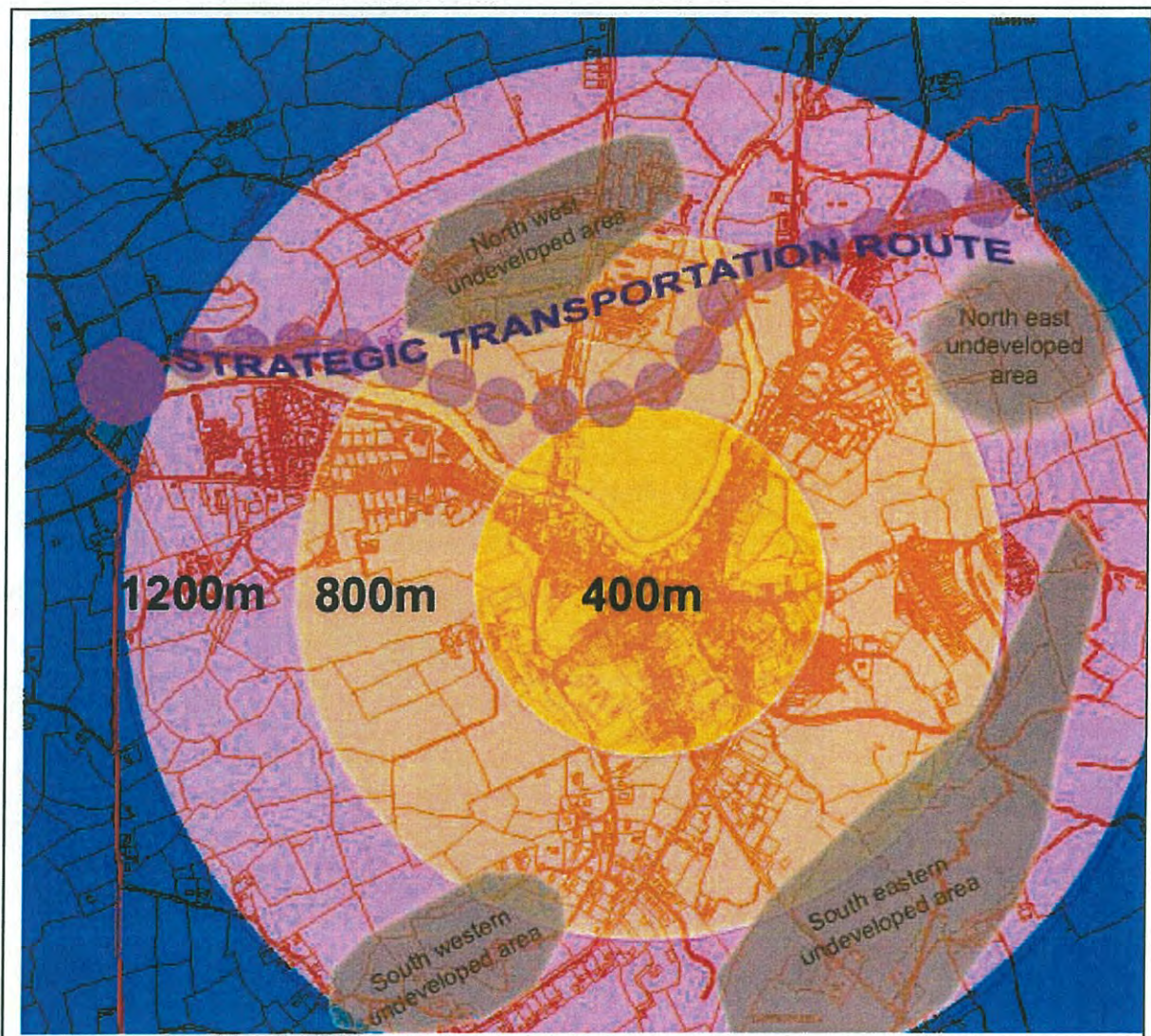


Figure 3.1 Opportunities for the Future Growth of Skibbereen

Thus the initial development strategy for the town is one of densification (redevelopment of under-utilised lands, brownfield sites and infill development) rather than continuous edge-of-town expansion and urban sprawl in the form of concentric low density developments. A restriction on significant expansion of the town centre to the outskirts will apply with a preference for a more compact urban form that would support pedestrian movement and cycling. The focus will be on urban renewal and regeneration and will see new growth on the edges being directed into specific areas, such as the four 'undeveloped wedges' of the town (see figure 2.4) which have seen little development over the preceding plan period, so as to create a more balanced structure to the town's development.

3.3.1 Environmental and Transport Considerations

The future development of Skibbereen needs to be considered in terms of medium and long term growth. It is desirable that the town consolidates its existing structure in order to facilitate a compact and sustainable form of urban development. In this regard, a number of land use and transportation issues need to be jointly considered within the framework of existing environmental factors.

The Environmental and Heritage Features Map (Figure 2.6) clearly illustrates the features which influence the location, extent and shape of development in the town, with the floodplain and the elevated nature of land to the west and east of the town restricting and limiting development. Whilst any one of these elements on their own would not necessarily prevent or prohibit development, their collective consideration in the context of other land availability and future population growth, does influence the overall direction of development.

The main traffic corridor running through Skibbereen (the N71) runs along an east west axis. This corridor provides a strategic link between the town and Cork city and further provides linkage to the rural hinterland further west along the coast. It is important that this strategic piece of road infrastructure retains its function as a distributor road and that only development of local/regional economic importance is permitted along this corridor. Thus the east west alignment of the N71 offers the greatest opportunities for future economic and employment growth, though there is still capacity within the plan area to enable continued concentric growth to its limits (see Figure 3.1) where the need arises. Although it is acknowledged that the concentric growth model can generate problems relating to accessibility to public transport and creates difficulties in relation to social, energy and environmental problems (the further out that the town develops, the greater the distance to public services) there is still merit in its sequential approach.

Therefore the development strategy for Skibbereen will combine elements of the concentric growth model with the arterial route development model to ensure the development of a compact, accessible and legible town. Future employment/enterprise generating development will be located along the economic corridor to the north east of the town whilst each of the four undeveloped wedges surrounding the town centre will accommodate future residential, commercial and mixed use development growth. Reduced density standards will apply to elevated/scenic areas and may also be applied to those locations further removed from the town centre. The exact location of the proposed different type of uses is detailed in Map 3 (Appendix 1).

3.4 FUTURE LANDUSE FRAMEWORK

Having identified the basic structure and form for the future expansion of Skibbereen, it is necessary to examine the proposed land use framework for the town and the following is outlined as a basic explanation. More detailed analysis, including relevant policies and objectives are provided in Part 3 and Part 4 of the plan, whilst Table 3.1

(Land Use Zoning Matrix) provides an indication of the acceptance of otherwise of a development use in a particular zoning class. Whilst Table 3.1 is a useful tool in guiding development to certain use zonings, the development categories are by no means exhaustive.

3.4.1 Town Centre Use

Comprising the defined retail core and wider town centre activities the objective of this zoning is to retain and enhance existing retail use within the retail core and to provide for residential, commercial, office, cultural and other uses appropriate to the centre of a developing town. There is a positive discrimination towards retail use within the retail core and retail uses shall only be permitted outside of the retail core on other town centre zoned land if it can be comprehensively demonstrated that there is no alternative site available within the retail core and that such uses shall not adversely impact on and diminish the vitality and viability of the town centre. A Retail Impact Statement shall be required of all retail proposals outside of the retail core.

3.4.2 Mixed Use

Outside of and adjoining the town centre the proposed mixed use zoning shall accommodate residential, commercial, office, cultural and other uses appropriate to the centre of a developing town. Potential retail use will be strictly controlled in this area and whereas consideration may be given to possible convenience retailing where it can be comprehensively demonstrated that there is no other site available in the town centre, the provision of comparison retailing will be strictly controlled and only considered in exceptional circumstances.

3.4.3 Commercial Use

Commercial use zoning is provided at key strategic locations around the town and shall accommodate those commercial, cultural and other uses which are land intensive and are inappropriate to a town centre location, including for example bulk retailing, car showrooms, other showrooms, builder's providers and light industrial uses. Commercial uses that are considered appropriate to a town centre location shall not be favourably considered unless it can be demonstrated that there are no other alternative sites available. A single retail unit primarily trading in convenience goods may be considered on that commercial zoned land located to the north east and south west of the Tragumna Road (R596) only where it can be comprehensively demonstrated by means of sequential testing undertaken in accordance with the criteria set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines that no other alternative site exists or is capable of development/redevelopment on town centre or on mixed use zoned land. The size and scale of any proposed convenience store at this location shall be strictly controlled to ensure that the vitality and viability of the town centre is not compromised whilst the provision of comparison retailing shall only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

3.4.4 Industry/Enterprise Use

Located in close proximity to strategic transport corridors, the industrial/enterprise zoning use shall facilitate employment generating uses but specifically excludes retail use and Class 2 office uses as defined in Part 4 of Schedule 2 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, where the services are provided principally to visiting members of the public.

3.4.5 Educational/Institutional/Civic Use

The objective of this land use zoning shall be to ensure the provision of adequate community and education facilities including health centre/clinics; places of worship; cultural uses; schools; nursing homes; community halls; sports clubs; recreational buildings and parks / playgrounds.

3.4.6 Neighbourhood Centre Use

The aim is to ensure that neighbourhood centres will serve catchment areas within approximately 400 metres and reduce the necessity to travel by car to avail of services. In practice, catchment areas of neighbourhood centres overlap and neighbourhood centres will not be 'self-sufficient' but rather will be dependent on adjacent or neighbouring centres for additional facilities. It is not the intention of this zoning to draw trade/services from the town centre, rather its intention is to complement the town centre and to possibly facilitate late opening of services. In this regard each neighbourhood centre shall be limited to 400sqm of net retail floorspace with office/residential use overhead. Proposed retail uses will be restricted to convenience retail use and retail services only, consistent with Class 2, Part 4 of Schedule 2 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 that is "professional services (other than health or medical services) and any other services (including use as a betting office) where the services are provided principally to visiting members of the public". The provision of a convenience supermarket in a neighbourhood centre shall have a maximum net floor area of 200sqm.

3.4.7 Residential Use

Comprising established residential use, residential Phase I and residential Phase II uses, these zonings provide for new residential development and other services incidental to residential development. While housing is the primary use in this zone, recreation, education, creche/playschool, clinic/surgery uses, home based economic activity, sheltered housing and small corner shops are also envisaged, subject to the preservation of neighbouring residential amenity and traffic considerations.

3.4.8 Open Space/Sports/Recreation/Amenity

The areas included in this zoning objective cover both private and public open space and includes designations for both existing and planned new open spaces. Development that would result in a loss of open space within the town shall not be permitted except where specifically provided for in this Plan. Existing agricultural uses in open space areas shall continue to be permitted, and reasonable development proposals in relation to this use shall be considered on their merits. The provision of development for playgrounds, parks, other areas for outdoor activities, sports centres, sports pitches, outdoor recreation training centres and landscaped areas shall be acceptable in principle.

3.4.9 Agriculture

Primarily existing agriculture related uses with limited ancillary developments subject to the preservation of the residential, visual and other amenities of the urban environs. The purpose of these latter requirements is to ensure that such agricultural uses do not prejudice the long-term development and amenities of the town. Very limited residential development specifically restricted to the needs of existing long-term agriculture landholders will be considered subject to suitable location and specific requirements.

Extent of Zoned Land

Zoning Category	Total Zoned Land	Remaining Zoned Land	Undeveloped
Established Residential	65.55 hectares	-	
Residential Phase I	28.71 hectares	28.71 hectares	
Residential Phase II	25.60 hectares	25.60 hectares	
Commercial	29.32 hectares	8.65 hectares	
Industry/Enterprise	11.54 hectares	8.80 hectares	
Mixed Use	13.22 hectares	3.44 hectares	
Neighbourhood Centres	1.96 hectares	1.96 hectares	
Town Centre	21.76 hectares	1.58 hectares	

Educational/Institutional/Civic	2.57 hectares	-
OpenSpace/Sports/Recreation/Amenity	38.98 hectares	38.98 hectares
Agriculture	141.2 hectares	141.2 hectares

Table 3.1 Land Use Zoning Matrix

Use Type	Town Centre	Mixed	Commercial	Industry/Enterprise	Educational Institutional /Civic	Neighbourhood Centre	Residential	OpenSpace/Sport Recreation Amenity	Agriculture
Advertising Panel	√	√	√	√	x	√	x	x	x
Agricultural Machinery	x	x	o	o	x	x	x	x	√
Amusement Arcade	o	o	o	x	x	x	x	x	x
Bank	√	√	o	x	x	x	x	x	x
Boarding Kennels	x	x	x	o	x	x	x	x	√
Bring Centres	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x
Car Repair/Sales	o	o	√	√	x	x	x	x	x
Caravan/Camping Park	x	x	o	x	x	x	√	x	o
Cash & Carry	x	o	√	o	x	x	x	x	x
Cemetery	x	x	x	x	√	x	x	o	√
Childcare Facility	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	x
Church/School	√	√	√	o	√	o	o	x	o
Cinema	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	x
Civic Amenity	x	x	o	√	o	x	x	x	o
Community Hall - Recreational	√	√	√	o	√	√	√	o	x
Community Hall - Functional	√	√	√	x	o	o	x	x	x
Composting Facility	x	x	x	√	x	x	x	x	o
Dancehall/Disco	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	x
Dwelling	o	o	o	x	x	x	√	x	o*
Garden Centre	x	x	√	x	x	x	o	x	o
Guest House	√	√	√	x	x	o	o	x	x
Health Centre/Clinic	√	√	√	x	x	√	o	x	x
Heavy Vehicle Park	x	x	√	o	x	x	x	x	x
Hotel	√	√	√	x	x	o	o	x	x
Industry - General	o	o	o	√	x	x	x	x	x
Industry - Light	√	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	x
Leisure/Recreation/ Open space	o	o	o	o	√	√	√	√	o
Nursing Home	o	o	o	x	√	√	√	x	x
Office	√	√	√	o	o	√	x	x	x
Petrol Station	x	x	√	x	x	o	x	x	x
Playground	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	o
Public House	√	√	√	x	x	o	x	x	x
Restaurant	√	√	√	o	x	√	x	x	x
Retail	√	o	o	x	x	√	x	x	
Retail	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	x
Warehousing									
Supermarket <200sqm	√	√	√	x	x	√	x	x	x
Supermarket >200sqm	√	o	o**	x	x	x	x	x	x
Wholesale/ Warehousing	x	x	√	√	x	x	x	x	x

* Subject to compliance with the overall agricultural land use objective as detailed in section 3.4.9

**Only applies to that land zoned for commercial use on either side of the Tragumna Road (R596) – see commercial land use objective as detailed in section 3.4.3

√ Generally Permitted - subject to compliance with other criteria detailed in the Plan

X Not Permitted

o Open for Consideration – Dependant on site characteristics, neighbouring uses and compliance with other criteria detailed in the Plan

PART 3

POLICIES & OBJECTIVES



4.0 EFFECTIVE TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

4.1 AIM

It is the aim of Skibbereen Town Council to reduce traffic congestion in the town centre and to create a vibrant urban area within an attractive urban centre. Therefore it is the main objective of the Council to create an integrated and environmentally sound transport system that provides:

- Ease of access to the town;
- A choice of transport access for all;
- Strong integration between transportation planning and land use planning;
- General reduction of the need to travel (especially by car) by land use planning which promotes a sustainable mix of uses;
- Optimum use of existing transportation infrastructure by traffic management and reduced travel times and congestion; and
- A shift from car use to more environmentally friendly modes of transport including walking and cycling

4.2 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT FUNCTION

4.2.1 Regional Links

The main traffic corridor running through Skibbereen (the N71) provides a strategic link between the town, Clonakilty and Cork city and further provides linkages to the rural hinterland further west along the coast. Other regional and local routes connect Skibbereen with the local towns of Baltimore, Schull, and Union Hall and carry significant tourist traffic during summer months. Skibbereen also functions as a major bus distributor centre for the West Cork region with nine daily bus services linking Skibbereen and Cork city. Although there is no rail connection in the town, the road network and bus services provide a solid infrastructural base. Enhanced transportation infrastructure, in particular improvements to the N71 transport corridor, is seen as a critical component to the future growth and stability of the town as it provides linkages and facilitates commercial synergy with other centres of growth, including Clonakilty.

The bus depot for Skibbereen is located on the junction of Marsh Road and the N71 and is physically separated from the town centre by the busy road network and roundabout junction. There is a need to integrate and connect the public bus service with town centre activities and therefore consideration needs to be given to a dedicated bus pick-up and drop-off point in the town centre.

4.2.2 Local Links

A comprehensive Traffic and Transportation Study, jointly commissioned by Skibbereen Town Council and Cork County Council, is currently being undertaken for the town of Skibbereen. The strategic aim of the study seeks to encourage sustainable land use and transportation patterns within the town including an examination of the transport need of existing land use and proposed development zoning and sites. The study will identify local traffic and transportation requirements and will make recommendations to improve local accessibility and circulation thereby safeguarding strategic national and integral through routes. The study will form a key component of this Plan and its recommendations and objectives will be critical to the development of an accessible and legible town.



Traffic Through the Town

Vehicle Circulation

Notwithstanding significant enhancement to the local road network, including the N71 relief road constructed through the Marsh which diverts all passing traffic heading west away from the town centre and the construction of the Gortnaclohy Link Road which distributes local traffic from the east away from The Square in the town centre, there still remains heavy traffic flows and congestion through the town at peak periods. This situation is exacerbated as all traffic heading south west from the N71 on the R595 to Baltimore must pass through the centre of the town.

The Skibbereen Development Plan 2004 proposed a number of bypass / relief road routes through the town in order to address the issue of traffic congestion. Whilst some of these routes were implemented, including the Gortnaclohy Link Road, other routes were never realised. Although the north eastern relief road which connects the Gortnaclohy Link Road with the N71 was never implemented, it is considered that the principle of a distributor road at this location remains desirable as it would redistribute traffic from the town centre directly onto the R595 Baltimore Road and would effectively open a significant land bank to the north east of the town for development purposes. Realisation of this piece of infrastructure is dependant on the continuation of the road through lands outside the town boundary and under the control of Cork County Council.

The Traffic and Transportation Study along with the strategic road proposals aim to increase ease of movement to and within Skibbereen by redirecting through traffic around the centre. The ease of congestion will be further enabled through the implementation of traffic management measures for the town.

Parking

Skibbereen has provision for free on-street and off-street parking in the town centre. All streets in the town centre including North Street, Main Street Lower Bridge Street, Market Street, Townshend Street and Mardyke Street have parallel parking on one or both sides of the road. There are off-street car parking facilities on the Fair Field to the rear of Bridge Street and Mardyke Street, on lands between Townshend Street and Market Street and just beyond the Town Council offices between North Street and the river. It would appear that the on-street parking is insufficient for demand, often leading to parking in unsafe locations and parking on the edge of the footpath. Conversely, the off-street car park on the Fair Field, which has capacity for a significant number of cars, appears underused for private parking.

The main objective is to remove cars as a dominant feature on the town centre's streets so that there is ease of movement for the pedestrian and cyclist, in a safe and attractive urban environment. In general, in the town centre, there will be a presumption against long-term stay parking in preference to short-term stay and a preference for off-street car parking rather than on-street car parking. Furthermore, in the interests of using the town centre's lands more efficiently and effectively, there is a preference for sub-surface or multi-storey car parks rather than surface car parking.

The provision of additional off-street parking is recognised as a priority in this Plan and thus a new car park providing in excess of 200 car parking spaces is proposed in the Marsh area. This car park will be effectively linked with the town centre via a pedestrian bridge over the river at Levi's Quay which has already been constructed. To further encourage the use of existing and proposed off street car parking, improved signage needs to be employed and consideration given to charging for on-street parking and the introduction of waiting time restrictions, in conjunction with increased enforcement of parking contraventions.



Parking in the Town



Pedestrian Links over Ilen River

Pedestrian and Cycling Accessibility

It is an objective of this plan to promote greater pedestrian activity throughout the town centre and discourage vehicular traffic. Enhancement of the pedestrian environment would improve the enjoyment of Skibbereen for residents and visitors alike and is crucial for any successful town centre regeneration initiative. Skibbereen is well provided with footpaths throughout the town centre but their condition varies and their provision diminishes with distance from the town centre. Although footpaths are provided within the town centre, there remains a conflict between pedestrians and vehicles arising from parking obstructions, limited footpath widths and erratic pedestrian movements outside of uncontrolled crossing points.

Currently cycling does not play a major role as a mode of transport in Skibbereen, but cycling is a cost-effective, non-polluting and highly flexible transportation mode that reduces congestion in urban areas, fosters improved health and is accessible to young people. Therefore the Council aims to promote cycling in Skibbereen. The town centre is quite flat and feasible north-south cycling links and routes can be identified.

There is a need to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists can co-exist in harmony with vehicles. Pedestrianisation and pedestrian priority areas along with the widening of public footpaths are issues that will be explored in the Traffic and Transportation Study and in this regard the recommendations of this study are an integral component and will influence the overall objectives of this Plan.

4.3 OBJECTIVES

Strategic objective 2 of the 'Vision for Skibbereen' (detailed in section 3.2 of this Plan) specifically seeks to develop an "accessible and legible town". Four strategic objectives were listed to achieve this specific vision. These strategic objectives are now considered on a site specific context and provide detailed transport and movement objectives/goals for the Town Council over the life-time of this Plan and beyond.

It is an objective of the Council to:

EFFECTIVE TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT OBJECTIVES

Objective T1	Continue to work with Cork County Council in developing the N71 as a major strategic economic corridor linking Skibbereen with Cork City
Objective T2	Work with Bus Eireann in providing a dedicated drop-off and pick-up bus service on the Marsh lands or on another alternative site within the town centre.
Objective T3	Implement the recommendations of the Skibbereen Traffic and Management Study
Objective T4	Ensure that the north eastern distributor road linking the Gortnaclohy Link Road with the N71 is constructed as part of the overall development of zoned lands to the north east of the town.
Objective T5	Upon completion of the new sewerage works, to provide for a public car park on the Marsh lands with direct access to the town centre via the footbridge at Levi's Quay.
Objective T6	Improve pedestrian facilities in the town centre and identify cycling links and routes in accordance with the recommendations of the Skibbereen Traffic and Management Study.

EFFECTIVE TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT POLICIES

Policy T1 Explanation:

The Council will support the provision of transportation links considered essential to the development of an efficient and sustainable network in Skibbereen and will safeguard the N71 corridor in the interest of the long term sustainable development of the area.

Policy T2 Explanation:

The Council recognises that integrated land use and transportation policies need to be pursued so that the continuing increase in car dependence and the projected population growth do not have adverse effects on the environment of Skibbereen. Alternative forms of transport will therefore be supported and encouraged.

Policy T3 Explanation:

The Council is committed to securing the North Eastern Distributor Road in partnership with the private sector and Cork County Council. The route alignment as shown on the Land Use Zoning Map is indicative and needs to be further investigated as part of the development control process for the area. Although a timeframe cannot be determined at this stage, it is anticipated that the route would be implemented incrementally as adjoining sites come forward for development on a phased basis.

Policy T4 Explanation:

It is the policy of the Council to seek to improve pedestrian and vehicular access and safety throughout the town. Convenient pedestrian and vehicular access that enhances the general permeability of the town will be encouraged as an integral part of all new development proposals.

4.4 POLICIES

The six objectives identified above can only be achieved if effective transport and movement policies are put in place to guide and control future development. In this regard four policies have been identified and where necessary and relevant an explanation for the policy is provided.

Policy T1 Transport Corridor

T1-1 The N71 has been designated as a strategic transport corridor and any proposals which are likely to compromise the strategic nature of this infrastructure in terms of traffic generation, access points, or conflicting uses, shall not be permitted unless the proposed development can be demonstrated to be of significant local / regional importance.

T1-2 Advertising signage adjacent or on the N71 shall be prohibited

Policy T2 Sustainable Public Transport

T2-1 Measures to encourage the development and expansion of public transportation infrastructure within Skibbereen and networks to adjoining settlements and Cork City, shall be supported and facilitated where possible.

T2-2 Adequate provision shall be made within developments to accommodate drop-off pick-up points and turning manoeuvres for future public transport vehicles.

Policy T3 North Eastern Distributor Road

T3-1 An indicative route for the North Eastern Distributor Road has been identified on the Land Use Zoning Map and the delivery of this road is promoted to allow for controlled accessibility to development lands and to facilitate a more efficient local road network.

T3-2 Access to zoned lands between High Street and the N71 shall only be permitted off the proposed new north eastern distributor road and there shall be no direct access onto the N71 from these lands, except in exceptional circumstances.

T3-3 The proposed new road shall be designed as an integral part of a development proposal on the zoned lands and shall be constructed by the developers to accepted modern standards and shall provide for cycle paths and footpaths on both sides.

T3-4 The phasing of development of zoned lands adjoining the proposed route shall be concurrent with the construction of the road. The northern section of the road with direct access onto the N71 falls within the administrative boundary of Cork County Council and this section of the road must be completed before that section of the road within the Town Council boundary can be substantially developed and prior to substantial development occurring on those zoned lands lying between High Street and the N71.

Policy T4 Parking and Access

T4-1 All development proposals in the town shall promote a more acceptable balance between the needs of motorists and pedestrians. This shall be achieved through the implementation of traffic management measures that improve pedestrian and vehicular access within a site and through the town including

- (a) Encouraging new off-street parking wherever practicable and facilitating improvements to existing off-street parking within the defined town centre and mixed use zoning area;

- (b) Ensuring that new developments provide for adequate off-street parking in accordance with the parking standards contained in Table 17.3.1;
- (c) Ensuring development proposals are accompanied by appropriate levels of footpaths, cycle ways and cycle routes; and
- (d) Promoting local access routes and pedestrian movement corridors that encourage a strong network of linkages

5.0 TOWN CENTRE URBAN RENEWAL AND REGENERATION

5.1 AIM

Skibbereen has all the necessary ingredients of an attractive and pleasant urban environment, including key natural features such as the river and its historic quays; a historic urban fabric with key architectural buildings, cultural and civic institutions and public spaces. It is the aim of Skibbereen Town Council to enhance and expand on these qualities.

Enhancement of the town centre is a central tenet of this Plan and the concept of vitality and viability is central to maintaining and enhancing a healthy town centre. Vitality and viability depends on many factors, including the range and quality of activities in a centre, its mix of uses, its accessibility to people living and working in the area and its general amenity, appearance and safety. A healthy town centre, which is vital and viable balances a number of qualities and these qualities shape the aims of Skibbereen town centre, including:

- A concentrated economic and activity centre
- A maturing market for retailing
- An accessible and efficient transportation hub
- A growing residential base
- An attractive business environment
- A growing and diverse evening economy

5.2 URBAN FORM AND FUNCTION

For the purpose of this plan the town has been effectively broken into four Quarters (identified in Figure 5.1) that best describe the function and form of each area, including the

- Historic Quarter
- Riverfront Quarter
- Civic/Cultural Quarter
- Community/Recreational Quarter

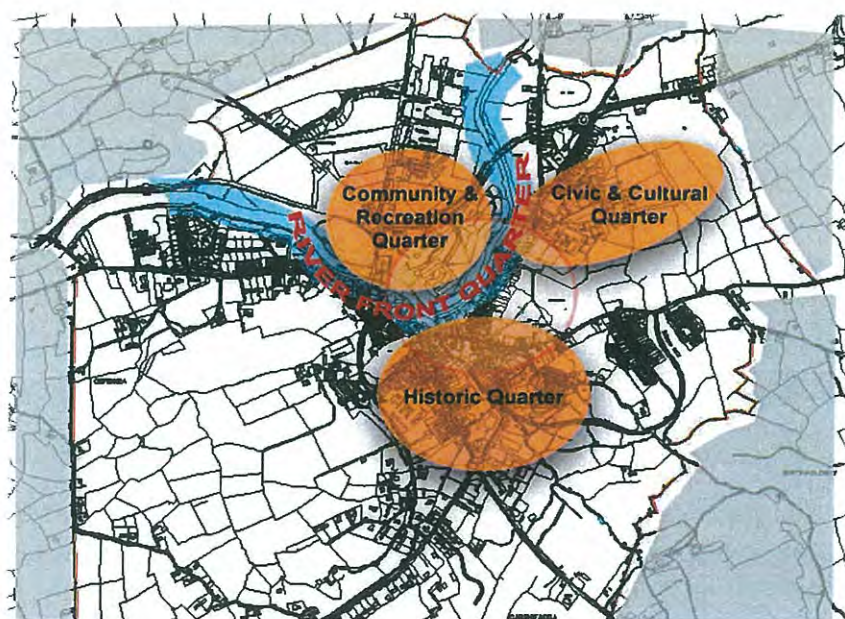


Figure 5.1 Identified Town Quarters

Each Quarter is unique in its own right and contributes individually and cohesively to the functioning of Skibbereen as a town. There is significant development potential in each of the Quarters to facilitate future development within the town and to specifically achieve the aims of a healthy town centre. In this regard, Figure 5.2 identifies a number of opportunity sites in each of the Quarters and which are examined in further detail below. Each of these sites are considered to have significant development potential and if developed could contribute significantly to the renewal and regeneration of the town centre.

- Opportunity Site 1 – Fair Field
- Opportunity Site 2 – East Backlands
- Opportunity Site 3 – West Backlands
- Opportunity Site 4 – Secondary Schools
- Opportunity Site 5 – Marsh Lands

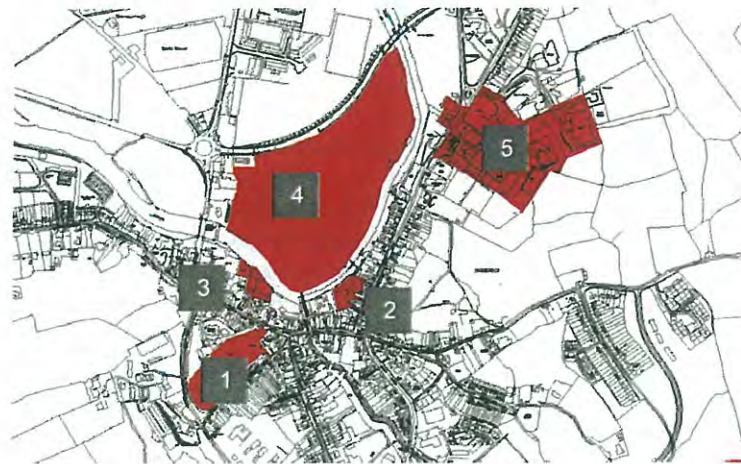


Figure 5.2 Opportunity Sites

5.2.1 Historic Quarter

The Historic Quarter is reflected in the urban form map of 1842 and is broadly defined by that area identified for town centre use on the land use zoning map. This area represents the economic hub of the town and is largely geared around the provision of local services and facilities for the resident population and hinterland area and for tourists during the summer months.

The prime commercial street in Skibbereen is Main Street, with the town centre end of Bridge Street, North Street and Market Street also contributing the economic function of the town. The centre of activity in the town primarily stretches from The Square westwards to the junction of Townshend and Mardyke Streets. As well as retail activity at ground floor level, the Historic Quarter is dominated by other commercial and community uses including financial institutions, offices, restaurants, hotels, public buildings, car parks and churches.

Notwithstanding the economic importance and function of the Historic Quarter and its development/expansion over the years, there still remains a unique development opportunity in the town, a site which is unrivalled in terms of its location and size.

Opportunity Site 1 – Fair Field

Comprising 1.29 hectares, this site is located south of Bridge Street and north west of Mardyke Street. Currently used as a public car park this land is predominantly in the ownership of the Town Council although an area of land to the rear (south west) adjoining Rossa Road is in private ownership. This site represents a significant development opportunity in the heart of the town and is an opportunity site that is unrivalled in terms of its size and location. Presently this site has access onto Bridge



Urban Form 1842



Figure 5.3 Fair Field

Street and Mardyke Street and has capacity to accommodate significant town centre uses including extensive retail development.

5.2.2 Riverfront Quarter

The Riverfront represents that area to the rear of North Street, Main Street and Bridge Street which backs onto the Ilen River and which comprises the 'backlands' of the Historic Quarter. As a maritime town in the 1800's the Ilen River was a significant transport corridor and this area of the town reflects its past with remnants of stores and mills fronting onto the river. Like all Irish towns, the town of Skibbereen turned its back to the river and it was not until recently that this area of the town began to experience some redevelopment. The Town Renewal Scheme 2000 – 2003 did regenerate the area somewhat with new development evident at Levi's Quay and at Thornhills Yard. The Skibbereen Urban Study 2002 further sought to stimulate development along the riverfront and a pedestrian footbridge was constructed at Levi's Quay.

There is substantial local interest in the redevelopment of lands adjoining the River Ilen and the Caol Stream which runs in an east west direction through the town. The 'River Ilen & Caol Stream Redevelopment Project Feasibility Study', prepared by a local interest group, seeks to refocus the town on the river and to redevelop the waterways and the quaysides in the town. This study demonstrates how the river can once more be integrated into the heart of the town and used to further develop the tourism market.

Notwithstanding recent development and proposals along the Riverfront there still remains significant development opportunities at this location. A significant opportunity also exists to incorporate a riverside walkway and to redevelop the quaysides as lands are regenerated and redeveloped.

Opportunity Site 2 – Yard to Rear of North Street (East Backlands)

Comprising 0.3 hectares, this site is bound by an established terrace of buildings on North Street to the east and by the Ilen River to the north west. A block of recently constructed apartments can be viewed to the west of the site. The established terrace of buildings fronting onto North Street comprise two and three storey premises with single storey services extensions to the rear. Currently used as a yard to facilitate informal parking, the site contains a three storey out building with a lean to structure and some mature trees. Access to the site is via a single lane arch entrance with trusses. This site has capacity to accommodate sensitive town centre development with a possible opportunity of connecting with/linking to the recently developed residential/retail scheme to the west.



Figure 5.4 Yard to Rear of North Street

Opportunity Site 3 – West Backlands

This is an area of land comprising 0.35 hectares which has significant development opportunity fronting onto the Ilen River. Stretching from an old stone mill building which adjoins Thornhills Yard to the backland car parking areas of the Eldon and West Cork Hotels, this site comprises a mix of existing uses and could be developed for mixed town centre use whilst providing for a riverfront walkway. The existing old stone building should be restored and the car parking areas developed to accommodate commercial use at ground floor level and residential use overhead.



Figure 5.5 West Backlands

5.2.3 Civic/Cultural Quarter

The Civic/Cultural Quarter is located at the northern extremity of North Street and extends from the Town Council offices and library to the south and to the public-park, community centre and schools to the north. This Quarter also includes the Pro Cathedral and the Arts Centre. Zoned for mixed use in this Plan this area adjoins the town centre and is within 400m of the Town Square. The function of the Civic/Cultural

Quarter is currently being reinforced with the development of a cinema and other mixed uses.

It is noted that the West Cork Craft and Design Guild wish to develop an eco friendly, flagship building in Skibbereen that would provide services to craft producers as well as facilities and services to the community in general. It is considered that the location of such a facility within the Civic/Cultural Quarter would be of overall benefit to the town and would result in synergy of similar type uses.

Notwithstanding recent developments it is considered that this Quarter may have further significant development potential if the three secondary schools amalgamate and re-locate as is proposed.

Opportunity Site 4 – Secondary Schools

Comprising St. Fachtnas De La Salle, Rossa College and the Convent of Mercy Secondary Schools, these sites are individual in nature but are clustered in the same general area. Given the proximity of these sites to neighbouring primary schools it is considered that such sites could be further utilised for educational purposes by the neighbouring primary schools which may need to expand as population in the town grows or alternatively if it can be demonstrated that the buildings are no longer required for educational or community purposes and that the primary schools in the vicinity do not need to expand, then such sites/buildings may be appropriate for other mixed uses provided that an element of educational/community/civic use is maintained.



Figure 5.6 Secondary School Lands

5.2.4 Community/Recreational Quarter

The Community/Recreational Quarter is that area of land located on the northern bank of the Ilen River extending from Mill Road to the east out the Schull Road to the west and to lands just north of the N71 by-pass. This area is subject to flooding from the Ilen River and therefore is unsuited for significant development purposes. Currently used for both passive and active recreational purposes, it is considered that this Quarter could be further enhanced upon completion of the new wastewater treatment plant for the town, to provide for significant recreation, community and amenity uses, whilst also functioning as a significant visual attraction and gateway into the town.

The Skibbereen Urban Study 2002 examined the development potential of part of these lands and considered the community/recreational development of these lands as a reasonable objective as it would encourage the continued use of the Marsh and facilitate its integration with the town centre. The recently constructed footbridge over the river at this location also facilitates its integration with the Riverfront Quarter and the wider town centre.

Opportunity Site 5 Marsh Lands

Unsuited to commercial development due to the recommended flood relief measures contained in the Urban Study 2002, poor soil conditions and the availability of more suitable development space elsewhere within the development plan boundary, this land has been identified for the provision of a public car park. It is considered that this land would also be suitable to accommodate a drop off/pick up facility for Bus Eireann and to accommodate other tour buses visiting the region. The remaining land is suited to both active and passive open space uses, thereby visually enhancing a 'gateway' location into the town and physically connecting with the town centre.



Figure 5.7 Marsh Lands

5.3 HEALTH CHECK

Although no single indicator on its own can measure the performance of a town in relation to its "health" it is possible to gain a good appreciation by undertaking a health

check assessment using a variety of indicators. This provides a consistent framework for assessing vitality and viability. In this way the strengths and weaknesses of a town centre can be analysed systematically and its performance in terms of attraction, accessibility, amenity and action programmes can be assessed. The most appropriate health check indicators are examined forthwith.

5.3.1 Diversity of Uses and Retailer Representation

Figure 2.4 detailed a town centre ground floorspace survey which indicates the range of businesses within the town including financial institutions, retail operators, offices, public houses, restaurants and public buildings. The diversity of uses evident in the town centre is typical of many rural towns in Ireland and primarily comprises lower order comparison shopping with limited convenience provision. There is a need to protect existing retail operators from competing non retail uses, thereby maintaining vitality in the town centre.

There are few symbol or brand names in the town with the exception of Super Valu and Lidl. Excluding smaller convenience stores such as Spar and Cost Cutter, Super Valu is the only large supermarket operating in the town, with Lidl trading as the only discount retailer. There are no symbol comparison stores in the town with all comparison operators trading under indigenous local names.

The Town Council has had a number of enquiries from other national convenience multiples who wish to locate in Skibbereen. Such commercial interest in the town is welcomed and encouraged and whilst competition in this sector is important it is critical that future retail provision is appropriately located within the town centre in so far as possible. It is only when it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable town centre sites available that edge of centre sites will be considered.

5.3.2 Vacancy Level and Dereliction

A detailed ground floor vacancy survey was undertaken on town centre sites in early January and the results of this survey are indicated in Figure 5.8. As can be seen from the Vacancy Level Map, there are a significant number of vacant sites in the town centre. Overall, vacancy levels are deemed to be quite high and this is a matter of concern as high vacancy levels affects investor confidence and if left unchecked can adversely impact on the health and vibrancy of a town centre. There is a need therefore to address vacancy levels through effective retail policy (see section 6.0 of this Plan).

The Skibbereen Town Development Plan 2004 identified twenty two derelict sites within the town centre. A survey of such sites in June 2008 highlights how dereliction in the town has been addressed in the intervening years as today there are only eight derelict units remaining. The Town Renewal Scheme 2000-2003 significantly contributed to this reversal and has been responsible for significant site regeneration initiatives particularly within the backlands abutting the river.

5.3.4 Shopping Rents

Current rents on Main Street stand at €25 - €30 per sqft whilst rents on the secondary radiating streets including North Street and Bridge Street stand at €20 - €23 per sqft. These rental levels are considered to be relatively low when compared with other centres such as Tralee in County Kerry. Rents in Tralee range from €50 per sqft in the central Main Street area, dropping to €40 per sqft on the secondary streets.



Figure 5.8 Vacant Units Survey January 2008

5.3.5 Accessibility and Pedestrian Flows

Transport and Accessibility issues affecting the town centre have already been comprehensively assessed in Section 4.0 of this Plan and it is an objective of this Plan to create an accessible and legible town.

The town centre of Skibbereen is characterised by vehicular-pedestrian conflict which does not contribute to a pleasant or circulating shopping environment. The conflict is most severe, and pedestrian movement is most impeded, on the main shopping streets of Main Street and Bridge Street. It is an objective to improve pedestrian facilities in the town centre and to promote pedestrian priority areas on these streets (refer to section 4.3).

5.3.6 Environmental Quality

The environmental quality of the town centre varies substantially from street to street. The Square has benefited from recent streetscape improvements thereby substantially improving the town centre, whilst limited works appear to have been undertaken on North Street. However, most streets within the town centre are dominated by on-street car parking, poor quality, narrow footpaths and poor road surface dressing. Whilst, the quality of existing shopfronts is generally good, vacancy, limited dereliction and poor shop front design dominates certain streets including Bridge Street and Market Street.

5.3.7 Crime and Safety

Discussions with the local Gardai reveals that, like most towns and cities in Ireland, there is a negative perception in relation to safety in Skibbereen, during the evening/night time. Late night fast-food outlets provide a particular focus for this unwelcome activity, following pub closing. Crime and public order is an issue that needs to be addressed so as to ensure a good quality of life for the town's residents and visitors alike. Encouraging people to live within the town centre, via initiatives to provide

residential accommodation above shops available for living space, will assist in creating a more vibrant and safer environment. Neighbourhoods that have a residential element are, by their very nature, more community focused and as such more carefully supervised and protected.

5.3.8 Overall Assessment

The health check has demonstrated that the town centre of Skibbereen is seriously deficient in a number of respects and significant change is required to regenerate a town centre, which has been identified as an ‘economic driver’ in West Cork serving a wide rural hinterland. A review of the town centre health check indicates that the most acute problems in the town centre include an ageing building stock and high vacancy levels; poor quality retail and commercial offer arising from a lack of retailer representation; poor quality physical environment; and poor connectivity and pedestrian permeability. The objectives and policies identified in the following paragraphs have been developed to address the perceived and acute problems of the town

5.4 TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

The concept of town centre management aims to bring together a partnership of key stakeholders, sharing aspirations, expertise and resources to take forward a joined up and holistic plan to meet local needs and strengthen regional resources. The town centre can be managed in a similar approach to a shopping centre. Local town centre management initiatives range from ad hoc partnerships to companies limited by guarantee. Usually a core management group called a Management Board or a Steering Group clarifies the roles and responsibilities of all partners. Ideally participation should not be confined to local government and retailers, but should include restaurateurs, leisure operators, transport providers, investors and land owners, voluntary community groups, as well as such service providers as solicitors, accountants, financial services, the police, education and health.

Skibbereen would benefit from the creation of a formal, structured Town Centre Management Group. The local authority should play a pivotal role in instigating the process, in consultation with the user groups mentioned. Town Centre Management is necessary to develop towns that are attractive to shop, live, work and spend leisure time in. It is important to maximise the various town centre uses in a safe, accessible and effective way. The Management structure can set out clear objectives and achievable action for town improvement through a partnership of key stakeholders, sharing aspirations, expertise and resources to create a holistic plan to meet local needs and strengthen regional interests.

5.5 OBJECTIVES

Strategic objective 1 and strategic objective 5 of the ‘Vision for Skibbereen’ (detailed in section 3.2 of this Plan) specifically seeks to develop a “strong local economy” and “strong local services and amenities”. Eight strategic objectives were listed to achieve these specific visions. These strategic objectives are now considered in a site specific context and provide detailed town centre, urban renewal and regeneration objectives/goals for the Town Council over the life-time of this Plan and beyond.

It is an objective of the Council to:

TOWN CENTRE, URBAN RENEWAL & REGENERATION OBJECTIVES

Objective TC1 Reinforce the function of and use within each of the four Quarters identified in the town centre to provide for commercial synergy and critical mass.

Objective TC2	Promote and facilitate the development of the 5 no. opportunity sites identified in different Quarters throughout the town centre through the preparation of detailed site development briefs where appropriate.
Objective TC3	Promote the town centre and primarily the retail core as the primary location for retail provision.
Objective TC4	Protect existing ground floor retail use in the town centre from non retail uses.
Objective TC5	Encourage greater retailer representation in the town centre and to facilitate the development of new stores on appropriate town centre sites.
Objective TC6	Promote and encourage the reuse and redevelopment of existing vacant and derelict properties and to update the Derelict Sites Register.
Objective TC7	Ensure a high standard of design in the town centre and to promote and encourage a higher degree of environmental quality.
Objective TC8	Undertake significant streetscape improvements following completion of the new town sewerage scheme.
Objective TC9	Foster and encourage an evening economy in the town to promote tourism and counteract crime perception and safety.
Objective TC10	Instigate the process of establishing a town centre management forum.

5.6 POLICIES

The ten objectives identified above can only be achieved if effective town centre, urban renewal and regeneration policies are put in place to guide and control future development. In this regard five policies have been identified and where necessary and relevant an explanation for the policy is provided.

TOWN CENTRE, URBAN RENEWAL & REGENERATION POLICIES

Policy TC1 Explanation:

Development of the 5 no. opportunity sites is a priority in the Plan. There is limited commercial interest in the town and therefore it is critical that future commercial uses, including retail uses, are appropriately located in the optimum location to reinforce the town centre. The Town Council will seek to prepare site development briefs for the largest of the opportunity sites (Fair Field) to guide and control development in an orderly manner.

Policy TC2 Explanation:

Diversity of retail use and variety in retailer representation is a central tenet of a healthy town centre. The Council seeks to maintain and promote a healthy town centre and to ensure that the town centre is the primary retail area in Skibbereen. Every effort must be made to ensure that existing retail uses are protected and enhanced.

Policy TC1 Opportunity Sites

TC1-1 The 5 no. opportunity sites identified in this Plan shall be developed for their specific uses prior to other alternative edge of centre or out of centre sites. Other alternative sites shall not be developed unless it can be comprehensively demonstrated that the opportunity sites are either unsuitable or unavailable for development purposes during the lifetime of the Plan.

TC1-2 The opportunity sites shall be developed in consultation with Skibbereen Town Council and in strict accordance with detailed site development briefs and flood risk management requirements set out under Policy WU4 where relevant.

TC1-3 The opportunity sites shall be developed in an integrated and holistic manner. Where such sites fall into multiple ownership and it is proposed to partially develop a site, it will be necessary to demonstrate that the proposed development has regard to the future development potential of the remainder of the site such that future development is not compromised.

Policy TC2 Protecting Retail Use

TC2-1 The town centre and primarily the defined retail core shall be the preferred location for retail uses.

TC2-2 Proposals which would involve a net loss of convenience or comparison shopping floorspace at ground floor level within the town centre zoning shall be prohibited, except in exceptional circumstances.

TC2-3 The provision of non retail uses at ground floor level within the retail core shall be strictly controlled thereby avoiding an over concentration of such uses at any one location. Such uses include professional and financial services, amusement arcades, video stores, fast food/takeaways, hackney cab operators and bookmakers.

TC2-4 Development involving the use of upper floors in buildings for residential use, provision of professional and financial services, restaurants and bars, food and drink or other entertainment uses shall be promoted provided that:

- (a) The proposals would not harm the viability of the ground floor shopping unit;
- (b) Separate and safe access to the upper floors is provided; and
- (c) There would be no loss of existing residential accommodation and no demonstrable harm to the living conditions of any neighbouring residents in terms of noise, cooking smells or general disturbance.

Policy TC3 Explanation:

It is important that existing vacancy levels are addressed and that there is a presumption in favour of the re-use of existing buildings.

Policy TC3 Derelict and Vacant Buildings

TC3-1 The rehabilitation, restoration and re-use of existing under-utilised sites in the town centre, mixed use and commercial zoning areas shall be encouraged in preference to the development of Greenfield sites in edge of centre or out of centre locations.

TC3-2 The provisions of the Derelict Sites Act 1990 shall be utilised by the Council to encourage the refurbishment of derelict properties.

Policy TC4 Town Centre Design

TC4-1 Any new developments within the town centre shall be required to respect the heritage and architectural character of the street and:

- (a) Respect the character of the streetscape in terms of design detail including proposed materials;
- (b) Conform with the scale, massing, layout, height and urban grain of the streetscape as far as possible to ensure continuity of street frontage and definition of public and private space;
- (c) Respect and not restrict important views/vistas or landmarks within the townscape;
- (d) Observe the historic building line, avoiding any setbacks where possible; and
- (e) Be designed by a suitably qualified architect with relevant experience in streetscape and shopfront design.

TC4-2 Shopfronts shall only be permitted if they preserve and enhance the character of a building and its setting by:

- (a) Repairing and retaining an historic shopfront or historic features in a shopfront;
- (b) Treating the shopfront as part of the design of the whole building and its setting, ensuring that the shopfront is in proportion;
- (c) Designing fascias in scale and in depth and width with the shopfront and building;
- (d) Using wither internal lattice, toughened glass or removable grilles if a security shutter is proposed;
- (e) Using shopfront signs which in their number, size and materials conserve or enhance the appearance of a building and its setting;

- (f) Utilising small traditional hanging signs and resisting bulky projecting box signs;
- (g) Utilising external illumination;
- (h) The use of Irish language in shopfront signage is encouraged; and
- (i) Shopfronts should be painted, varnished or stained.

Policy TC5 Evening Economy

TC5-1 Developments which aim to foster the evening economy and promote the tourist product of the town centre area shall be encouraged. Proposals to develop the arts and crafts industry shall be particularly encouraged in the Civic/Cultural Quarter.

6.0 SHOPPING AND RETAIL PLANNING

6.1 AIM

Enhanced shopping and retail provision is clearly a catalyst for redevelopment in a town centre. It is evident that success breeds success and successful retail operators associated with retail variety and provision instills investor confidence in a town. Furthermore proactive partnership between retailers and a Town Council strengthens a town and builds a sense of commitment and ownership that attracts both users and investors. Thus, it is the main objective of the Town Council to facilitate a competitive and healthy environment for retail industry and to enhance shopping within Skibbereen such that:

- Retailers benefit from increased footfall and turnover.
- Shoppers enjoy a pleasant, safe and easily accessible environment with a wide choice of shops and facilities.
- Visitors are attracted by places of interest and entertainment events.
- Property owners experience a rise in rent and property values.

6.2 RETAIL FUNCTION AND HIERARCHY

All local authorities are obliged to follow the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government - Retail Planning Guidelines for Local Authorities, 2005. The implications of these guidelines as well as more detailed survey and analysis are discussed in greater detail in the 'Cork Strategic Retail Study 2008' undertaken jointly by Cork County Council and Cork City Council. This section summarises and discusses some of the findings derived from that strategy and formulates policies and objectives accordingly.

The government has stipulated in policy that established centres should be the preferred locations for retail developments. The established centre in Skibbereen is defined as the retail core and is illustrated in Figure 6.1. Edge-of-centre sites, followed by out-of-centre sites should only be considered where it can be demonstrated that there are no central sites, which are suitable. This is referred to as the sequential approach to the location of retail development.

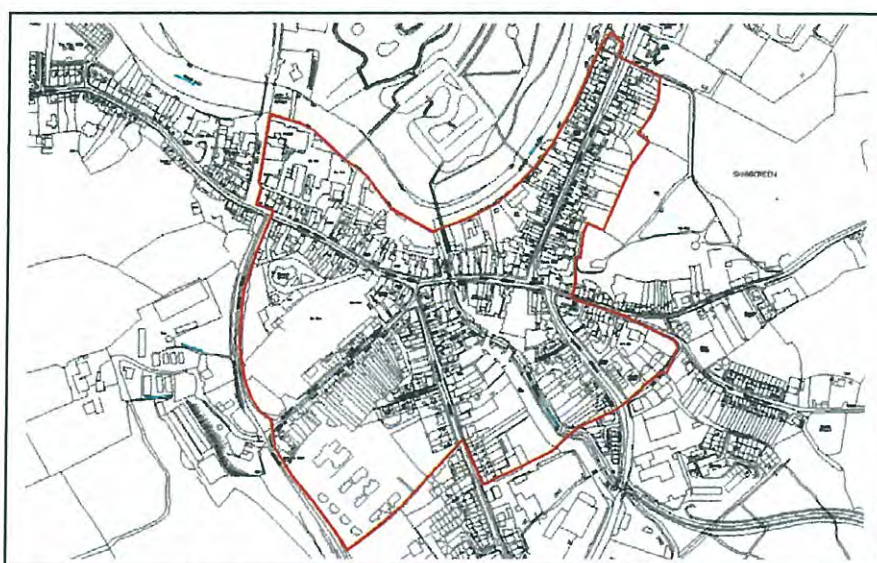


Figure 6.1 Defined Retail Core

Skibbereen faces the challenge of ensuring that additional retail development is provided in a way that is efficient, equitable and sustainable whilst fostering a pleasant and stimulating shopping environment. In particular, Skibbereen needs to provide sites for the mid-sized 'name-brand retailers' or 'multiples'. It is not the aim of this Plan to parachute the retail function of Skibbereen to that equivalent to Cork City. It is more about realising that the provision of this type of retailing is crucial, as the lack of town centre multiples is a key factor inhibiting Skibbereen's growth and it is considered that the location of such multiples in the town would act as 'key attractors' for the town centre. This deficiency is partly because Skibbereen has comparatively little modern shopping space and as such there have not been many opportunities for new retailers to enter the Skibbereen market. However, a positive consequence of this has been the development of an interesting variety of local independent stores contributing to the town's unique retail sector. Skibbereen must continue to provide an environment where specialist, independent retailers can flourish, thus adding to the diversity of urban life. Research shows high quality indigenous local shops for browsing are crucial in maximising a centres overall appeal to the shopper. Thus, the smaller, specialist units have the affect of acting as a backup to the big name multiples.

The breakdown of net retail floorspace within Skibbereen town centre is shown in Table 6.1. It should be noted that the Lidl discount foodstore (1,630sqm) is not included in this table as it is located on an out of centre site.

Table 6.1 Net Floorspace Provision in Skibbereen Town Centre (July 2007)

	Comparison	Convenience	Total
Skibbereen	3,530sqm	2,160sqm	5,690sqm

Source: Cork Strategic Retail Study 2008

Since 2002 there has been around 1,000sqm net of new comparison floorspace developed in the town, all in small units. A further 1,100sqm net is committed (has planning permission but is not yet constructed), again all in small units. It is understood from pre-planning discussions and from submissions on this Plan that national retail multiples are looking to locate in the town. An out-of-centre Lidl has been developed since 2002.

6.3 CATCHMENT AND FUTURE GROWTH IN RETAIL FLOOR SPACE

The Cork Strategic Retail Study 2008 establishes a retail hierarchy to guide future growth in retail provision. The retail hierarchy for County Cork, set out in Figure 6.2, recognises Cork City centre as the main retail centre in the strategy and places county towns such as Skibbereen at the bottom of the hierarchy. Essentially this means that Cork City will experience most significant retail growth in the county and that towns such as Skibbereen will only experience incremental retail growth in line with current and planned population levels.

There are six county towns identified in the strategy including Bantry, Charleville, Clonkilty, Kanturk, Mitchelstown and Skibbereen. These towns have been designated the role of expansion towns. These are towns that can accommodate more growth than would be expected for such a centre in rural County Cork, but without growth, could suffer from severe leakage to other towns outside the county. Although these towns will experience lower population growth than other areas of the County they should be the principal locations for both convenience and comparison retail development in the rural areas of the County. The strategy further recognises that Skibbereen is a town that

- County Cork Retail Hierarchy**
1. Cork City centre.
 2. Cork Suburbs
 - District Centres
 - Neighbourhood Centres
 3. Outer Metropolitan Area
 4. Ring Towns.
 5. County Towns

Figure 6.2 County Cork Retail Hierarchy

needs expanded retail capacity to overcome potential isolation from higher order markets and a tendency to leakage to competitive centres outside the County.

6.4 LOCATION OF NEW RETAIL FLOORSPACE

A need for limited floorspace provision in the town has been established and there is thus a need to identify an appropriate development strategy to facilitate provision of such retail space. Policy TC2-1 already identifies the retail core as the preferred location for retail development and this approach is very much in line with national guidance as outlined in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2005. In accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines (2005), the sequential approach towards new retail development should be promoted. The preferred location for new retail development should be within a town or district centre (as defined in the development plan). Where it is not possible to provide the form and scale of development required then consideration should be given to edge of centre sites. An edge of centre site is commonly defined as one which is within an easy and convenient walking distance from the primary shopping area of a town centre. The distance considered to be convenient will vary according to local circumstances but typically is 300-400 metres. Out of centre sites should only be considered where it can be demonstrated that there are no town centre or edge of centre sites that are suitable, viable and available. Retailers therefore should be prepared to make reasonable compromises and adapt their standard development formats to the Council's preferred sites.



Figure 6.3 Retail Opportunity Sites

There are many opportunities for the re-development of vacant and derelict sites in the retail core and much of the new retail development should take place on such sites rather than at edge or out of centre greenfield locations. In addition to vacant and derelict properties, Skibbereen is in the unique position of having a substantial town centre brownfield site that could readily accommodate retail use and would be most suitable for a national convenience retail operator. This site, known locally as the Fair Field and currently used as a surface car park has already been identified as Opportunity Site 1 in section 5.0 of this Plan. The Town Council owns a substantial area of this site and thus its development lies very firmly in the hands of the Council. It is thus proposed to prepare a detailed site development and design brief to facilitate and stimulate development interest in the land and to ensure that its development for town centre retail use becomes a reality during the lifetime of this Plan. There are two other alternative sites within the town centre, Opportunity Site 2 and Opportunity Site 3 which although significantly smaller than the Fair Field, could also readily accommodate small scale comparison retail development.

Where it can be comprehensively demonstrated that neither of the three identified opportunity sites can be developed then other alternative sites outside of the retail core, within the mixed use zoned area or within the commercial zoned area to the north east and south west of the Tragumna Road (R596), will be considered. A detailed and comprehensive sequential assessment will influence such site selection.

6.4.1 Retail Warehousing

Retail warehousing is characterised by large single level stores specialising in the sale of 'bulky' items such as furniture and DIY items. This type of activity has not been prominent in the town although there is an element of such use (Drinagh Hardware) at the southern end of Market Street near the roundabout. Due to their size and parking requirements, retail warehouses do not generally fit within a town centre and as such need to be considered separately from standard retailing.

Retail warehousing depends heavily on good access to the national road network, and also benefits from being agglomerated together on single sites so as to minimise the number of trips by car. It can have a positive role to make in the retail hierarchy, and provided they are of appropriate scale and are restricted to bulky comparison goods, need not necessarily have a material adverse impact on an existing town centre. Provision has been made for retail warehousing on the southern side of the town centre, on those lands identified for commercial use on the Land Use Zoning Map. There is already an element of this type of activity in the area and it is considered that further retail warehouse use in this location will facilitate a healthy and competitive retail climate in Skibbereen and encourage linked trips by agglomerating retail warehousing with good access to the national road network. The light industrial activity dominant on the Marsh Road is already infused with bulky retailing and this plan seeks to enhance such provision by facilitating bulky goods retailing at this location also.

6.4.2 Local Retail Needs - A Network of Neighbourhood Centres

A network of effective neighbourhood centres, which include a significant retail element, are designated outside of the town centre in Skibbereen. The location of neighbourhood centres seeks to ensure that all future residential areas are adequately serviced by local facilities and services, including commercial and community centres. Neighbourhood centres provide a valued service and cater for the daily needs of nearby residents, particularly the elderly, the less mobile, families with children and those without access to a car. Typically these should be located so that all residential development is within reasonable walking distance (about 400 metres) of the facilities and have good road access. Neighbourhood centres comprise elements of the following retail provision; convenience stores, newsagents, pharmacies, butchers, post offices, restaurants, take away, video/DVD rental, laundry facilities and hairdresser.

6.5 OBJECTIVES

Strategic objective 1 and strategic objective 5 of the 'Vision for Skibbereen' (detailed in section 3.2 of this Plan) specifically seeks to develop a "strong local economy" and "strong local services and amenities". Eight strategic objectives were listed to achieve these specific visions. These strategic objectives are now considered in a site specific context and provide detailed shopping and retail planning objectives/goals.

It is an objective of the Council to:

SHOPPING AND RETAIL PLANNING OBJECTIVES

Objective SR1	Actively engage with 'name brand retailers' and 'multiples' to facilitate their location in the retail core and the town centre.
Objective SR2	Ensure the protection of specialist retail units and indigenous local shops
Objective SR3	Promote the retail core and then the zoned town centre as the primary location for retail provision.
Objective SR4	Encourage and facilitate retail development on Opportunity Site 1 'Fair Field' by preparing a detailed site development and design brief.
Objective SR5	Consider the practical development opportunities of the identified Opportunity Sites 1, 2 and 3 along with vacant and derelict town centre properties in the sequential approach to retail development.
Objective SR6	Accommodate retail warehouse provision on that land identified for commercial use on the Land Use Zoning Map

6.6 POLICIES

SHOPPING AND RETAIL PLANNING POLICIES

Policy SR1 Explanation:

A large scale retail planning application is considered to be any proposal with in excess of 400sqm of net comparison retail floorspace and 300sqm of net convenience floorspace. Where both convenience and comparison retail use is proposed a retail impact assessment will be required for those developments in excess of 500sqm net floor area.

Policy SR2 Explanation:

Every effort must be made to ensure that retail development locates within the town centre and it is only in exceptional circumstances that retail development will be permitted on edge of centre or out of centre sites, with the exception of retail warehousing. It is not the purpose or intention of this policy to be anti-competitive or to unnecessarily restrict retail operators from trading in the town, rather the emphasis is on protecting the town centre.

Policy SR3 Explanation:

Although typically described as trading in bulky goods only, retail warehouse parks have in the past accommodated large clothing stores and other non bulky retail items. Such retail types can adversely impact on a town centre and thus it is important to regulate the provision of same within each development.

The six objectives identified above can only be achieved if effective shopping and retail planning policies are put in place to guide and control future development. In this regard six policies have been identified and where necessary and relevant an explanation for the policy is provided.

Policy SR1 Protecting Vitality and Viability of Town Centre

SR1-1 Large scale retail planning applications shall be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment and shall demonstrate that the development will not have a material adverse impact on the vitality and viability of Skibbereen town centre.

SR1-2 A retail development shall only be considered where:

- (a) It supports the long term strategy for the town centre as outlined in this Plan;
- (b) It would not cause an adverse impact on the town centre singly or cumulatively with other developments or planning permissions sufficient to undermine the quality of the centre or its role;
- (c) It would not diminish the range of activities and services that a town centre can support; and
- (d) It would not cause an increase in the number of vacant properties in the defined town centre.

Policy SR2 Sequential Approach

SR2-1 The retail core as defined in Figure 6.1 shall be the preferred location for retail uses followed by the wider town centre as defined by the town centre zoning.

SR2-2 Opportunity sites 1, 2 and 3 shall be priority sites in consideration of retail development within the retail core. Other alternative sites outside of the retail core shall only be considered where it can be comprehensively demonstrated that town centre sites are:

- (a) Of inadequate size;
- (b) Unavailable for development and is likely to remain unavailable for the life-time of the Plan;
- (c) Unaccessible and can not be accessed in the short term; and
- (d) Unfeasible and unviable for the proposed use.

SR2-3 The priority of this Plan is to accommodate retail use within the retail core and then the town centre and in this regard it may be necessary to modify/adapt a proposed retail scheme/ standard retail format to a town centre location.

Policy SR3 Retail Warehousing

SR3-1 Retail warehousing shall be considered on appropriately zoned sites where:

- (a) Effective links with the development and the town centre are provided in order to encourage commercial synergy; and
- (b) The traffic generated by the development either singly or cumulatively with other recent or proposed development shall not cause an unacceptable adverse highways impact

SR3-2 No more than 20% of the total floor area of a retail park shall be devoted to the sale of computers, toys or sports goods.

Policy SR4 Commercial Use

SR4-1 Retail use shall not normally be encouraged in commercial areas except where they involve the sale of bulky goods.

SR4-2 A single retail unit primarily trading in convenience goods may be considered on that commercial zoned land located to the north east and south west of the Tragumna Road (R596) only where it can be comprehensively demonstrated by means of sequential testing undertaken in accordance with the criteria set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines that no other alternative site exists or is capable of development/redevelopment on town centre or on mixed use zoned land. The size and scale of any proposed convenience store at this location shall be strictly controlled to ensure that the vitality and viability of the town centre is not compromised whilst the provision of comparison retailing will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

SR4-3 Retail provision associated with petrol filling stations will only be permitted where the retail element is secondary to the use as a petrol filling station and the net floor area is no greater than 40sqm.

Policy SR5 Explanation:

Neighbourhood centres are intended to provide for local needs only and are not intended to compete with the town centre or to draw trade from a large catchment.

Policy SR5 Neighbourhood Centre

SR5-1 Neighbourhood centres shall cater for the provision of a number of small retail/commercial units for the typical provision of a newsagent, supermarket/general grocery store, sub-post office and other small shops of a local nature.

SR5-2 Each neighbourhood centre shall be limited to 400sqm of net retail floorspace with office/residential use overhead. Proposed retail uses will be restricted to convenience retail use and retail services only, consistent with Class 2, Part 4 of Schedule 2 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 that is "professional services (other than health or medical services) and any other services (including use as a betting office) where the services are provided principally to visiting members of the public". The provision of a convenience supermarket in a neighbourhood centre shall have a maximum net floor area of 200sqm.

Policy SR6 Advertising

SR6-1 The provision of advertising signs shall only be considered where the proposed sign

- (a) Is non-plastic and has external illumination;
- (b) Is hand painted;
- (c) Does not lead to a cluttered appearance at a junction or on a building;
- (d) Does not comprise a large advertising hoarding; and
- (e) Is in keeping with the character of the general area.

SR6-2 The provision of large advance signs for services and premises will generally be prohibited. Finger post signs, however, shall generally be accepted.

7.0 TOWNSCAPE MANAGEMENT, ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

7.1 AIM

The historic flair of Skibbereen rests largely upon the survival of its original townscape features and the remaining stock of traditional buildings. It will be the town's future challenge to retain and enhance the visual appeal of its townscape, while permitting the modern uses necessary to ensure its vibrancy. A significant proportion of the historic buildings have been altered in recent years and not always in the most sympathetic manner. Window openings and fenestration patterns have changed, PVC and aluminium windows were inserted and modern shop fronts replaced traditional ones. A general lack of maintenance is evident on some town centre buildings, particularly above ground floor level. One of the most critical conservation issues is the high level of vacancy as illustrated in Figure 5.8. In order to address these issues there is a need for comprehensive townscape management, the key aims of which are to:

- Maintain existing uses and attracting new ones to the town centre.
- Respect the historical and traditional context that contributes to Skibbereen's character.
- Promote the right balance between conservation and redevelopment.
- Enhance the townscape through provision of pedestrian priority areas and other environmental improvements (such as the placement of electricity cables underground, improvements in street lighting, paving and public art).
- Protecting key buildings of the town's architectural heritage (through the Record of Protected Structures).
- Protecting and enhancing key streetscapes and elements of townscape (primarily through Architectural Conservation Areas).

7.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT

Skibbereen developed as a river side settlement probably after the Sack of Baltimore in 1631, even though evidence of earlier communities exist. In 1658 the population of the town was fifty four and the town developed from two centres, the present day High Street (New Stapletown) and Bridgetown (Bridge Street). North and Main Street are 17th and 18th century developments, while Ilen Street, Market Street and parts of Townshend Street were developed in the 19th century. This growth called for increased housing, which was of a poor nature, around the High Street area, and what is now called Assumption Place. Only scant traces of these habitations remain.

"Established as a market town on the lands of Sir Walter Coppinger who secured the right to hold fair in the area in 1615. Originally two separate settlements, divided by a small stream, the present town combines the parishes of Bridgetown to the west and Creagh or Stapletown to the east. Skibbereen was formerly an important centre for the manufacture of textiles, particularly wool and linen, its location on the south bank of the Ilen River gave the town access to Baltimore Harbour from where corn and flour were exported. An extensive brewery was established here in 1809 that supplied the surrounding areas as did the weekly markets that were noted for their abundance of provisions. Skibbereen has been a cathedral town of the diocese of Ross since the 19th century".

(Urban Archaeology Survey of the County of Cork)

The importance of the river to the town cannot be overlooked in an age when communication by land was difficult, although Skibbereen was not accessible to large boats. This river traffic brought about the development of North and Main Streets with their attendant warehouses and cornmill/breweries in the 17th and 18th centuries. The

town boasted the usual 17th, 18th, and 19th century industries – rope making, tanning, distilling, brewing, milling, weaving, (woollen and linen), basket making, rail making and boat manufacture. The town, however, owed its prosperity to the fact that it was a distribution and collection centre, its traders provided services for a large farming hinterland and earned for the town the title “Capital of the Carberies”.

The period from 1800 to 1805 brought about a large population growth. This growth, the greatest in the town’s history, was brought about by the heavy demand for agricultural produce that resulted from the Napoleonic Wars. The main factors in Skibbereen’s favour at that time were the ease with which potatoes could be grown and the demand for agricultural produce. The effects of the famine saw a reduction in the population of the town in the 1840’s. The next period of growth was in 1850’s. At this time the Town Hall was built. This was followed by the building of the Gas Works in 1867 and the Schull Tramway in 1880’s. A linen revival in the early 1870’s and the buoyant agricultural prices of the 1870’s and 1880’s, a result of the growing industrial population in England, further increased the prosperity of the town.

With the setting up of Co-Operative Marts at the end of the 1950’s followed by Fastnet Co Op Food Processing Plant in the mid-sixties, the town started to move slowly towards industrialisation. A number of small industries were set up locally following the establishment of an Engineering Works, Timber Merchants and an Injection-Moulding factory on the outskirts of the town during the 1970’s. In the early 1980’s the setting up of the large Spiralux Factory was seen to be a major step towards industrialisation particularly when followed by the almost immediate occupation of three I.D.A. Advance Factories.

7.3 THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Skibbereen town possesses a wealth of historical buildings and archaeological remains. Such features are a finite, non-renewable resource particularly vulnerable to partial or total destruction and in certain instances contain irreplaceable information about the past. The Council recognises the value and significance of its built and archaeological heritage and therefore seeks to ensure the effective protection, conservation and enhancement of historical and archaeological sites, monuments and their settings, through preparing a Record of Protected Structures (RPS), defining an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), identifying recorded monuments and archaeological sites and defining an Area of Archaeological Potential. The effect of having a building listed on the RPS, within an ACA or in a zone of archaeological potential, is addressed in Part 4 of this Plan, the Development Control Section. In essence works which are normally considered ‘exempted development’, that is not expressly requiring planning permission will now require planning permission.

7.3.1 Record of Protected Structures

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (Part II, Section 10) places an obligation on all planning authorities to include in its development plan objectives for the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. These buildings and structures are compiled on a register known as the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), and is outlined in Appendix 2 and mapped on Map 4. The map is considered as a guide and should only be used as an aid to identification. It does not seek to indicate or define the curtilage of any building. This is a matter that shall be subject to individual assessment of planning applications and/or following a request for a Declaration. The traditional juxtaposition of buildings of different character, quality, age and style contribute to the intrinsic qualities of the urban area forming interesting townscapes and

attractive streetscapes. The buildings and structures identified on the RPS are irreplaceable records of the past of the local and national heritage and therefore require protection. Their presence enhances the character of Skibbereen and adds to its local distinctiveness.

7.3.2 Architectural Conservation Area

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (Part II, Section 10 and Part IV, Section 81) places an obligation on local authorities to include an objective for the preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas (ACA). ACA’s are defined as places, areas, groups of structures or townscapes, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. They also include areas, which contribute to the appreciation of protected structures as the setting of a protected structure is often an essential part of its character. Piecemeal alterations on individual non-protected structures can have a significant cumulative effect on the streetscape.

An ACA may consist of patterns of elements (such as materials, construction systems, architectural elements) that are repeated within the area and give it a sense of harmony; an ACA may also relate to the importance of a number of buildings or structures whose protection is based on the wider ensemble of which it may be a component. In this sense it is concerned as much with the setting of the structures and their interrelationship, though it may relate to urban forms of distinctiveness or to particular landscape settings (i.e., country houses). ACAs are also used to protect the setting and exterior appearance of individual structures or groups of structures that are of special interest, where the interiors may not merit protection.

Skibbereen ACA

The entire town centre of Skibbereen has been identified as an ACA. It represents the main commercial centre and the consequent character of the town. There are many fine shopfronts from a variety of periods and styles that create a sense of vibrancy and interest. Whilst many have retained or sympathetically restored shopfronts future developments must recognise the value that such items have on the overall character of the area. It is not only the lower floors of these buildings that define this character, but the upper levels also contribute to the sense of place created. The sense of enclosure and space that is most attractive and interesting has been determined by the historic layout of the street and the form and scale of the buildings.



Figure 7.1 Skibbereen ACA

7.3.3 Historic Quays

A total of five historic quays (see figure 7.2) have been identified in Skibbereen. Comprising of old disused stone quays along the town side of the River Ilen between the two road bridges, these quays were once the primary means to transport goods and people in and out of Skibbereen. Some of the quays are in private ownership, others are unrecognisable and some have been blocked with stone and deposits. However, what is unquestioned is the historic significance and value of the quays and therefore their protection should be considered as part of this plan. In the past, communities and public bodies turned their back on water bodies but now the tide is turning in this regard. Therefore an opportunity presents itself to afford protection to the quays by way of identification in this plan and by ensuring that the quays are redeveloped as part of any development proposal on adjoining land.

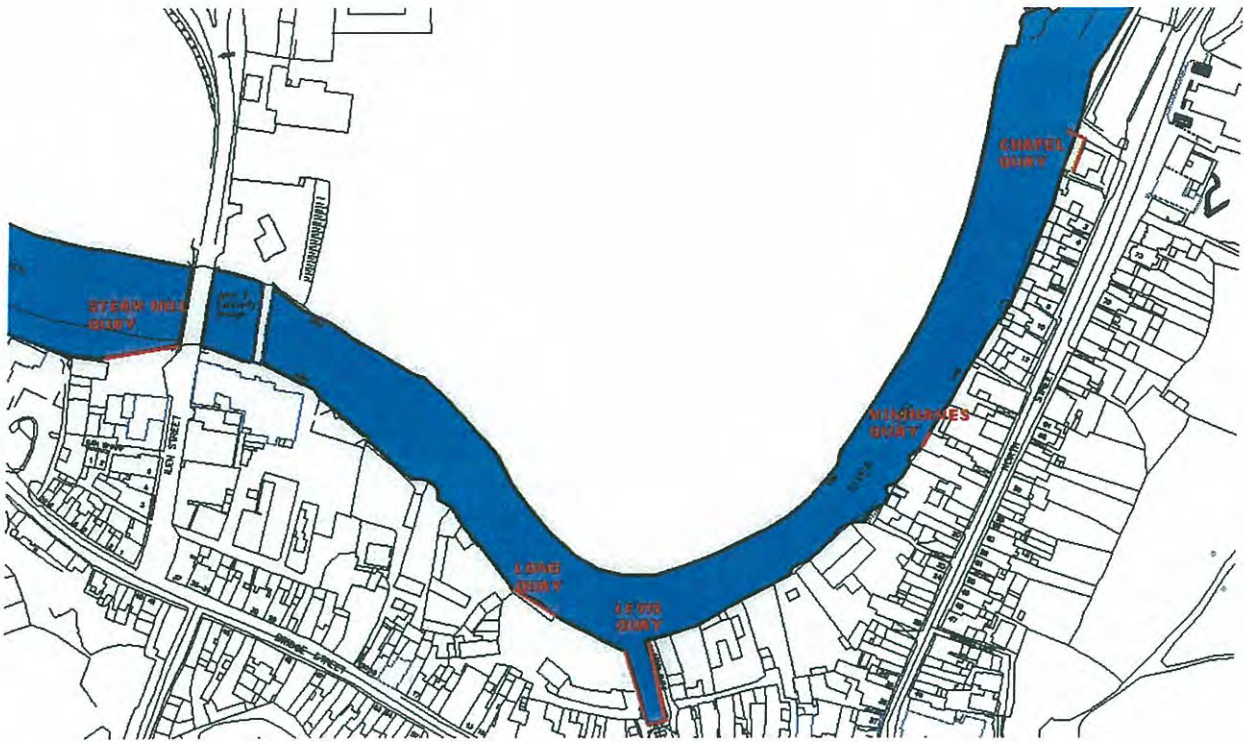


Figure 7.2 Historic Quays

7.4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Preservation (i.e. preservation in-situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally, is legal requirement. This includes all remains and sites which might yet be undiscovered, as the Record of Monuments and Places is subject to ongoing continuous updating. The precise location of Monuments and Places included in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) are identified in Figure 2.6 and Map 2. Heritage and Environmental Features. The centre of Skibbereen is also located within a Zone of Archaeological Potential (ZAP).

Given the historic significance of the River Ilan and associated river traffic in the 17th and 18th centuries, underwater archaeology may be another important aspect of Skibbereen's archaeological heritage as there is generally a high archaeological potential within maritime environments. Under the National Monuments Acts 1930-1994 all shipwrecks over one hundred years old, including underwater archaeological structures, features and objects are protected. The Record of Monuments and Places does not include all underwater archaeological sites and as a result development could potentially impact negatively on underwater cultural resources. Therefore the possible impacts on riverine environments by developments adjoining the River Ilan will be considered.

7.5 OBJECTIVES

Strategic objective 3 of the 'Vision for Skibbereen' (detailed in section 3.2 of this Plan) specifically seeks to develop a "positive physical and natural environment". Six strategic

objectives were listed to achieve this specific vision. These strategic objectives are now considered in a site specific context and provide detailed townscape management, architectural and archaeological heritage objectives over the Plan period and beyond.

It is an objective of the Council to:

**TOWNSCAPE MANAGEMENT
ARCHITECTURAL AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
HERITAGE OBJECTIVES**

Objective TM1	Preserve and enhance the character of the town centre by protecting historic/architectural buildings, groups of buildings, the existing street pattern, plot size and scale while encouraging appropriate development in the town.
Objective TM2	Facilitate enhancement of the quay walls and slipways on the River Ilan and develop as a tourist product as far as possible.
Objective TM3	Endeavour to protect and further develop the tourist potential of built and archaeological heritage in the town and promote heritage trail in the town.
Objective TM4	Provide general advice to potential developers on conservation and archaeological features.
Objective TM5	Encourage and facilitate a sensitive extension to the existing Heritage Centre in the town.
Objective TM6	Prepare a town centre improvement study and to implement its findings over the life time of this plan.

7.6 POLICIES

The six objectives identified above can only be achieved if effective townscape management, architectural and archaeological heritage policies are put in place to guide and control future development. In this regard three policies have been identified and where necessary and relevant an explanation for the policy is provided.

**TOWNSCAPE MANAGEMENT
ARCHITECTURAL AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
HERITAGE POLICIES**

Policy TM1 Explanation:

The Council will draw attention to the heritage value of protected structures and will offer general advice on conservation as is available. The Council will require planning permission for any works including alteration, change of use, or the replacement of any element of a Protected Structure where the character of the structure is affected. Planning permission shall only be granted for the demolition of a protected structure in exceptional circumstances in accordance with Section 57(10)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Policy TM1 Protected Structures

- TM1-1** Structures entered onto the Record of Protected Structures or listed to be entered onto the Record of Protected Structures shall be protected and their reuse/conservation/restoration and appropriate use encouraged.
- TM1-2** Proposals for development involving alterations or additions to a protected structure or its setting shall be encouraged where those works
 - (a) Enhance the special character of the structure; and/or
 - (b) Complement and reflect the design and character of contiguous buildings and the surrounding area; and/or
 - (c) Features of architectural or historic interest and the historic form and structural integrity of the structure are retained.
- TM1-3** Proposals for development of protected structures shall be encouraged where those proposals:
 - (a) Contribute to the continued maintenance and repair of the structure; and/or
 - (b) Maintain existing usage or provide a new use compatible with the character the structure or its setting.
- TM1-4** Development proposals on sites contiguous with a protected structure shall only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the development has no adverse impacts on the character or integrity of the protected structure, or views to and from it.

Policy TM2 Explanation:

This policy is designed to recognise the character and architectural value of the ACA. It is considered that the overall quality of the ACA is of sufficient importance to require special treatment in terms of development proposals that may affect protected and unprotected structures alike.

Policy TM3 Explanation:

Where significant archaeological remains are found through excavation, the Council will require a plan for their recording and conservation (either in-situ or ex-situ) as a component of an application for planning permission.

Policy TM2 Architectural Conservation Areas

TM2-1 Proposals involving re-use, change of use, new build and extension of buildings and structures in ACA's shall only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that development will

- (a) Reflect and respect the scale, massing, proportions, design and materials of existing structures and reflect the character of the area and its streetscape; and
- (b) Retain important exterior architectural features that contribute to the character and appearance of the ACA; and
- (c) Where it is not possible to retain the existing features, make use of natural local materials.

TM2-2 The total demolition of buildings within an ACA which is not scheduled within the Record of Protected Structures shall only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- (a) The existing building or structure does not contribute positively to the character or appearance of the ACA; or
- (b) The building or structure is beyond viable repair or reuse.

Policy TM3 Protection of Archaeological Sites and Places

TM3-1 Proposals for development adjoining/neighbors or on land that includes a recorded monument shall undertake an archaeological assessment and submit proposals for the conservation and management of archaeological resources.

TM3-2A minimum 20m buffer area, maintained free from development, shall be required on all development proposals where sites have archaeological features.

8.0 RESIDENTIAL STRATEGY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

8.1 AIM

Accommodating population growth in the town and ensuring an adequate supply of housing stock to facilitate growth is a key aim of this plan. Providing and facilitating housing provision is one challenge but creating a quality, livable environment is a far greater challenge particularly having regard to limited services and facilities traditionally provided in many small towns throughout Ireland. Thus, the aim of this Plan is to:

- Facilitate a quality living environment.
- Ensure an accessible residential environment.
- Regenerate existing neighbourhoods.
- Ensure the provision of a mix of house types to suit all needs.
- Enable the people of Skibbereen to have a place to live, suited to their needs, at an affordable price.

8.2 EXISTING HOUSING

The existing land use pattern in Skibbereen is characterised by a very low percentage of residential uses within the town centre and expanding residential developments of relatively low density housing estates and ribbon development on the fringes of the town. These developments are primarily concentrated to the south and south eastern side of the town on both sides of the Baltimore Road and between High Street and the Gortnaclohy Link. Established residential development can also be found on the northern side of Upper Bridge Street. Ribbon development is evident on the approach roads to the town, but is particularly prevalent on the Baltimore Road. Most of the residential development in Skibbereen is within the Town Council boundary but some housing developments have occurred on zoned residential land within the functional area of Cork County Council, well removed from the town centre.

Most of the private housing estates built in recent years contain semi-detached single family two-storey houses. The quality of these estates varies, and a number of design issues have been highlighted, with some estates arguably being of poor quality, particularly in relation to the layout, in the provision of meaningful areas of open space, the lack of adequate landscaping, or poor linkages between adjoining residential areas and open space. The local authority will encourage and support the enhancement of existing residential areas, through estate management and other means.

Within the town centre, streets such as Townshend Street and the southern end of Market Street and Bridge Street have a strong residential character. The practice of 'living over the shop' is no longer common in the town centre. The protection and promotion of residential uses within the town centre is crucial to creating a vibrant and safe town centre. Additional accommodation in the town centre close to all facilities reduces the need to travel by car and thereby supports a sustainable land use pattern.

8.3 HOUSING STRATEGY

The Cork Authorities Joint Housing Strategy 2009 (The Housing Strategy) is appended in full to this Plan. The Housing Strategy identifies seven Housing Market Sub Areas and locates Skibbereen in the South Coast sub area. Households in the South Coast sub area are expected to grow from 20,490 in 2006 to 26,699 in 2020 with 24,461 households in 2016. The 1.9% annual household growth rate is the lowest for all seven sub areas and is based on a population projection of 61,208 in 2016 or a 0.6% growth rate per annum. In 2007 the average house price in Skibbereen was €342,514.

The Housing Strategy identifies a number of key points which are relevant to Skibbereen and the wider Cork County area:

- There is a need to ensure the development of a greater mix and variety of house types and an increase in the delivery of smaller units.
- Average household size is continuing to decline.
- In 2006 there were 14,246 private rented housing registrations in Cork, representing 8.5% of total households.
- It is estimated that in 2006 there was a sufficient land supply in the County for the development of 73,875 new units.

8.3.1 Private Housing Need and Supply

Section 2.4.2 of this Plan provides an overview of the current population profile for Skibbereen and details why this plan adopts the projected growth figure of 3,035 for 2020 as set out in the Cork County Development Plan, thereby resulting in a projected population increase of 2.3% per annum. Having regard to the current average household size of 2.9 which is expected to decrease to 2.5 persons per household by 2011, an average of 2.7 is taken for all calculations. Therefore based on a population of 3,305 in 2020 there is a need for a total of 1,224 houses in Skibbereen up to 2020. Having regard to the current population of 2,338 in 2006, there will be a demand for 358 new additional households between 2006 and 2020. This simplistic household calculation does not provide for existing housing stock that may need to be replaced in the future so therefore it is estimated that the demand could be slightly in excess of 358 houses. Assuming an average density of 30 units per hectare there is therefore a need for 12 hectares of land to accommodate projected housing need in the town up to 2020.

The current situation with regard to the supply of undeveloped residential zoned land is detailed in Figure 8.1 below (See Appendix 1 Map 5 for large scale A3). A survey undertaken in June 2008 indicated that there was some 45.5 hectares of undeveloped zoned residential land within the Town Council boundary and a further 10 hectares outside of the town boundary within the functional area of Cork County Council. Of the 45.5 hectares of land located within the Town Council boundary some 18.71 hectares of land has extant permissions for residential development that is planning permission has been granted but development has not yet commenced. Thus, having regard to the extent of undeveloped zoned land within the functional area of Skibbereen Town Council, there is capacity for approximately 1,365 residential units in the town that is over three times that required to accommodate projected population growth until 2020.

Thus, having regard to these calculations there is no need to zone additional land within the town based on population projections alone. However, regard must be had to that land where planning permission has been secured but yet construction has not commenced; that land which is zoned and which may not be released for development purposes over the lifetime of the plan; and that residential zoned land which may be better suited for other development purposes in the consideration of future residential land supply. There is also a need to accommodate locational choice in the supply of residential units. In addition, regard must be had to the strategic location of existing residential zoned land and the need to adopt a sequential approach having regard to services and facilities when considering the supply of residential zoned land

Name	Approx Site Area (hectares)
UR-01	1.91
UR-02	3.23
UR-03	2.90
UR-04	2.01
UR-05	0.29
UR-06	2.76
UR-07	2.44
UR-08	0.49
UR-09	1.26
UR-11	0.49
UR-12	6.57
UR-13	1.27
UR-14	0.27
UR-15	2.82
UR-16	0.14
UR-17	1.34
UR-18	0.79
UR-19	1.64
UR-20	3.49
UR-21	3.64
UR-22	5.34
UR-23	0.41
Total	45.5

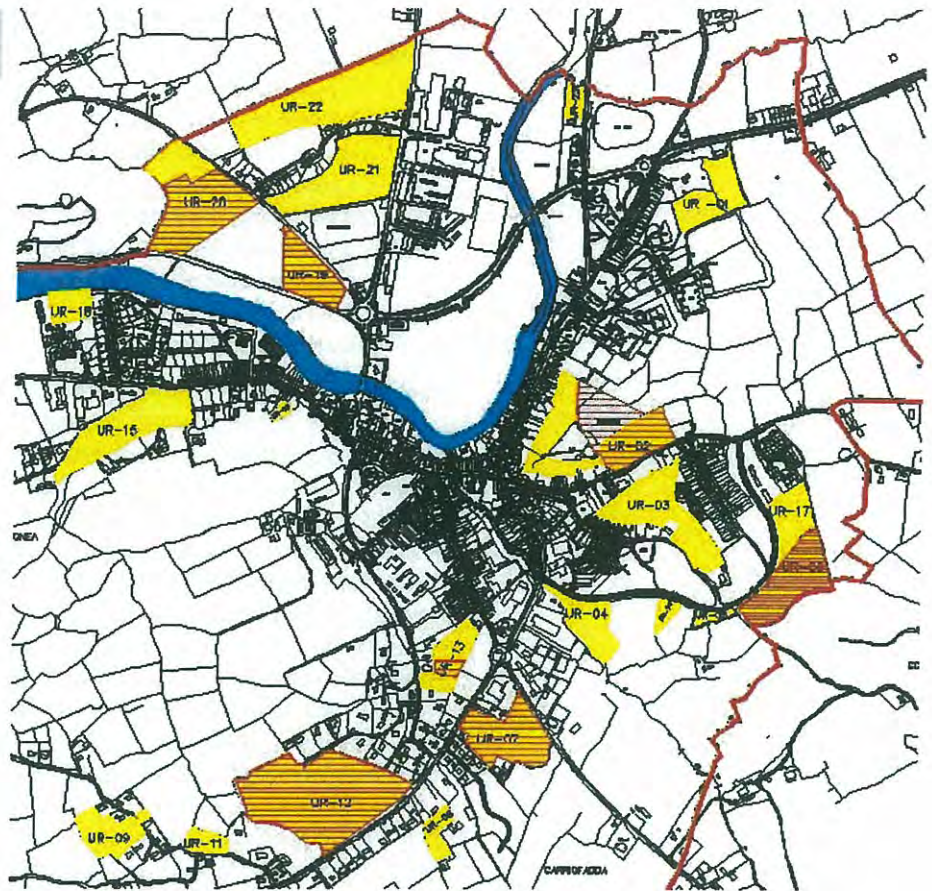


Figure 8.1 Availability of Unzoned Residential Zoned Land

8.3.2 Social and Affordable Housing Need and Supply

Traditionally Skibbereen and the County of Cork have developed social housing on the basis of need. In 2008 there are 105 persons on the waiting list for social housing in the town and 30 people seeking affordable housing. It is likely that this figure overstates social housing need due to a number of factors such as a proportion of applicants being on the waiting list of more than one authority, and the fact that occasionally the qualifying circumstances of applicants may change subsequent to being added to the list.

There are 86 no. occupied social housing units throughout the town and it is proposed to construct a further 9 no. houses on Mardyke Street by 2009 and to purchase an additional 4 no. houses to meet projected need this year. There are further plans to construct additional social housing on the southern side of the town over the plan period and it is anticipated that the Council will have social housing units available within the development currently under construction by Cork County Council within the town boundary and providing for 51 no. social housing units in total. In addition to social housing there are currently 2 no. affordable housing units available on the Baltimore Road.

8.4 LOCATION OF FUTURE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Section 8.3.1 of this Plan has highlighted how undeveloped residential zoned land in the Skibbereen Development Plan 2004 has capacity for approximately 1,365 residential

units in the town that is over three times that required to accommodate projected population growth until 2020. Therefore there is no need to zone additional land to meet projected housing need. However, this land, as illustrated in Figure 8.1 is indiscriminately located throughout the Plan area at various locations and distances relative to the town centre and services. Furthermore, it is considered that existing residential zoned land would be better suited to other development uses including commercial and mixed use development.

When one examines Map1 Existing Land Use Zoning Map, it is evident that there is a significant area of agricultural use land to the north east of the town between the N71 and High Street. This area of land is strategically located within walking distance of the town centre, adjoining existing community and educational facilities and can be accessed by a proposed new distributor road (see section 4.0, policy T3). Thus, having regard to the sequential approach in relation to the zoning of land as promoted in the Development Plan Guidelines published by the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government it is considered that some of this land should be zoned for residential use, notwithstanding the supply of existing undeveloped zoned land in the town. Other than this substantial area of undeveloped land, it is considered that the zoning of additional residential land in this Plan is limited to that of infill or brownfield sites in accordance with the overall plan strategy detailed in section 3.3.

Having regard to the existing supply of residential zoned land and that additional land that is zoned to the north east of the town, an orderly, coordinated sequence to the development of the town is promoted, in order to maximise the utility of existing and future infrastructure provision and services and promote the achievement of sustainability, such that the town is developed from the inside out. The rationale for phasing is in keeping with government guidelines advocating the need to prevent leap-frogging. Thus, there are two phases to residential zoning proposed in this plan with land closest to the town centre allocated into Phase I zoning and land further removed from the town centre and existing services allocated a Phase II zoning.

A total of 119.86 hectares of land is zoned as established residential, residential Phase I and residential Phase II use in this Plan. Of this 119.86 hectares some 54.31 hectares is undeveloped and is available to accommodate residential development during the lifetime of this Plan and beyond with 28.71 hectares of land allocated to residential Phase I zoning and 25.60 hectares of land allocated to residential Phase II. Phase I land shall be developed prior to land in Phase II except in exceptional circumstances, which includes the provision of a one-off house on zoned serviced land. Table 8.1 below details the changes to proposed residential zoned land in this Plan.

Table 8.1 Changes to Residential Zoning

Existing and Proposed Uses	Area (hectares)
Existing Undeveloped Zoned Residential Land in 2004 Development Plan	45.5
Existing Undeveloped Zoned Residential Land in 2004 Development Plan changed to other development use including commercial and mixed use	5.81
Existing Undeveloped Zoned Residential Land in 2004 Development Plan changed to Residential Phase II land	9.0
New Residential Phase I land proposed in this Plan	11.49
New Residential Phase II Zoned Land	8.16

8.4.2 Traveller Accommodation

The Council recognises the distinct culture and lifestyle of the traveling community and in association with Cork County Council will endeavour to provide suitable accommodation for travellers who are indigenous to the area. Currently traveller accommodation is provided through social housing.

Working with the travelling community, their representative organisations, and local communities, the Council will seek to ensure an equitable distribution of traveler facilities throughout the plan area where appropriate. The priority will be on the provision of standard housing for families who express a preference for that type of accommodation.

8.5 NEW RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

The location of neighbourhood centres, identified on Map 3 Land Use Zoning Map seeks to ensure that all existing and future residential areas are adequately serviced by local facilities and services, including commercial and community centres. The provision of neighbourhood centres also seeks to provide a strong local focus for residential areas, creating a sense of place and community. The role of designated neighbourhood centres is to reinforce some existing areas which display emerging or existing neighbourhood characteristics (i.e Upper Bridge Street) or to designate new neighbourhood centres to serve existing or future residential areas. A total of two neighbourhood centres surrounding the town have been identified, as detailed on the Land Use Zoning Map 3).

A range of uses will be encouraged at neighbourhood centres, namely local convenience shops (including fruit and vegetable market, local butchers, etc.), a pharmacy, video/DVD rental, laundry facilities, pub, take away, hairdresser, dental and medical surgery, crèche and childcare facilities. The scale, number and size of the units will be restricted to ensure that they serve local needs. The aim is to ensure that neighbourhood centres will serve catchment areas within approximately 400 metres and reduce the necessity to travel by car to avail of services. In practice, catchment areas of neighbourhood centres overlap and neighbourhood centres will not be 'self-sufficient' but rather will be dependent on adjacent or neighbouring centres for additional facilities. It is not the intention of this zoning to draw trade/services from the town centre, rather its intention is to complement the town centre and to possibly facilitate late opening of services.

In order to act as a focal point in a residential area, high urban design quality will be sought. Buildings comprising the neighbourhood centre or in the immediate vicinity will generally be permitted to increase their heights to three storeys to reflect their prominence. A mix of uses will be encouraged at the centres, with residential and office uses promoted above first floor levels. This will also act as an incentive towards their construction and development. Local parks (emulating a 'village green' for example), civic spaces and community facilities (e.g. educational, sports and recreation) are encouraged in the immediate vicinity of neighbourhood centres. For a neighbourhood centre to be successful it needs to be strongly linked to surrounding residential developments, with good access for pedestrians and cyclists. It also requires a prominent location with good road frontage and access. Opportunities for passing trade also reinforce their role.

RESIDENTIAL STRATEGY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS OBJECTIVES

8.6 OBJECTIVES

Strategic objective 4 of the 'Vision for Skibbereen' (detailed in section 3.2 of this Plan) specifically seeks to develop a "vibrant and balanced community". Four strategic objectives were listed to achieve this specific vision. These strategic objectives are now considered in a site specific context and provide detailed residential strategy and neighbourhoods objectives over the Plan period and beyond.

It is an objective of the Council to:

Objective H1	Protect existing residential use within the town particularly those residential areas on the southern end of Market Street, Townshend Street and Upper Bridge Street.
Objective H2	Encourage the use of upper floors within commercial buildings for residential use subject to compliance with necessary legislation
Objective H3	Promote the concept of a 'compact town' by encouraging appropriate forms of development on suitably zoned land in a phased manner and by resisting sporadic isolated developments.
Objective H4	Encourage the development of high quality homes, both new build and refurbishment, which would encourage a good social mix within the town and that can adequately adapt to growing family needs.
Objective H5	Ensure that adequate housing is provided for the resident population of the town and that both social and affordable housing can be accommodated on site in accordance with Part V of the Planning & Development Act 2000.
Objective H6	In association with Cork County Council, continue with the Council house building programme in an attempt to reduce the numbers on the Council housing waiting list and to continue to assess the need to provide accommodation for the travelling community.
Objective H7	Investigate the potential for the establishment of a community action committee, which works in partnership with the Council to promote and regenerate residential neighbourhoods.
Objective H8	Promote the development of two neighbourhood centres within the Plan area to encourage accessible communities and a sense of place.
Objective H9	Prioritise issues of design and sustainable development in determining the most appropriate density standards for individual sites.
Objective H10	Secure the implementation of the Housing Strategy and require that a percentage of the land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, be made available for the provision of social and affordable housing.

RESIDENTIAL STRATEGY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS POLICIES

Policy H1 Explanation:

It is considered that the proposed phasing system will benefit Skibbereen greatly by containing development sequentially and limiting sporadic development clusters thereby culminating in a well focused town structure and strong urban fabric, which can contribute to the sustainable future growth and development of the town. The Development Plan Guidelines published by the DoEHLG encourages 'approaches to zoning that incorporate development land coming on stream on a phased basis should be considered'

Policy H2-1 Explanation:

There is a need to retain the existing housing stock in Skibbereen where possible. The effect of this policy is to restrict the grant of planning consent for developments, which would either temporarily or permanently reduce the housing stock within the area. However, within Skibbereen town centre, there is a shortage of suitable premises for small businesses and it is considered reasonable to exclude the town centre from the effects of this policy.

Policy H2-3 Explanation:

The sub-division of existing properties into smaller residential units provides a number of benefits as it increases overall housing stock levels and encourages the development of smaller and lower cost properties. Provisions in the policy ensure that conversions are only undertaken in certain circumstances, which would not be detrimental to other planning and amenity objectives.

Policy H3-1 Explanation:

It is important to seek to protect the amenity of existing residential areas so that owners and occupiers can continue to enjoy their properties without undue disturbance from neighbouring developments. The Council will therefore carefully consider the likely impacts of new development proposals on residential amenity and where adverse development and use impacts are identified, for which suitable mitigation measures cannot be implemented, planning permission will not normally be granted for the development proposal.

8.7 POLICIES

The nine objectives identified above can only be achieved if effective residential strategy and neighbourhood policies are put in place to guide and control future development. In this regard seven policies have been identified and where necessary and relevant an explanation for the policy is provided.

Policy H1 Phasing of Land

H1-1 Ensure that the development of residential zoned land is controlled in such a manner that all residential zoned land in Phase I, as indicated on the Land Use Zoning Map can be developed. The land identified as residential Phase II land shall be released only when it can be demonstrated that 50% of all residential zoned land in Phase I is developed. This policy being an innovative policy shall be monitored over the next two years and examined at that time.

H1-2 The phasing of residential land shall not apply where it is specifically proposed to accommodate a one-off house or a serviced site, where it can be comprehensively demonstrated that the provision of such a unit does not compromise the overall development of the land and the development is considered to be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Policy H2 Protection and Promotion of Residential Areas and Uses

H2-1 Existing residential use within the town particularly those residential areas on the southern end of Market Street, Townshend Street and Upper Bridge Street shall be protected. The loss of existing residential accommodation or potential accommodation in a building originally designed for such purposes but presently either vacant or in a non-residential use shall be prohibited, except in exceptional circumstances. This policy shall not apply within the zoned town centre area.

H2-2 Proposals for the re-use of upper floors above commercial premises for residential accommodation shall be encouraged providing the proposed development:

- a) Does not result in the loss of commercial or residential amenity;
- b) Creates suitable access arrangements; and
- c) Does not create excessive demand for on-street parking.
- d) Complies with minimum internal standards as per the Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities Guidelines, as DOEHLG 2007

H2-3 Conversion of properties into smaller units of residential accommodation shall be considered on a case-by-case basis, except where they would result in:

- a) Development that is out of character with the area;
- b) The loss of a property of a size and type, and in a location that is suitable for a single family dwelling house;
- c) Excessive levels of on-street parking demand; and
- d) Non-compliance with the minimum internal standards as per the Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities Guidelines, DOEHLG 2007

Policy H3 New Residential Development

H2-1 Proposals for residential developments shall only be considered where there is no significant reduction to the amenity of existing, new or replacement residential accommodation. New residential development must comply with the development control standards outlined in Part 4 of this Plan and compliance with the following conditions:

- (a) The proposal is within an area zoned for residential uses, town centre, or mixed use zoned land; and
- (b) Respects the existing scale and character of the surrounding area; and
- (c) Conforms with the appropriate development standards established in the plan; and
- (d) Provides adequate off-street parking; and
- (e) Provides satisfactory vehicular, cycle and pedestrian Access to the site; and
- (f) Provides adequate space between proposed and existing buildings to maintain the amenity of neighbouring properties and
- (g) Provides an adequate landscape, including the retention where possible of existing tree and hedgerows; and
- (h) Provides sufficient open space and play facilities.

H3-2 The requirements of the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for Apartments, 2006 and the Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities as issued by the DOEHLG 2007 shall be implemented in respect of all apartments and housing units erected in mixed use or dedicated apartment complexes. Such requirements will include:

- (a) Apartment/Housing design
- (b) Minimum apartment internal design standards
- (c) Provision of community facilities, open space and balconies
- (d) Access for people with disabilities

Policy H4-1 Explanation:

DOEHLG Circular HS9/01, (2001) requires that the Housing Strategy include policies, which control the mix of house types and sizes required to meet housing demand. The Councils will consider the appropriate mix of types and sizes of dwellings on a site by site basis as and when planning applications are received and will use conditions and agreements as appropriate in order to secure the preferred mix of housing.

Policy H4 House Type and Mixture

H4-1 A mixture of house types and sizes shall be required and shall be developed in order to reasonably match the requirements of different categories of households within Skibbereen, including those groups with particular special needs. The mixture of house types and sizes shall be controlled through individual planning applications and conditions or agreements under Part V in order to secure the appropriate mix as required in terms of their specific housing requirements shall be utilised.

H4-2 A minimum of 20% of the total number of units constructed within a development comprising five or more units shall be made available for purchase and occupation by persons or families resident in the town. This policy shall also apply to each phase of a multi-phase development.

H4-3 A maximum of 20% of land used for "Residential" or for a mixture of Residential and other uses as prescribed under section 94(4) c of the 2000 Planning and Development Act, as amended, shall be reserved for the purpose of meeting social and affordable housing need arising within Skibbereen. The application of this policy shall apply to the development of all residential, town centre or mixed use zoned lands, which are not subject to an exemption certificate.

Policy H5 Part V Provision

H5-1 All developments to which Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) applies, shall require the developer to submit a proposal to the Council relating to the fulfillment of any Part V obligation, with the lodgment of such planning application. The Council may give consideration to any of the options as provided for in Section 92(2) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended by Section 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2002 in fulfillment of such provisions. Developers are encouraged to negotiate with the Council at the pre planning stage in respect of their obligations to comply with Part V of the 2000 Planning and Development Act, as amended.

H5-2 The requirements for social and affordable housing shall be implemented through the use of conditions attached to planning permissions (either wholly for residential development or where residential development forms a component of the proposed development).

Policy H5 Explanation:

This Plan does not set out minimum or maximum density standards as it is considered that quality of design will be the main criteria for assessment of residential densities. However, the Council will be guided by the density standards set out in the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DOEHLG) 2008 and the Best Practise Urban Design Manual (DOEHLG).

Policy H6 Density of Development

H6-1 A mixed density approach to new residential development shall be pursued that shall have regard to the

- (a) Location and context of the site;
- (b) Quality of design;
- (c) Contribution of the development to the enhancement of the town form;
- (d) Connectivity to the town centre and linkages with other residential neighbourhoods, services and amenities; and
- (e) Efficient use of energy, transport and natural resources

Policy H7 Regenerating Existing Neighbourhoods

H7-1 The regeneration of neighbourhoods in partnership with community interests shall be encouraged through advocating the reuse of derelict buildings and promoting the use of environmentally sound building materials and by supporting local community development and enhancement schemes.

H7-2 The enhancement and protection of existing open spaces shall be facilitated.

H7-3 The development of two neighbourhood centres to serve existing and proposed residential development, as defined on the Land Use Zoning Map 3 shall be encouraged and facilitated. Each neighbourhood centre shall be limited to 400sqm of net retail floorspace with office/residential use overhead. Proposed retail uses will be restricted to convenience retail use and retail services only, consistent with Class 2, Part 4 of Schedule 2 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 that is "professional services (other than health or medical services) and any other services (including use as a betting office) where the services are provided principally to visiting members of the public". The provision of a convenience supermarket in a neighbourhood centre shall have a maximum net floor area of 200sqm.

9.0 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC AMENITY

9.1 AIM

The landscape setting of Skibbereen is one of the towns' greatest assets, which in addition to the river also comprises an undulating landscape, giving scenic views of the town and of distant views of the surrounding hills and countryside. As well as conserving and protecting the landscape setting of Skibbereen it is necessary to provide for both active and passive open space/recreational areas thereby enhancing the overall living environment and ensuring quality of life for all residents. Protecting the natural environment, facilitating public amenity and providing open space is a balancing act requiring an understanding of the function and needs of residents and visitors to the town. An attractive and quality environment in Skibbereen will provide for:

- Attractive, useable and meaningful public open space
- A balanced mix of open space types
- An equal distribution of public open space
- Public amenity walkways and viewing locations
- Conservation of the natural environment and scenic landscape.

9.2 EXISTING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The town of Skibbereen is set within a wider landscape of natural beauty, however, the urban centre has a unique environmental context divided by the Ilen River and juxtaposed between the elevated ground to the east and the west. This provides an attractive environmental focus to the town centre.

9.2.1 Ilen River

The Ilen River is the main natural amenity feature and has had a strong influence on the historic development of the town. The river which is up to 40m in width, carves a large meander through the town forming a floodplain known as the Marsh along the western bank. The Caol Stream running in a southern direction is a tributary of the Ilen. The river and stream do not have any environmental designations although they are recognised as a significant riverine habitat and amenity resource. Otherwise under-utilised as a recreation resource, the river does offer considerable potential for contributing more positively to the general amenity of the town.



Ilen River

9.2.2 Elevated Scenic Areas

Located between two elevated areas, namely Skibbereen Heights to the west of the town and The Rock to the east, the town has been forced to expand primarily to the north and south. Skibbereen Heights comprises a substantial area of very elevated land dominated by sheer rock on the eastern boundary adjoining Ilen Street and Mardyke Street. With the exception of Swanton's Nursery/Garden Centre located on the north eastern boundary with access at the junction of Mardyke Street and ad hoc residential development including Coronea Drive there is little development in this area of the town. The Rock describes the elevated area to the east of the town to the rear of buildings on North Street and extending eastwards up High Street. In contrast to Skibbereen Heights this area is quite accessible, with a pathway off North Street via Windmill Lane and via an un-named laneway located opposite the Council offices and adjoining the West Cork Arts Centre to the south.



Elevated Scenic Area

Both areas were identified as elevated scenic areas in the Skibberreen Town Development Plan 2004 and it was an objective to resist any development and use in the areas that would impair its visual amenities. It is considered to continue with and

adopt the approach in this Plan and to further explore the considerable potential of these areas in contributing more positively to the general amenity of the town.

9.2.3 Plantation Area

Located on land between the Marsh Road and Mill Road and abutted by a link road to the south, is an attractive plantation area, surrounded by one-off residential developments to the east west and south. It is an objective of the Skibbereen Town Development Plan 2004 to protect this area and this protection is also carried forward in this Plan.

9.2.4 Open Space Amenity

Skibbereen Town Council recognises the importance of an adequate provision of attractive and conveniently located open space throughout the plan area. Open spaces can provide a variety of functions, including active recreation, passive recreation, visual amenity (important landscape views), ecology (bird and wildlife habitat; biodiversity of plant species), drainage management (particularly stormwater control) and socioeconomic needs (such as meeting places, and allotments). Existing open space within Skibbereen is made up of these elements, which are important in the consideration of the overall open space strategy for the area.



Amenity Walk

All of the active open space within the town is located north of the Ilen River and north of the N71. The active open space is primarily operated and provided by sports clubs including the GAA grounds, Glencurragh pitch and the rugby pitch.

Also on the northern side of the town, to the north of the Ilen River are a number of passive areas of open space, including an attractive park located between Marsh Road and Mill Road, and a park with a playground located on Cork Road. The remaining open space areas in this area of the town comprise primarily of undeveloped areas subject to flooding. The most significant of these areas is that land situated on the northern bank of the Ilen River and known locally as the Marsh. This is a significant piece of undeveloped land in the heart of Skibbereen town and presents a significant opportunity to accommodate recreation and social/community uses. Further to the west of this land and just west of John F.Kennedy Bridge is an area of open space which is also subject to flooding and which has been developed with seating and pathways.

The only area of open space located south of the Ilen River is that elevated area known as The Rock. Although accessed via pathways from North Street and developed with a viewing platform, this area suffers from a lack of maintenance, is unpoliced and would benefit from careful peripheral development thereby affording natural surveillance to the area.

The majority of existing passive open space is incidental to housing developments, with these spaces generally lacking in overall quality, particularly in relation to their layout and integration in the overall development, design, landscaping, existing facilities, and the degree of overlooking. Few links are developed between adjoining housing areas, or between open spaces within large housing developments. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the improvement and enhancement of these areas in the future, to create attractive, safe and meaningful public amenities.

9.3 OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC AMENITY STRATEGY

It is very clear from the assessment of open space provision provided in section 9.2, that most of the open space is provided for north of the Ilen River and that the only open space provided south of the river is in that area known locally as The Rock. Thus, it is



Figure 9.1 Linkage of Open Spaces

very clear that there is an unbalanced provision of open space in the town and that there is a clear need for additional open space provision on the southern side of the town.

A balanced mix of open space types within each area of the town needs to be developed to ensure ease of access for all to open spaces and playing fields and therefore it is proposed to consider the town in four separate quarters. Breaking the plan area into four distinct areas ensures that all existing and future areas of the town are adequately served by a variety of open space types. It is a key objective to try and establish linkages and connections between these open spaces so as to provide a comprehensive network.

Northern Open Space Strategy

This area is well supplied with both open space and playing fields. The key strategic site comprising the Marsh lands has significant recreational potential and regard will be had to the development of this area upon finalisation of the new sewerage scheme for the town which includes certain development works on this land. The Skibbereen Urban Study 2002 prepared by Cunnane Strattan Reynolds proposed a detailed community/recreational plan for this area along with significant flood relief measures and implementation of this Plan would significantly enhance the recreational amenity value of the town.

Eastern Open Space Strategy

This area of the town is served by The Rock open space area. With two access points located north and south of North Street, this land can be easily accessed from the town centre and can also be accessed via High Street. Defined with pathways and a viewing area, this open space suffers from a lack of maintenance, lack of surveillance, an isolated location and a lack of directional signage. It is considered that development of lands surrounding the open space should be encouraged and promoted thereby ensuring natural surveillance of the area with four defined open space linkages providing access to the open space from High Street and North Street. The open space requires regular maintenance and landscaping and should be promoted with directional signage. It is recommended that the area is promoted in the tourist guide for the town, as it offers impressive views of the town to the north and west.

Southern Open Space Strategy

Suffering from a lack of formal open space provision it is proposed to develop a park and provide a playground facility south of the town centre on land located between the Gortnaclohy Link Road and the Castletownsend Road. This land shall be developed from financial contributions secured from residential development within the town.

Western Open Space Strategy

Skibbereen Heights provides a long term opportunity for the town, to develop a significant recreational area within the town boundary and to facilitate the development of walkways, tourist trails and natural amenity features. Due to the elevated nature of this land, access from the town side is restricted although there are several access points from the unclassified county road bounding the land to the west. A comprehensive and detailed study of this area would be required prior to consideration of any significant recreational development.

Open Space Linkages

An open space link is accommodated within this Plan linking the new southern open space land with the Gortnaclohy Link Road northwards onto High Street and with a proposed access route into The Rock open space. The link can further be extended via



Walkway along Ilven River

a 10m wide open space buffer on the western side of the proposed new distributor road. This 10m buffer will also incorporate a cycle path and footways. This walkway could then be further extended to link in with the Amenity walk to Russagh Mill.

9.3.1 Playing Fields

There is a good supply of playing fields in Skibbereen albeit all being located on the northern side of the river. Given recent trends in the relocation of sports clubs and facilities to the environs of a town remote from existing services and facilities, it is considered that the development of existing sports grounds, or other recreation facilities, for other purposes should not be permitted unless a suitable alternative open space or the enhancement/upgrading of an existing facility, can be achieved as a replacement in the same area. It is considered that many such facilities, whilst not always open to the public in the strictest sense of amenity, do act as 'breathing spaces' and amenity/recreational buffers in urban areas and should generally be protected. If it is a case that existing sports club facilities/grounds are not sufficient to meet the future requirements of that club then it is important that other suitable grounds are provided for. However, it is recommended that the relocation of a club must adopt a sequential approach in site selection thereby encouraging relocation to another site within the Town Council area.

As the majority of existing clubs and sporting bodies do not have the required finances to develop their own facilities, the Council will act in a strategic management role to facilitate the recreational development of their land in cooperation with various sporting agencies and funding sources. The Council will also facilitate a joint partnership role with school bodies so as to enable joint usage of existing sporting grounds within the area which are at the moment only open to school students within school times and are hence an under-utilised sporting resource.

9.3.2 Playgrounds

There is currently only one active children's playground within Skibbereen located on Cork Road. Issues in relation to liability/insurance and potential for claims, vandalism and inadequate funding have in the past hindered the provision of such playground areas, however due to the obvious social need for such facilities this situation is changing. Skibbereen Town Council is committed to developing a second playground in the town to the recognised safety standards, in the interests of promoting and encouraging children's social, physical, intellectual and creative development within a suitable recreational environment. This second playground area shall be located on the new area of open space to the south of the town.

Where possible additional smaller play areas associated with housing estates will be facilitated as a second tier of local play areas and developers will be expected to provide useful informal open spaces, such as pocket parks, within residential areas.

9.3.3 Public Walkways

The natural environment, biodiversity and waterway of Skibbereen should be recognised and the provision of an amenity walk on the southern bank of the Ilven River should continue to be an objective of this Plan as lands in the area are redeveloped/regenerated. On the northern bank of the Ilven River a high quality combined cycleway and walkway is proposed extending from the upstream bridge as far as the John F Kennedy bridge and beyond to link in with the existing walkway on that area of open space between the Ilven River and the Schull Road. An additional amenity walkway, extending from the Gornaclohy Link road south eastwards has been identified in this Plan, extending beyond the town boundary to Russagh Mill.

9.4 OBJECTIVES

Strategic objective 3 of the 'Vision for Skibbereen' (detailed in section 3.2 of this Plan) specifically seeks to develop a "positive physical and natural environment". Six strategic objectives were listed to achieve this specific vision. These strategic objectives are now considered in a site specific context and provide detailed natural environment open space and public amenity objectives over the Plan period and beyond.

It is an objective of the Council to:

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC AMENITY OBJECTIVES

- Objective ENV1 Encourage the development of suitable sites for additional sports, recreation and open space provision, to ensure that that provision is properly coordinated with other forms of development and other land-use policies, and to protect open space and other land with recreational or amenity value.
- Objective ENV2 Facilitate development of the Marsh land for community/recreational purposes upon completion of the Skibbereen Sewerage Scheme in line with the development proposals contained in the Skibbereen Urban Study 2002.
- Objective ENV3 Maintain and enhance The Rock open space area including the provision of directional signage advertising its amenity value and the enhancement and development of four formal entrance points, including two existing access points from North Street, one existing and one proposed access point from High Street.
- Objective ENV4 Facilitate the development of open space in the southern sector along with the development of a playground with monies secured from financial contributions from residential development in the town.
- Objective ENV5 In the long term to seek the development of Skibbereen Heights as a significant recreational amenity and tourist attraction for the town subject to the preparation of a feasibility and design study.
- Objective ENV6 Protect the use of existing playing fields within the town and maintain such land for recreational purposes.
- Objective ENV7 Ensure the provision of linked open space on the eastern side of town in accordance with Figure 9.1.
- Objective ENV8 Facilitate the development of a public walkway on the southern bank of the Ilan River and a combined cycleway and walkway on the northern bank.
- Objective ENV9 To support the implementation and actions of the County Biodiversity Action Plan and to support the development of a habitat map of Skibbereen to tie in with the County Habitat Mapping Project.

9.5 POLICIES

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC AMENITY POLICIES

The nine objectives identified above can only be achieved if effective natural environment open space and public amenity policies are put in place to guide and

control future development. In this regard six policies have been identified and where necessary and relevant an explanation for the policy is provided.

Policy ENV1 Improving Amenity Spaces

- ENV1-1** The provision of parks and play spaces shall be improved, and those spaces and pathways that can usefully form green links, footpaths and cycle ways to connect residential areas with parks and open spaces shall be extended, and linked with each other, subject to the availability of adequate finances.
- ENV1-2** Ensure the provision of recreational facilities including the provision of playgrounds in both public and private sector developments.

Policy ENV2 Open Space within Residential Developments

ENV 2-1 Developers of new housing developments shall be required to make provision for sport and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the development, as an integral element of their proposal. Such provision shall include direct provision of facilities on or off site, or, in exceptional circumstances a financial contribution in lieu of provision shall be made to the Council to enable it to make appropriate alternative provision.

- ENV2-2** The minimum standards for the provision of leisure facilities as part of new housing developments are
- (a) Usable open space shall be of the order of 12% - 18% of the site area. The percentage shall increase as the density of the development increases.
 - (b) Recreation facilities shall be provided as part of the housing development at a rate of 1 point per 6 housing units (see detailed explanation).
 - (c) A minimum of 30% of the required points shall be satisfied by the provision of on-site local facilities.
 - (d) The remainder of the points requirement shall be satisfied by the provision of facilities, on-site, or off-site at an appropriate agreed location.
 - (e) Where deemed appropriate by the Planning Authority, a cash equivalent may be accepted to enable the Local Authority provide some of the recreation facilities. In these circumstances the value of the facilities in question shall be arrived at by reference to the current housing land value and the construction cost of the said facilities. The monies raised in this manner can only be spent on the provision of recreation facilities to serve the development from which the cash equivalent is raised.
 - (f) Alternative facilities other than those outlined below, or of another nature, i.e. minority sports, arts/culture, can be considered for substitution for those items listed. In these circumstances the facilities to be provided shall be equivalent in recreational and/ or arts or culture value to the item being replaced. The acceptability or otherwise of substitute facilities shall be at the discretion of the Planning Authority and shall be decided as part of the Planning Application process.

Policy ENV2 Explanation:

The Points Value Table shall be as follows:

Neighbourhood Play Area	1
Local Play Area	3
District Play Area	6
Multi- use Games Area	6
Double Tennis Court	7
Grassed Pitch	42
Dressing Rooms	6
Community - 2 badminton	23
Community - 1 basketball	58

Policy ENV3-2 Explanation:

Notwithstanding the elevated scenic area designation afforded to the land, existing authorized businesses should be permitted to continue and expand as appropriate.

Policy ENV3 Natural Environment

- ENV3-1** The natural environment, biodiversity and waterways of Skibbereen shall be protected, conserved and enhanced and shall be specifically protected from invasive species.
- ENV3-2** Proposals for development within the elevated scenic areas, including The Rock and Skibbereen Heights shall not normally be permitted. The existing

Policy ENV3-3 Explanation:

It is necessary to provide for attractive entrance/nodal points into the town. Having regard to the rural nature of the town it is considered that the provision of a natural, maintained landscape setting is desirable.

Policy ENV3-5 Explanation:

In accordance with EU Directive 92/43/EEC (Article 6), The Council shall take appropriate steps to avoid, in the special areas of conservation, the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of to conserve such sites.

nursery/garden centre operating on that land identified as Skibbereen Heights shall be permitted to expand only where it can be demonstrated that such development would have no direct or indirect adverse impact on the area particularly having regard to potential visual impact and the development is appropriate in nature, scale and purpose to the surrounding area.

ENV3-3 The visual amenity and character of the approach roads into Skibbereen shall be retained and preserved such that any new development proposals shall provide for a minimum 3m setback from the public road, appropriately grassed and landscaped. Existing hedgerows shall be retained where possible.

ENV3-4 Features of the landscape that serves as refuges for wild plants shall be maintained in all development proposals as far as possible, including hedgerows, trees, rivers, lakes, parklands, stone walls, ponds and roadside verges.

ENV3-5 Proposals not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the SAC but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives in accordance with and to the satisfaction of the Town Council and relevant bodies.

Policy ENV4 Protection of Trees

ENV4-1 Proposals for development shall not be permitted where it is considered that it will result in the destruction of or significant damage to any tree or stand of trees which makes a significant contribution to the ecology, character or appearance of the area and in particular those trees that define the character of Skibbereen Heights.

ENV4-2 The plantation of trees located on land between the Marsh Road and Mill Road shall be preserved from development and shall only be felled for commercial purposes provided there is a programme of replanting implemented on the site.

Policy ENV5 Provision of Walkways

ENV5-1 All future development on the southern bank of the Ilen River shall make provision for a 3 metre wide walkway along the waterfront.

Policy ENV6 Maintaining Open Space Provision

ENV6-1 The development of existing public or private open space, including sports grounds, or other recreation facilities, for other purposes shall not be permitted unless a suitable alternative open space or the enhancement/upgrading of an existing facility, can be achieved as a replacement in the same area.

ENV6-2 Relocation of a club and sports ground shall adopt a sequential approach in site selection thereby encouraging relocation to another site within the Town Council area.

10.0 LEISURE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

10.1 AIM

The social infrastructure in Skibbereen consists of a diverse range of social clubs, sports organisations, resident associations and support groups, in addition to community, educational and health services that typify its importance as a local centre serving a large rural hinterland. The development and facilitation of an effective social infrastructure network within Skibbereen is important in the promotion of the town as an urban centre with a good overall quality of life, where social inclusion and community participation are regarded as necessary prerequisites. The Council recognises the importance of community participation in the improvement of existing community and recreation facilities, and aims to:

- Encourage increased involvement of local groups, independently and in association with the relevant statutory bodies, in the future development of the town.
- Assist as far as possible in the provision of such community facilities as community centres, schools, health centres, crèches, playing fields and recreation facilities by reserving suitably located sites, by assisting in the provision of finance for their development (where appropriate), and/or by the use of development control to ensure provision is made for such facilities as the Council considers appropriate

10.2 EXISTING FACILITIES

Skibbereen has a range of community and recreational facilities, such as community centres, schools, health centres, crèches, playing fields and recreational facilities. In relation to indoor recreational facilities, Skibbereen is served by the Sports Centre and has a number of local sports clubs, which have access to a limited number of indoor halls. The town also has a strong cultural background, supporting a Heritage Centre, a proposed new cinema under construction, Arts Centre and a Youth Theatre (refer to section 10, Tourism, Arts and Culture for further details). There are a number of educational facilities to cater for primary and post primary as well as training programmes for school leavers and adults. Skibbereen acts as a local centre of importance in the provision of community services and facilities, as indicated by the presence of the library, Cork County Council Area Offices, Town Council offices, the West Cork Community Services Area Headquarters and the hospital and the Fire Station among many other community services.

10.2.1 Education Facilities

Skibbereen provides a wide range of educational facilities from primary to post primary level, catering for approximately 1,416 students. It provides for its educational needs through four primary schools, three post primary schools and an adult education facility at Rossa College.

The four primary schools in the town have a total enrolment 507 pupils and include SN Padraig Naofa (junior and senior boys), Scoil Naomh Seosamh (all girls), Abbeystreery NS (Church of Ireland) and Gaelscoil Dr. M Ui Shuilleabhain. SN Padraig Naofa junior and senior boys share the same campus. The all girls school, Scoil Naomh Seosamh has nine classrooms and already expanded its facilities by one classroom in 2006 to facilitate a special education class. The Gaelscoil is in temporary accommodation on the same site as Rossa College and an eight classroom school is required to facilitate this service. The Department of Education has advised that based on projected population growth up to 2020 no new sites would be required at primary level although

extensions to existing schools may be required if all zoned residential land in the town was developed.

The three post primary schools have a total enrolment of 909 pupils and include Rossa College, Convent of Mercy and St. Fachtnas De La Salle. The Department of Education has advised that agreement has been reached to amalgamate the three schools to form a new community school which will cater for 900 pupils. A new site of 4.8 hectares is therefore required to accommodate a new post primary school. In this regard is noted that the Department requests site reservations to be made as close as possible to community facilities such as sports facilities and services such as libraries so that these can be shared between the school and the community.

10.2.2 Health Facilities

The West Cork Community Services Area Headquarters are based in the Skibbereen Community Hospital Grounds (located outside the Plan area within the functional area of Cork County Council) along with the Skibbereen Health Centre. A full range of medical services are provided including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, nursing, home help, dental clinic, child health and school medical services, mental health and social work. The registration of deaths, births and marriages are facilitated whilst the administration of the Health Service Executive (HSE) allowances and schemes for the West Cork Area are processed from the Community Services Area.

Special Needs

Skibbereen Community Hospital provides long stay and convalescent care for the elderly as well as a day care facility. There is only one registered nursing home operating in Skibbereen and is located outside the Plan area. The West Cork Community Services Area Headquarters provides funding to voluntary agencies that provide health related activities and services and funding is also provided to CoAction and COPE who operate in the town. CoAction provides education, training and support for employment to children and adults with learning disabilities at its premises on Mardyke Street. The COPE Foundation operate two hostels in the town and provide services and facilities for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. The Geriatric Society provides a significant facility for old people in the town, currently accommodating thirty three adults in flatlets and twelve residents in Cara House.

10.2.3 Childcare Facilities

The Ministerial Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities 2001, published by the DoEHLG require that provision is made for the provision and monitoring of childcare facilities in a development plan. There are six crèches and day care facilities in the town and according to the Cork County Childcare Committee there is a particular lack of full day places for children as the majority of the community run childcare facilities cater for children on a sessional (up to 3.5 hours) or part-time (between 3.5 and 5 hours) basis. Thus there is a need for affordable, full time childcare places in the town.

10.2.4 Leisure Facilities

Sports and recreation facilities in the town include tennis courts, rugby, soccer and GAA pitches (although the provision of facilities for these clubs are very limited), badminton, basketball, rowing, indoor football, karate cycling and gymnastics. However, the provision of outdoor and indoor facilities is generally lacking, with a lot of clubs having to rent land and/or indoor facilities. Many clubs have to depend on the Sports Centre or

the hiring of other facilities for training sessions. The Sports Centre caters for a variety of clubs in the town.

10.2.5 Cemetery Development

The public cemetery serving the town is located outside the Plan area within the functional area of Cork County Council. Provision has been made in the Skibbereen Electoral Local Area Plan to facilitate the expansion of the cemetery by zoning 1.5 hectares of land for such use. The Town Council will work with Cork County Council to facilitate its expansion where the need arises.

10.3 OBJECTIVES

Strategic objective 4 of the 'Vision for Skibbereen' (detailed in section 3.2 of this Plan) specifically seeks to develop a "vibrant and balanced community". Four strategic objectives were listed to achieve this specific vision. These strategic objectives are now considered in a site specific context and provide detailed natural environment open space and public amenity objectives over the Plan period and beyond.

It is an objective of the Council to:

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES OBJECTIVES

Objective CR1	Work with community groups and organisations to provide additional and enhanced community and leisure facilities in the town.
Objective CR2	Facilitate the on site extension of the four primary schools as demand necessitates.
Objective CR3	Facilitate the relocation of the three post primary schools and the development of a new community college within the Town Council boundary.
Objective CR4	Implement as far as possible the provisions of the Barcelona Agreement.
Objective CR5	Implement the Ministerial Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities 2001, published by the DoEHLG.

10.4 POLICIES

The five objectives identified above can only be achieved if effective leisure and community facilities policies are put in place to guide and control future development. In this regard five policies have been identified and where necessary and relevant an explanation for the policy is provided.

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES POLICIES

Policy CR1	Development and Expansion of Educational Facilities
CR1-1	A flexible approach shall be adopted to the development of a new post primary community school on lands within the Town Council area such that all classes of zoning within this Plan, with the exception of open space/recreation zoning and agricultural zoning, permit the development of a school in principle.
CR1-2	The development of a new school shall be encouraged and supported on land within the Town Council area subject to: (a) Provision of appropriate vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access;

- (b) It can be demonstrated that there are no adverse impacts on surrounding residential amenity; and
- (c) Adequate linkages with other sports facilities and services can be demonstrated.

Policy CR2 Explanation:

Given the proximity of these sites to neighbouring primary schools it is considered that such sites could be further utilised for educational purposes by the neighbouring primary schools which may need to expand. If it can be demonstrated that the buildings are no longer required for educational or community purposes then such sites/buildings may be appropriate for other mixed uses provided that an element of educational/community/civic use is maintained.

Policy CR2 Reuse of Existing Educational Establishments and Sites

- CR 2-1** The sites of the three secondary schools have been identified as opportunity site no.4 within the town suitable to accommodate a mix of uses. In the first instance the reuse of these sites for educational/community purposes shall be encouraged and promoted. Only where it can be comprehensively demonstrated that there is a need/requirement for the buildings or site to be used for educational/recreational purposes shall consideration be given to other uses on the site as set out under Mixed Use Zoning in Table 3.1 Land Use Zoning Matrix.
- CR2-2** The use/partial use of Rossa College for continued educational purposes shall be encouraged.

Policy CR3 Provision of Health Services

- CR3-1** The minimum standards for the provision of leisure facilities as part of new housing developments are
- (a) Meets an identified health need; and
 - (b) Would not have a significant detrimental impact on amenity of nearby occupants; and
 - (c) Adequate access to the site is made available; and
 - (d) The site is suitably located in relation to the population it seeks to serve.

Policy CR4-2 Explanation:

Large development schemes are those schemes that involve the construction of 75+ houses and mixed use schemes where the total gross floor area is in excess of 10,000sqm.

Policy CR4 Provision of Residential Care Homes and Childcare Facilities

- CR4-1** There is a deficiency in the provision of residential care homes and nursing homes within the town and the provision of such facilities shall be encouraged where it can be demonstrated that:
- (a) Adequate car parking is provided for residents, staff and visitors; and
 - (b) Sufficient private open space is provided for residents; and
 - (c) They would not significantly detract from the amenity and character of the surrounding area.
- CR4-2** The provision of childcare facilities shall be supported throughout the town and shall be required in all large development schemes, unless it can be comprehensively demonstrated that there is an adequate supply and capacity within easy walking distance of the site. Individual childcare facilities shall be permitted where it can clearly demonstrate that:
- (a) They are sited close to housing or employment areas and adjacent to transport corridors and/or in the vicinity of schools; and
 - (b) The development shall not give rise to a traffic hazard and adequate provision shall be made for drop off facilities; and
 - (c) The development does not give rise to any adverse impacts on residential amenity; and
 - (d) There is adequate provision for private open space.

Policy CR5 Protection of Existing Leisure and Community Facilities

- CR5-1** Development involving the loss of built leisure and community facilities shall not be permitted unless suitable alternative facilities can be provided as a replacement. Accessibility of the new facilities by the community being served shall be a pre-requisite for permitting any relocation of recreation facilities

11.0 TOURISM ARTS AND CULTURE

11.1 AIM

According to the European Tourist Market Attractions 2005 survey, European 'attractions tourism' is dominated by attractions that are founded on history and cultures going back many centuries. For numerous visitors, simply wandering around the 'Old Town', the well-preserved ancient hearts of many towns across Europe, is enough of an attraction.

The town of Skibbereen is promoted as the capital of West Cork and centre for tourist activities of a wide region. It is promoted as an ideal base from which to discover the choice of beautiful fishing villages, to experience Ireland's first Marine Nature Reserve on Lough Hyne and to enjoy golfing, fishing and horse-riding. Whilst Skibbereen town itself is promoted having regard to its historical context and the Irish Famine, the Heritage Centre and the West Cork Art Centre, the town lacks a theme in terms of tourism promotion and lacks a marketing product. The aim is to:

- Enhance Skibbereen's role in tourism and enhance the tourism potential of the town.
- Integrate the three pillars of place, people and culture.
- Enhance commercial synergy between tourism, arts and culture.

11.2 TOURISM ARTS AND CULTURAL PROVISION

Outside of Dublin the south west of Ireland had the greatest number of tourists in 2006, calculated by Tourism Ireland at 1,994,000 or 24% of the market share (there is no breakdown of tourist figures for Skibbereen). Visiting places of historical and cultural interest remains the most significant activity of all overseas tourists with 37% engaging in such activity.

The development of a number of attractions in the area of arts and culture have reinforced Skibbereen's role in the area of tourism over recent years. The Heritage Centre on the old gasworks site is a significant attraction in Skibbereen and many visitors come to research the genealogy information available. Furthermore the Great Famine Commemoration Exhibition in the centre is a popular tourist attraction. In addition to on site exhibitions and information, the Heritage Centre now offers two historical walks around the town including the 'Skibbereen Historical Walks' which runs twice weekly and the 'Pirates and Princes Walking Tour' which operates daily. The Heritage Centre has acquired additional land to facilitate its extension having regard to the popularity of its product.

The West Cork Art Centre is a unique concept to the town of Skibbereen and one that needs to be further promoted in connection with tourism. The centre was established in 1985 and is a publicly funded arts facility that creates opportunities for the people of West Cork and its visitors to have access to, and engagement with, local and global arts practice of excellence. It is a resource and development agency, providing expertise and physical and human resources to assist artists, other arts organisations, groups and individuals to realise arts projects and has education at its core. The expansion of this facility must be encouraged and it is understood that the centre is exploring the development of new exhibition space off Townshend Street on the site of the old bakery.



Heritage Centre



West Cork Arts Centre

In addition to the Heritage Centre and Arts Centre there are a number of protected buildings around the town that are of significance including St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the Court House.

Festivals, whether of a comedy, music, arts, etc. theme, can add significantly to the image of a place, providing a significant draw for visitors and tourists. At present Skibbereen is host to a number of festivals including the Food Festival in September and the Ilen Street Vintage Day Festival with the highlight of the day being the famous Pig Race which takes place in Ilen Street.

New concepts and strategies are continuously being created to stimulate and invest in tourism in Ireland and Skibbereen has recently benefited from Fáilte Ireland's new cycling strategy. A number of hub towns have been created with the support of local authorities and the assistance of National Development Plan Infrastructure Grants and work is currently underway in developing day and half day signed looped cycling routes in a number of centres around the country including Skibbereen.

11.3 TOURISM ARTS AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

Notwithstanding the significant natural, cultural and artistic opportunities in the town, Skibbereen appears to lack an image or theme in terms of tourism promotion despite its appeal. However, it is very clear that tourism should be clearly promoted and associated with the strong arts and cultural themes in the town and in this regard there is an opportunity to further develop the Civic/Cultural Quarter (identified in section 5.0 of this Plan) and to promote it as a significant tourist attraction. It is noted that the West Cork Craft and Design Guild wish to develop an eco friendly, flagship building in Skibbereen that would provide services to craft producers as well as facilities and services to the community in general. It is considered that the location of such a facility within the Civic/Cultural Quarter would be of overall benefit to the town and would result in synergy of similar type uses. The future expansion of the West Cork Arts Centre off Townshend Street, whilst not necessarily in the Civic/Cultural Quarter, will further enhance the overall tourism, arts and cultural opportunities within the town.

There is a lack of opportunity for visitors to spend money in the town outside of the obvious domain of pubs, accommodation and restaurants. Although the town does have some good eating establishments and restaurants, in general there appears to be a need for a greater diversity and an improvement in quality. Streets that could be considered for restaurants and café culture include those streets converging around the Town Square that is the southern end of North Street, western end of High Street, eastern end of Main Street and the northern end of Market Street.

11.4 OBJECTIVES

Strategic objective 1 of the 'Vision for Skibbereen' (detailed in section 3.2 of this Plan) specifically seeks to develop a "strong local economy". Four strategic objectives were listed to achieve this specific vision. These strategic objectives are now considered in a site specific context and provide detailed tourism arts and culture objectives over the Plan period and beyond.

It is an objective of the Council to:

Objective TAC1 Provide a slipway, berthing facilities, fishing stands and walkways at suitable locations on the Ilen River to facilitate boating and fishing within the town.

TOURISM ARTS AND CULTURE OBJECTIVES

Objective TAC2	Provide a pedestrian trail along the north bank of the Ilen River as part of the overall development of the Marsh Area of the town.
Objective TAC3	Facilitate and promote the extension of the Heritage Centre.
Objective TAC4	Encourage the location of the West Cork Craft and Design Guild flagship building within the town of Skibbereen but primarily within the Civic/Cultural Quarter of the town.
Objective TAC5	Promote the development of a venue building and/or concert hall that could be used for a variety of live entertainment, music concerts, recitals, drama, comedy and dance. The development of such a facility could be provided as part of a public-private partnership project.
Objective TAC6	Improve the signposting of scenic routes, walks, riverside trails, historic and archaeological heritage features throughout the town in an attractive and well designed manner.
Objective TAC7	Work with other agencies and voluntary groups in developing a theme for tourism in Skibbereen and in promoting the artistic and cultural activities in the town.
Objective TAC8	Support the continued operation and service of the Cork/Kerry

TOURISM ARTS AND CULTURE POLICIES

11.5 POLICIES

The eight objectives identified above can only be achieved if effective tourism art and culture policies are put in place to guide and control future development. In this regard two policies have been identified and where necessary and relevant an explanation for the policy is provided.

Policy TAC1 Development of Arts and Local Heritage

TAC1-1 It is the policy of the council to enhance and promote the public awareness of the arts, folklore, history and cultural heritage of the town through the support of local arts, heritage and cultural groups.

Policy TAC2 Development of Civic and Public Buildings

TAC2-1 The development of new civic and public buildings or the change of use of existing buildings to civic/public use shall be encouraged and supported on land within the Town Council provided it can be demonstrated that:

- (a) The building will be open to local residents and visitors to the town;
- (b) It is accessible to those with special mobility needs; and
- (c) Provides public open space for outdoor entertainment purposes.

12.0 URBAN DESIGN

12.1 AIM

Urban design is the concept of determining the shape, form and design of the urban environment. It is concerned with the external appearance of development and the relationship of buildings to one another and to the spaces around them. Therefore, it is concerned with architecture, buildings and space as they are experienced in the public realm - the street and public places like squares. Good urban design is based on an understanding of how successful places work, it enhances the image of the town and therefore can contribute to the economic well-being of a place. The aim of urban design for Skibbereen is to:

- Establish a strong positive identity for the town;
- Ensure that any new buildings or development respects the local setting and context;
- Create an attractive urban environment that will enhance the liveability of the area and attract inward investment;
- Increase the overall permeability and legibility of the built environment;
- Enhancement of permeability (establishing connections between places) and legibility (understanding an area - this is enhanced by landmarks, focal buildings and key features in the landscape);
- Promote places that are safe and secure; and
- Promote sustainable development.

12.2 URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The principles of urban design are applied to the critical future development of the town centre and to the most extensive land use in the plan area that is residential use. This Plan does not seek to prescribe the form and appearance of every parcel of identified development land within Skibbereen, but instead sets out guiding principles that the Council wish to see embodied in new development. A fundamental requirement will be the need to integrate all form of development into the landscape setting, thereby reducing its impact on the local environment and reinforcing local distinctiveness. This can be achieved by retaining existing site features (such as trees, hedgerows, ponds, outcrops, etc) and by using strong structure planting that complements and reinforces the existing vegetation pattern.

The scale, massing and height of proposed development needs to be considered in relation to that of adjoining buildings, the local topography, the general pattern of heights in the area, the view and landmarks,. In the majority of cases, successful development is achieved by defining and enclosing space by buildings, structure and landscape. Buildings that follow a continuous building line around a street block and contain the private space within rear garden or courtyards are usually more successful than individual builds that stand in the middle of a plot.

12.2.1 Town Centre Principles

The planned expansion of the town will require a new structure of streets and spaces to open up further land for development. Given the generally good condition of buildings in the town centre, there are few derelict sites or locations requiring special development consideration, with the exception of the Fair Field whose redevelopment would be of significant importance to the town. However, it is proposed to prepare a detailed design brief for this land in the short term to facilitate its redevelopment. In recognition of its architectural character and heritage interest, most of the town centre is incorporated within an Architectural Conservation Area. The priority for development in this area

should therefore be on refurbishment and sensitive redevelopment where appropriate. Protected structure will be subject to statutory protection, and the emphasis will be on preserving the physical integrity and setting of these buildings.

12.2.2 Residential Development

As the major land use, the form of new residential development is an important consideration in the overall settlement pattern of Skibbereen. The main objective is to achieve high quality living environments that are more sustainable than many previous examples and can be enjoyed by all who use them. In the majority of cases, recent housing developments have tended to be repetitive and uniform. A similar mix of houses arranged to a standardised layout around a rigid road hierarchy results in sameness that lacks any local identity.

The urban form of the new residential developments should encourage walking through the layout of streets and buildings. The block layout needs to reflect existing natural features, contours and existing building patterns. Public spaces should account for a minimum of 15% of the total area, with parks, sports and recreation fields forming an integral part of the settlement. High quality public spaces provide the focus for the community, with buildings of architectural distinction and variety. The surrounding street grid should be fine grained, with small street blocks and numerous pedestrian linkages to the central public spaces.

The visual presence of vehicles should be minimised and private parking accommodated to the rear of properties where possible, in attractive courts that are over-looked by houses and connected to the network of pedestrian routes. On all new roads speeds should be constrained and a pedestrian-friendly environment created that increases the feeling of safety, without resorting to crude remedial treatments such as ramps, horizontal alignment constraints combined with the careful positioning of buildings, landscaping and the use of different materials should be used to help reinforce the need to reduce speed and the dominance of motor vehicles. Traffic generating developments should usually be located towards the edges, incorporated into the green landscape structure of the outer areas.

Roads and Access

It is generally acknowledged that cars have come to dominate most streets in urban areas. This has only occurred in the last few decades and the imbalance needs to be reversed if urban communities are to review and prosper. Streets should be as much living places as they are routes for cars, an integral part of the community and the focus of many activities that link together people's lives. While certain levels of traffic for access and serviceability should be accommodated, increasing pressures for parking and the movement of large vehicles at the expense of other (usually more vulnerable) road users has reduced the vitality and attractiveness of many areas. This is demonstrated in Skibbereen by the dominance of through traffic in Main Street and the lack of attractive, useable streets in the residential areas.

The rigidity and standardisation of most recent housing layouts are partly the result of the dominance of motor vehicles. Layouts have been based on the geometry of vehicle movement, with the natural result that residents find it easier to use their car than any other form of travel. As importantly it is also leads to the creation of areas that are uniform in appearance and lack of their own sense of local identity.

It is a strategic objective of this Plan to manage levels of traffic and reduce vehicle speeds within the town, by ensuring that the road infrastructure meets the needs of residents by providing a safe and high quality pedestrian and cycle environment. New

General Principles of new Housing Development	
Movement	A movement framework that is safe, direct and attractive to all users
Mix	A rich mix of housing typologies
Community	A sense of neighbourhood and community awareness
Structure	A coherent structure of public spaces, streets and movement routes
Layout	Street layout and design that encourages use and activity
Place	Attractive and clearly defined public and private amenity spaces
Parking	Convenient but unobtrusive parking
Safety	A safe and secure environment
Adaptability	Housing that is robust and adaptable to changing requirements
Maintenance	An environment that can be well-maintained over the long term
Sustainability	Housing designed to minimise resource consumption
Detail	Well-considered detailing of buildings and spaces

residential developments should therefore seek to recreate high quality areas where the design and lay out of roads are integrated in a way that is sensitive to the local environment, rather than to dominate it.

12.2.3 Neighbourhood Centres

A network of neighbourhood centres is proposed to act as focal points for all residential areas. These are proposed to reinforce existing and emerging centres and to ensure that all new residential areas are adequately serviced by local facilities. Mixed-use developments at new neighbourhood centres will be permitted to three storey heights (with local retail developments at ground floor level and local office and apartments overhead). Open space in the form of a village green or pocket park will also be required at the neighbourhood. Ideally, the open space should be framed by a terrace of buildings. Shared car parking provisions will be permitted to the front of buildings to allow convenient access, but otherwise private car parking (for either business owners or apartment dwellers) will be encouraged to the rear or side of buildings.

12.2.3 Riverside Development

There are significant backland development opportunities on the southern bank of the Ilen River. The objective is to provide a strong and continuous building edge to the waterway whilst facilitating a 3m wide walkway between the river and the proposed building. The scale of development will be consistent with existing development and should be no more than three storeys in height unless adjoining an old mill building which would give greater latitude for heights of up to four storeys. Pedestrian and vehicular access to the area will be promoted via the archway system evident on North Street and Main Street. Mixed uses will be encouraged.



Riverside Laneways



Public Art

12.2.4 Key Landmark Sites

There are a number of high profile sites at strategic locations in the town. Some of these will be more apparent following the completion of the North Eastern Distributor Road. Many of the sites are situated at critical road junctions and intersections. The sites are highly visible and as such, it is essential that they are designed to the highest standards, as their development will set the tone for the town, and influence the public perception of it. Many of the identified landmark sites are situated on the approach roads into the town close to the Town Council boundary. Development on these lands will therefore provide a clear distinction between the urban and rural environment.

These landmark sites are as follows:

- Lands surrounding the junction of the N71 with the proposed new north eastern distributor road.
- Lands and existing development centered around the Baltimore Road roundabout.
- Lands on the north western side of the Baltimore Road and identified for the provision of a neighbourhood centre.
- Lands surrounding the roundabout linking the N71, Marsh Road and Ilen Street, John F. Kennedy Bridge.

12.2.3 PUBLIC ART

The local authority acknowledges the contribution of public art to the urban landscape and will encourage the provision and installation of public art in various forms and media throughout the town.

12.2.4 DESIGN STATEMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

For sensitive sites, key landmark sites, opportunity sites and major development proposals, applicants will be required to provide a short written statement setting out the design principles adopted as well as illustrative material in plan and elevation. This Design Statement is intended to help officials get a better understanding of the approach to the design and to provide evidence of the level of design appreciation behind the application. For all infill developments, the applicant will be required to show elevations of buildings on either side and submit photographs of the streetscape within which the development is proposed. For large schemes, the applicant may be required to provide an urban design framework plan, action area plan or masterplan. Photomontages, 3-D images and townscape views illustrating the design proposal may also be required.

12.3 OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council to:

URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Objective UD1	Ensure the high quality design and architectural treatment of key landmark sites as identified in section 12.2.4 and the four opportunity sites identified in section 5.2
Objective UD2	Prepare a detailed design development brief for the Fair Field land within the town centre to fully realise its development potential and to promote its high quality development.
Objective UD3	Ensure through any development proposal on lands surrounding the zoned open space known as The Rock and its associated access routes, that buildings are positioned to frame the access routes and orientated to naturally police and overlook the open space.
Objective UD4	Ensure, through any redevelopment of backlands and plots associated with the southern bank of the Ilen River, that a new streetscape is created with an almost continuous building line, with 3-4 storeys in height and a minimum pedestrian pavement area of 3 metres from building edge to waters edge.
Objective UD5	Continue to support and promote the planning advisory service provided by the Town Architect and Engineer for all prospective developments in the town

12.4 POLICIES

URBAN DESIGN POLICIES

The five objectives identified above can only be achieved if effective urban design policies are put in place to guide and control future development. In this regard three policies have been identified and where necessary and relevant an explanation for the policy is provided.

Policy UD1	Design Statement
UD1-1	The submission of a design statement shall be required for the development of sensitive sites, key landmark sites, opportunity sites and for all major development proposals.

Policy UD2 Masterplanning

UD2-1 New development shall be carried out in an orderly and planned manner, having consideration for the future development and form of the area. Therefore, permissions for developments may not be granted unless they are set within an overall masterplan, concept plan or neighbourhood plan to be carried out at the behest of the planning authority and at the expense of the developer.

Policy UD3 Urban Design Principles

UD2-2 Regard shall be had to good urban design principles in the assessment of developments and the assessment shall be informed by how well the development responds to the following general guidelines:

- (a) Buildings shall be two or three storeys, terrace or semi-detached;
- (b) Detached buildings may be appropriate at key locations where they can be incorporated in the general form of the street through the use of boundary walls and landscaping;
- (c) The built form shall be arranged in simple blocks as shown in the Development Guidelines, interpreted according to the building type and required density.
- (d) Parking shall be provided discreetly, in indented bays and parking courts wherever possible.
- (e) Rear courtyard areas shall be arranged to be over looked by active frontages;
- (f) The corners and other key focal points of blocks shall be articulated through height and/or architectural treatment;
- (g) Generally the plot ratio of development shall be in the region of 2:1 (i.e. the total amount of floorspace should be no more than double the total plot area);
- (h) The plot width for individual units shall vary (from between 4 to 9 metres) in order to reduce repetition; and
- (i) Occasional non-domestic buildings shall be encouraged within residential areas at suitable locations as a means of encouraging mixed use developments.

13.0 EMPLOYMENT ENTERPRISE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

13.1 AIM

It is recognised that employment can have a major impact on population trends, as people are attracted to employment growth spots and thus increase population. Thus enhancing, encouraging and facilitating additional employment opportunities over the plan period will be critical to the success of Skibbereen's vision. In line with regional and local strategic planning and development documents, it will be the aim of this Plan to support the development of Skibbereen as a:

- County town and key economic and service provider to a large rural hinterland.
- Centre of electronic commerce with the appropriate telecommunications network.
- Desirable and attractive tourism centre, particularly with regard to untapped tourism potential.
- Centre capable of attracting and accommodating new service industry to the town.

Such development would support the Government's objective to achieve a more balanced regional economic structure in the country.

13.2 ECONOMIC PROFILE

Manufacturing industry in Skibbereen consists of light engineering, food and dairy products and furniture manufacturing. There are three industrial/enterprise clusters located to the north (Marsh Road), west (Upper Bridge Street) and south east (Castletownsend Road) of the town. There are also three new industrially zoned sites in the county area on Marsh Road and on the northern side of the N71. New employment opportunities in Skibbereen have been limited in recent years and there is no one main employer in the region. Prencos Manufacturing and O'Donnell Furniture Manufacturers on the Baltimore Road are some of the few remaining industries in the town.

Skibbereen serves as an administrative, employment, commercial, retail, health, and educational centre for the surrounding rural hinterland, which accounts for many of the professional service and administration sector jobs in the area. It is thus not surprising that the service sector is the primary employment sector in the town employing 43% (Census of Population 2006) of the total workforce. Manufacturing was the next greatest employer in the town accounting for 14% of the workforce, followed closely by building and construction at 13%. Some 7% of the workforce was unemployed in 2006 and this is well above the current national average of just over 5% in 2008. In June 2008 21% of the total population in the town were recorded as being on the Live Register and this represented a 2% increase over June 2007 figures.

Just over half (51%) of the population in the town is available to the workforce, that is they are either working looking for their first job or are currently unemployed. Some 13% of the population is retired and a further 8% look after home and family on a full time basis. The percentage of population in the workforce is substantially lower when compared with the national average of 61% although the number of people retired time basis in the town is substantially higher.

13.3 FUTURE ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Well dispersed throughout the town a significant proportion of the commercial/industrial zoned land in the town has been developed to date, although it is recognised that some

36.9 hectares of land has been zoned for industrial /enterprise use in the county area outside of the administrative area of Skibbereen Town Council. Notwithstanding such zoning regard must be had to Skibbereen's designation as a District Employment Centre in the Cork County Development Plan and the need to provide for employment and industry sites close to existing services and amenities.

It is necessary to create an environment of well-planned land uses, which in turn creates a favourable climate for investment. The town with its recent improvements to water and sanitary infrastructure will cater for all future developments. A key element in the proposed land use structure for this Plan is the development of an economic growth centre to the north east of the town, serviced by the proposed new distributor road linking High Street with the N71. The purpose of this economic growth centre is to establish high profile sites within easy reach of the town centre, significant residential areas and amenities. It also facilitates the opportunity to integrate land use with transportation, ensuring transport options for employees. Priority for growth in industrial and business activity during the lifetime of the plan will be within this economic growth centre.

The town has a prominent role within the region as a county town and key economic and service provider. Already a centre for public administration and services, Skibbereen is an attractive location for investment because it is situated on a good regional road network, has an airport within one hour drive (Cork Airport), has broadband and ISDN telecom facilities and has a FAS training facility, as well as adult educational facilities.

Quality of life is an important issue to companies and their employees. Skibbereen is situated in a particularly attractive area, which offers a good quality of life with excellent scenery, heritage and attractions. Skibbereen also provides access to good health recreation, leisure and cultural facilities which are important considerations to potential new employers in the town.

13.3.1 E-Town Concept

With many commuters complaining of lengthening journey times, Shannon Development saw the need to generate a new 21st century model to deal with the growing problem and developed an E-town concept with the first e-town constructed in Miltown Malbay and the second under construction in Tarbet. The objective of the E-Town concept is to provide alternative solutions for enterprise based on the quality of life advantages of small towns and villages. The idea is to develop clusters of mixed-use live/work accommodation tailored to people who want to establish and run their business from their homes. With the rise in information technology this method of working has become more realistic and more prevalent in businesses. Flexible working practices and the ability for employees to work in a comfortable environment often benefit productivity. The Council recognise the need to encourage flexibility in the zoning of areas to encourage the creation of 'live work' units.

13.4 OBJECTIVES

Strategic objective 1 of the 'Vision for Skibbereen' (detailed in section 3.2 of this Plan) specifically seeks to develop a "strong local economy". Four strategic objectives were listed to achieve this specific vision. These strategic objectives are now considered in a site specific context and provide detailed employment enterprise and economic development objectives over the Plan period and beyond.

It is an objective of the Council to:

EMPLOYMENT ENTERPRISE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Objective EC1	Encourage the creation of live-work units and to facilitate an e-town concept development on appropriately zoned residential land within the town.
Objective EC2	Facilitate the development of office/employment use with residential overhead within the neighbourhood centre zonings and to encourage the provision of offices within the new economic growth centre excluding Class 2 office use.
Objective EC3	Liaise with relevant industrial and enterprise bodies such as the IDA, and County Enterprise Board amongst others to promote Skibbereen as a town supportive of the services industry.

13.5 POLICIES

The three objectives identified above can only be achieved if effective employment, enterprise and economic development policies are put in place to guide and control future development. In this regard three policies have been identified and where necessary and relevant an explanation for the policy is provided.

EMPLOYMENT ENTERPRISE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Policy EC1	New Employment Proposals
EC1-1	The provision of adequate and sufficient employment opportunities to cater for the needs of the population of the town and its hinterland will be facilitated through the development of a new economic growth centre on the N71.
EC1-2	Proposals for employment generating development on land other than that zoned for such development shall only be considered where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) There are no suitable alternative sites available within land zoned for employment generating purposes; and (b) The development proposal is in accordance with the other policies of this plan.
EC1-3	New or extensions to existing employment generating development proposals shall be permitted provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) It is occurring on appropriately zoned land; and (b) It is appropriate to the respective area in terms of size and the type of employment generating development to be provided; and (c) It would not cause adverse transport effects to the safety and free flow of traffic on the surrounding highway network.

Policy EC2 Explanation:

This policy only applies to those units which were designed and built as residential units only and whose main purpose and function is to operate as a residential unit. This policy does not apply to planned e-town developments as described in section 13.3.1 above.

Policy EC2	Small-scale Businesses
EC2-1	The development of small-scale businesses shall be promoted in the town but the operation of such a business from home will be assessed on the scale and nature of business and the level of customers/callers to the business and shall only be considered where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The use of the house for business purposes is secondary to its use as a dwelling and the floor area of the business shall reflect this; (b) The business serves a local need; (c) Adequate parking provision shall be provided in accordance with the car parking requirement schedule set out in this Plan; and (d) There shall be minimal loss of residential amenity to adjoining residences in terms of general disturbance, noise and traffic generation.

Policy EC3 Promotion of Quality Work Environment

EC3-1 It is the policy of the Council to promote a good quality working environment with access to local services and facilities, through the good spatial distribution of employment around the town within easy reach of transport services and residential

14.0 ENGINEERING INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

14.1 AIM

Necessary to accommodate a comfortable lifestyle and a successful economic environment, water services and utilities are basic fundamentals in the current economic climate and in the context of a functioning and established urban environment. The provision and monitoring of such facilities is necessary to ensure that there is an adequate and efficient supply available to accommodate both current and future residents and both current and future developments. Thus, the aim of this Plan is to:

- Provide appropriate infrastructure to serve the needs of the existing population and to accommodate the projected population increase in the Skibbereen area.
- Protect the existing water supply from contamination.
- Protect existing and future population from possible future flooding events as far as possible.
- Facilitate the supply of utilities such as electricity, natural gas, telecommunications and water in a coordinated and orderly manner.

14.2 INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITY ANALYSIS

14.2.1 Water Supply

The source of the water for the town of Skibbereen is the Ilen River and the treatment plant is located at Ballyhilty, upstream of Skibbereen Town. The source and treatment have adequate capacity for any proposed development for the life of this plan. The water from the Ilen River is effectively treated by means of a gravity filtration plant and includes filtration, fluoridation, chlorination and PH correction. The scheme has capacity for 1.21 million gallons with the current peak demand during summer months at 700,000 gallons.

14.2.2 Wastewater Services

The Preliminary Report for the new sewerage scheme in Skibbereen has been prepared and a new sewage collection system is currently under construction with an anticipated completion date for the end of 2009. A tender for the construction of a new treatment plant is currently being prepared and it is hoped that this will commence construction in 2009 with a view to being operational in 2010. Once complete the new Skibbereen Sewerage Scheme will have a capacity for a population equivalent of 4500 people. The treatment plant will be designed to allow a future upgrading to a population equivalent of 9000.

The new sewerage system as outlined above will be capable of accommodating the future development and growth of the town as proposed over the period of the development plan.

14.2.3 Surface Water Drainage and Flood Risk Management

Surface water has not been considered as an inhibiting factor to development within the town. New governmental planning guidelines on Flood Risk Management¹ recommend that new developments in urban areas employ sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) as an alternative measures to the disposal of surface water to watercourses. Options include consideration of permeable paving with gaps to allow flow of water, storage (attenuation) of surface water within developments to allow for the gradual

¹ *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (DoEHLG 2008)*

release of water after heavy periods of rain and increasing use of detention basins designed as part of landscaped treatments within developments.

In extreme weather conditions the town is at risk of flooding from the Ilen River and the Caol Stream. A number of relevant studies have been commissioned by Cork County Council and Skibbereen Town Council. These include the:

- 1984, Road Traffic and Flooding Study.
- 1986, Road Traffic and Flooding Study – Review of Flooding Study.
- 1997, Skibbereen Road and Flood Relief – Environmental Impact Study.
- 2002, Skibbereen Urban Study.
- 2005, Assolas Stream Flood Study.

Remedial works in the form of river realignment works downstream of Kennedy Bridge have significantly improved the situation by reducing the frequency of flooding. Further alleviation measures are contained in the Skibbereen Urban Study 2002 which also contains specific proposals to offset any increase in flood water level caused by the potential development of the Marsh area for community and recreation purposes.

Any consideration of new land use opportunities within the urban area must have regard to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities regarding '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*² (*flooding guidelines*). In terms of preparing objectives for zoning land in the development plan process, the *flooding guidelines* recommend a preferential and precautionary tiered strategy of flood management through; avoidance of flood hazard areas; using/substituting less vulnerable landuses; and finally mitigation and management of potential risks as a last resort. The *flooding guidelines* do suggest employing flood zone analysis (sequential testing) and a 'justification test' as a key tool in flood risk management which may identify development possibilities in areas at lower risk of flooding through good spatial planning.

In terms of existing undeveloped zoned areas potentially at risk of flooding, the *flooding guidelines* suggest that zoning objectives should be reconsidered for any such lands where flood risk is assessed to be potentially significant and likely to increase in the future. Emphasis is placed on *inter-alia*; removing high risk/vulnerable uses, revisions to the landuse zoning area/objectives for such areas, preparing a detailed local area plan informed by more detailed flood risk assessment addressing development issues prior to development; specification of pre-requisite flood risk measures.

No detailed flood risk assessment/analysis has been undertaken as part of this Plan on the historic flood affected areas and thus the development strategy for this Plan will adopt a precautionary flood risk managed approach in accordance with the *flooding guidelines*.

The Heritage and Environmental Features Map (Section 2, Figure 2.8) identifies those lands in the town that act as a floodplain (inherited from the Skibbereen Town Development Plan 2004) and that area of land within the town which is subject to historical flooding and which has been sourced from the OPW National Flood Hazard Mapping. Having regard to the availability of undeveloped zoned land remaining within the town of Skibbereen and the potential to zone additional land in close proximity to services and facilities which is not identified as a floodplain, a precautionary approach will be taken and no development, save for recreational/sports use, shall be permitted on land identified as a floodplain. This approach is very much in line with that recommended in the 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Consultation Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities', 2008.

² DoEHLG, 2008 Draft Guidelines.

14.2.4 Electricity

The existing electricity supply is provided through a 38kv sub-station located approximately 2km north east of the town. Supply voltage at 10kv and 400/230v are available in and around Skibbereen town. As part of its national programme, the ESB are beginning to convert the existing 10 kV network to 20 kV, by refurbishment and the installation of new transformers.

Overhead cabling is present in large areas of the town including within the defined Architectural Conservation Area (historic core). Such cabling clutters the landscape and detracts from the quality of the built form. In recent developments, these supply cables have been placed underground and it will be a requirement that all future cables within the town centre are placed underground.

14.2.5 Telecommunications

The importance of the telecommunications sector to the local and regional economy of Skibbereen is recognised particularly in the promotion of the services employment sector. Intensive digitisation is seen as offering a competitive advantage in attracting economic development and inward investment. It also supports the interests of existing residents, industry, commercial and tourism needs. Under the Regional Broadband Programme a fibre duct route was deployed along the four main routes out of the town offering broadband to residents and businesses in the town. In addition there are also several providers in the West Cork area providing wireless broadband.



Figure 14.1 Fibre Duct Route

The importance of a high quality telecommunications service in Skibbereen is recognised in this Plan. The provision and location of some telecommunication installations which form part of the requirements for licensed, public mobile telephony, although essential to modern day requirements, can cause public concern with particular reference to health issues. The location of such infrastructure will be guided by the Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government in 1996. Only as a last resort and where other alternative sites have been comprehensively investigated and are deemed either unavailable or unsuitable should free-standing masts be located in a residential area or beside schools. If such a location should become necessary, sites already developed for utilities should be considered and masts and antennae should be designed and adapted for the specific location. The support structure should be kept to the minimum height consistent with effective operation and should be monopole (or poles) rather than a latticed tripod or square structure.

There are many telecommunications structures located in and around the town. The Council acknowledges the necessity for these services, particularly to accommodate a comfortable lifestyle and a successful economic environment. However, particularly within the telecommunications sector, there is an increasing public concern about the visual and other impacts of various infrastructural elements.

14.2.6 Waste Management Recycling and Reuse

In accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996, an approach to waste management should adhere to a "waste hierarchy". This hierarchy places the greatest emphasis on prevention and minimisation of waste production, followed by re-use, recycling, and recovery (including energy recovery), with disposal to landfill as the lowest preference. The waste hierarchy deals with all types of waste, from household, commercial, and agriculture to construction and demolition waste. It is through this hierarchy that the Waste Management Plan 2004 - 2009 for Cork County Council takes

cognisance of the need for an improved waste infrastructure to serve Skibbereen and the surrounding areas.

Skibbereen currently disposes of its waste to a landfill site in Derryconnell. The weekly refuse collection for the town is carried out by Cork County Council via an individual 'wheeled bin' system for each household or large containers for commercial operators. There are a number of bring centres throughout the town including one on the Cork Road. It is proposed to encourage the provision of additional bring centres in conjunction with large scale development within the town. A 'Recycling Centre' currently operates on lands adjoining the Fire Station on Marsh Road.

14.2.7 Litter Management

Litter consists of any substance, material or item deposited in, or disposed of, in, or within sight of, a public place in such a manner as to be detrimental to the amenity of the natural or built environment. A litter-free environment will improve the visual appearance of Skibbereen and will create a more pleasant public realm for both local residents and visitors alike.

14.2.8 Fire Service

A new fire station with two bays was recently constructed on the Marsh Road and is currently adequate effectively service the needs of the town.

14.3 OBJECTIVES

Strategic objective 3 of the 'Vision for Skibbereen' (detailed in section 3.2 of this Plan) specifically seeks to develop a "Positive Physical and Natural Environment". Six strategic objectives were listed to achieve this specific vision. These strategic objectives are now considered in a site specific context and provide detailed engineering infrastructure and utilities objectives over the Plan period and beyond.

It is an objective of the Council to:

ENGINEERING INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES OBJECTIVES

Objective WU1	Meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive through maintaining high status or good status of waters where they exist and to achieve good quality status in all other waters by 2015 and implement the Programme of Measures outlined in the Draft South Western River Basin Management Plan.
Objective WU2	Ensure an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of good quality water for domestic, commercial and industrial use.
Objective WU3	Conserve water supplies through the elimination of leakage in the interests of efficiency and sustainability and promote public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures.
Objective WU4	Ensure the completion of the new sewerage scheme in Skibbereen by 2009.
Objective WU5	Implement the recommendations of the 2002 Skibbereen Urban Study subject to the availability of funding.
Objective WU6	Co-ordinate with utility providers particularly in the early stages of major projects to limit the proliferation of unsightly lines, aerials and/or antennae and to limit continuous disruption to public roads from the alternate provision of infrastructure by different companies.

- Objective WU7 Continue to implement the objectives of the Town Litter Management Plan.
- Objective WU8 Implement the Cork County Waste Management Plan 2004 – 2009 in so far as it applies to Skibbereen and any future amendments/revisions.
- Objective WU9 Adopt a precautionary flood risk management approach including the continued implementation of flood remedial works and avoidance of flood risk areas for new developments.
- Objective WU10 Encourage the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SuDS) in brownfield locations and alternative water recovery including rainwater harvesting within new developments.

**ENGINEERING
INFRASTRUCTURE AND
UTILITIES POLICIES**

Policy WU1-1 Explanation:

The provision of a safe and reliable supply of water is a basic service that is provided throughout the Plan area. In the interest of the amenities of the population as a whole, it is vital that this water supply is protected from contamination.

14.4 POLICIES

The ten objectives identified above can only be achieved if effective employment, enterprise and economic development policies are put in place to guide and control future development. In this regard three policies have been identified and where necessary and relevant an explanation for the policy is provided.

Policy WU1 Protection of Water Resources

WU1-1 In order to maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of our waters, the Council shall promote the implementation of Water Quality Management Plans for ground, surface, and riverine waters in the plan area as part of the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive. Proposals for development shall be considered where it can clearly be demonstrated that the development meets the requirements of the European Water Framework Directive (European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003).

WU1-2 Development that would have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface water and groundwater quality and quantity and the Ilen River and its tributaries shall not be permitted. In areas of potable groundwater sources, or over vulnerable aquifer areas, development proposals shall only be considered if the applicant can clearly demonstrate that the proposed development will not pose a risk to the quality of the underlying groundwater.

Policy WU2 Waste Water Management

WU2-1 Proposals for development shall be considered in locations where the Council, in consultation with the appropriate authorities, consider that sewage disposal and treatment facilities, and surface water drainage of adequate capacity and design, are available, or can be provided in time, to serve the development

Policy WU3 Surface Water Management

WU3-1 Permitted storm water run-off from all new developments shall be limited and managed in an effective manner. The maximum permitted surface water outflow from any new development shall be restricted to that of a Greenfield site before any development took place unless otherwise agreed by the Water Services Section of the Council

WU3-2 Proposals for development within the town shall include plans to provide 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems' (SUDS) as part their development proposals.

Policy WU4 Surface Water and Flood Risk Management

WU4-1 Proposals for development, including the infilling of land, in floodplains shall not normally be permitted.

WU4-2 Development proposals within the defined flood risk area shall be subject to a 'justification test' and demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that;

- a) The proposal is within or adjoining the town centre; and
- b) Includes a sequential assessment demonstrating that there are no reasonable or available alternative development sites that meet the requirements of the development within an area at lower risk from flooding; and
- c) The land comprises significant previous development and/or underutilised lands within the urban envelope; and
- d) The development of the area is essential to facilitate regeneration or town centre expansion; and
- e) Environmental/hydrological assessment has been undertaken to identify the potential of flood risk as a result of development and that the development would not result in increased or new flood risk elsewhere and if possible will reduce the overall flood risk; and
- f) The proposal includes measures to minimise flood risk to people, property and the economy and the environment as far as reasonable possible; and
- g) Residual risk to the area and/or the development can be managed to an acceptable level by design, incorporated flood risk measures; and
- h) Complies with other policies and development control standards of this Plan.

WU4-3 Proposals within the defined flood risk area shall seek to exclude high vulnerability uses such as residential care homes, hospitals, emergency services, residential use, primary and strategic transport and utilities infrastructure.

Policy WU5 Public Utility Management and Provision

WU5-1 All future electricity cables, particularly in the urban environment and in places of public open space shall be provided underground.

WU5-2 Strategic energy corridors, identified or required for the provision of energy supplies shall be safeguarded from development.

WU5-3 Notwithstanding the Government's Guidelines on Telecommunications Antennae, in exercising a precautionary approach, no new masts shall be permitted within residential areas or the town centre or within 1km of such areas. However, the importance of a high quality telecommunications service, taking into account both national and regional considerations shall be considered in applying this policy.

Policy WU6 Waste Management

WU6-1 Bring-banks and recycling facilities shall be required and be included as part of the overall development of large developments subject to the provisions of the Cork County Waste Management Plan.

WU6-2 All large scale construction and demolition projects shall be required to submit Waste Management Plans.

Policy WU6-2 Explanation:

The classes of development for which these plans are required are set out in The Best Practice Guidance on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Waste published by the DoEHLG 2006.

15.0 SUSTAINABILITY

15.1 AIM

The principle of sustainability is now a fundamental consideration of planning policy as established in the Planning and Development Act 2000. The Act states that “a development plan shall set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area”. This Plan must therefore be drawn up with sustainability issues at its core, thus ensuring that environmental protection is an integral part of the planning and development process.

As part of this plan it is intended that all new development must address sustainability criteria and submit a sustainability statement with all large developments. The planning authority will have regard to the findings of the sustainability statement and will assess development with regard to their contribution to each of the areas set out in the sustainability indicators (see Part 4, Development Control Criteria).

15.2 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Planning and Development Act 2000 Section 10-(5) (a) states that the ‘development plan shall contain information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Plan’. In the wider context, the overall aim of the Act is to promote ‘proper planning and sustainable development’. An assessment of the policies, which seek to achieve this, can be achieved through the use of Sustainability Appraisal or Strategic Environmental Assessment.

An Environmental Assessment of a Development Plan is similar to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in that it attempts to influence proposed actions in order to minimise potential adverse environmental impacts. Unlike an EIA however, it is concerned with the implementation of an entire development plan, rather than an individual project. The assessment is carried out to fulfill the Council’s obligations under the Planning and Development Act 2000. An Environmental Assessment is a method whereby a systematic process is engaged in to help ensure that the full scope of environmental considerations is dealt with in the Plan and to influence proposed actions in order to minimise adverse environmental effects. Part 5 of this Plan details the Strategic Environmental Assessment for this Plan.

15.3 SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES

In order to maintain a good quality of life, over future decades and for future generations, it is essential that principles of sustainability are addressed, as decisions made in this development plan period will have a long term impact on the town of Skibbereen and the quality of life of its inhabitants.

There are generally three aspects to the concept of sustainable development:

- An economically sustainable system must be able to produce goods and services on a continuing basis;
- An environmentally sustainable system must maintain a stable resource base avoiding over-exploitation of renewable resource systems and depleting non-renewable resources. This includes maintenance of biodiversity, atmospheric stability, and other ecosystem functions not ordinarily classed as economic resources.
- A socially sustainable system must achieve distributional equity, adequate provision of social services including health and education.

15.3.1 An Economically Sustainable System

Having regard to the function and purpose of Skibbereen as a local service provider and a county town serving a large rural hinterland, it is considered that there are three overall objectives to achieving an economically sustainable system.

Encouraging Local Economic Buoyancy

New living and working arrangements and flexibility in the way we live and work such as working from home (e-town concept), working locally and internet grocery shopping (e-tailing) are becoming more commonplace due to the advancement of communication technologies and can reduce car trip generation. This type of working has benefits for sustainable living as it encourages mixing of uses and reduces unnecessary trips while also helping to ensure local economic buoyancy. Opportunity will be given within the land use planning system to accommodate developments, which might contribute to more sustainable urban systems, such as 'live-work' units and an e-town development concept. Furthermore an economic growth centre has been identified within the town to facilitate further enterprise and industrial development within the town.

Encouraging Indigenous Business

Whilst inward investment is a very important element of the national economy, local business growth is particularly important to an economy such as Skibbereen and in facilitating the long-term economic sustainability and stability of the town. Local business growth ensures self sufficiency and self sufficiency is critical in periods of international economic instability. Local business also means locally produced goods and services which contribute towards a reduction in the typical travel patterns for goods and services. The provision of local industries and crafts can encourage improved local identity and encourage locally provided jobs. They also add to the vitality of the community and sense of place.

Integration of Land Use and Transportation

Integrating land use and transportation in an effective and efficient manner ensures the free flow and distribution of traffic and a reduction in potential traffic congestion in the town. Clustering business and employment uses on key transport routes encourages commercial synergy and business efficiencies whilst the careful distribution of local neighbourhood centres around the periphery of the town ensures all residents can walk to secure local services.

15.3.2 An Environmentally Sustainable System

Natural resources and biodiversity are common concerns relating to environmental sustainability. However consideration of waste management and renewable energy needs to be further considered under this sustainable system.

Protection of Natural Resources

Balancing our natural resources and facilitating population growth and human development must be considered in a sustainable manner so that there is always an equal balance or harmony between the environment and humans. Our natural resources include land, water consumption and the use of depletable materials such as fossil fuels, which are non-renewable. Fossil fuels are used in transport and general energy consumption in heating, lighting, businesses and agriculture. Land is also a depletable resource as in many cases it can mean the loss of habitats, flora and fauna and contribute to the depletion of agricultural and recreational land. Water is also a resource where over consumption can lead to threats to habitats, biodiversity and the natural water table. This Plan has had regard to the protection of natural resources within Skibbereen and in particular has sought to protect the natural floodplain of the

Ilen River; has identified sensitive land banks such as elevated sites; has promoted development in a compact form thereby encouraging development from the town centre out and introducing the phasing of development land to avoid leap frogging; and has maintained existing recreational land zoning and has provided for additional recreational uses on the southern side of the town.

Protection of Natural Ecosystems

Bio-diversity is an all encompassing name for plants and animals which are particularly important to protect because they contribute to the harmony or balance of nature and add to the quality of life. Plants (flora) contribute to carbon balance that is the ability of plants to soak up Co2 and many other pollutants, whilst animals (fauna) are part of the inter-linked eco-system that results in the codependency of flora and fauna. Provision of open space and semi-natural wild areas and the recognition of the riverine environment of the Ilen River all contribute to the protection of bio-diversity.

Waste Management

The massive amount of waste produced by humans must be significantly reduced or recycled to increase more sustainable living. Waste covers a wide range of areas including; construction, industry, agriculture and household refuse and waste. The provision of a Civic Amenity Facility on Marsh Road shall contribute to the aims of recycling reuse and recovery.

Energy Efficiency

This concept promotes the use of energy production through more sustainable means, where there is a less reliance on fossil fuels and greater use of wind, hydro, solar and tidal power; the promotion of energy efficient designs, including passive solar heating, passive cooling, use of shelter-belts, use of site layout to minimise wind exposure, and increased insulation (heat reduction measures), etc. All designs for new buildings should be founded on a sustainable ethos, manifest and measurable in the use of energy sources. In this regard, the use of innovative materials and architectural designs to improve the environmental performance and energy efficiency of buildings will be encouraged (see Part 4 Development Control Guidelines).

15.3.3 A Socially Sustainable System

Reduction in Social Inequality

It has been recognised that social sustainability is also a key element to the success of sustainable development and includes consideration of the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population. The plan promotes 'walkable communities' that is good access to local facilities on foot, thereby reducing the need to travel by car. This is particularly important where facilities are needed for those who do not drive such as the elderly, children and the otherwise socially excluded.

Quality of Built Space

Quality of design will be the main criteria through which development proposals in Skibbereen will be considered. The quality of built space improves the livability of urban areas and therefore the quality of life in the town. It can also further reduce the need to travel and can have an effect on reducing crime in urban areas.

Open Space Provision

Having access to good quality open space of different types can encourage urban living. Open space gives space for active recreation (sports activities) and also for more passive activities such as bird watching, visual amenity, walking and cycling. Good quality open space can enhance feelings of well-being and can provide a connection to nature.

Urban Renewal

Renewal and regeneration are important factors in the physical sustainability of urban areas. Urban regeneration and renewal are also critical principles in the reuse of existing land banks, thus reducing the infringement of urban areas into the countryside. It also enhances accessibility to existing facilities and services, helping to support and sustain existing developments.

15.4 OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The principle of densification therefore has been established in the form of the “compact town” model as set out in section 3.0. The overall plan strategy was devised with sustainable values at its core. The key principles behind the strategy are thus also key sustainability principles, namely;

- Consideration of traffic movements in the identification of land use zonings;
- Accessibility to mixed-use functions and services, provided through a comprehensive network of neighbourhood centres;
- Protection and enhancement of key landscape features including elevated scenic areas;
- A balanced distribution and mix of open spaces throughout the plan area, including the southern side of the town;
- Development of a compact town and promotion of urban renewal and regeneration within the town centre and a phased approach to residential development on the town fringes; and
- Promotion of heritage and culture, to enhance the attractiveness of the town.

15.5 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

The key policies and objectives in relation to sustainability have been integrated into each of the individual fourteen sections that comprise Part 3 of the overall document.

The Development Control Section (Part 4) outlines a number of sustainability indicators that shall be used by the Council in their assessment of planning applications so as to ensure that proposals conform with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

16.0 IMPLEMENTATION

16.1 AIM

The benefit of the Plan will only be achieved if its policies are translated into action. Implementation of the Plan will be achieved through:

- The Development control process
- Development partnerships with other agencies
- On going management of the Plan; and
- Regular monitoring and reviewing of the Plan

16.2 THE CHALLENGE

This plan proposes many policies and objective in an attempt to control and guide development in the town of Skibbereen in a coordinated and integrated manner, but also to make Skibbereen a more attractive place to live in and to enhance the quality of life. This Plan puts forward many ideas and appears to make many promises. Arising out of the public consultation event, there is much concern amongst the public that this document will be prepared and when adopted will 'sit on a shelf'.

Skibbereen has been identified as a county town and growth/development centre performing an important employment, service and social function for an extensive rural hinterland. In order to fulfil and perform this function Skibbereen will need all those extra support services this Plan is promoting including a vibrant town centre, additional community and recreational facilities, well designed housing estates, an effective transportation network and an attractive townscape. These additional services cannot be provided by financial services alone, but require the intervention of both the local authority and the community at large.

The benefits of the Plan will only be achieved if its policies and objectives are translated into action. Traditionally the responsibility of implementing a Plan rested solely with the Council through its development control and enforcement powers and when funding was available some objectives, such as street improvements or road improvements were implemented.

However, this Plan is not only a plan for the Council but it is also a Plan for the people of Skibbereen. The people of Skibbereen contributed to the contents of the Plan through the making of submissions and attendance at the public consultation event. Thus, some level of responsibility for implementing this Plan must rest with the community.

16.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

There are many proposals set out in this Plan over which the Council has no direct responsibility or control. The expansion of primary and post-primary schools, for example are essentially the responsibility for the Department of Education, whilst the provision of health services falls under the auspices of the Department of Health. Whilst the Council will use whatever endeavours it can to facilitate the provision of social community and transport infrastructure, it is not in all instances the direct provider of such services.

The Council is constrained in its implementation efforts by limited resources. This factor underlies the need to maximise both financial and human resources in consultation with government and non-government organisations and individuals. Furthermore, there is a

need to combine the statutory powers of the Council with proactive private and voluntary sector investment.

16.3.1 Community Participation

Public confidence in the development planning system relies heavily on the involvement of community participation and in transparency of the system itself. There is an overall lack of communication between public and regulatory bodies and the people of Skibbereen. Public and regulatory bodies are not fully informed of public opinion and the public are not adequately informed about the roles and actions of the regulatory bodies.

As a result, the local community do not feel actively involved in how the area is managed and developed and this can lead to public criticism. There is a need for regulatory bodies to collectively address a situation along with input from the public.

The Council engaged the community at the very initial stages in the development plan process with a community consultation event at the West Cork Hotel in April 2008. It is necessary to continue to promote community participation in all aspects of the plan-making process and will engage the community on matters relating to the review of the Development Plan.

The development of the Fair Filed site is an example of one project that will require a proactive approach from the Council in leading and co-ordinating private sector input. Others may be linked to tourist development initiatives, inward investment or job creation projects or environmental enhancement initiatives with individuals and groups.

16.3.2 Pre-Planning Advice

Skibbereen Town Council offers an advisory service to potential developers. The Town Architect and Town Engineer are available for consultation by appointment for any prospective development in the Town of Skibbereen. Advice is given on design and the ability of existing services to accommodate the proposed development. This advice is given subject to the stipulation of Section 247 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, where the carrying out of the consultation shall not prejudice the performance of the planning authority of any of its functions.

This service is available from the earliest stage of a project and intending developers are recommended to avail of the service and to contact the Town council for information and an appointment.

16.4 MONITORING OF THE PLAN

There is a legal duty conferred upon the Council to monitor and review this Plan over its life time. The Council must keep all matters, which affect development and the planning of development under regular review. Monitoring is an essential part of the overall development plan process.

There is a requirement therefore, to identify the extent to which the Plan is being implemented and the effectiveness of its policies and proposals, particularly in relation to sustainability. In addition, the assumptions and forecasts, which underpin the Plan, will require continued assessment to detect any fundamental changes which impact upon the policies within the Plan.

The Plan may need to be updated as a result of changing assumptions; forecasts or policy objectives and this process will be informed by the monitoring described above. Any review or update will be made when appropriate. In any case, the Council must undertake a full review of this Plan, within four years of adoption of the Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES

16.5 OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council to:

Objective IMP1	Address breaches of planning control where they occur
Objective IMP2	Work in partnership with public agencies and the private and voluntary sectors to secure the effective implementation of the Plan
Objective IMP3	Pursue partnerships with the private sector in order to achieve the implementation of key projects within the Plan
Objective IMP4	Continue to promote community participation in all aspects of the plan-making process and will engage the community on matters in relation to the review of the Development Plan.
Objective IMP5	Continue the weekly planning and design advisory service, which is available to intending developers in Skibbereen in the interest of fairness, transparency and certainty as to the Councils requirements for specific sites.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

16.6 POLICIES

Policy IMP1	Enforcement
IMP1-1	Enforcement of the planning codes and policies and objectives of the Development Plan are essential if confidence in the development plan process is to be sustained. The Council will use its extensive enforcement powers under the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended.
Policy IMP2	Related Plans and Strategies
IMP2-1	Plans and strategies prepared by other agencies, public bodies and organisations must ensure that their policies and objectives are consistent with those of the Skibbereen Development Plan.
Policy IMP3	Development Contributions
IMP3-1	In granting planning permission for new development, the Council may require development contributions in respect of public infrastructure and community facilities benefiting the development, as specified under the terms of Section 48 and 49 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 and in accordance with the adopted Development Contribution Scheme.

PART 4

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL STANDARDS



17.0 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

17.1 AIM AND PURPOSE

The purpose and aim of development management is to give guidance to developers regarding the criteria used by the planning authority in assessing planning applications. These guidelines take account of the policies and objectives already stated in previous sections of this plan and have regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Development management standards give a general guidance to applicants on the criteria used by the planning authority to assess planning applications and secondly, to give guidance on criteria that will be applied in assessing particular types of development. While it is not an exhaustive list of every type of development, it contains the more frequent type of planning applications received by the planning authority. Reference to other agencies and national guidelines is also made and these and their latest revisions will be taken into consideration.

The following general guidelines shall apply to all development in the town:

- Pre-application discussion is encouraged and advised as it can eliminate delays at future stages of the planning process, particularly in the case of large developments and the development of sites in sensitive areas. This advice and guidance will be given free of charge.
- Major considerations of the Planning Authority when assessing planning applications will be their impact on amenity, traffic safety, local infrastructure and the environment
- Retention and refurbishment of existing structures shall be favoured over demolition and new build, where practical and reasonable.
- The use, scale, siting and design of new developments should be sympathetic to their surroundings. Integration of proposals into the landscape is most desirable and the removal of hedgerows and other natural features should only be proposed, if otherwise unavoidable.
- The emphasis is on high quality - in materials, design and landscaping.
- Simplicity in materials, design and finishes should be incorporated.
- Modern and innovative high quality designs will be permitted, however they will be required to have traditional references sympathetic to the existing form in Skibbereen.

17.2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

17.2.1 Sustainability Statement

All residential developments of five houses or more or commercial/ industrial developments with a gross floor area in excess of 5000sqm shall be accompanied by a sustainability statement. In Ireland sustainability has been defined by the Comhar document "Principles for Sustainable Development" and the guiding principles are set out in the sustainability checklist below. Significant residential or commercial / industrial developments should be proofed for compliance with the principles of sustainable development. The following sustainability checklist should be used (where appropriate):

TRANSPORT.

1. Density to support public transport
2. Provision for public transport, cycling, pedestrians, and environmentally friendly transport.
3. Pedestrian Priority – Hard surface area designed to accommodate play, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport & private vehicles.
4. Good accessibility & pedestrian permeability.

ENERGY.

5. Minimise energy demand and minimise energy levels in building design, location and orientation
6. Use renewable materials: natural, ecological and locally produced.
7. Minimise waste and make provision for re-cycling in the collection of waste.

ECOLOGY.

8. Identify and integrate into design related features of the site such as trees, shrubs, watercourses, and topography.
9. Protect bio-diversity and use native species.
10. Develop a green framework linking urban areas and surrounding countryside.
11. Provide green areas where they will provide maximum enjoyment and form an integrated part of the building design.
12. Protect water quality and use water elements for spatial coherence.
13. Plan to reduce noise levels from cars and to reduce their use.
14. Identify and reduce likely sources of noise pollution.

LAND.

15. Promote efficient use of space for urban development.
16. Rebuild and renovate existing buildings.
17. Integrate existing buildings into new urban policies.
18. Apply urban design guidelines encouraging variety in layouts, mix of areas, views to landmarks and skylines, open spaces and historic associations.

SOCIAL QUALITY.

19. Provide a mix to cater for different household sizes and social integration.
20. Provide residential areas close to services, workplace, and schools.
21. Provide access for mobility impaired.
22. Design for privacy in and around dwellings

17.2.2 Land Use Zoning Matrix

The land use zoning matrix detailed in section 2 of the Plan is intended to provide guidance to potential developers. It is not intended to supplant the normal planning process. An indication that a proposal would be 'permitted in principle' from the matrix should in no way be taken to imply a granting of permission, or indeed that a planning application will necessarily be successful. Individual applications are a matter for the planning authority to decide and the final decision rests with them, taking into consideration the detailed merits and locational context of the development.

17.2.3 Existing Non-Conforming Uses

Planning applications in relation to non-conforming uses in established areas or zoning categories, such as those relating to alterations and extensions will be considered on their merits.

TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT STANDARDS

17.3 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT STANDARDS

17.3.1 General Guidelines

The potential impact of any development on the public road network is an important consideration of the Planning Authority when assessing a planning application for development. All applications for development involving access onto the public road network or the intensification of the use of an existing access will be assessed having regard to:

- Classification of the public road

- Speed limits which applies at the point of access.
- Width and carrying capacity of the road
- Nature, scale and layout of the development.
- Volume and nature of traffic likely to be generated by the development.
- Design of the access and the sight line visibility
- Number of access points in the vicinity.
- Level of parking required and provision of on-site parking.
- Lighting and advertising matter associated with the development.
- Footpath and public lighting requirements

17.3.2 Vehicle Parking Standards

The provision of parking both operational and non-operational is necessary to improve amenity by reducing local congestion and to ensure road safety by enabling vehicles and pedestrians to circulate freely. Adherence to the parking standards set out below is necessary to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the accommodation of vehicles associated with a development proposal.

The standards set out in Table 17.3.1 are minimum parking standards to be provided for specific developments. Areas specified refer to gross floor areas. The minimum car parking standards required may be relaxed/reduced in certain instances where public car parking is available in the vicinity of the development and which is adequate to serve both the development and to perform its original function or where on the particular planning merits of the case or in central urban areas, it would be unreasonable to require full car parking provision.

17.3.3 Cycle and Motorcycle Parking

Provision of one secure (loop type) cycle parking space for every 20 spaces car parking spaces for new office, retail, leisure, industrial and commercial uses is required. For educational establishments two cycle parking spaces per five students will be required. Provision of cycle parking in well lit, secure and undercover locations will be sought whenever possible. Provision for motorcycle parking will also be required, to encourage other modes of transport. In addition, motorcycles using standard car space is not an efficient use of land.

17.3.4 Access for People with Disabilities

Ten percent of the population has a disability and to date the built environment has not catered for this fact very well. It is a policy objective of the planning authority to ensure where possible that the built environment caters for the needs of people with disabilities. The Building Regulations (Part M - Access for the Disabled) sets out the needs of persons with disabilities and these have to be taken into consideration in the design of new and existing structures that allow public access, for example schools, libraries, shops etc. These needs relate, in particular, to access, internal circulation, parking, and sanitary facilities. Designated car parking spaces should be reserved for people with disabilities in accordance with need. In general, one designated space for every 25 spaces car parking spaces provided for new office, retail, leisure, industrial and commercial uses is required. Their location should be clearly signposted and bays marked. These spaces should be located closest to the point of entry to the building with no crossing of vehicular routes. The pedestrian route should be defined (e.g. textured surface), non slip and well lit. Footpaths at the junctions of roads in new housing developments should be dished to cater for disabled persons and incorporate tactile paving. The planning authority, on all Developments requiring public access, shall have regard to the National

Disability Authority guidelines: ‘Building for Everyone’ (2002) to ensure adequate universal access.

Table 17.3.1 Car Parking Standards

Landuse	Unit	Parking Spaces per Unit
Auditorium, Theatre, Cinema, Stadium	Seat	0.33
Church	Seat	0.5
Bank	100 Sq Meters gross floor area	8
Library	100 Sq Meters gross floor area	5
Offices	100 Sq Meters gross floor area	8
Shopping Centres, Retail Stores	100 Sq Meters gross floor area	6
Driving Ranges (golf) Archery Ranges	2.5M of Baseline	2
Golf or Pitch and Putt Courses	Per hole	4
Bowling Alley	Per lane	6
College Vocational Schools	Student Seat	0.5
Primary Schools	Per Class Room	1.5
Dwelling House	Dwelling	2 (incl communal spaces)
Flat/Apartment	Dwelling	2
Hospital	Per bed	1.5
Hotel, Motel, Motor Inn, B&B accommodation, Hostel etc.	Per bedroom	1
Manufacturing	100 Sq Meters gross floor area	4
Warehousing	100 Sq Meters gross floor area	2
Ballroom, Private Dance Clubs	9 Sq Meters dance floor area	5
Restaurant	9 Sq Meters dining floor area	4
Bars, Lounges, Function Rooms	7 Sq Meters net floor area	2
Nursing Home	Per bed	1
Surgeries	Consulting Room	4
Petrol Stations	100 Sq Meters gross floor area	6

RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS

17.4 RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS

It is the aim of the planning authority to ensure that each residential development is of high quality layout and design, with an emphasis on a mix of dwelling types and sizes, innovative layout, adequate open space provisions (for both passive and active amenity), landscape quality, clearly defined pedestrian links and traffic calming measures, through road layout and design, i.e. shorter streets, T-junctions, as opposed to ramps and special bumps. Residential developments shall be designed in accordance with the principles set out in the Sustainable Residential

Development in Urban Areas Guidelines and the Urban Design Manual A Best Practice Guide unless otherwise superseded by quantitative standards set out in this development management section.

17.4.1 General Design Issues

The following principle design criteria shall apply to housing developments in general:

- House design should promote originality, avoid uniformity, create a sense of place, and make use of materials, architectural form and colour to create a high standard of visual amenity. Colour may be used to create a sense of identity within the development, however sometimes the use of colour and other design elements may need to be restrained.
- Natural features or landmarks such as mature trees, views or vistas should help to enrich the layout and orientation of housing.
- The Planning Authority will require a variety of house types in developments with greater than 10 houses so as to ensure social mix and integration.
- The creation of “landmarks” within the estate, whether through retention of existing features, landscaping, archaeological or other features (i.e. sculpture, buildings with special architectural treatment), or by the introduction of new features, will be encouraged to improve legibility.
- The accessibility requirements of different user groups living within the development will be considered at the design stage, particularly those of the pedestrian.
- Pedestrian linkages and the provision of a safe environment for children will be highlighted.

17.4.2 Housing Layout and Design

Large residential areas in excess of 50 houses shall generally be broken into small functional and visual groups, which fulfill a social and aesthetic need for identity. These shall be designed to ensure safety for children, facilitate social interaction and introduce variety into the visual environment, avoiding monotonous, repetitious types of development. Each street of houses should attempt to create its own visual identity, with variations being achieved by site layout, building lines, house design, colour and hard and soft landscaping.

Protection and respect for the existing amenities and the character of the area should be regarded as a feature of good design. Too much uniformity can lead to monotony, therefore it is important to attain a sense of place or ‘legibility’ through varying the new physical forms within the design. Variety can be achieved in a number of ways – by incorporating natural and man-made landscape elements into the design and layout of future developments; by introducing focal points or landmarks at key locations; through the quality of the architecture and by providing different housing typologies (house types) or by mixing land uses at appropriate locations. This variety leads to a richer environmental quality. The form and materials used with regard to these elements should avoid excessive uniformity and have emphasis on visual quality. Too much variation on the other hand leads to discordant patterns of development and buildings within the same streets that have little relationship with each other.

It is important to achieve a balanced approach in the creation of an attractive and enduring residential environment. Layouts should also respect the need for access to the range of local services required by residents.

Home Zones

Home Zones will be encouraged in new residential developments, particularly as an alternative to cul-de-sac developments. A home zone is a residential street or area, which is designed so as to ensure that pedestrians, cyclists and residents have priority over the car. As car ownership increases, streets and residential roads become more dominated by moving vehicles. Roads are no longer as safe for children to play along and it has become increasingly difficult for people to adopt more environmentally friendly modes of transport, such as walking and cycling. Within home zones, the streets are designed through the appropriate use of materials, street furniture and a variation of road widths, to force motorists to drive with more care and at lower speeds. Ideally, the whole surface is level and paved in sets and blocks rather than tarmac to help distinguish the home zone from a normal road. In an effort to reduce speeds (while avoiding after-thoughts in future years such as speed ramps) drivers have to pick their way carefully around items of street furniture such as trees, planters, seating and even benches. On-street car parking is normally permitted, but is often arranged at the end of blocks or terraces, or provided as shared parking areas. The roads and streets then become places where children can play and people can interact.

Security and the Orientation of Buildings

Residential areas should be designed with personal security in mind, specifically areas used by the public such as open space, playgrounds, playing fields, streets and footpaths. Housing should overlook roads and footpaths and it will generally not be acceptable for houses to face away from public roads, including alleyways and pedestrian-only through routes, which will be required to be overlooked by houses and be well lit in order to avoid anti-social behaviour. Houses will be expected to orientate towards spaces and streets that are within the public domain. In keeping with this policy, houses located on corner sites should be designed in such a way as to be orientated towards both roads that they bound. This may require changes in the design to include such features as splayed corners with an entrance, increases in window openings, curved facades, etc. Such buildings are likely to perform an urban design role as a focal building within housing estates, therefore a stepping up in height may be acceptable. Housing designs shall consider orientation and sun-path so as to maximise amenity, daylight and the benefits of passive solar gain.

17.4.3 Development Impact Assessments

In cases of residential developments involving the construction of fifty or more houses the applicant shall submit a development impact assessment, to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on existing services and facilities in the town including existing and proposed roads, sewage and water infrastructure; schools; community facilities; recreational facilities; healthcare. The ability of such services and facilities to accommodate the proposed development shall be clearly demonstrated.

17.4.4 Large Scale Residential Development

While each planning application for residential developments shall be considered having regard to the proper planning and development of the area, the following are some general development guidelines in relation to housing estates.

Note: In cases of innovative designs and layouts, the standards detailed below may be relaxed.

Table 17.4.1 Residential Guidelines

Topic	Relevant Standard
Density	Housing densities should be appropriate to the location of the development and have regard to pattern and scale of adjoining development. The Planning Authority will have regard to the principles as outlined in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government document: - 'Sustainable residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities'(DOEHLG 2008) in considering the density and layout of housing estates.
Design	A high quality of architectural design and layout are the main criteria for achieving a high quality living environment and all housing developments will be assessed against the general good practice guidelines set out in this Plan. In the overall design and layout, 'people should come before traffic', with vehicle speed managed by arrangement of building and spaces and traffic calming measures, where appropriate, to provide a safe environment for pedestrian and cyclist. Regard should be had to the Urban Design Manual A Best Practice Guide published by the DoELHG in 2008.
Space between Dwellings	Minimum 3 metres for full length of dwelling equally divided between the two.
Minimum Front Garden Length	6 metres. Notwithstanding this, the importance of maintaining building lines and providing adequate car parking will also be taken into account. Variation in building lines will be permitted provided that there is overall coherence to the design.
Minimum Rear Garden Length	11 metres with single and two storey dwellings except at corner sites where rear garden areas should be at least 120 sq.metre. Where development consists of three or more storeys this distance will need to be increased to ensure adequate protection of amenity and to avoid potential overlooking.
Open Space	<p>A provision of between 12% - 18% of the total gross area of the site. A variety of types and sizes of open spaces should be provided to cater for active and passive recreational needs for children and adults of all ages in accordance with policy ENV2 of this Plan.</p> <p>The minimum unit of open space shall be 200sq. metres with any one side greater than 10m.</p> <p>Note: no account will be taken of incidental open space such as grass margins, left over areas, nor an area due to its nature (marshy) or topography (slope) is deemed unsuitable.</p> <p>The location, siting and design of the public open space will have regard to the following:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) be well designed of a high visual standard and shall be functional and accessible to all b) provide for the retention of existing natural features c) include proposals for drainage and landscaping of the public open space d) Houses shall not be permitted to back onto open spaces. e) Provide high levels of natural surveillance and overlooking by as many houses as possible. f) Be provided with a boundary fence/wall where open space is adjacent to a main access road. <p>Where the scale or nature of the development does not allow sufficient spaces for the minimum public open space requirements, the planning authority will seek financial contribution in lieu of all or part of the required open space towards the provision or improvement of open space and sport facilities in an accessible location a reasonable distance from the site.</p>
Boundary Fences/Walls	<p>Rear/Side</p> <p>Between 1.8 and 2.0 metres in height and extending for 3 metres from the rear elevation of the dwelling on the side boundary.</p> <p>These shall be in keeping with the overall design of the estate and generally be of solid block and capped and plastered on their public side adjacent to public open space or public highway.</p>
Parking	As per parking schedule detailed in Table 17.3.1
Trees, Hedgerows and Landscaping	<p>All housing applications will be required to include landscaping plans. There is a general presumption in favour of retaining existing trees, hedgerows and landscape features to form the focus of a housing estate development. Particular attention should be paid in the housing layout, positioning of underground services and roadways to avoid the removal of these natural features. If some trees and hedgerows have to be removed, planning permission will be conditional on replanting of native trees and hedgerows with a particular emphasis on broadleaf species. All trees, hedgerow and landscape features to be retained shall be identified and appropriately protected with suitably secure fencing prior to commencement of development, details of which shall be agreed with the planning authority.</p> <p>There will be presumption against developments which involve the largescale removal of sound mature tree and hedgerow species whether they are listed for preservation in this Plan or not.</p>
Sustainability Statement	A Sustainability Statement is required for all residential development of 5 or more dwellings (See Section 17.2.1)
Biodiversity	Due recognition shall be given to protected species under the Wildlife Act 2000 and where possible all efforts will be made to ensure that development will have minimal impact on the natural environment.

Archaeology	Developers will be required to carry out archaeological monitoring, archaeological assessments and provide buffer areas around archaeological features in accordance with guidance in Section 17.7.2 of the Development Management Guidelines.	
Recycling	Provision shall be made for 'bring centres' in large scale developments, except in exceptional circumstances and shall be provided for in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Section. The design of all dwellings shall take account of the requirement for segregated collections of dry recyclable good and organic wastes.	
Sanitary Services	Provision shall be in accordance with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's Publication ' <i>Recommendation for Site Development Works for Housing Areas</i> ' (1998). Each house shall have individual sewer connections to the main sewer. Adequate provision for the disposal of surface water separate from the foul sewerage system is required.	
Roads, Footpaths and Lighting	Construction	Road and footpath design and construction shall be in accordance with DoEHLG ' <i>Recommendation for Site Development Works for Housing Areas</i> ' (1998). The planning authority generally expects to see all new roads in residential development designated as 20mph zones, to reduce speeds and accident rates in accordance with DoEHLG, Department of Transport and Dublin Transportation Office ' <i>Traffic Management Guidelines</i> ' (2003).
	Lighting	Provision in accordance with ESB's publication ' <i>Public lighting in Residential Estates</i> '.
Road Layout and Design	Major Access Road	Main link within housing areas serving 100-300 residential units. Speeds should be physically constrained by the road layout between 20mph and 30mph.
	Minor Access Roads	Generally serve small groups of house, up to 50 dwellings. Speeds physically constrained by road layout to 20mph. Some of these will have a shared surface for vehicles and other road users. The use of horizontal alignment constraints backed up by good urban design to keep speeds low. The careful positioning of buildings, landscaping and the use of different materials can help to reinforce the need to reduce speed and reduce the dominance of motor vehicles. Source: DoEHLG, Department of Transport and Dublin Transportation Office ' <i>Traffic Management Guidelines</i> ' (May 2003).
Transport Assessment	A Transport Assessment is required for all major residential development in accordance with the guidance set out in Policy INF16.	
Naming of Development	Housing developments and roads therein shall be suitably identified by nameplates erected in suitable positions in line with housing completions. The names of the estate and roadways shall be provided in Irish or shall relate to local Irish townlands, placenames or features.	

17.4.5 Infill Development

These guidelines related to the provision of residential developments within existing residential or mixed-use developments. The planning authority will give favourable consideration to a development where it eliminates a derelict structure or vacant site. Drawings submitted (elevations and site layout) for infill developments should be up to date and show proposed developments related to adjoining developments. Contiguous elevations may also be required of rear elevations where appropriate. The development management standards set out for new residential developments may be relaxed in the case of infill developments.

A potential developer of an infill site should consider the following aspects;

- Design of dwelling house and materials used should be compatible with existing properties in the area.
- The height of building should be similar to adjoining properties and the ridge height and fascia levels should match adjoining property.
- Overlooking adjoining property should be minimal.
- Boundary treatment should ensure an effective screen between proposed and existing development.
- Private open space should be provided to allow for bin and fuel storage as well as an area for clothes drying.
- Car parking provision in accordance with standards outlined in Table 17.3.1 or in cases where this is not possible a contribution to the Local authority toward the provision of alternative car parking.

17.4.6 House Extensions

It should be noted that the Local Government (Planning & Development) Regulations 2000 as amended now exempt from planning permission, extensions up to 40sq.m. in area to the rear of houses, subject to certain restrictions.

In assessing an application for a house extension, the planning authority will have regard to the following:

- Existing site density.
- Remaining private open space.
- Size of extension – the size of extension shall have regard to the size of the existing dwelling.
- Design- the design of the extension will be required to respect and integrate with existing dwelling in terms of materials used, finished, windows, proportions etc. Flat roof extensions visible from the front will not normally be permitted.
- Impact on adjoining residences.
- Effect on front building line – extensions will not generally be allowed to break the existing front building line. However a porch extension which does not significantly break the front building line will normally be permitted. In terrace and semi-detached situations, extensions which significantly protrude beyond the front building line and/or along the full front of the house will not be permitted, and
- Ability to provide adequate car parking within the cartilage of the dwelling.

17.4.7 Multiple Occupancy

In areas of multiple occupancy development there are a greater number of people. The planning authority is aware that this can adversely affect the amenities of the area – increased traffic generated coupled with car-parking requirements; lack of commitment to (public and private) open space; maintenance (particularly when residents may not be home owners); increased noise, nuisance and general disturbance. The subdivision of existing dwellings into apartments/flats will not generally be permitted within residential estates designed and developed for single family occupancy.

Planning applications for the development of apartments are subject to the guidelines and standards set out in Table 17.4 above where relevant and applicable. It is the policy of the Council to implement the requirements of the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for Apartments, 2006 and the Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities as issued by the DOEHLG 2007, in respect of all apartments and housing units erected in mixed use or dedicated apartment complexes. Such requirements will include:

- Apartment/Housing design
- Minimum apartment internal design standards
- Provision of community facilities, open space and balconies
- Access for people with disabilities

17.5 COMMERCIAL RETAIL AND NON RESIDENTIAL USE STANDARDS

17.5.1 Large Scale Retail Development

All large scale retail developments, or mixed use developments with a large retail component will require a Retail Impact Assessment. A large scale retail planning application is considered to be any proposal with in excess of 400sqm of net comparison retail floorspace and 300sqm of net convenience floorspace. Where

COMMERCIAL RETAIL AND NON RESIDENTIAL USE STANDARDS

both convenience and comparison retail use is proposed a retail impact assessment will be required for those developments in excess of 500sqm net floor area. The criteria to be considered in the assessment of significant applications will include:

- Testing the proposal against the sequential approach and demonstration that other design options have been considered;
- The impact on the town centre, including cumulative impact;
- Demonstration that there is demonstrable need for the development;
- The relationship of the application to the position of Skibbereen in the county retail hierarchy;
- Its contribution to town centre improvement;
- Its contribution to site and/or area regeneration;
- The quality of access by all modes of transport including by foot and bicycle;
- Its role in improving the competitiveness of the town and county;
- Its role in sustaining the community of Skibbereen and the wider hinterland;
- The extent to which it is relevant to consider the imposition of restrictions on the range of goods permitted for sale; and
- Any other development plan policy or objective.

17.5.2 Retail Warehouses

Retail warehouses are generally large scale single retail stores catering for the car-borne customer and specialising in non food products such as furniture, carpets, tiles, DIY, electrical goods etc and other uses such as car sale/showrooms. A retail park generally comprises a number of such warehouses. The emergence of retail warehouses is as a result of the inability of town centre locations to cater for these type of developments in terms of size, servicing requirements, accessibility and goods sold.

The Planning Authority will pay particular attention to the following when considering an application for a retail warehouse:

- Type of goods sold - in the event of a grant of planning permission, a condition may be imposed restricting the type of goods sold.
- Size of Building - the size of the premises may be restricted as may the sub-division into smaller units.
- Design of building - due to their scale and size they can have a significant visual impact a high quality design will be required
- Landscaping - a comprehensive scheme submitted at application stage.
- Road network in the vicinity and traffic generation are important considerations.
- Parking standards in accordance with those set out in Table 17.3.1 will be required.
- In addition to general servicing requirements, due to the large area of hard surfacing associated with these developments, the planning authority will pay particular attention to surface water run-off.
- The accessibility of the proposed development to public transport.

17.5.3 Small Scale Retail Development

All proposed developments that are below the thresholds identified will be assessed on the basis of their compliance with the Retail Planning Guidelines and specifically the sequential approach, development plan objectives and zonings and the policies and proposals of the County Retail Strategy.

17.5.4 Small Scale Industrial Development

The Planning Authority is aware of the importance of small-scale industrial development to the area and has zoned land for such purposes. In assessing an application for development the planning authority will weigh the development against its impact on the environment. No maximum density or site coverage is specified in this Plan. Applications for industrial developments will be considered having regard to the following:

- Location relative to adjacent land uses - if the development constitutes a 'bad neighbour' it will not be permitted;
- Nature and scale of operations;
- Hours of operation – particularly where the proposed development is located in proximity to residential areas;
- Availability of adequate services to serve the development – water, sewerage, etc.;
- Proposals for and location of safe storage on site and disposal of waste;
- Traffic generation, access and road safety. Generally one vehicular access point will be permitted to serve the development. Adequate turning areas must be provided within the cartilage of the site unless satisfactory alternative arrangements are agreed with the planning authority;
- Potential impact on residential and other amenities of the area;
- Functional parking provision - car parking for staff/visitors, loading /unloading areas etc.) in accordance with planning authority's standards;
- Design of buildings/structures on site;
- On-site storage arrangements – external storage shall be adequately screened and its height shall be controlled by planning condition if necessary;
- Proposed landscaping/screening of the site – service and loading areas should be adequately screened;
- Advertising and lighting shall be carefully controlled. The use of grouped advertising signs will be encouraged in the existing industrial estate and the area identified for enterprise development. Advertising will only be permitted on site where the sign is small in scale and is not considered to detract from the surrounding environment.

17.5.5 Petrol Filling Stations

The role of petrol filling/service stations is changing – from being purely for the provision of fuel to the provision of a wide range of goods and services for example shops, restaurants, fuel depots etc, in fact some function as the sole retail outlet for a local area. These uses should be secondary to the use as a petrol filling station and they should not take from retail developments in the town centre, except those that reinforce the physical fabric of the town and give vitality and vibrancy to the town's core.

The following table details a number of guidelines and standards that should be considered when making an application.

Table 17.5.1 Petrol Filling Station Guidelines

Topic	Standard/ Guideline
Design	An integrated design dealing with buildings, structures, advertising matter, lighting, overall layout etc. of good architectural merit is an essential part of a planning application.
Access	Generally 2 access points with a minimum width of 7.3m and a maximum width of 9.1m with appropriate radius of curvature based on road design speed, Proposals for pairing stations may be considered more favourably i.e. on opposite sides of major roads or to avoid traffic turning right across a road.
Site Depth	Minimum 22m.
Boundary	The front boundary of the site shall be defined by a wall not exceeding 0.5m in height and the area between this and the road edge shall be levelled and laid so that surface water does not pond in the area or flow onto the public road. A footpath shall also be provided outside the boundary wall.
Location of Structures	The pump island shall not be located closer than 7m from the roadside boundary. No obstruction other than pump island shall be located with 15m of the road boundary. No structures whether permanent or temporary shall interfere with the sight lines of drivers or obstruct pedestrians
Lighting	All fixtures or fittings shall be provided in such a way so as not to cause a glare to road users or unduly detract from the visual amenities of the area.
Design / Advertising	Design of stations will be required to be of high standard with landscaping an essential part of any application. Minimal advertising will be permitted and shall generally be restricted to a main identifier sign structure, which shall not exceed 4.5m in height. Canopies should be appropriate to their setting in terms of height and design. The forecourt and adjacent footpath shall not be used for advertising whether for permanent or temporary structures.
Landscaping	A landscaping plan is required for all applications for petrol filling/service stations.
Parking	Parking requirements are set out in Table 17.3.1. the location of such parking will be such as to minimise pedestrian/vehicular conflict.
Surface Water	Surface water from the development shall be contained within the site and piped to the public system. No surface water will be permitted to pond within the forecourt, adjoining the boundary walls or along the entrance/exit lanes

17.5.6 Take-Away Premises

The development of a take-away premises needs planning permission whether it involves a change of use of an existing building or an entirely new building. Many of the planning considerations, which apply to a restaurant also apply to a take away premise. In addition, controls under other legislation must be adhered to.

Planning considerations include the impact of the development upon the amenities of the area. This includes noise pollution, litter, odour, general disturbance that can be related to opening times and traffic. They may be more acceptable in mixed-use locations such as town centres or identified neighbourhoods in certain instances. However, proximity to residential development and the consideration of opening

hours will be important planning considerations in assessing applications for their development.

Take-aways tend to create a litter problem and is difficult to control as it generally takes place outside the curtilage of the premises concerned. The provision of litter bins both inside and outside the premises are necessary. Noise and general nuisance are other problems often cited by residents in the vicinity of a take away premises – noise both from the equipment used (extractor fans, refrigeration units etc.) and from patrons. Where take-away premises are permitted, noise from patrons (and their cars) will be controlled by imposing strict closing times on the premises.

Facade design will be carefully controlled by the planning authority and in particular, the amount and type of advertising signage and lighting. The design shall respect the character of the street. Corporate logos may not be permitted or may be modified to respect neighbouring buildings.

17.5.7 Advertising /Advertising Signage

Advertising matter will be required to be sympathetic in scale, design, materials and colour and be sympathetic with their surroundings. They should not interfere with traffic safety and they should not obstruct traffic signs. The Council when considering applications (planning and licences) for advertising signs shall have regard to the provisions contained in the Department of Environment's "Traffic Signs Manual" 1996, and any subsequent national policies in regard to advertising. A licence is required where the sign is on or along a public road and planning permission is required where the sign is on private property. Under the 1997 Litter Pollution Act, the Local Authority has powers to remove any sign which is not exempted development or does not have permission under the Planning Acts.

The Council will advise potential applicants on acceptable design of advertisements prior to submitting applications. The following reflects the Council's approach, in general to advertising:

- Encourage the use of hand painted signs and to prohibit plastic box signs, which are internally illuminated.
- Limit the numbers of signs where it is considered they would lead to cluttered appearance at a junction or on a building.
- On buildings and structures of historic, artistic and architectural interest, only permit advertising which is in character with the building or structure.
- Provide an advertising area or advertising facility in central or focal areas in towns or villages and in lay-bys.
- Limit advertising in areas of special amenity, areas where views and prospects of scenic importance are listed, recommended maximum size of 1 square metre.
- Only permit roadside directional signs manufactured by NSAI certified manufacturers in accordance with Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's current standards.
- Restrict the use of advertising structures on public footpaths and on road margins where they conflict with pedestrian or traffic safety or with visual amenity.
- Large advertising hoardings (bill boards) will only be considered as a temporary structures where they screen a derelict site.
- Permit fingerpost signs or advance signs for tourist attractions where they do not conflict with traffic safety.

17.5.8 Shop Front

There has been a noticeable trend in shopfront improvement as shopowners realise that a well designed shopfront can contribute significantly to the attractiveness of the business. The planning authority is particularly anxious to encourage good shopfront design, maintaining traditional shopfronts where appropriate, controlling advertising (particularly projecting signs) and generally improving the appearance of retail premises.

A well designed shopfront forms an integral part of the overall building relating in scale, proportion and vertical alignment as well as to adjoining buildings also. Advertising is an integral (not dominant) part of the façade and should be so designed. To achieve this the planning authority will assess a planning application having regard to:-

- Materials: the use of natural materials such as timber, stone and plaster which compliment the architectural character of the building itself and reflect existing finishes in the streetscape will be favoured.
- Advertising Matter:- ground floor level advertising will be permitted while restricting advertising above this level. (Advertising aimed at the pedestrian rather than the passing motorist). Advertising should be in scale with and not dominate nor interfere with features of the shopfront. The numbers of projecting signs (particularly brand projecting signs) will be restricted. The use of traditional hand painted signs is preferable. The Planning Authority will not favour the use of plastic (PVC, perspex) and internally illuminated signage.
- Shutters: Application involving roller shutters unless of the open grille or demountable type painted to match the existing shopfront will not be permitted. The roller shutters should be located inside the shopfront wherever possible, in the interests of visual amenity.
- External lighting The external lighting shall be sympathetic in design and materials to the shopfront and the existing streetscape
- Corporate Image: Developments involving the use of corporate logos/advertising matter/shopfronts should be in accordance with good civic design and with existing streetscape.

COMMUNITY AND RECREATION STANDARDS

17.6 COMMUNITY AND RECREATION STANDARDS

17.6.1 Childcare Facilities

In line with the childcare Facilities – *Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001*, suitable sites for full day care facilities would include detached houses/sites or substantial semi-detached properties with space for off-street parking and / or suitable drop-off and collection points for customers and also space for outdoor play area. A lay by facility along the front of the site may be acceptable which facilitates drop-off and enables vehicles leaving and entering the site in forward gear. Other suitable areas include neighbourhood centres within residential area and premises / sites on primary traffic routes close to public transport nodes.

Applicants are advised to consult the general standards for childcare facilities as contained in the *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001*, prior to making an application. Applications for crèches/ playschools are advised to supply the following information as part of the planning application:-

- Nature of the facility – Full Day Care, Sessional, Drop In, After School Care.
- Details of proposed opening times.

- Proposed number and age range of children.
- Proposed number of staff.
- Internal Floor Area devoted for use.
- Details of external areas for play areas.
- Detailed landscaping / screening proposals.
- Car-parking arrangements.(Parking standards are set out in Table 17.3.1)

Where planning permission is granted, the Planning Authority may impose conditions on the above (apart from the number of staff). In addition, a temporary permission may be imposed, to enable the Planning Authority to assess the impact of the proposed development on the amenity of the area.

17.6.2 Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds

The provision of a tourist caravan park or camping ground to facilitate the expanding tourist industry in the area is a possibility. In assessing an application for a tourist caravan park the following matter will be assessed by the Planning Authority:

- Location of the development relative to existing services including retail and social facilities;
- Availability of services to cater for the development;
- Impact on existing residential amenities – overlooking, increased traffic and general disturbances will be taken into account;
- Capacity of road to cater for development;
- Type and size of development – caravans for all year round occupation will not be permitted.
- Landscaping - an application for a caravan park must be accompanied by a comprehensive landscaping plan both proposed and existing;
- Adherence to Bord Failte's publication entitled '*Model Standards for Caravan and Camping Parks*' will also be assessed.

It is advised to consult in advance of making a planning application for a tourist caravan park with the Environmental Health Officer, the Chief Fire Officer as well as the Planning Authority.

ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE STANDARDS

17.7 ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

17.7.1 Environmental Impact Statement

Environmental Impact statements (EIS's) are required with planning applications for certain proposals. In other cases they are required where certain thresholds are exceeded. In cases where thresholds are not exceeded the planning authority may still require an EIS. where the effect of the proposed development on the environment is likely to be significant. The *Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations* set out the range of topics that must be covered in an EIS.

The Planning Authority will pay particular attention to the cumulative impacts of a development – where individually a development may fall below the threshold level for requiring an EIS but cumulatively they exceed it a developer may be required to submit an EIS. Prior consultation is advised in cases where a planning application involves the preparation of an environmental impact assessment. EISs are available for public inspection and comment, and shall be taken into consideration when assessing the application.

17.7.2 Developments in Area of Archaeological Potential

The value of archaeological sites and monuments in the area is recognised by the Planning Authority. Applicants are advised to consult the Protected Structures and the Heritage and Environmental Features Map in order to ascertain whether their development is located in close proximity to an archaeological feature/potential or whether the building is a protected structure. Where a development site coincides with an area of archaeological potential the planning application will be referred to the Department of Arts, Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for its recommendations. Its views together with the views and concerns of other interested bodies will be taken into account when assessing the planning application.

In cases where it is deemed that archaeology would be affected by a development, the planning authority will require archaeological investigations to be carried out either prior to a decision on the planning application or prior to commencement of development on site. Developers are also advised of additional requirements under the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994*.

17.7.3 Protected Structures

Any works, which would materially affect the character of a protected structure, requires planning permission. In order to facilitate the owners/occupiers of protected structures the owner or occupier of protected structures the owner or occupier may seek a declaration from the Planning Authority as to the type of works, which the planning authority considers would not materially affect the character of the structure. It is advisable to have a pre-application discussion with the planning authority to discuss any proposals that you may have for a protected structure and to seek competent advice on the best practice for carrying out such works. In certain cases it may be appropriate to apply to Cork County Council for a Conservation Grant to carry out necessary works for the restoration and / or preservation of a protected structure.

17.7.4 Energy Efficiency

In order to ensure a more sustainable approach to development, the Council will adopt a range of sustainable building requirements so as to ensure energy efficiency, healthy and low environmental impact buildings and in this regard will:

Where site conditions permit the following principles are to be considered:

High insulation standards and draft proofing;

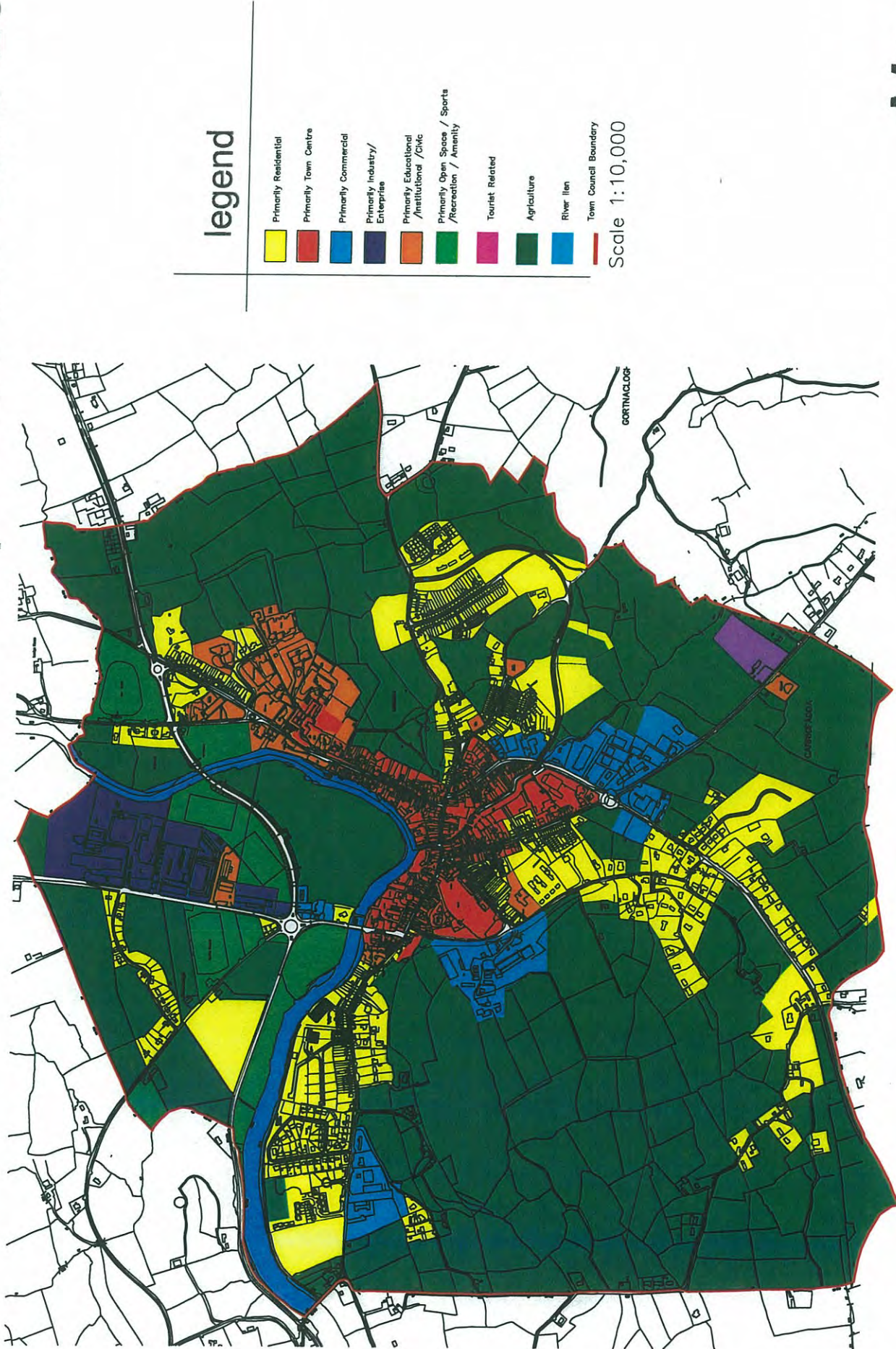
- The use of natural and recycled materials;
- That the houses collect their own water or adopt water conservation measures (grey water systems used for toilets – rainwater harnessed and directed into toilets for flushing);
- Solar water heating;
- Encourage buildings to conform to the European A-type standard rating in accordance with the Energy Performance of Building Directive (EPBD Directive 2002/91/EC). In essence, this requirement will ensure that the annual space and water heating energy requirements for all buildings must not exceed 70-90 kWh/m².
- Wherever possible buildings will be designed to ensure possible solar gains or adopt the principles of the passive house.
- Electricity generation from photovoltaics (which uses a semiconductor in order to convert sunlight to electricity) and/or ground source heating pumps to provide some of the water heating requirements;

- Harnessing the use of biogas, which is wood pellets used in a burning process;
- Provision of storm water attenuation;
- The adoption of ecological principles for the site design and landscaping (eco-landscaping; permeable paving, etc.).
- For most or all of these principles to be successfully applied – particularly for the more advanced ecological design principles (i.e., earth sheltered buildings), reasonably sized plots and space for sunlight are appropriate and a gentle southward-facing slope is ideal.
- The Greener Homes Scheme is now available and is administered by *Sustainable Energy Ireland*, providing assistance to homeowners intending to purchase a new renewable energy heating system. Also funding is available through the House of Tomorrow Projects to developers for the design and construction of clusters (minimum 10) of superior energy

APPENDIX 1 MAPPING



Skibbereen Town Development Plan 2009-2015

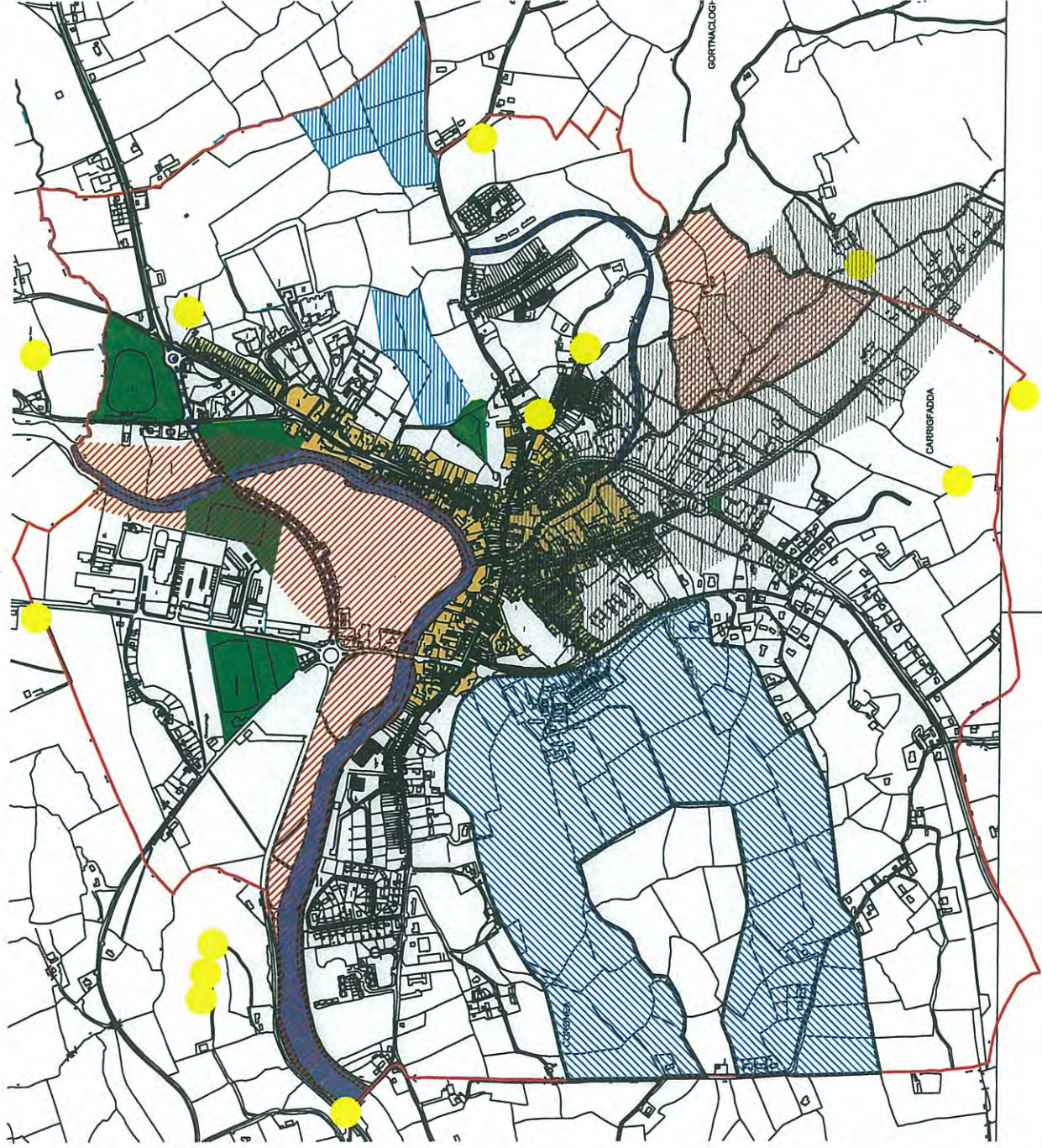


legend

- Primarily Residential
 - Primarily Town Centre
 - Primarily Commercial
 - Primarily Industry/Enterprise
 - Primarily Educational/Institutional/Civic
 - Primarily Open Space / Sports / Recreation / Amenity
 - Tourist Related
 - Agriculture
 - River / Ilen
 - Town Council Boundary
- Scale 1:10,000

Map 1 Existing Land Use Survey

Skibbereen Town Development Plan 2009-2015



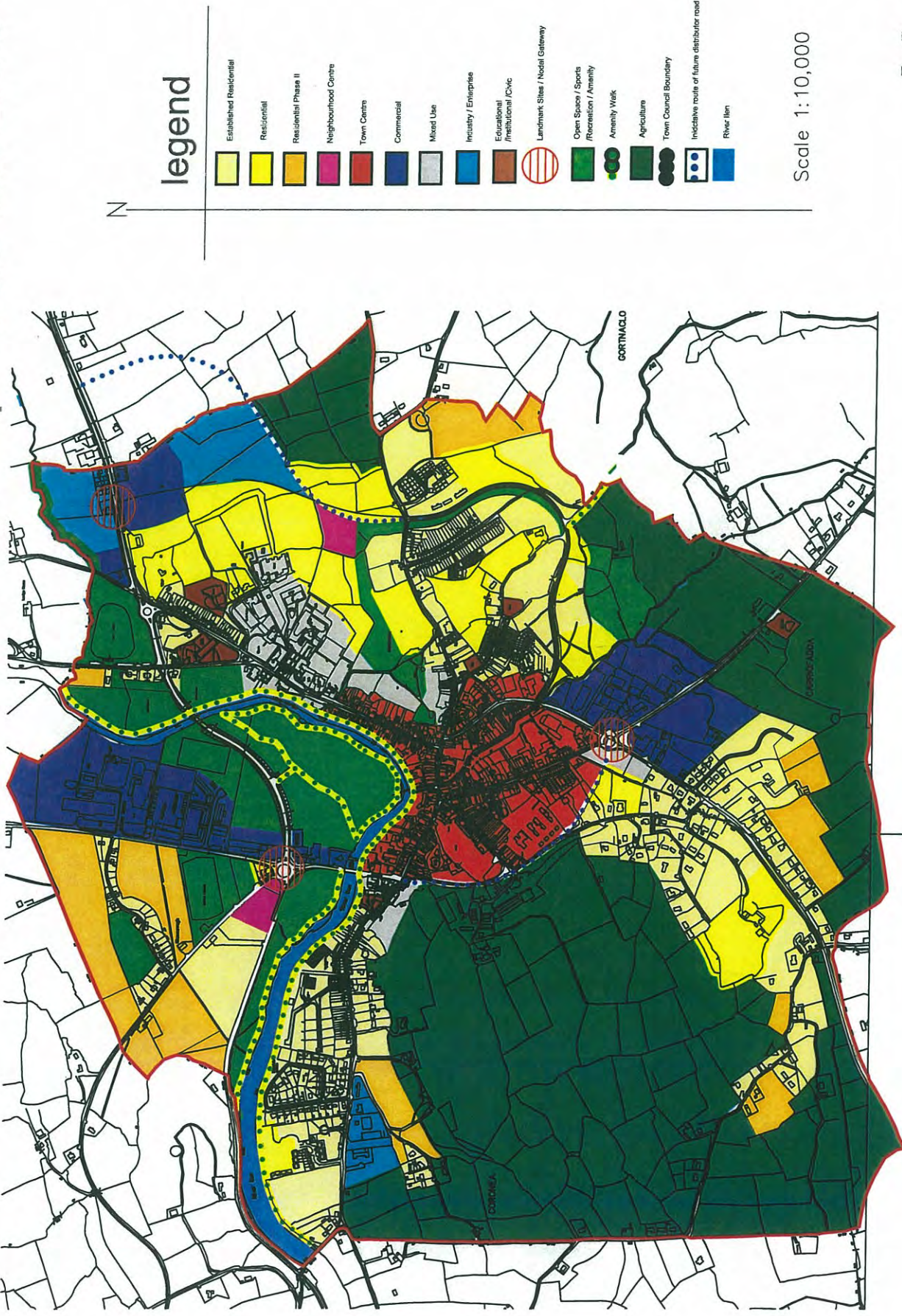
legend

- River Ilen
- Town Council Boundary
- Elevated Scenic Area
- Extent of Flood Plain (Inherited from Skibbereen Town Development Plan 2004)
- Architectural Conservation Area
- Existing Open Space/Playing Fields/ Recreation
- Archaeological Sites
- Areas Subject to Historical Flooding (OPW National Flood Hazard Mapping)

Scale 1:10,000

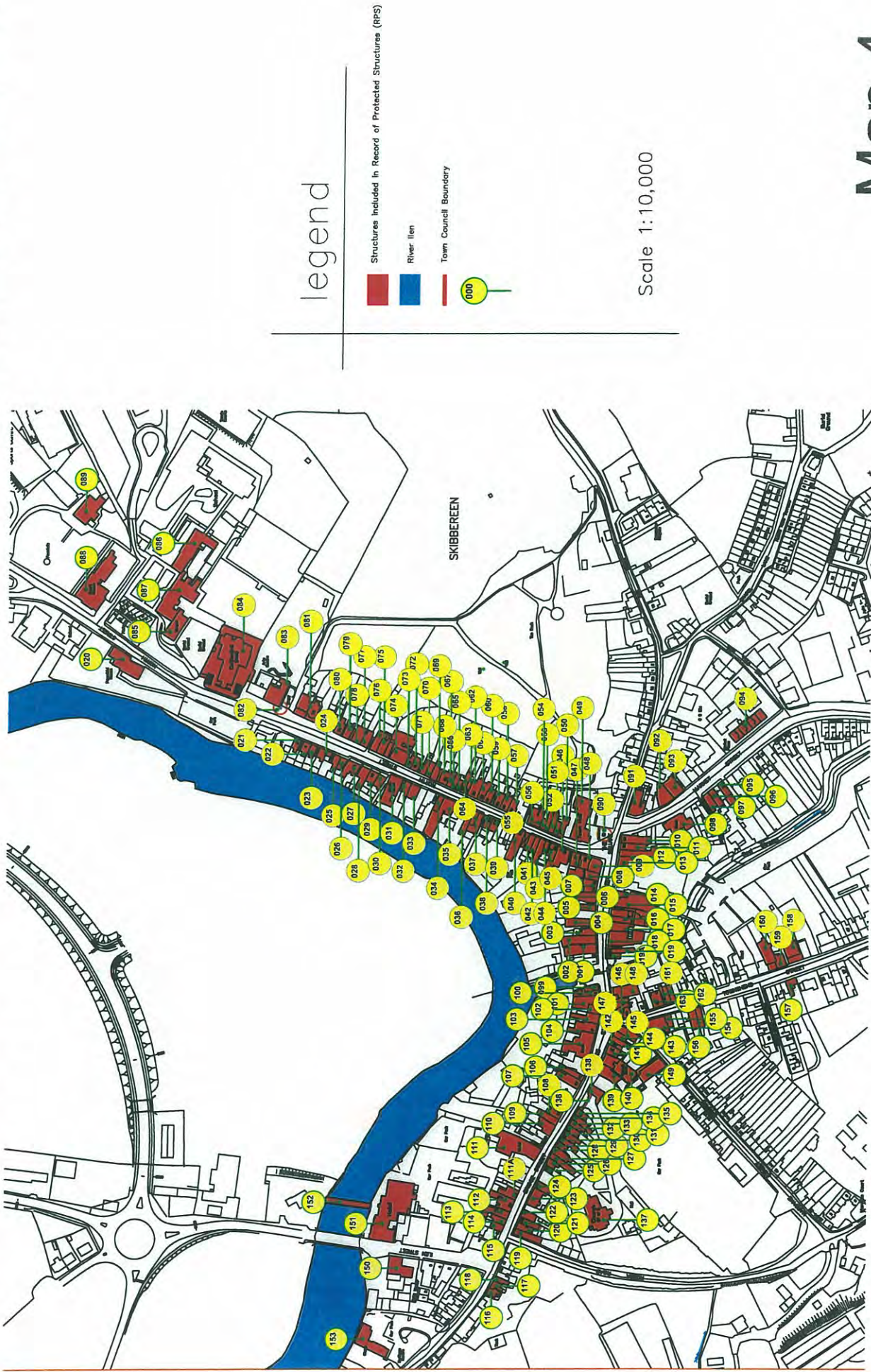
Map 2 Heritage & Environmental Features

Skibbereen Town Development Plan 2009-2015



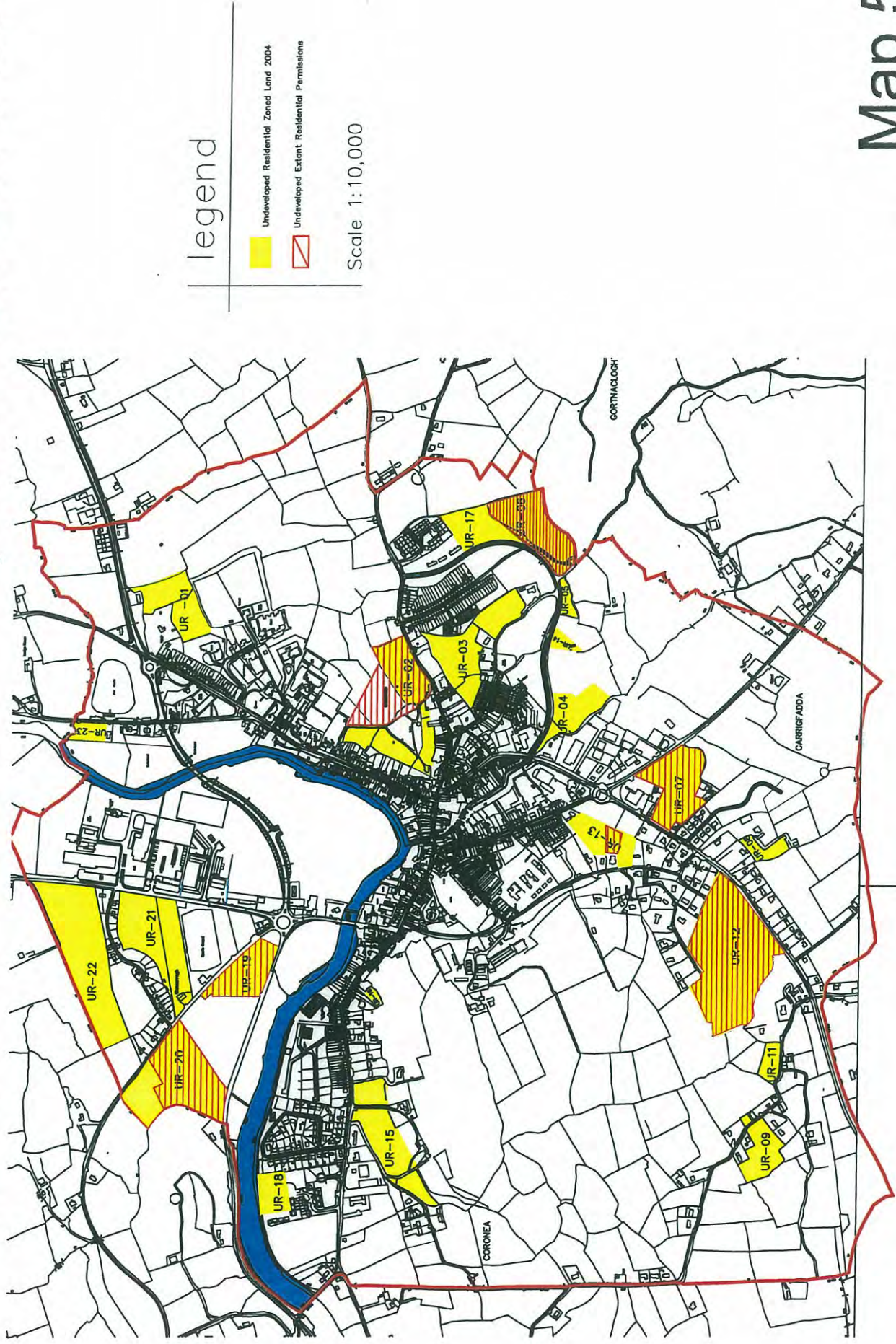
Map 3 Land Use Zoning Map

Skibbereen Town Development Plan 2009-2015



Map 4 Record of Protected Structures

Skibbereen Town Development Plan 2009-2015



APPENDIX 2

LIST OF RECORDED MONUMENTS



LIST OF RECORDED MONUMENTS**Archaeological sites within Skibbereen Town Boundary**

1	Souterrain possible Gortnaclohy	CO141 – 089
2	Graveyard (5 th – 6 th Century)	CO141 – 092
3	Church possible	CO141 – 142
4	Graveyard (5 th – 6 th Century)	CO141 – 093
5	Ringfort – rath	CO141 – 091
6	Ringfort – rath	CO141 – 127

Archaeological Sites outside Skibbereen Town Boundary

7	Souterrain	CO141 – 140
8	Country House	CO141 – 045001
9	Castle- unclarified	CO141 – 094
10	Standing Stone	CO141 – 154
11	Ritual site – holy well	CO141 – 085
12	Ringfort – rath –	CO141 – 086
13	Standing Stone –	CO141 – 087
14	Ringfort – rath	CO141 – 088
15	Redundant Record –	CO141 – 032
16	Ringfort	CO141 – 128
17	Potential Site-documentation	CO141 – 0045002 (not on Map 2)

APPENDIX 3

RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES



RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES**MAIN STREET**

001	3-4 Main Street	'Restaurant'
002	5 Main Street	'Sean Murray'
003	7 Main Street,	Violet House
004	9 Main Street	Cleary's Pharmacy
005	12 Main Street	Movieland
006	13 Main Street	'Hibernian Insurance'
007	DELETED	
008	16 Main Street	'Bank'
009	17 Main Street	'The Corner House'
010	18 Main Street	'C Connelly'
011	23 Main Street	Director's Cut
012	24 Main Street	'Pierce Hickey'
013	25 Main Street	'Field's coffee Shop'
014	28 Main Street,	'World Choice'
015	29-30 Main Street,	'O'Brien'
016	31 Main Street	Threads
017	32 Main Street	'Designs'
018	33-34 Main Street	Pharmacy
019	35 Main Street	'Cathal O'Donovan'
019A	36 Main Street	'West Cork Mobiles'

NORTH STREET

020	North Street	'The Palace'
021	3 North Street	
022	4 North Street	
023	5 North Street	
024	6 & 7 North Street	
025	8 North Street	
026	9 North Street	
027	10 North Street	
028	11 North Street	
029	12 North Street	
030	13 North Street	
031	North Street	'The Credit Union'
032	North Street	
033	North Street	
034	North Street	'Four Seasons
035	North Street	3 in 1 Restaurant
036	20 North Street	Embellish
037	21 & 22 North Street	
038		
038	23 North Street	
039	24 North Street	'Carey'
040	29 North Street	Discount World
041	30 North Street	Fiona's
042	31 North Street	Jacq & Hari
043	32 North Street	Teddy O'Brien
044	33 North Street	'Hall'
045	34-35 North Street	Gooseberry
046	36 North Street	'Levis & Sweetman'
047	37 North Street	Wish
048	38 North Street	'Barry Kirby'
049	North Street	'The Town Hall'
050	40 North Street	'Tots to Teens
051	41 North Street	'Eckocks'
052	42 North Street	'Folded Edges'
053	43 North Street	'Tig na Gaeheal'
054	44 North Street	'Ozies'
055	45 North Street	Rasa Sayang Restaurant
056	North Street	Rasa Sayang Restaurant
057	48 North Street	'Kalbos Bistro'
058	49 North Street	'Irish Nationwide'
059	50 North Street	Internet Cafe

060	51 North Street	'Funeral Home'
061	52 North Street	'The Chop Shop'
062	52-53 North Street	'Kearney's Well'
063	54 North Street	
064	55 North Street	
065	56 North Street	
066	57 North Street	
067	58 North Street	
068	59 North Street	
069	60 North Street	
070	61 North Street	
071	62 North Street	
072	63 North Street	
073	64 North Street	
074	North Street	'Irish Permanent'
075	North Street	
076	North Street	
077	67 North Street	
078	68 North Street	
079	69 North Street	
080	70 North Street	
081	North Street	(2 no buildings)
082	North Street	'Post Box'
083	North Street	'The West Cork Arts Centre)
084	North Street	'St Patrick's Cathedral'
085	North Street	'The Convent Chapel'
086	North Street	'Mercy Heights School'
087	North Street	'Mercy Convent'
088	North Street	'Court House'
089	North Street	'Norton House'

THE SQUARE

090	The Square	'1798 Statute'
-----	------------	----------------

MARKET STREET

091	Market Street	'Post Office'
092	Market Street	'Wolfe Solicitors'
093	Market Street	'Young Men's Society'
094	Market Street	'School'
095	8 Market Street	'Jer Buckley'
096	6 Market Street	
097	5 Market Street	'O'Donovan'
098	Market Street	'Bank of Ireland'

BRIDGE STREET

099	1 Bridge Street	'O'Leary'
100	2 Bridge Street,	'Abbey Furniture'
101	3 Bridge Street	'Thornhill Hardware'
102	4 Bridge Street	'OTT Clothing
103	5 Bridge Street	'T Daly'
104	6 Bridge Street	Kikis
105	Bridge Street	'AIB Bank'
106	12 Bridge Street	Vodafone Shop
107	13 Bridge Street	Health store
108	17 Bridge Street	'Jerry McCarthy'
109	17A Bridge Street	'Trendy Kids
110	18 Bridge Street	Suitables
111	Bridge Street	'Eldon Hotel'
111A	29 Bridge Street	'Post Box'
112	30 Bridge Street	'Hodnett'
113	31 Bridge Street	'Kings Palace'

116	32	Bridge Street	
114	33	Bridge Street	' M.A.Hayes'
115		Bridge Street	' Sheilas Hair Salon'
116		Bridge Street	'Tully's Bookmakers'
117		Bridge Street	'P Cronin'
118		Bridge Street	'Baby Hannahs'
119		Bridge Street	Baby Hannahs
120	43	Bridge Street	'Art Supplies'
121		Bridge Street	
122	45	Bridge Street	
123	46	Bridge Street	Over the Moon
124	47	Bridge Street	
125	48	Bridge Street	
126	49	Bridge Street	Dry Cleaners'
127	50	Bridge Street	Skaska
128	51	Bridge Street	'Clerke'
129	52	Bridge Street	
130	53	Bridge Street	'Splash & Giggle'
131	54	Bridge Street	'Francis Collins'
132	55	Bridge Street	
133	56	Bridge Street	
134	57	Bridge Street	'P.J.McCarthy'
135		Bridge Street	'Arch Church of Ireland'
136		Bridge Street	'Church of Ireland'
137	60	Bridge Street	'Fairfield House'
138	61&62	Bridge Street	' J D Kennelly Ltd'
139		Bridge Street	'Methodist Church'
140	64	Bridge Street	'Kathleen Collins'
141	65	Bridge Street	
142	66	Bridge Street	'Charles McCarthy'
143	67	Bridge Street	' Walsh Victuallers'
144	68	Bridge Street	'The Tzar'
145	69	Bridge Street	'Thornhill Brothers'
146	70	Townsend Street	'Thornhill Brothers'
147		Bridge Street	
148	72	Bridge Street	Red Onion Restaurant

MARDYKE STREET

149	Mardyke Street	'Masonic Hall'
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ILEN STREET

150	Ilen Street	'Roycrofts Cycles'
151	Ilen Street	'West Cork Hotel'
152	Ilen Street	'Railway Bridge'

UPPER BRIDGE STREET

153	Upper Bridge Street	'Heritage Centre'
-----	---------------------	-------------------

TOWNSEND STREET

154	Townsend Street	'FBD Insurance'
155	Townsend Street	'Mary Deasy'
156	Townsend Street	'Horse & Hound'
157	Townsend Street	'Two Storey House'
158	Townsend Street	'Two Storey house'
159	Townsend Street	'The Beauty Spot'
160	Townsend Street	'Two Storey House'
161	Townsend Street	'O'Neill'
162	Townsend Street	'Andy O'Sullivan'
163	Townsend Street	'Hackett's Bookmakers'

APPENDIX 4

CORK AUTHORITIES JOINT HOUSING STRATEGY



Joint Housing Strategy



**Cork Planning Authorities
2009**

**Cork Planning Authorities
Joint Housing Strategy**

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Joint Housing Strategy for the Cork Planning Authorities

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Housing Strategy has been developed by the eleven Planning Authorities in Cork: Cork County Council, Cork City Council, and the Town Councils of Clonakilty, Cobh, Fermoy, Kinsale, Macroom, Mallow, Midleton, Skibbereen and Youghal in order to address the existing and future housing needs of the area. It is a review of the previous Joint Housing Strategy produced in 2001 and, once adopted, will replace the previous Strategy.

1.2 The primary purpose of the Strategy is to ensure that the overall supply of housing is sufficient to meet the planned population of Cork. It is based on a shared vision which sees having a suitable place to live at an affordable price as a basic right. This strategy has been formulated in the context of a continuing reality that not everyone in Cork City and County can exercise this right and a substantial portion of our population:

cannot afford a house, or

live in housing unsuitable to their needs.

1.3 As such the aim of the strategy is to address these issues and:

'To help enable the people of Cork, now and in the future, to have a place to live, suited to their needs, at a price that they can afford'

1.4 Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 requires that all Planning Authorities prepare Housing Strategies and incorporate these into their development plans. Legislation provides for the preparation of a Housing Strategy jointly by two or more planning authorities in respect of the combined area of their development plans. In meeting the requirements of the Planning and Development Act, the Strategy addresses the following objectives:

- a) To ensure that the overall supply of housing is sufficient to meet the planned population of Cork.
- b) To ensure there is a mixture of house types and sizes to meet the needs of various households.
- c) To ensure that housing is available for people on different income levels.
- d) To provide for the need for both social and affordable housing.

1.5 The Strategy sets out measures to address the housing needs of the existing and future population of Cork to 2020.

How to use the strategy:

1.6 Sections one to five outline the main trends and issues affecting the provision of housing in Cork including an assessment of the likely housing need and supply in Cork between 2006 and 2020. Section 6 examines the requirements for social and affordable housing. Building on the analysis presented, Section 6 then sets out a series of policies and programmes to address the future housing needs of Cork. Section 7 looks at the requirements for implementation and monitoring of the strategy. Where appropriate, technical information and detailed calculations are contained in the main report with some additional supplementary information contained in the appendices.

How the strategy was developed:

1.7 This Strategy is a review of the Strategy developed in 2001. Circumstantial changes such as the increased significance of Part V and changing trends have resulted in some deviation from the approach followed in the last strategy where appropriate.

1.8 To facilitate analysis at sub county level, housing market areas were identified in the last strategy as set out in appendix 6 and figure 1 on page 6. These areas were established based on the criteria that they showed similar characteristics in terms of population change, house prices and distribution of social housing. Wherever possible, to allow for comparison and monitoring, the market areas share boundaries with those identified in the Strategic Plans.¹

1.9 As there is no evidence of any significant change to the proportional representation of these areas in terms of housing need, supply and income since 2001, analysis of these housing market areas continues to be appropriate. The areas are as follows:

- Metropolitan Cork (sub-divided into North, East and South),
- Ring Area,
- South Coast,
- North and West Rural, and
- Charleville / Mitchelstown.

1.10 There have been a number of changes since the last Housing Strategy that were taken into consideration. These include inter alia:

- The issue of a revised population target for 2020 for the South West region identified by the Government,
- Publication in 2007 of “Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities“, a new policy statement for housing which aims to build sustainable communities, ensure an effective delivery of housing programmes, and respond to housing needs in a way that improves choice and tailors support taking account of the householders position in the life cycle,
- Legislative changes introduced by an amendment to the Planning and Development Act in 2002 including an increase in the options available to developers to comply with Part V,
- Changing trends such as the increasing demand for smaller housing units,

¹Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001-2020 and North and West Cork Strategic Plan 2002- 2020

- Availability of data from a comprehensive Housing Land Availability Study for the County.

1.11 The Joint Housing Strategy is set within the context of a range of national, regional and local policies, plans, guidelines and legislation. From this four key principles were identified as follows:

Principle 1: To Provide for a Diverse Range of Housing Needs

Principle 2: To Promote Balanced Sustainable Communities

Principle 3: To Promote Sustainable Development of the Urban & Rural Environment

Principle 4: To Promote Environmental Sustainability and the Development of a High Quality Living Environment

1.12 Data has been compiled from published statistics and information provided by the local authorities for the purpose of this work.

1.13 Relevant consultation material has been drawn from four main sources:

- Response to two press advertisements placed on behalf of all the planning authorities involved in the Joint Housing Strategy Review:
 - Submissions were invited from interested parties prior to the preparation of the Draft Strategy,
 - Submissions were invited during the formal public consultation period following publication of the Draft Strategy.
- Relevant responses to invitations for submissions made by the County Council with regard to the review of its development plan,
- Relevant issues raised during a stakeholders workshop organised by the County Council with regard to the review of its development plan; and
- The County Council's Housing Land Availability Study that was prepared for the County in September 2006 (with a baseline date of 31st January 2006) in consultation with the Construction Industry Federation, and the City and Town Councils' Housing Land Availability Studies.

1.14 Following acknowledgement of existing strategic context, data analyses and consideration of issues raised by consultation process a number of policies and implementation programmes were identified.

2 Housing Strategy in Context

2.1 The Housing Strategy is set within the context of a range of other documents and plans that have particular relevance to housing provision, many of which have been published/reviewed since the adoption of the 2001 Strategy. Among the relevant documents, from national to local level, are the following:

- National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS)
- Atlantic Gateways Initiative
- National Development Plan 2007-2013
- Towards 2016 – Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015.
- Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs)
- Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001-2020
- North and West Cork Strategic Plan 2002-2020
- Cork County Development Plan 2003-2009
- Draft Cork County Development Plan 2007
- Cork City Development Plan 2004-2010
- The Integrated Strategy for the Economic, Social & Cultural Development of County Cork, 2002 – 2011
- City Strategy – ‘Imagine our future’ – Cork 2002 – 2012 Integrated Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development
- Town Council Plans
- Local Area Plans
- City and County Housing Action Plans 2004-2008
- Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002
- Circular AHS/4/06 – Guidelines on Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2002-2006: Implementation Issues.
- Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2008
- Housing Refugees: Good Practice in Housing Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities.
- Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities – Statement on Housing Policy 2007.
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities- Best Practice Guidelines 2007
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Consultation Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities, February 2008)
- Urban Design Manual, a Best Practice Guide. February 2008.
- Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2007
- Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005.
- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)
- Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1999.

2.2 These are briefly summarised in Appendix 1.

3 Housing Demand:

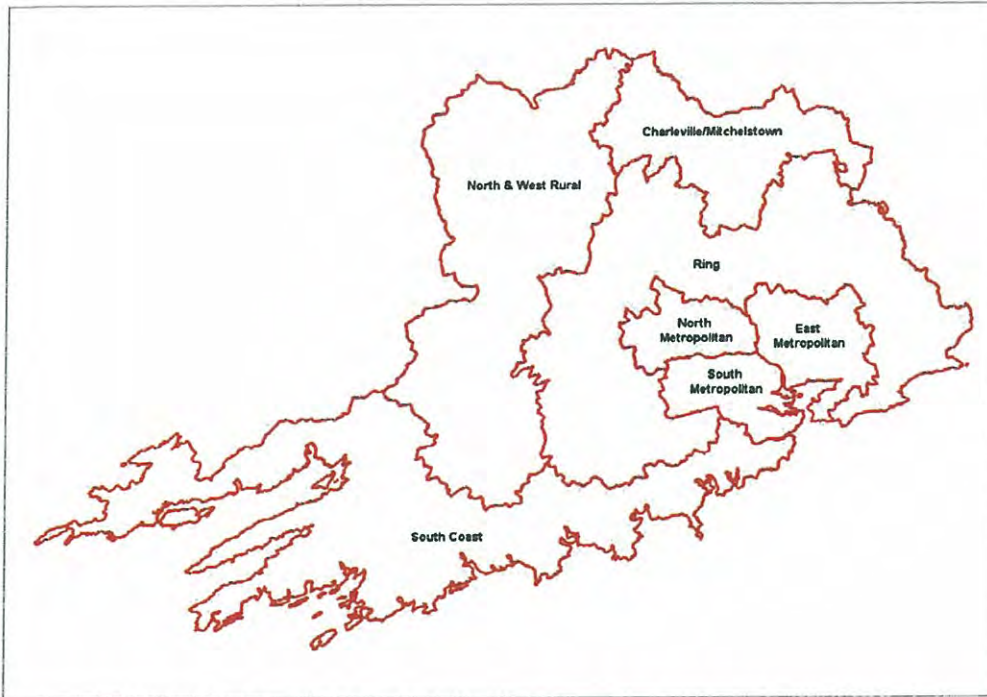
- 3.1 This section sets out the basic demographic assumptions with respect to future population, household and house building projections made in the Strategy. The figures for population and households are based on the target population figures for the Irish Regions issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) in February 2007².
- 3.2 In the case of the new targets, the impact of the implementation of Government policy in the form of the NSS was specifically factored into the forecasting process. By contrast, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) current regional projections excluded consideration of such policy implementation.
- 3.3 The demographic tables for the Strategy have attempted to pursue this methodology to the County and sub-county level. Within the CASP area the County and City Councils have appointed consultants to update the CASP plan first published in 2001 to provide an appropriate distribution of future population in line with the latest figures from the DoEHLG. Therefore, until that work is completed, the tables attached, provide a population distribution within the CASP area on a provisional basis only as an interim measure, until the CASP update project has reported.

Housing Market Areas

- 3.4 Demographic data in relation to seven Housing Market Sub Areas that together make up the City and County has been produced. These areas are:
 - Metropolitan Cork East
 - Metropolitan Cork North
 - Metropolitan Cork South
 - Ring
 - South Coast
 - Mitchelstown/ Charleville
 - North West Rural

² These target figures represent an update to the forecasts published in the NSS and the RPGs and have been prepared to take account of the 2006 Census preliminary results. They represent an interim position pending the full review of the regional population projections by the CSO in late 2007 or early 2008 but the DoEHLG are encouraging Regional and Local Authorities to take account of them in RPG's and Development Plans.

Figure 1: Housing Market Areas



3.5 The table below shows the population projections for 2002-2020 defined by Housing Market Area.

Table 1: Projected populations defined by Housing Market Area 2002 –2020

Housing Market Area	Year						Annual % Growth	
	2002	2006	2011	2013	2016	2020	2002-2006	2006-2020
Metropolitan East	40,242	48,167	58,598	63,377	72,560	86,905	4.60	4.31
Metropolitan North	76,847	77,210	86,630	90,712	97,986	108,599	0.12	2.47
Metropolitan South	140,266	147,164	157,745	162,187	166,913	173,428	1.21	1.18
Ring Area	80,648	92,017	96,398	98,209	102,494	108,501	3.35	1.18
South Coast	53,810	58,125	59,116	59,517	61,208	63,538	1.95	0.64
Mitchelstown /Charleville	21,358	22,551	23,803	24,323	25,099	26,173	1.37	1.07
North West Rural	34,658	36,061	37,782	38,493	39,635	41,210	1.00	0.96
County Cork (including City)	447,829	481,295	520,071	536,818	565,894	608,355	1.82	1.69

3.6 The table below shows the household projections for 2002-2020 defined by Housing Market Area.

Table 2: Projected Households defined by Housing Market Area 2006 –2020

Housing Market Area	Year					Annual % Growth 2006-2020
	2006	2011	2013	2016	2020	
Metropolitan East	16,390	21,230	23,545	27,990	35,585	5.69
Metropolitan North	27,156	32,442	34,833	39,070	45,864	3.81
Metropolitan South	51,314	58,564	61,744	65,980	72,417	2.48
Ring Area	31,368	34,989	36,552	39,610	44,423	2.52
South Coast	20,490	22,188	22,907	24,461	26,699	1.91
Mitchelstown /Charleville	8,085	9,086	9,521	10,201	11,185	2.35
North West Rural	12,431	13,867	14,487	15,489	16,934	2.23
County Cork (including City)	167,234	192,366	203,589	222,801	253,107	3.00

3.7 Table 3, below, sets out the distribution of new houses by housing market area for four future timelines. The number of new houses required is based on the number of new households projected from each strategic planning area plus an allowance to accommodate other factors including: frictional vacancies, second homes, net losses due to demolition and conversions, and an allowance for investment properties. Accordingly an allowance of 30% was used.

Table 3: Projected House Building defined by Housing Market Area 2002 –2020*

Housing Market Area	Time Period			
	2006 -2011	2011- 2013	2013- 2016	2016- 2020
Metropolitan East	6,292	3,155	5,924	9,581
Metropolitan North	6,871	3,254	5,652	8,544
Metropolitan South	9,425	4,278	5,652	8,079
Ring Area	4,707	2,177	4,121	5,968
South Coast	2,208	934	2,021	2,909
Mitchelstown /Charleville	1,302	565	885	1,279
North West Rural	1,867	806	1,302	1,878
County Cork (including City)	32,673	15,169	25,557	38,238

3.8 From Table 3, above, it can be concluded that in order to meet the housing requirements for 2020 approximately 7,900 units will have to be constructed per annum.

Housing Demand - key points:

- *From target population figures for the Irish Regions issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in February 2006 a target population of 608,355 in 2020 has been established for Cork, representing an increase of 127,060 over 2006 figures and an increase of 87,354 over RPG figures for 2020 published in 2004.*
- *It is expected that total new households in the County as a whole will increase by 85,873 between 2006 and 2020 and that total new houses built during this period will be 111,637.*
- *An estimated average of 7,900 new units will need to be constructed each year between 2006 and 2020.*

4 Housing Supply

- 4.1 This section of the Strategy considers housing supply and in doing so provides an analysis of house completions, type of house developed, house price trends and land availability.

House Completions

- 4.2 On average, since 1994 there has been a steady rise in construction rates in Cork. Figure 2 below shows the pattern of new house completions in County Cork (including Cork City and Town Council Areas) from 1994 – 2007. Housing completion rates in Cork peaked in 2006, with a total of 9,141 units being built in the County as a whole. The DoEHLG house completion figures for 2007 reveal that 8,686 new houses were built. These figures show that between the end of 2006 and the end of 2007 the house completion rate in the County had dropped by 4.98%.

Figure 2: New House Completions in Cork 1994 - 2007

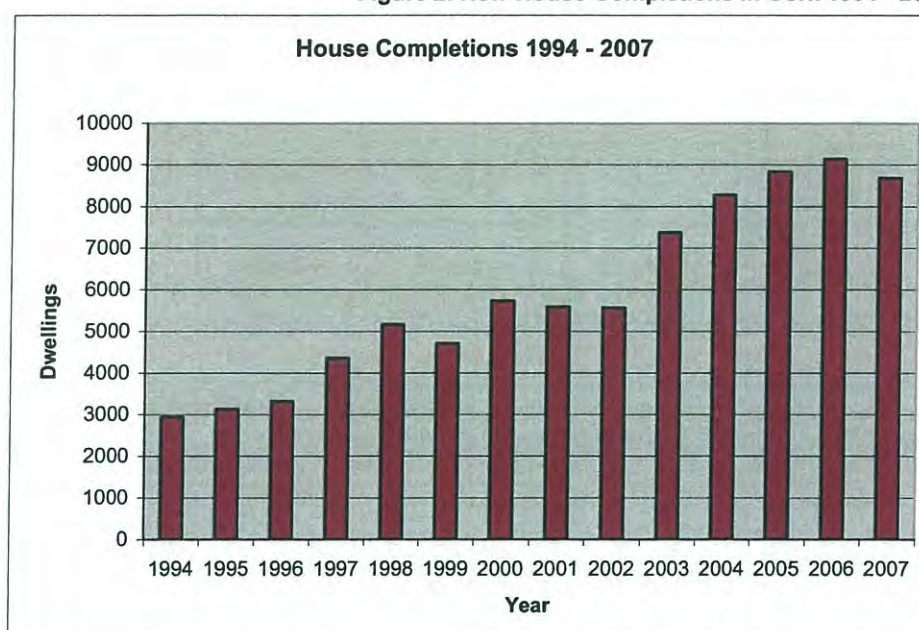


Figure 2: Includes Cork City and Town Council Areas from 1994 – 2007
SOURCE: Department for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government: Annual Housing Statistics Bulletins

- 4.3 The construction industry in Cork has responded well to the increase in house demand, in terms of increasing overall output. Cork's Planning Authorities have a responsibility to support housing output by ensuring that a sufficient amount of land is zoned in order to meet future housing demand.

House Types

- 4.4 In tandem with the current population trends, average household size is continuing to decline. The impact of population growth and social changes, such as more elderly people living alone and higher incidences of marital breakdown, means that household sizes are declining.
- 4.5 According to the 2006 census the average number of persons in private households for the Cork Area is 2.81 persons, in 2002 it was 2.94 persons. This trend indicates that more new dwellings will have to be supplied for the same amount of persons, irrespective of population and household formation increases during the coming decade. In line with falling household size and current European experience much of the additional demand of dwellings may be for smaller units rather than the traditional three bedroom semi-detached house.

4.6 All of these factors impact on demand within the Cork Area. The number of households in Cork has increased from 147,990 in 2002 to 167,234 in 2006. The 'National and Regional Population Projections 2006-2020' published in February 2007 forecast that the population of Cork will increase by 127,060 persons by 2020, this equates to an increase of 84,536 households by 2020. In order to accommodate these households, a larger number of housing units will have to be constructed in the Cork area in the period 2006 to 2020.

Table 4: House Completion Type Cork City and County³

	Bungalow	House Detached	House Semi - D	House terraced	Flat/Apartment	Total
2001						
Cork City	6	97	252	82	315	752
Cork County	835	1,704	1,348	346	605	4,838
<i>Total</i>						5,590
2002						
Cork City	17	81	320	92	302	812
Cork County	720	1,706	1,395	436	497	4,754
<i>Total</i>						5,566
2003						
Cork City	6	42	101	87	817	1,053
Cork County	493	1,904	2,447	637	844	6,325
<i>Total</i>						7,378
2004						
Cork City	30	53	1,245	17	1,019	2,364
Cork County	432	1,485	3,456	52	487	5,912
<i>Total</i>						8,276
	Individual House		Scheme House		Apartments	Total
2005						
Cork City	118		558		1,008	1,684
Cork County	2,071		4,466		621	7,158
<i>Total</i>						8,842
2006						
Cork City	72		456		537	1,065
Cork County	2,268		5,002		806	8,076
<i>Total</i>						9,141
2007						
Cork City	61		747		401	1,209
Cork County	2,116		4,442		919	7,477
<i>Total</i>						8,686

Source: DoEHLG Housing Statistics 2001 – 2007

- 4.7 Overall, a greater number of small units is needed. Notwithstanding this, within the City the aim is to ensure that apartment developments include an acceptable proportion of larger units as well to ensure that such developments are sustainable in the long term and provide a suitable long-term option for families. Apartments should at least meet minimum floor areas and standards recommended by the DoEHLG in their Design Standards for New Apartments published in September 2007.
- 4.8 To meet the changing needs and sizes of households, it is a policy of the Housing Strategy to ensure the development of a greater mix of house type and sizes reflecting local circumstances.
- 4.9 Table 5, below, sets out the targets for housing size and distribution contained in CASP. Monitoring of house completions will be required to establish to what extent targets are being achieved.

³ These data are based on the number of new dwellings connected by the ESB to the electricity supply but exclude conversions and may not accord precisely with local authority boundaries. The classification used for type of dwelling changes in 2005 – 'individual house' is where connection is provided to separate detached house, 'scheme house' is where connection is provided to two or more houses, 'apartment' is where all customers' metering for the block is centrally located.

Table 5: Target Housing Programme 2020

Household Size Distribution		Urban Housing Size Distribution		Suburban Housing Size Distribution	
1 person	27%	1 bed	15%	1 bed	5%
2 persons	34%	2 bed	35%	2 bed	20%
3 persons	16%	3 bed	35%	3 bed	40%
4 persons	16%	4 bed	10%	4 bed	25%
5+ persons	8%	5+ bed	5%	5+ bed	10%

House Price Trends

- 4.10 House price trends generally reflect the state of the national economy, with rising prices associated with economic booms and price stagnation occurring alongside downturns in the economy.
- 4.11 An examination of the trend in house prices for Cork indicates a very sharp increase in the average price of both new and second-hand housing in recent years. Between 2001 and 2006, the average price for new housing in Cork increased from €174,550 to €305,015 while second-hand house prices increased from €179,687 to €353,104 (DoEHLG, 2007). Between 2006 and 2007 the average price of a second hand house in Cork rose by 4.4% and the average price of a new house in Cork rose by 6.7%.
- 4.12 The tables below show the average price of new houses between 2001 and 2006 and the average price of second hand houses between 2001 and 2006.

Table 6: Average Price of New Houses (Including Apartments) 2001 – 2007

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
Cork	174,550	184,369	211,980	237,858	265,644	305,015	325,453
(% increase on previous Year)		(6%)	(15%)	(12%)	(12%)	(14.8%)	(6.7)
National	182,863	198,087	224,567	249,191	276,221	305,637	322,634
(% increase on previous Year)		(8%)	(13%)	(11%)	(11%)	(10.6%)	(5.6)

Source: DoEHLG Housing Statistics 2001 – 2007

Table 7: Average Price of Second-hand Houses (Including Apartments) 2001 –2007

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
Cork	179,687	200,155	240,444	273,605	307,007	353,104	368,523
(% increase on previous Year)		(11%)	(20%)	(14%)	(12%)	(15%)	(4.4%)
National	206,117	227,799	264,898	294,667	330,399	371,447	377,850
(% increase on previous Year)		(11%)	(16%)	(11%)	(12%)	(12.4%)	(1.7%)

Source: DoEHLG Housing Statistics 2001 – 2007

- 4.13 As part of the 2001 Joint Housing Strategy a house price survey was carried out in January 2001. The aim of this survey was to determine the variation in prices in different areas of Cork. The survey outlined the variation in prices, for a new 3-bed house between different housing market areas. ⁴
- 4.14 For the purpose of this strategy it is deemed appropriate to use the same variables that were used in 2001 when identifying the average house price by market area as there has been no significant change in house price distribution in the past 6 years.

Table 8: Average Price of a New Home (incl. Apartments) in each Housing Market Area

Housing Market Area	2007 Average Price €	Differential Percentage Compared to Average House Price
Cork County Average (Q2)	325,453	
Metropolitan Area		
South Metropolitan	373,620	+14.8
North Metropolitan	346,933	+6.6
East Metropolitan	333,589	+2.5
Ring Area		
Ring (Excl. Youghal)	322,849	-0.8
Youghal & Hinterland	280,215	-13.9
South Coast Area		
Kinsale	378,827	+16.4
Clonakilty/Skibbereen	333,589	+2.5
Bantry/Castletownbere	306,902	-5.7
North West Rural Area	266,871	-18
Charleville / Mitchelstown Area	298,766	-8.2

⁴ The survey was based upon a postal and telephone survey of auctioneers for each Market area. Of the 175 auctioneers surveyed only 27% responded, from which over 1,000 price data returns were received. A follow up telephone survey of 20 auctioneers was completed to further substantiate returns.

Private Rented Sector

- 4.15 In the 2001 Housing Strategy it was maintained that the private rented sector is uncompetitive with regard to two main factors: security of tenure and accommodation cost (rent being regarded as “lost revenue” where a mortgage is seen as an investment). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the significance of the rental sector has grown due to demand for private rented housing, much of which is generated by the migration element of the population. Nationally, in 2006 tenancy registrations represented 8.5% of total households. The percentage in Cork is in line with National figures.
- 4.16 In 2007 there were 21,702 private rented housing registrations in Cork.⁵
- 4.17 Due to the escalation in house prices, home ownership has become less attainable and many are seeking alternative rental options. The future role of the private rental sector depends greatly on its ability to offer an attractive and competitive alternative to home ownership, particularly with regard to security, affordability, availability and standard of accommodation. There are a number of areas where a rental option can offer a more appropriate form of accommodation than owner occupation:
- To allow new households, or immigrants, time to acclimatise to the housing market or to allow time to bridge the affordability gap to home ownership;
 - As a transitory option prior to longer term commitments for those seeking either private and public housing;
 - For those seeking location specific temporary accommodation e.g. students seeking accommodation close to third level education, temporary employees or holiday-makers;
 - For those wishing to divest of accommodation no longer suited to their needs;
 - More generally, for households who have a preference for rented accommodation.
- 4.18 The Rental Accommodation Scheme introduced in 2005 may help to strengthen the development of the private rented sector. The scheme is examined in more detail in the social and affordable housing section of this strategy.
- 4.19 It is necessary to monitor the private rental sector, particularly within the context of a changing housing market.

Housing Land Supply

- 4.20 Housing Land Availability Surveys were carried out independently for the DoEHLG by each of the separate Local Authorities in County Cork in 2006. In the County Council area, comprehensive surveys of residential land availability carried out in January 2006 indicate that there is ample zoned residential land to cater for demand until the next County Plan is adopted around January 2009.
- 4.21 The following table details the land availability in the functional area of each of the authorities in Cork.

⁵ This represents the actual number of tenancy registrations entered on the PRTB computer system on 31 December 2007 that are still active on 30th April 2008.

Table 9 : Housing Land Supply – Cork County (Including Town Councils and City Council)⁶

Local Authority	Gross Area (Ha)	Net housing Area	Number of Units Completed Summer 2006	Number of Units Under Construction Summer 2006	Number of Units not started but with permission Summer 2006	Estimated number of units on remainder of zoned land	Number of Units which can commence immediately	Number of Units which can commence < 2 years	Number of Units which can commence > 2 years < 5 years	Number of Units which are unlikely to commence within 5 years
Cork City Council	309.51	309.51	1784	2495	2649	12601	2649	2649*	5867	6734
Cork County Council	4405.96	3548.92	7563	8459	6248	54267	5178	19772	27064	8501
Clonakilty TC	42.38	42.38	44	59	95	173	95	0	42	131
Cobh TC	4.96	4.96	0	43	20	61	20	61	0	0
Fermoy TC	10.26	10.26	0	0	0	340	0	340	0	0
Kinsale TC	12.55	12.55	17	86	208	0	160	48	0	0
Macroom TC	36.3	36.3	45	396	129	164	85	208	0	0
Mallow TC	58.42	58.42	0	320	222	1031	222	246	500	285
Midleton TC	7.27	6.91	0	0	0	414	0	414	0	0
Skibbereen TC	59.87	59.87	328	0	229	627	229	627	0	0
Youghal TC	360	360	100	4	1053	4197	1053	1347	500	2350
TOTAL	5307.48	4450.08	9881	11,862	10853	73875	9691	23063	33973	18001

*Given the lack of sites with development constraints within City Council boundaries, the number of units which can commence immediately is the same as the number of units that can commence in < 2 years. This does not affect the estimated number of units on the remainder of zoned land nor has it been included in the total figures.

4.22 It is estimated above that there is sufficient supply for 73,875 new units. A conclusion drawn from the demographic analysis of housing demand is that in order to meet the housing requirements for 2020 approximately 7,800 units will have to be constructed per annum, or 109,897 between 2006 and 2020. Some of these, up to 20%, will be constructed on unzoned land either within small settlements or in the countryside. To accommodate the remainder, land will need to be identified in future reviews of Local Area Plans or Development Plans.

Housing Supply - key points:

- *There is a need to ensure the development of a greater mix and variety of house types and an increase in the delivery of smaller units.*
- *Average household size is continuing to decline.*
- *In 2006 the average price of a new housing unit was €305,015 and that of a second hand house was €353,104.*
- *In 2006 there were 14,246 private rented housing registrations in Cork, representing 8.5% of total households.*
- *It is estimated that in 2006 there was a sufficient land supply in the County for the development of 73,875 new units.*

⁶ Figures are based upon the 2006 Annual Housing Land Availability Study Returns to the DoEHLG, (city figures updated to 2007). Definitions of the terms used are provided in appendix 4.

5 Social and Affordable Housing

- 5.1 The Planning Act requires the Strategy to provide for the need for both social and affordable housing. For the purposes of this Strategy social housing is defined as rented housing provided either by the Local Authority, or a voluntary or cooperative housing body or provided through the Rental Accommodation Scheme. During the negotiations on 'Towards 2016' it was agreed that it is appropriate to include units procured under the Rental Accommodation Scheme as part of the social housing stock.
- 5.2 Despite a common misconception that affordable housing is a form of social housing affordable housing is in fact a separate entity and is defined as owner-occupier or shared ownership housing, provided at a price below market value. Due to the high cost of home ownership shared ownership housing is occurring less and the more common form of affordable housing is therefore owner-occupied housing. To a limited extent the provision of affordable housing may address some social housing needs, by reducing numbers on the waiting list for Local Authority housing.
- 5.3 The forthcoming introduction of the new Incremental Purchase Scheme, as outlined in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2008 will further broaden access to home ownership for lower income groups. This scheme reflects government belief that home ownership should be available to as many as possible where this is their preferred option. Under this scheme applicants for local authority housing may opt to purchase, if their income permits, at the point of allocation of the dwelling. This will involve purchasing over a period in predetermined instalments.

Local Authority Housing Data and Activity

- 5.4 This section contains an assessment of housing needs trends in County Cork. The 2001 Joint Housing Strategy estimated a social housing demand in the County in January 2001 of 7,500 based on the local authority waiting lists (and assuming approx 10% for double-counting).
- 5.5 There is a significant discrepancy between the net social housing need as represented by the Housing Needs Assessment and the number of households on the Local Authorities Social Housing Lists. Comparing the last two housing needs assessments, between 2002 and 2005 there was an apparent reduction in net need of just over 9% in Cork. In the City between 2004 and 2006 there was an increase of 51.1% in the number of applicants on its social housing waiting list.

Table 10: Applicants for Social Housing (rented)⁷

Local Authority	2002 (Housing Needs Assessment)	2005 (Housing Needs Assessment)	% Change in Net Need 2002 – 2005	2006 (Local Authority Waiting List)
Cork City Council	2282	2516	+ 10.3	5633
South Housing Division	1002	931	- 7.1	2029
North Housing Division	505	371	- 26.5	913
West Housing Division	594	483	- 18.7	811
Clonakilty Town Council	111	43	- 61.3	76
Cobh Town Council	160	103	- 35.6	130
Fermoy Town Council	119	91	- 23.5	223
Kinsale Town Council	103	64	- 37.9	173
Macroom Town Council	76	57	- 25.0	143
Mallow Town Council	360	318	- 11.7	488
Midleton Town Council	137	85	- 38.0	345
Skibbereen Town Council	77	46	- 40.3	99
Youghal Town Council	239	122	- 49.0	288
Total	5765	5230	- 9.2	11748

- 5.6 Table 10 above shows that as of 31st Dec 2006 there was a total of 11,748 households on the waiting list of the local authorities in the County. However it is likely that this overstates social housing need due to a number of factors such as a proportion of applicants being on the waiting list of more than one authority, and the fact that occasionally the qualifying circumstances of applicants may change subsequent to being added to the list.
- 5.7 On the other hand, due to the approach taken in assessing social housing need for the DoEHLG Housing Needs Assessment returns, there is a substantial discrepancy between these figures and the social housing waiting list figures. It is estimated that 65% of the Social Housing Waiting List is a reasonable reflection of net social housing need. It is therefore estimated that current net social housing need is approximately 7636.
- 5.8 In the 2001 Joint Housing Strategy it was acknowledged that a number of households applying to the Local Authority for social housing do so to avail of the private sector Rental Subsidy Scheme and do not wish to access social housing. It is expected that the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), introduced in 2005, will address these needs. Some of the benefits expected to accrue from RAS include greater social mix through providing a wider geographical spread of social housing, improvements in tenant choice through the creation of a graduated system of housing supports and improvements in the quality, suitability and usage of private rented accommodation. The flexibility offered by RAS can make a significant contribution to addressing social housing need for one-person households.

⁷ Figures for 2002 and 2005 are taken from the Local Authority Housing Needs Assessment, while the 2006 figure is from the waiting lists of the planning authorities as at 31st December 2006

5.9 It is expected that over time housing authorities will build up a stock of private-rented accommodation to which they will nominate RAS recipients. In the long term it is envisaged that all rent allowance recipients will be transferred to RAS however as uptake of RAS by landlords is likely to correlate strongly with rent prices then it is difficult to predict.

5.10 Where appropriate, Local Authorities may, at their discretion, give consideration to the provision of private rental accommodation, to be administered under the RAS scheme, for social housing purposes as a way of complying with Part V.

5.11 The composition of households seeking social housing is evolving and of particular note is the significant increase in the number of one person households seeking accommodation at 51%, which is an increase of 20% on the level identified in the 2001 Joint Housing Strategy. Single parent households represent just over 30% of those on the waiting lists.

Table 11: Social Housing Applicants: Household Type by Housing Authority – 2006

Local Authority/division	Single with child/ children				Couple with or without child/ children					Family Household Total	One Person Household Total	Total
	1	2	3	4+	0	1	2	3	4+			
Cork City Council	1030	244	63	34	244	207	163	86	48	2119	3514	5633
Cork County Council (South Division)	511	210	76	51	155	129	153	86	70	1441	588	2029
Cork County Council (North Division)	212	94	29	22	58	44	42	21	21	543	370	913
Cork County Council (West Division)	167	40	21	11	62	45	29	15	8	398	413	811
Clonakilty TC	13	1	1	0	8	5	4	2	0	34	42	76
Cobh TC	117	35	17	11	16	37	23	26	6	288	239	527
Kinsale TC	14	4	1	0	4	24	3	4	0	54	119	173
Macroom TC	31	9	2	3	7	4	1	1	1	59	84	143
Mallow TC	102	18	39	3	9	67	56	11	15	320	168	488
Midleton TC	104	29	7	0	19	23	27	12	3	224	121	345
Youghal TC	51	18	3	3	2	18	15	9	6	125	163	288
Total	2352	702	259	138	584	603	516	273	178	5605	5821	11426
% of total	20.6	6.1	2.3	1.2	5.1	5.3	4.5	2.4	1.5	49.1	51	100

Figures for Fermoy and Skibbereen Town Councils not included.

5.12 As illustrated in Table 11, 51% of social housing applicants comprise one-person households – the comparable figure published in the 2001 Strategy was 31%. While this might suggest a large requirement for the provision of one-bed units this is not always considered the appropriate response. It is important that the nature of housing units required is adequately communicated at preplanning stage.

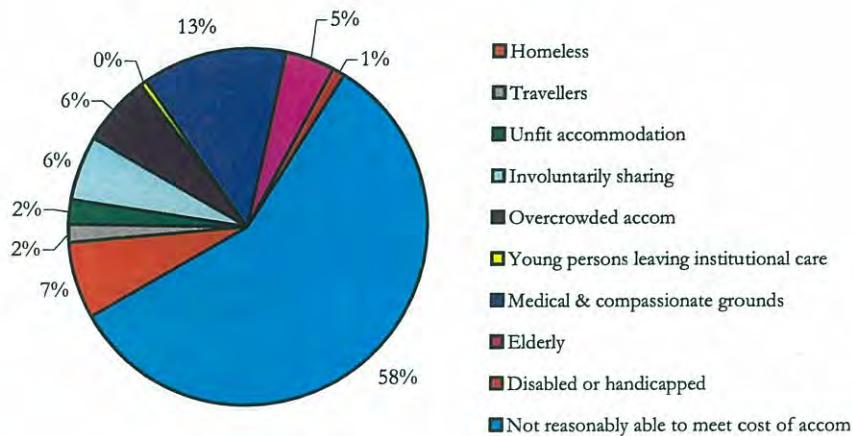
5.13 An examination of the age profile of applicants from the 2005 Housing Needs Assessment shows that just over 37% of applicants are under 30 years of age and almost 62% are under 40 years old. Only 7.5% of applicants are over 60 years of age.

5.14 52% of households have been on the list more than 2 years and a further 25% have been on the list for 1-2 years. The average length of time on the waiting list is 2 years 11 months.

5.15 The reasons why people are on the waiting list are varied but by far the biggest reason (58%) is financial, where the applicant is not reasonably able to meet the cost of the accommodation.

Figure 3: Category of social housing need - 2005

Category of social housing need - 2005



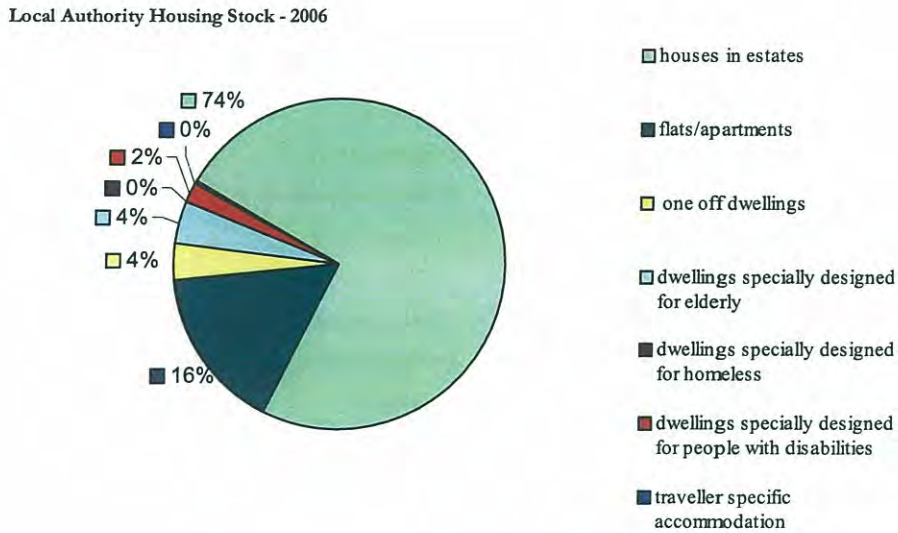
Source: Local Authority Housing Needs Assessment 2005, DoEHLG

5.16 Income data on applicants bears out this conclusion with just over 68% of applicants on a household income of less than €10,000. Over 84% of applicants have a household income of under €15,000, which is less than half the average industrial wage.

Existing Local Authority Housing Stock

5.17 The current local authority housing stock in the County is 13,625 units, 73.9% of which are houses within housing estates. A further 16% comprise flats and apartments, 90% of which are located within the City Council jurisdiction. Less than 4% of the housing stock is made up of one-off housing. Housing for special needs, including housing for the elderly and those with a disability, represent just over 6% of the stock. Most purpose built accommodation for the elderly is owned by the voluntary housing sector, while the low percentage of units for the disabled is most likely to be because alterations are made or facilitated to existing private dwellings rather than by direct provision by the authority involved.

Figure 4: Local Authority Housing Stock – 2006*



*Figures for the Southern Housing Division are from 2004

5.18 In 2006 over 70% of the stock was located within the area of the City Council and Southern Housing Division of the County.

5.19 In the period between 2001 and 2006 there was an increase of 2.5% in the vacancy rate of social housing stock. This represents a yearly increase of 0.42%. With the exception of a fall of 0.3% between 2005 and 2006, the vacancy rate has been on the rise since 2001. The various housing action plans suggest that specific measures are being taken to address the vacancy rate by the various authorities and the rate decreased between 2005 and 2006, however this is likely to be counterbalanced by the increase in overall stock. The length of time taken to re-let a property varies considerably across the authorities from 4 weeks in the Northern Division of the County Council to 276 days in the Southern Division.

5.20 The voluntary and co-operative housing sector appear to have less of a problem with vacancy and long term voids – most of their stock is less than 15 years old and in good condition.

Table 13: Average Vacancy Rates in Local Authority Housing Stock

	Average Vacancy Rates in Local Authority Housing Stock: %
2001*	2.5
2002*	3.3
2003*	3.5
2004*	4.4
2005*	5.2
2006	5

*Rate not available from every Local Authority

- 5.21 The number of Local Authority houses that have been sold since 2001 amounts to 684 units or about 5% of the current stock.

Social Housing Management and Maintenance

- 5.22 Almost 75% of the local authority housing stock has been constructed in the period since 1970, with over 31% of that constructed since 1990. While the stock is considered to be in a reasonable condition overall, there is a specific problem in relation to the number of units without adequate central heating systems – approximately 50% of the stock of the City Council and Southern Housing Division in the County. It should be noted that all stock in South Cork is expected to have central heating installed by the end of 2008.
- 5.23 In tandem with the major capital investment that has taken place in the improvement of the Housing Stock and the construction of new housing, the Housing Authorities have restructured their housing management operations and have diverted dedicated resources to estate management. Staff have now been deployed to deal with day-to-day management issues, to enforce the terms and conditions of Tenancy Agreements, to provide a responsive service to the public, and generally to promote the principles of good estate management. The Housing Authorities will continue to work in close co-operation with other Agencies in carrying out their estate management function.
- 5.24 In the City Council, dedicated Housing Officers have been assigned to manage every City Council estate. The North, South and West Housing Divisions of the County have established estate management units and have appointed full time housing officers/estate management liaison officers with primary responsibility of estate management and improvement in tenant participation. Various social housing management initiatives include the production of tenants handbooks and tenant participation schemes.
- 5.25 The Housing Bill 2008 as published incorporates the provisions relating to anti-social behaviour which if enacted will require that Local Authorities adopt strategies for the prevention and reduction of anti social behaviour in the Local Authority housing stock.

Affordable Housing

- 5.26 Currently affordable housing is delivered through a number of schemes, most significantly the 1999 Affordable Housing Scheme and the Affordable Housing Initiative. Recently the Shared Ownership Scheme has diminished as a housing option because house prices have become prohibitive and the maximum loan amount on offer is now insufficient to enable the purchase of a house in most areas of the County and particularly in the City and Southern Housing Division. While it is anticipated that schemes such as these will continue to play a significant role in affordable housing delivery, it is expected that Part V will provide the majority of affordable housing in the future.
- 5.27 The number of people opting for the Tenant Purchase Scheme remains relatively static.
- 5.28 There can be a difficulty in reconciling the trend towards smaller household formations and the need to accommodate the changing housing needs of households. This applies particularly to affordable housing as it involves a long term commitment to a particular house should penalties not be incurred. It is important that housing mix is reconciled with the trend in household formations and the need to adopt a lifecycle approach to affordable housing in particular.
- 5.29 Experience of operating the affordable housing scheme has shown that matching affordable housing applicants with houses in their stated preferred location can be problematic. In South Cork, the busiest area in the County Council jurisdiction, the

experience to date is that the definition of the area for the purpose of the expression of interest in affordable housing has been confusing for the public and has at times been difficult to administer. As a means of overcoming this problem, South Cork has been divided into 11 broad areas for Affordable housing purposes.

Voluntary Housing Sector

- 5.30 Providers of voluntary housing in Cork are diverse - ranging from national charitable organisations such as Respond and Cluid, Simon Community, St. Vincent de Paul to a variety of local, smaller voluntary organisations that respond to local needs. The voluntary housing sector generates variety in housing provision as these bodies decide the type of housing most suitable to local requirements and combined with the local authority have the responsibility of tenancy allocation. This is of particular importance regarding the provision of special needs housing.
- 5.31 The co-operative housing movement also provides an opportunity for the provision of social and affordable housing. Housing co-operatives are a distinct form of not-for-profit mutual housing association, working to relieve housing needs for community benefit. The members are the users of the housing services provided by their cooperatives. The National Association of Building Cooperatives (NABCO) is the representation, promotion, advice information, training and development organisation for the cooperative housing movement in Ireland. The cooperative movement may be able to contribute to the delivery of social or affordable housing through partnerships with either Local Authorities or private builders/developers.
- 5.32 There are two schemes, operated by the DoEHLG, under which units are delivered – these are the capital assistance scheme and the capital loan and subsidy scheme.
- 5.33 While it is difficult to quantify the impact of the provision of housing by the voluntary sector, particularly its potential future impact, it is clear that in terms of addressing specific housing needs it plays a vital role.

Housing Action Plans:

- 5.34 Five-year action plans for social and affordable housing were introduced in 2004, to translate the objectives for social and affordable housing in the housing strategies into specific delivery plans and to provide a more integrated and holistic approach to planning and delivering these programmes.
- 5.35 Housing Action Plans and The Housing Strategy form an interdependent dual role in ultimately insuring the effective delivery of appropriate housing programmes. Housing Action Plans also provide additional perspectives on housing demand and housing needs that have been taken into consideration in preparing the Housing Strategy.
- 5.36 Subject to the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2008 being enacted, it is proposed that housing action plans will be replaced by a two tier plan structure. The Bill contains a statutory requirement to prepare Housing Services Plans which will relate to the remaining period of operation of the Local Authority's Development Plan. Preparation of Housing Services Plans shall have regard to, inter alia: the Development Plan; the authority's summary of social housing assessment; demand for affordable housing; the authority's traveller accommodation programme; and the need to ensure that housing services are delivered in a manner which promotes sustainable communities. The Bill also requires that a local authority shall prepare a housing action programme for implementation of its housing services plan. Subject to the Bill being enacted in accordance with the Bill as published, these measures will improve the effectiveness of the delivery of housing programmes.

- 5.37 In a reference to achieving housing and accommodation objectives the DoEHLG, in its 'Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities' publication, refers to the framework for effective housing responses including strategic planning through county/city development plans leading to housing strategies and housing action plans. The framework is illustrated in the following hierarchy of current strategies and plans:

Figure 5: Hierarchy of Strategies and Plans



Affordability Thresholds

- 5.38 An essential aspect of the Housing Strategy is to ensure that provision is made for people who cannot gain access to housing on the open market. In assessing the extent to which lack of affordability is an issue in Cork, the following data were used.

- o The division of Cork into the Seven Housing Market Areas for this analysis:
 1. South Metropolitan area
 2. North Metropolitan Area
 3. East Metropolitan Area
 4. Ring
 5. South Coast
 6. North & West Rural
 7. Charleville/ Mitchelstown
- o Census data (2002 & 2006) at DED level have been aggregated to these five areas.
- The house price data used was based on the County average new house price for Cork for 2004 which was €237,858 (source DoEHLG Statistics 1971 – 2006 (Q2)). As it is likely that a household on a lower income band would aspire to purchase a house at an 'entry level' price then the analysis used an average 'entry level' house price for each housing market area to

establish an affordability threshold. It is assumed that this is 10% less than the average house price for each housing market area.

- o The County Average Disposable Income for 2001 & 2004 is taken from the County Incomes & Regional GDP 2004 (published in February 2007 by the CSO).
- o Peter Bacon's Household Income model (provided for the Housing Strategy 2001)

Analysis⁸

5.39 All analysis is based upon 2004 data, as this, at present, is the best available information. The most up to date CSO income data is 'County Incomes and Regional GDP' which was published in February 2007. The analysis is set out in detail in appendix 5 and leads to a calculation of the percentage of households which are eligible for either social or affordable housing. Appendix 5 contains a table of Household Income by Market Area 2004 (Based on 5% APR).

5.40 In the 2001 Joint Housing Strategy an average interest rate to 2011 of 6% was chosen. In the event, since 2001, interest rates have never reached that level. International currency changes, including adoption of the euro, would indicate that a 6% rate is unnecessarily high. Accordingly a 5% rate has been adopted as more typical for the period of this Strategy. Based on the analysis the affordability threshold is estimated as 45.3% - i.e. 45.3% of new households will not be able to afford a house on the open market without some intervention and will therefore require social or affordable housing.

5.41 Table 14, below, shows the percentage of new households, within each housing market area, that, it is calculated, will fall below the affordability threshold.

Table 14: Percentage of New Households Below Affordability Threshold

Housing Market Area	5% APR
South Metropolitan	44.5
North Metropolitan	49.4
East Metropolitan	44.9
Ring	38.6
South Coast	59.8
North & West Rural	43.8
Charleville / Mitchelstown	42.9
City	46.3

Estimated Social and Affordable Housing Need 2006-2020

5.42 Assessment of the need for social and affordable housing has been based on Peter Bacon's demographic distribution model and it allows for the uplift of the National and Regional Population Projections 2006-2020 published in 2007.

⁸ Affordability calculations are based upon:

1. The average County Cork house price in 2004 (i.e. €237,858),
2. A total loan size (i.e. a mortgage at 90% of the overall cost of the new dwelling i.e. €214,072),
3. Factor of mortgage repayments (i.e. 35% of disposable income (annual income net of income tax and PRSI)),
4. Based on a 5% (APR) rate, over a 25 year loan period.

Demographic and Income Distribution Assessment of Affordability

5.43 An essential aspect of the Joint Housing Strategy is ensuring that provision is made for people who cannot gain access to housing on the open market. The last Strategy followed the approach outlined by the DoEHLG based on household and income analysis and projections forward from which the number of households which fall under the affordability criteria (as defined in the Planning and Development Act 2000) was estimated. To assess the extent to which lack of affordability is an issue in Cork the data used in the last housing strategy has been updated. The income data was updated using the national average resulting in an updated income distribution model. It is assumed that since 2001 there has been no significant spatial distribution of income.

5.44 **As the percentage of households below the affordability threshold is substantially above 20% in all housing market areas it is deemed necessary that all areas reserve the maximum provision of twenty per cent social and affordable housing, as allowed for under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).**

Estimating social and affordable housing need

5.45 The following table shows the estimated social housing need and supply from 2006-2020. The approach taken is outlined in detail in appendix 5.

5.46 The approach differs from that outlined in the Draft Strategy in that it is considered that the building programme of the local authorities will be adjusted over time to take account, in the first instance, of the social housing supply arising from other sources, i.e. Part V, Voluntary and Co-operative Sector and casual vacancies. Having determined the contribution to the supply side made by these sources, the deficit to be met by way of the Local Authorities Building Programmes and RAS can subsequently be made.

Table 15: Estimated Social Housing Need and Supply 2006-2020

	Total Social and Affordable Demand	Social demand	Social supply
Estimated net social housing need 2006 (based on the 2006 local authority waiting lists)	7,636		
No. of new social and affordable housing applicants between 2006 and 2020 (45.3% of 85,873)	<u>38,900</u>		
Total social and affordable housing applicants 2006-2020:	46,536		
Social Housing Applicants 2006-2020 (51% of 38,900, +7636)		27,475	
<i>Estimated that demand will be met by supply as follows:</i>			
Casual vacancies @450 per annum			6,300
Voluntary and Co-operative housing			3,628
Part V (applied to 85% of all new houses) ⁹			<u>8,478</u>
Less sale of local authority stock			<u>-1,862</u>
Local Authorities social housing building &			10,931

⁹ This figure includes financial contributions, expressed here as the equivalent in units.

acquisitions programme (including RAS)			
Social housing supply			27,475

5.47 The following table shows the estimated affordable housing need and supply from 2006 to 2020 including an estimation of each element of affordable housing supply. The approach taken differs from that outlined in the Draft Strategy in that it is considered that the building programme of the local authorities will be adjusted over time to take account, in the first instance, of the affordable housing supply arising from other sources, i.e. Part V and Voluntary and Co-operative Sector. Having determined the contribution to the supply side made by these sources, the deficit to be met by way of the Local Authorities Building Programmes can subsequently be made.

Table 16: Estimated Affordable Housing Need and Supply 2006-2020

	Total New Social and Affordable Demand	Affordable demand	Affordable supply
No. of new social and affordable housing applicants between 2006 and 2020	38,900		
Affordable Housing Applicants 2006-2020 (49 % of new social & affordable housing applicants 2006 - 2020)		19,061	
Voluntary and Co-operative housing			<u>1,000</u>
Part V applied to 85% of all new houses ¹⁰			10,500
Affordable Housing schemes (excluding part V)			7,561
Affordable housing supply			19,061

Social and Affordable Units Accruing from Part V:

5.48 The estimated new housing units that will be developed between 2006 and 2020 in the County and City are 87,844 and 23,793 respectively¹¹. It is assumed that Part V will not apply to approximately 15% of these figures. When 20% is applied to the remainder it is estimated that in the County and City 14,933 and 4,045 units respectively will accrue.

5.49 This translates to a Part V social housing supply of 8,478 units and a Part V affordable housing supply of 10,500 units.

¹⁰ This figure includes financial contributions, expressed here as the equivalent in units.

¹¹ These figures differ from those indicated in Section 3 as they are derived from strategic area analysis rather than housing market area analysis.

Special Needs Housing

Student Accommodation

5.50 There are currently approximately 23,000 full time students attending the two largest third level educational institutions in Cork City - 16,000 in University College Cork (UCC) and 7,000 in Cork Institute of Technology (CIT).

5.51 The UCC Strategic Plan has a target to reach 20,000 full time students in its plan period (i.e. to 2011). An emphasis of the strategic plan is also on increasing postgraduate numbers from 20% to 30% of total student population by 2011. The accommodation requirements of post graduates are different from the rest of the student body in that they need year round accommodation.

Current trends impacting on the demand for student accommodation:

- Increasing numbers of international students attending third level education.
- Issues of commuting difficulties and greater affluence contributing to an increase in the percentage of students requiring accommodation.
- Sale of private dwellings which were previously occupied by students.
- Competition from purpose built student complexes with parents being attracted by the standard product offered.
- Competition from immigrants in the private rented market.

5.52 There are mixed views on the likely impact of the end of the S.50 tax breaks for student accommodation. It is not expected that there will be a significant loss of student accommodation among student complexes in the City centre and those associated with UCC. The student market is considered to be quite lucrative in these locations. However, some of the complexes in more remote locations relative to the campus could be lost and the complexes associated with CIT are considered to be more vulnerable – there is a suggestion of an oversupply of student accommodation in the CIT area. It seems that some of the complexes may have been built to a higher standard with the intention of allowing their reversion to mainstream apartment complexes in the future.

5.53 Student accommodation is exempt from the reserved land policy so allowing a change of use to standard residential apartments could see the Councils lose out on Part V obligations. Accordingly, it would be prudent for Development Plans to include a policy, similar to that contained in the current City Development Plan, indicating that, in general, applications for a change of use from student accommodation to any other type of accommodation shall be resisted unless it can be adequately shown that an over provision of student accommodation exists in the County.

Accommodation for the Elderly

5.54 While the majority of older people own their own homes, some may find that their accommodation is not entirely suitable to their needs. The changing age profile of Ireland's population means that there are now more older people per head of population than before.

The implication of this trend is that considerably more housing, suited to the needs of older people will be required in the future. Nationally, people over 65 years of age represent 4% of people on social housing lists.

- 5.55 For those who wish to continue to live independently, it is important that the opportunity exists to trade down or downsize in the area in which they live (for example to a smaller or single storey dwelling or apartment unit). Assessment of housing mix needs to consider this in appropriate developments and locations.
- 5.56 Some older people have specific housing needs relating to access, medical care, security and personal safety among other issues. Housing location is an important issue for older people particularly those who live alone and are reliant on public transport and local services. Dwellings and other residential facilities catering specifically for older people should be located in close proximity to convenience shops, community facilities and public transport nodes. The semi supported or 'assisted living' concept is considered a suitable option for many older people as it enables them to live relatively independently in their own homes.
- 5.57 The DoEHLG is examining the additional role that RAS may play in relation to downsizing schemes, in allowing people to release their home for a period for use under the scheme while they are being accommodated in social housing.
- 5.58 Older Irish emigrants have the opportunity to be considered for social housing in Ireland while still resident outside of the country through the Safe Home scheme which is supported by the DoEHLG and administered by Safe Home, a national organisation established in 2001 in Co. Mayo. It seeks to assist older Irish born emigrants to return to their homeland working to secure housing in the Voluntary Sector (in housing specifically for the older person) for applicants as near to their home place as possible.
- 5.59 Cork City Council operates a downsizing scheme providing a policy measure aimed at dealing with under-occupation and maximising the use of the housing stock. Under this scheme, persons over the age of 60 who own their own home, and who find their dwellings too large for their needs, may request the Council to purchase their home in return for a life long tenancy in a senior citizen dwelling, on the condition that they make a financial contribution to the Council under the terms of the Financial Contribution Scheme.
- 5.60 Cork City Council also aims to actively promote downsizing of its own rented stock.

Accommodation for Travellers

- 5.61 Under the Housing Acts 1966-1997, Local Authorities are responsible for the provision of accommodation, including serviced caravan sites, for travellers. Since the enactment of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, each local authority has adopted two Traveller Accommodation programmes for their functional areas which specifically address the accommodation needs of the travelling community. The current programme is from 2005 to 2008 and puts forward programmes for the provision of permanent accommodation for the County's indigenous Traveller Community.
- 5.62 A Traveller Accommodation Committee was established in the County with sub-committees at divisional level in North, South and West Cork – among its purposes is to advise in relation to the preparation and implementation of the Traveller Programme and to advise during the review of progress in implementing the programme. A City Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee also exists.
- 5.63 Assessments of traveller specific accommodation needs in Cork were carried out recently for the current Traveller Accommodation Programmes for the City and County. A survey carried out for the current City Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme estimated that approximately 90-95 families required accommodation or a change in the accommodation provided. Allowing for new family formation, the overall traveller accommodation requirement for the City between 2005 and 2008 is estimated to be 100-110 families. 50% of the survey respondents requiring housing indicated a preference for

standard housing. This indicates a standard housing requirement of 50-55 units over the programme period.

- 5.64 The County's Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005-2008 estimates that 153 families will require permanent accommodation over the programme period and it is envisaged that 12 units of transient accommodation will be required. The majority of accommodation type (60%) is to be local authority housing accommodating 99 families.
- 5.65 The DoEHLG publication 'Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities' identified a trend in the increasing number of travellers meeting their accommodation needs successfully through the private rented sector. At the end of 2004 this represented 7% of travellers and by the end of 2005 had increased to 10%.

Accommodation for People with Disabilities

- 5.66 In considering housing for people with disabilities, location is critical, particularly to those with a mobility related disability. The importance of access to public transport, local community services, and facilities is a significant factor for a mobility-impaired person in improving quality of life. In terms of house design, compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations expands options available to people with a disability.
- 5.67 Support is needed for the concept of independent living for people with a disability. When designing adapted housing units consideration should be given to the fact that some people require live in care. In addition to considering the needs of mobility related people there is a need to address specific housing requirements of deaf and blind and people with psychiatric problems.
- 5.68 To effectively address these needs, consultation and liaison between health boards and/or associations which represent people with particular disabilities and local authorities is required.
- 5.69 Where a specific special housing need is identified within an area, meeting this need should be considered during the preplanning negotiation involving reserved land under Part V so the need can be provided for during the design state of the development.
- 5.70 A commitment was given in 'Towards 2016' to developing a national housing strategy for people with a disability (as recommended in the NESC Housing in Ireland Report published in 2004) which will give a framework to inform the relevant components of Housing Action Plans.
- 5.71 The Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme for People with a Disability and the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme, both administered by local authorities, provide a social housing option for people with disabilities through providing grants to eligible applicants to adapt a dwelling house to cater for their needs.
- 5.72 As already stated, the voluntary and co-operative housing sector has a particular role to play in meeting special housing needs, including those of persons with a disability.
- 5.73 An examination of the role that all schemes, including the Rental Accommodation Scheme and Affordable housing schemes, can play in meeting the needs of persons with a disability needs to be undertaken.

Accommodation for People of Diverse Cultures

- 5.74 The last Housing Strategy acknowledged the need to develop a long term housing policy recognising cultural diversity and the diversity of housing need. It is particularly relevant that the 'Housing Action Plans, in setting out their specific social and affordable delivery plans, recognise cultural diversity. The authorities will work with the Health Service Executive and the voluntary sector in planning and implementing programmes to support

refugees. Applicants for refugee status that have a reasonable prospect of success are likely to require social housing in the future and are included in the overall estimations of social housing need.

- 5.75 Responsibility for providing for the needs of asylum seekers lies with the Department of Justice. Current national policy regarding housing asylum seekers is direct provision accommodation in hotels, hostels and apartment complexes.

Accommodation for the Homeless

- 5.76 According to the DoEHLG 2005 Housing Needs Assessment there are 341 homeless people in the City, 20 in the County's southern division and 2 in the Cobh Town Council's area, amounting to a total of 363. This is a substantial increase over the total level estimated in the 2004 Housing Action Plans as 174. It is likely that short term homelessness at least will continue to increase due to difficulties in securing private rented accommodation. It must be acknowledged however that it is difficult to measure as not all homeless declare themselves to be homeless.
- 5.77 The authorities are committed to supporting the implementation of Homeless Action Plans and to supporting the work of the Cork Homeless Forums. Homeless Action Plans are in place for the north and west divisions of the County and for the City. The southern division is a joint stakeholder with Cork City Council and other statutory agencies in the City's Homeless Action Plan.
- 5.78 'Homelessness - An Integrated Strategy on Homelessness in Cork 2005-2007' was published as a product of the review process undertaken by the Cork Homeless Forum of its first strategy published in 2001. As in the first strategy, it points to integration of services, sound preventative strategies, partnership amongst stakeholders and an integrated strategy as being key to the successful delivery of homeless services in Cork. Underpinning the strategy are a number of guiding principles and core values from which stem five specific objectives and associated actions. In addition it places greater emphasis on the ultimate goal of long term housing by aiming to provide suitable long term accommodation options for homeless persons (including independent or supported living as appropriate). The strategy refers to the potential of RAS in accommodating people in need of social housing.
- 5.79 Following an independent review of the Government's Integrated and Preventative Homeless Strategies, a new National Homeless Strategy is forthcoming. The new strategy is likely to build on the commitment given in Towards 2016 to eliminate long-term occupancy of emergency accommodation by 2010. This will reaffirm the need for the provision of non-emergency mainstream housing for homeless persons.

Partnership between City and County Councils

- 5.80 Land available for housing within the Cork City Council boundary and some of the Town Council boundaries is limited. In the future therefore housing demand generated from within the City or Town Council areas will have to be met to a large extent within the County. Considering that a significant amount of the land availability in the City is in the docklands it is likely that there will still be types of City generated housing need that docklands developments will not meet and that will need to be addressed by the County.
- 5.81 Mechanisms are to be developed to establish a joint approach to demand and supply management of social and affordable housing in the Metropolitan housing market areas.

Social and Affordable Housing - key points:

- *The largest category of social housing need in 2005, at 58% , is made up of those not reasonably able to meet the cost of accommodation.*
- *The percentage of households which fall below the affordability threshold ranges from 38.6% in the Ring housing market area to 59.8% in the South Coast housing market area.*
- *It is necessary that all areas reserve the maximum provision of 20% social and affordable housing as allowed for under the Planning and Development Act 2000.*
- *There is a need to ensure that housing is available to people with special housing needs including homeless people, travellers, people with a disability, older people, refugees and asylum seekers, and students.*

6 Principles and Policies

6.1 This section has evolved from an analysis of housing issues, needs and supply. A restatement of the aim of the strategy sets the context for the four key principles that underpin the strategy. These principles are expanded into detailed policies and programmes of action.

Aim of the Strategy:

'To help enable the people of Cork, now and in the future, to have a place to live, suited to their needs, at a price that they can afford'

Key Principles:

6.2 Four key principles guide the Housing Strategy.

Principle 1: To Provide for a Diverse Range of Housing Needs.

Principle 2: To Promote Balanced & Sustainable Communities.

Principle 3: To Promote Sustainable Development of the Urban & Rural Environment

Principle 4: To Promote Environmental Sustainability and the development of a High Quality Living Environment

Policies and Programmes of Action

6.3 Following directly on from analysis in earlier sections and a review of issues raised through the consultation process, a set of policies and programmes of action have been identified. The programmes of action identified are wide ranging: some are more general in nature and may already be contained in other policy documents of the Cork Local Authorities while others have been created to address specific issues, such as the reserved land policy. It is through the implementation of all of these actions together that we are likely to address existing and future housing needs in a comprehensive way.

6.4 The policies and programmes of action are presented on the following pages.

POLICY 1.1

The Cork Local Authorities will ensure a mix of house types and sizes within individual developments and within communities.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

(a) Assess housing variety and mix as a material consideration when considering individual planning applications for residential development. Require developers to submit a *Statement of Housing Mix* with planning applications for multiple housing units detailing the proposed housing mix and why it is considered appropriate– established mix in the area, design, location and market considerations etc. The needs of special groups such as the elderly and disabled should be considered as part of this process.

(b) When developing their own housing stock, the Local Authorities will aim to achieve a mix of housing types and sizes, having regard to identified needs.

(c) Seek to improve the quality of information exchanged between the local authorities, development industry and all other groups with an involvement or stake in the provision of

housing with a view to ensuring the supply of the different types of units more closely suits demand and to assist with monitoring the implementation of the strategy.

POLICY 1.2

The Cork Local Authorities will ensure the delivery of a range of housing to suit varying income levels.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- (a) Ensure that sufficient land is zoned at appropriate densities to meet housing requirements during the lifetime of the relevant Development Plans.
- (b) Work with educational and training institutions to support the development of student accommodation.
- (c) In partnership with the DoEHLG, private developers, the voluntary & co-operative housing sector, and academic bodies, the Local Authorities will consider other methods for providing housing which is affordable to low and middle income groups.
- (d) In partnership with the DoEHLG, continue to support and enhance the voluntary & co-operative housing sector in the development of general and special needs housing.
- (e) Facilitate and support the provision of a high quality and affordable private rented sector.
- (f) Each Local authority, in its development plan, will give an indication of preference for discharge of development under Part V.

POLICY 1.3

The Cork Local Authorities will require 20% of all land zoned for residential uses (or for a mix of residential and other uses) to be reserved for the purpose of social and affordable housing.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- (a) Seek a suitable balance between social and affordable housing on the reserved lands in accordance with policy 2.1 below.
- (b) Where it is proposed that a site be developed for student accommodation, the portion of the site relating to this shall be exempt from the reserved land policy. The proposed development must comply with the location and design criteria set out in the Government's Guidelines on Residential Developments for Third Level Students published in 1999.
- (c) Development Plans are to include a policy, similar to that contained in the current City Development Plan, indicating that, in general, applications for a change of use from student accommodation to any other type of accommodation shall be resisted unless it can be adequately shown that an over provision of student accommodation exists in the County. Where such applications are given favourable consideration, Part V obligations will apply.
- (d) Development Plans are to include an objective that all land within a development boundary, that is not subject to a specific zoning objective (including land that is subject to a general zoning objective), is deemed to be zoned for residential or mixed uses (including residential) for the purposes of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- (e) To ensure the timely conclusion of Part V agreements local authorities shall consider the use of a written agreement in conjunction with planning permissions to remove the ambiguity as regards what is agreed at preplanning and to impose time limits on both sides.

(f) Local authorities will give timely consideration to the enforcement of planning control where development proceeds without compliance with a Part V condition.

Policy 1.4

The Cork Local Authorities will support the development of housing for people with special housing needs.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- (a) Support the voluntary sector to develop housing for special needs.
- (b) Continue to work with the Cork Homeless Forum in finding ways to prevent homelessness and finding housing solutions for homeless households.
- (c) Provide appropriate accommodation for Travellers and / or halting site and /or transient site facilities through the implementation of the Traveller accommodation programmes.
- (d) Work with the various Disability Organisations to ensure that wherever possible, housing (including Local Authority Housing) is built to barrier-free standards.
- (e) Liaise with the Department of Justice to develop policy for the provision of short-term accommodation for refugees / asylum seekers in Cork and to develop policy on long-term provision for refugees.
- (f) Liaise with representative organisations, the Health Service Executive and other stakeholders in undertaking a review of the need for accommodation for older people and people with a disability.
- (g) Support the concept of independent living for older people and people with a disability and ensure where possible that housing for such groups is integrated with mainstream housing.
- (i) Requirements of special needs housing will be considered in the context of Part V negotiations.

Policy 1.5

The Cork Local Authorities will facilitate the establishment of a Joint Housing Strategy Stakeholders' Forum, to include representatives of the main stakeholder groups dealing with housing issues in Cork.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- (a) The Cork Local Authorities will set up a Joint Housing Strategy Stakeholders' Forum to comprise representatives of the main stakeholder groups dealing with housing issues in Cork, to meet annually and assist the local authorities in the implementation and monitoring of the Housing Strategy and to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas.

POLICY 2.1

In the interests of developing sustainable communities the Cork Local Authorities will ensure that there is an appropriate balance between social, affordable and mainstream housing provision within communities.

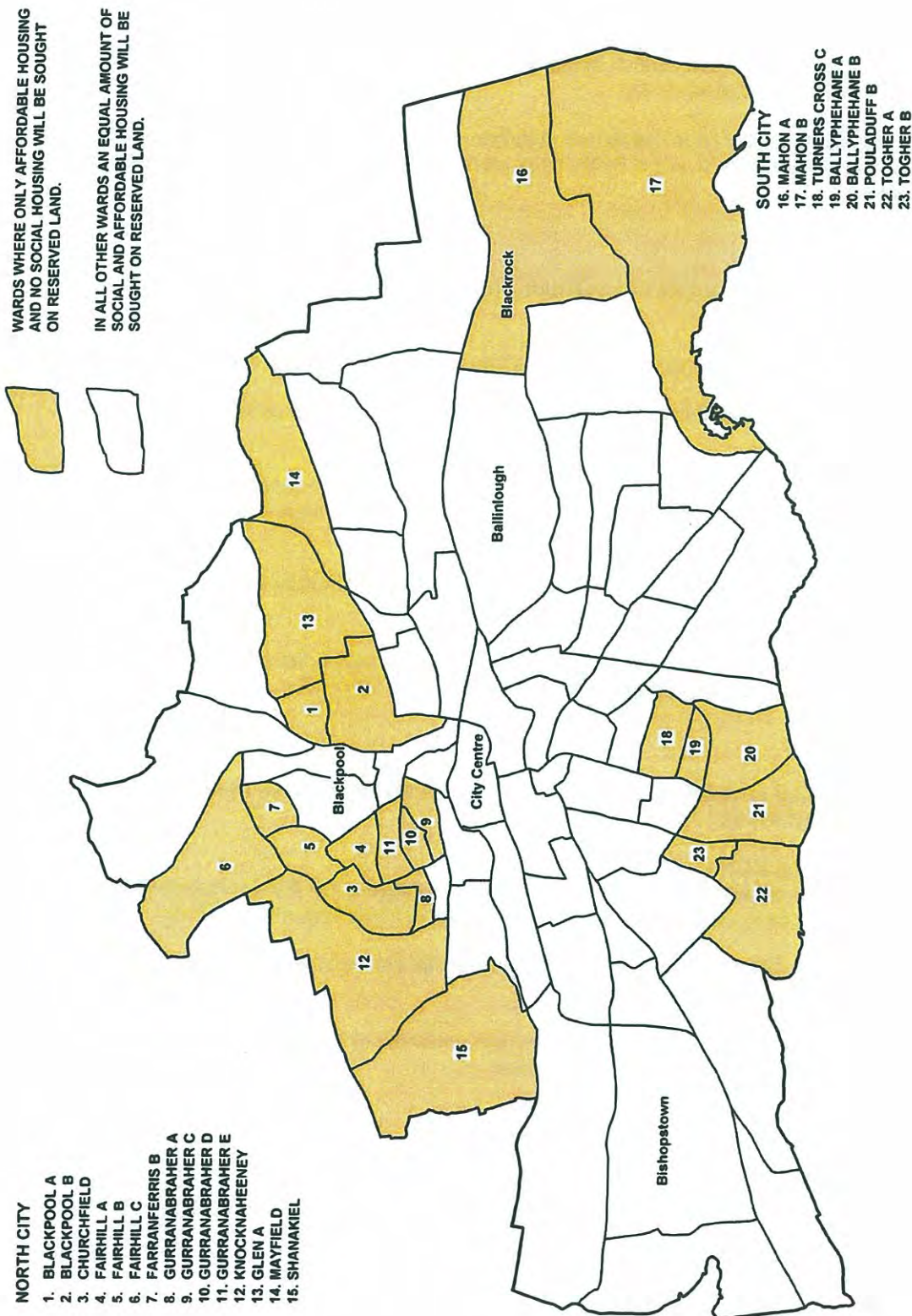
PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- (a) Within the County area of Cork Metropolitan area, there will be a requirement that half of the reserved land be for social housing and half for affordable housing, subject to the exceptions in c) below. This will be subject to review in future Development Plans.

- (b) Within the City area of Cork Metropolitan area, there will be a requirement that one quarter of the reserved land be for social housing and three quarters for affordable housing, subject to the exceptions in (d) below. This will be subject to review in future development plans.
- (c) In certain specified areas within the County (excluding the city), where there is an existing high concentration of social housing or where it is perceived that there is no social housing demand, there will be a lesser requirement or no requirement for social housing on reserved lands. Such areas will be identified in the first instance in Housing Action Plans and will be reflected in future development plan objectives or local area plan objectives where appropriate. In taking the full 20% reserved land the balance will be made up by affordable housing or by other options of compliance with Part V as specified in the Planning and Development Act 2000(as amended).
- (d) In Cork City this exception applies to the selected City wards specified in attached schematic no. 1.
- (e) In all other areas, the appropriate proportion of social housing on reserved lands will be agreed with the relevant planning authority based on the existing housing profile and needs of the area. This proportion is subject to a maximum of one half of the reserved lands.
- (f) The above actions do not preclude all of the reserved land from being used for social housing, if a developer wishes to make such an agreement and where a social housing need has been identified and where there is not a high concentration of social housing already.
- (g) The Local Authorities will investigate ways of developing multitenure developments on their own land.
- (h) The Local Authorities will promote participation in the Rental Accommodation Scheme.
- (i) Should legislation allow, Local Authorities will support the provision of affordable rental housing in the future¹².
- (j) In seeking to ensure an appropriate balance is maintained between the different housing tenures within communities the Cork Local Authorities will establish a consultative group to discuss the issues arising in meeting future social housing demand and to agree a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of social housing units.
- (k) The Cork Local Authorities will seek to enhance the administration and marketing of affordable housing schemes in order to maximise the affordable housing uptake.

¹² The DoEHLG has indicated that it is committed to piloting the affordable rental approach but that further study is required before an appropriate pilot can be progressed, not least in relation to the potential target group and the conditions of eligibility. (Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities, 2007).

Schematic 1: Special requirements in Cork City area for social / affordable housing balance on reserved lands



POLICY 2.2

The Cork Local Authorities will ensure that multi-tenure developments are developed as cohesive developments.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

(a) As part of their planning application on sites subject to the reserved land policy, developers will be required to demonstrate how the overall development will be perceived as a cohesive unit and how the overall layout and design of the development, the mix of house types and sizes, the distribution of the different tenures throughout the development and the phasing of the scheme will work.

(b) Support integration in mixed tenure developments by developing a high standard of property management for Local Authority properties and promoting good estate management practices.

POLICY 2.3

The Cork Local Authorities will maintain and enhance existing residential areas.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

(a) Improve Estate Management practices for existing Local Authority Properties.

(b) Continue development plan policies of protecting the residential amenity of established residential areas.

(c) Seek to build sustainable communities by addressing, through development plan policies, any deficits in the provision of social and community infrastructure within established residential areas.

(d) Identify opportunities for infill residential developments in the City centre, towns and villages.

(e) Where appropriate, make use of powers under the Derelict Sites Act to acquire and secure the redevelopment of derelict sites.

POLICY 2.4

The Cork Local Authorities will facilitate and support the development of a high quality private rented sector.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

(a) Promote and facilitate best practice of the development of the Rental Accommodation Scheme to achieve the transfer of long term rent supplement recipients to RAS.

(b) Investigate other ways in which the Local Authority can support the development of the private rented sector at local level.

(c) Promote improvement in the quality and standards of private rented accommodation by carrying out of inspections of such properties.

POLICY 2.5

The Cork Local Authorities will, where possible, ensure that development of second / holiday homes does not have a detrimental effect on provision of mainstream housing development.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

(a) In assessing new housing applications in urban and rural areas under pressure for development, priority will be given to meeting local demand in the provision of housing over provision of holiday/second homes.

(b) Seek to identify ways of monitoring the impact of second / holiday homes in Cork's rural areas and smaller settlements.

(c) Identify ways in which local housing needs can be met in areas of existing high second / holiday home pressure.

Policy 2.6

The Cork Local Authorities will seek to safeguard the enjoyment of any house, building or land provided by the Local Authority, and the enjoyment of any neighbouring private properties, through the promotion of good estate management.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

(a) The Local Authorities will continue to resource and expand the remit of the Estate Management Units to improve the quality of estate management services provided.

(b) The Local Authorities will continue to provide Tenancy Courses to all new tenants and to tenants who have been granted a transfer. A tenant handbook will also be given to each tenant.

(c) The Local Authorities will continue to assist tenants in establishing 'Resident Associations / Resident Groups, progressing any community initiatives and providing training to tenants elected to resident associations/groups.

(d) The Local Authorities will continue to deal with complaints regarding breaches of tenancy conditions.

(e) The Local Authorities will continue to work in close co-operation with An Garda Síochána and other agencies in addressing anti-social behaviour and in carrying out their estate management functions.

POLICY 3.1

The Cork Local Authorities will ensure that future residential development takes maximum advantage of existing and future services and transportation links.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

(a) Ensure new development is prioritised in areas where services and infrastructure are already available or can be efficiently provided.

(b) Require higher density residential development in proximity to town centres.

(c) Require higher density residential development within a walking catchment area of public transport facilities, i.e. at points of access.

(d) Promote enhanced accessibility in all new residential developments including provision of pedestrian routes and cycleways.

(e) Promote sustainable travel patterns by locating new residential development in close proximity to city and town centres; within a walking distance of public transport facilities; and in close proximity to other compatible uses.

POLICY 3.2

The Cork Local Authorities will encourage mixed-use developments.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

(a) Adopt land-zoning policies in future development plans for appropriate mixed-use developments (thereby reducing demands for commuting to work / education and social facilities).

(b) Look favourably on applications for home based economic activities where, by virtue of their nature and scale, they can be accommodated without detriment to the amenities of residential areas.

POLICY 3.3

The Cork Local Authorities will promote the development of sustainable design solutions for future residential development.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

(a) In accordance with the provisions of the Urban Design Manual published by the DoEHLG in February 2008 the Cork Local Authorities will request the submission of design statements with applications.

(b) Encourage retention and use of existing natural and built features where appropriate.

(c) Encourage inclusive design which allows all people to use space in the same way on equal terms.

(d) Encourage sensitive refurbishment of under-utilised or obsolete buildings.

(e) Encourage skilful design at a range of appropriate densities and designs for adaptable housing units through promotion of existing design guidelines and review requirement for further design guidelines.

(f) Consider promoting architectural competitions for the design of residential developments, to encourage more sustainable designs for houses and residential neighbourhoods.

(g) Promote the concept of 'Lifecycle Housing', i.e. that housing is adaptable for people's needs as they change over their lifetime.

POLICY 3.4

The Cork Local Authorities will maximise the use of existing local authority housing stock.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

(a) Review the utilisation of the existing housing stock and assess the numbers of tenants willing to transfer to smaller units and under what conditions.

- (b) Consider regeneration programmes involving the re-design of existing Local Authority housing units and housing estate layouts such as those already pioneered by Cork City Council.
- (c) Promote good estate management as a means of maximising the use of Local Authority housing stock.
- (d) The local authorities will strive to reduce the length of time that a Local Authority house is left vacant between tenancies.

POLICY 3.5

The Cork Local Authorities will ensure clear demarcation between urban and rural land uses.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- (a) Prioritise the development of towns and villages with existing services, through land zoning policies and the prioritisation of infrastructural investment.
- (b) Where appropriate to the role and size of each settlement, provide for a range of different land uses to be accommodated within settlements, to ease pressure for development in the countryside.
- (c) Make optimum use of existing infrastructure and serviced land, by requiring development to take place at appropriate density levels.

POLICY 3.6

The Cork Local Authorities Housing Development will protect and enhance the Natural Environment.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- (a) Require applications for new developments to demonstrate that they are sensitive to the surrounding environment.
- (b) Require new developments to maintain vegetation and existing environmental features.
- (c) Promote the use of environmentally friendly / energy efficient construction materials and techniques.
- (d) Require the incorporation of appropriate open spaces into the overall design of new developments in line with the DoEHLG publication "Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Consultation Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities", 2008 (in line with the final adopted version when issued by the DoEHLG).
- (e) Promote sustainability initiatives in new and existing residential developments.

POLICY 4.1 The Cork Local Authorities will seek to ensure a safe residential environment.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- (a) Encourage the submission of a Public Realm Safety and Security Assessment, where appropriate, with all applications for new development in accordance with the criteria set out in the Urban Design Manual, DoEHLG, 2008, and ensure that all new local authority developments have regard to the same guidelines.

- (b) Liaise with the Garda Crime Prevention Unit in developing design guidelines for new public and private housing developments and in the design of new local authority estates.
- (c) Require applications for new developments to incorporate traffic calming methods within the development.
- (d) Continue to promote the establishment of residents associations in all developments and residents' participation in estate management programmes targeted at enhancing the safety of housing areas.

POLICY 4.2

The Cork Local Authorities will ensure the attractive design and layout of residential developments.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- (a) Require all applications for new development to demonstrate due regard to the latest government guidance documents on residential design issues e.g the overall design and layout of residential developments, including design standards for apartments and the creation of sustainable communities.
- (b) Require applications for new residential developments to ensure adequate provision of well-designed public and private open space, including provision of family-oriented recreation facilities.
- (c) Require applications for higher-density residential developments to provide appropriate laundry facilities and adequate storage space for domestic waste, including provision of 'user friendly' recycling facilities as part of the scheme.
- (d) Encourage skilful design through promotion of existing design guidelines and review the requirement for further design guidelines.

POLICY 4.3

The Cork Local Authorities will seek to maximise the provision of social infrastructure for residential areas.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- (a) Require future land zoning policies to make adequate provision for community facilities and essential services such as schools, shops, health centres and childcare services and to seek their provision concurrent with development.
- (b) Optimise and protect use of existing facilities and services, including established recreational facilities, amenity areas and open spaces.
- (c) Require applications for residential development to make provision for childcare facilities, as outlined in appropriate guidelines.
- (d) Require applications for residential development to address the need for open space and recreational facilities.

7 Implementation and Monitoring

- 7.1 The Cork Planning Authorities Joint Housing Strategy will become operational when it has been adopted into the relevant Development Plan following the completion of procedures to make or vary the Plan as set out under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- 7.2 Achieving the aims of the strategy, restated below, requires successful implementation of strategies policies and actions.
- a) To ensure that sufficient land is zoned to meet the housing requirements in the region for the lifetime of the development plan.
 - b) To ensure there is a mixture of house types and sizes to meet the needs of various households.
 - c) To ensure that housing is available for people on different income levels.
 - d) To provide for the need for both social and affordable housing.
- 7.3 Implementation of these policies can only be realised through integration with all the relevant bodies. There is a need in particular for:
- closer inter-departmental working within Local Authorities including, in particular, consultation between planning and housing departments prior to and during the preparation of future housing plans;
 - closer liaison between the Local Authorities within Cork;
 - enhanced consultation and co-operation between Local Authorities, Developers, Voluntary & Co-operative Housing Sector and other relevant agencies in the implementation of the strategy;
 - the development of Partnerships to deliver multi-tenure developments; · the development of imaginative design solutions to deliver multi-tenure developments; and
 - closer liaison with City & County Development Boards, Community and Special Needs Forums.
 - The facilitation of the establishment of a Joint Housing Strategy Stakeholders' Forum, to include representatives of the main stakeholder groups dealing with housing issues in Cork.
- 7.4 Among the key issues arising from the process of reviewing the Strategy have been the following:
- The need for the establishment of a Joint Housing Strategy Stakeholders' Forum. The purpose of establishing the Forum would be to assist the local authorities in the implementation and monitoring of the Housing Strategy and to facilitate greater cooperation and the exchange of information and ideas between the Local Authorities and Housing Stakeholders.
 - The importance of estate management and of continuing to resource and expand the remit of the Estate Management Units to improve the quality of estate management services provided. Through estate management the Cork Local Authorities will seek to safeguard the enjoyment of any house, building or land provided by the Local Authority,

and the enjoyment of any neighbouring private properties, through the promotion of good estate management.

- The need to enhance the administration of Part V and marketing of affordable housing schemes to improve public confidence in the Part V process and to increase the uptake of affordable housing.

Role of Cork Local Authorities

7.5 Cork Local Authorities play an important role in influencing housing outcomes in our City and County. The key roles of the Local Authority include: -

- *An Integrated Planning Role:* setting broad policy directions, and land use development strategies and policies; and where appropriate directly implementing these policies.
- *A Regulatory Role:* regulating land use development, building quality, the private rented sector and environmental health, in accordance with national and local planning frameworks.
- *A Promoting Role:* promoting development and working with community agencies and other levels of government for housing outcomes that best address the social, cultural and economic needs of residents.
- *An Amenity Role:* developing, maintaining and preserving open space, parklands, recreational areas and physical infrastructure, so that the residential amenity of local areas is improved.
- *A Facilitating Role:* assisting in the leverage of funds and facilitating development opportunities that create affordable and social housing opportunities.
- *A Landowner Role:* using the Local Authorities' role as landowner to directly influence the market for housing to achieve established objectives.

7.6 It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act that the Housing Strategy is reviewed every two years or sooner if there is a significant change in the housing market or in National Spatial Planning Policy. To facilitate this review and to assess if policies of the strategy are being achieved monitoring of the strategy will be essential. In addition it is important that trends in house prices and incomes are kept under review.

7.7 Systems must be put in place to ensure that the necessary data is recorded on an ongoing basis in a usable manner by all of the authorities and where possible recorded in a consistent manner to allow effective analysis of data. The authorities will need to cooperatively develop a range of indicators. It is hoped that the compilation of adequate and accurate data by the County Council will be made possible with the development of the new HOME computer system and the new Part V add-on to the system developed by the County Council. The availability of adequate data will facilitate more effective integration with and within Cork Local Authorities.

APPENDIX 1: HOUSING STRATEGY IN CONTEXT

NATIONAL PLANS/ STRATEGIES

National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is a twenty- year strategic planning framework whose aim is to achieve more balanced social, economic and physical development and population growth between the regions. The NSS introduced the concepts of gateways and hubs; Cork being a gateway and Mallow identified as a hub. The NSS sets the context for spatial planning to inform regional planning guidelines and strategies and county and city development plans and strategies and to inform strategic investment, transport and other infrastructure policy decisions.

The NSS acknowledges that access to high quality and affordable housing in the right locations is an important spatial planning issue because of its quality of life, economic and environmental dimensions. Therefore, the provision of an effective supply of high quality and affordable housing is a priority of the Strategy. The NSS estimated housing demand for an additional 84,000 households in the Southwest region (Cork & Kerry) by 2020 based on current demographic trends, and 135,000 additional households in a scenario of economic growth.

Atlantic Gateways Initiative

The Atlantic Gateways Initiative derived from the NSS, which signalled that Ireland's best prospects for developing a critical mass to complement and counterbalance that achieved in Dublin was to combine the strengths and potential of some of the other Gateways, namely, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford (including the areas in between) to achieve more balanced regional development. In order to provide a serious alternative to the Greater Dublin Area, the rate of population growth in the cities of the Atlantic Gateways will have to substantially exceed the capital.

One of the policy priorities of the Atlantic Gateways Initiative is the promotion of sustainable communities, whereby the Atlantic Gateways could be promoted by highlighting innovative, high quality and affordable housing and living options.

National Development Plan 2007 - 2013

The prioritisation of regional development and enhanced social inclusion are some of the strategic policy goals of the National Development Plan (NDP).

Over €21 billion is allocated to investment in Housing in the NDP as part of the Social Infrastructure Priority, to give assistance to 140,000 households through social, affordable and voluntary housing schemes. Of this, €17 billion will be invested in social housing, with the aim of delivering a greater quantity of social housing options and improving overall quality of the tenure. Enhanced housing output reflected in the ten year social partnership agreement, Towards 2016, will result in 60,000 new social units being delivered over the plan period, with 27,000 of these new social housing units in the period 2007-2009. This will embrace meeting special housing needs (the homeless, travellers, older people and people with disabilities).

Over €4 billion is to be invested in affordable housing to support people seeking accommodation in the owner occupied sector, with an estimated 40,000 households benefiting from affordable housing. Of this 40,000 total, 17,000 units will be delivered in the 2007-2009 period. The upgrading of certain private accommodation for those in particular

need such as disabled persons and people with disabilities is also included in this sub-programme.

Private rental assistance in the form of the new Rental Accommodation Scheme and the traditional rent supplements under the Supplementary Welfare Allowances Scheme are also included in the budget for Housing.

Towards 2016 – Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015

The document sets out the rationale for the longer-term perspective being adopted in the agreement to realise its vision of Ireland in the future, and outlines other key national and sectoral policy instruments and strategies in place to meet the challenges ahead. It considers the wider policy framework, including macroeconomic policy, and building a new social policy perspective, founded on the lifecycle approach. Government investment in housing is outlined.

The adoption of the lifecycle framework is a key innovative feature of the Agreement.

The agreement, seeking to ensure that all housing is seen as being on an equal footing whether provided fully by the State or supported in some way, sets out the main area of focus to achieve the objectives of creating sustainable communities as follows:

- Continuing improvements in the quality of houses and neighbourhoods, including improvement of consumer information in relation to housing;
- Providing tailored housing services to those who cannot afford to meet their own housing needs, and in this way responding to the broad spectrum of housing need;
- Developing inter-agency cooperation where there is a care dimension;
- Maintaining the impetus for the delivery of housing at affordable prices to the market, including through State supported schemes, and other appropriate innovations, such as measures to support first time buyers;
- Progressing the social housing reform agenda set out in the Housing Policy Framework.

REGIONAL POLICY

Regional Planning Guidelines, May 2004

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) are set within the context and framework of the NSS, and also encompass the Cork Area Strategic Plan and the North and West Cork Strategic Plan. Some of the key goals of the RPGs are:

- Developing the Cork Gateway as a dynamic and progressive European City Region, attractive to investment and as the primary counterfoil to Dublin,
- Achieving critical mass in the hub town of Mallow,
- Developing the potential of other towns and villages,
- Developing educational, health, recreational and cultural facilities which will help facilitate the development of the Region and,
- Integrating land use and infrastructure provision.

In developing a Regional Strategy, the RPGs identify four regional development zones. Figures are provided for planned population growth and the resultant requirement for additional housing units for each of the zones.

The RPGs recognise that, in line with projected population growth and employment levels, housing provision will need to respond in a very proactive manner, to ensure that the growth can be secured. They also acknowledge that many of the towns in the County are under residential development pressure and that while residential development can play an important role in the regeneration of the towns, increasing critical mass and hence, service

levels and employment, care needs to be taken to direct such growth to the towns and villages to maximise the benefits from such development.

STRATEGIC PLANS

Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001 – 2020

The Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) was jointly commissioned by Cork City and Cork County Councils and provides a vision and a strategy for the development of the Cork City Region up to 2020. The NSS endorses the CASP as the basis for guiding development in Cork and surrounding areas.

The strategy provides general guidance on the direction and scale of growth so the potential of the sub region can be maximised and critical mass attained. Key issues identified in CASP are as follows:

- the regeneration of Cork City, with a particular focus on the Docklands area for re-vitalisation as a mixed use area,
- development of Metropolitan Cork as an integrated unit and rebalancing the growth of the City by directing development to the north and eastern sides of the City along the rail corridor,
- a fully integrated public transport system,
- focusing the development effort on the ring towns and towns and villages, to create a compact sustainable form, served by public transport.
- growth should be employment led to avoid creating dormitory towns.
- development should be Plan and infrastructure led.

North and West Cork Strategic Plan 2002 – 2020

The North and West Cork Strategic Plan 2002-2020 (NWCSP) focuses on areas outside of the CASP area and recognises that the core development issue facing north and west Cork is that of continuous decline in population. The principle recommendations of the NWCSP are as follows:

- Raise the productive potential of the economy by focusing industrial development geographically in a number of areas e.g. Clonakilty, Macroom and the corridor between Charleville and Mallow;
- Optimise spatial development patterns as an essential requirement for infrastructure development – weakness of the County's urban fabric represents a serious threat to the sustainability of communities. Low density development means that providing infrastructure and services is very costly and threatens competitiveness. A major programme of town and village renewal and development is required and a much greater proportion of new housing should be directed to villages.
- Good infrastructure and supporting services, and easy access to them, is essential for maintaining vibrant rural communities.
- Development needs to incorporate environmental sustainability and improve environmental quality in key areas of water quality, transport, energy, coastal zone management and waste.

COUNTY AND LOCAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Cork County Development Plan 2003 (as varied)

The Cork County Development Plan 2003 (as varied) was adopted in January 2003 and provides the framework for development and planning in the County for the next six years. The County Development Plan took its guidance from the 20-year strategy provided in CASP

and the N&WCSP (for the remainder of the County outside the CASP area). The local area plans were informed by the County Development Plan, which sets out policies and objectives for the planning of local areas. The Cork County Development Plan 2003 (as varied) has a vision for the County that is based on four strategic goals, as follows:

- Enhanced quality of life for all based on high-quality residential, working and recreational environments, and sustainable transportation patterns,
- sustainable patterns of growth in urban and rural areas that are well balanced throughout the County, together with efficient provision of social and physical infrastructure,
- sustainable and balanced economic investment, together with wise management of the County's environmental and cultural assets, and
- responsible guardianship of the County, so that it can be handed on to future generations in a healthy state.

The Cork County Development Plan is currently being reviewed and this Strategy will be adopted as part of the 2009-2015 Cork County Development Plan.

Cork City Development Plan 2004 (as varied)

The City Plan was adopted on 8th December 2003 and came into effect on 5th January 2004. It seeks to develop and improve the economic, social, cultural and environmental health of the City and has three interrelated goals:

- To promote and provide for the sustainable development of Cork City enabling it to fulfil its role as a Gateway city,
- To promote social inclusion and to facilitate equality of access to employment, education, transport, suitable housing and social and cultural facilities,
- To provide for a high quality natural and built environment and improved quality of life for those living, working in and visiting the City.

These goals are developed through more specific strategic aims, which in turn are to be realised through a series of integrated strategies detailed in the Plan. The regeneration of the Docklands area is one of a number of strategic aims listed.

The Cork City Development Plan is currently being reviewed and this Strategy will be adopted as part of the 2009-2015 Cork City Development Plan.

The Integrated Strategy for the Economic, Social & Cultural Development of County Cork, 2002 – 2011

The County Development Board Strategy identifies key challenges facing County Cork and sets out a detailed programme to address these issues and challenges. The Strategy seeks to improve the potential of all areas of the County to ensure balanced, sustainable development through investment in infrastructure, job creation, education and social and cultural activities. The goals identified will be achieved by the following actions:

- Provide effective infrastructure, to support sustainable development in County Cork,
- A widespread distribution of employment opportunities and economic growth,
- Improve the quality of life for all,
- Provide equal access and opportunity to education and training,
- Raise education attainment levels.

City Strategy – 'Imagine our future' – Cork 2002 – 2012 Integrated Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development

This is a ten-year strategy that sets out a vision for Cork City in 2012 - 'Cork... is globally competitive and has a rich quality of life that embraces diversity of culture, provides equality of opportunity for all and represents an ethos of dynamism, excellence and high quality'. The Strategy is formulated on the basis of seven themes, being:

1. Cork and its external role
2. Cork's image
3. Identity of the community of Cork
4. Integrated service provision
5. Quality of life in the City
6. Equality within the community
7. Cork as a city of learning

Goals, objectives and actions are attached to each theme.

City & County Housing Action Plans 2004-2008

Multi-annual action plan for social and affordable housing were introduced in 2004, to translate the objectives for social and affordable housing in the housing strategies into specific delivery plans and to provide a more integrated and holistic approach to planning and delivering these programmes, including delivery of housing by the voluntary and co-operative housing sector.

A mid-term review of the Action Plans is currently being finalised by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Amongst the recommendations arising from the review are that Action Plans should be put on a statutory basis to recognise their importance as a tool for planning housing provision and this is confirmed in the Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities policy document.

As set out in Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities, the next round of Housing Action Plans will be informed by;

- Housing Strategies (as revised based on Census 2006)
- Demand for affordable housing (based on updated housing strategy)
- Assessment of need for social housing supports (based on new methodology).
- The audit of existing social housing and an assessment of accommodation availability to determine the role that the private rented sector may play.
- Strategies for special needs housing including Homeless Action Plans and Traveller Accommodation plans.
- Requirement for housing renewal and regeneration.

Local Authorities will be obliged to prepare three year rolling implementation plans to deliver on the targets set out in the action plans and these will be reviewed annually by the DoEHLG. New guidelines on the preparation of Housing Action Plans will be published following the mid-term review, experience to date and recent policy direction.

Town Council Plans

There are nine Town Councils within Cork County who prepare statutory development plans; Clonakilty, Cobh, Fermoy, Kinsale, Macroom, Mallow, Midleton, Skibbereen and Youghal.

Clonakilty Development Plan 2003

The plan was adopted in 2003 and the main aims are identified as the maintaining of employment and the creation of greater awareness of the environment. The plan also endorses the main planning goals of the County Development Plan. In relation to housing,

the plan acknowledges the increase in demand for town centre housing, which has invigorated the inner town and alleviated ribbon development on the outskirts. Some of the housing policy objectives contained in the plan are; to provide adequate serviced land to meet private and public housing needs; to continue to improve residential amenities, and; to revitalise the residential potential of the town through infill housing and the re-use of upper floors of commercial properties. Specific housing objectives are also included in relation to matters such as housing layout, landscaping, open space, special needs housing etc. The plan is currently being reviewed and a new plan is expected to be adopted in December 2009

Cobh Development Plan 2005

The town council area contains a limited amount of undeveloped residential zoned land as the majority of the residential land bank is in the environs of the town which is under the jurisdiction of Cork County Council. The strategic objectives of the Cobh Development Plan (adopted in 2005) in relation to Housing are; to work with Cork County Council in providing an overall drainage strategy to guide private developers in the provision of drainage facilities serving residential development in the Cobh environs; to continue to improve residential amenities; to revitalise the residential potential of the town through infill housing and the re-use of upper floors of commercial properties. Other detailed specific objectives are included in relation to landscaping, open space provision, density, energy efficiency etc.

Fermoy Development Plan 2004

As in the case of Cobh, there is a limited amount of zoned residential land within the town boundary and much of the recent residential development has taken place on the zoned lands in the environs of the town under the control of the County Council. It is a policy of the town development plan to encourage the towns people of Fermoy to inhabit the town as a vibrant, sustainable community by providing a high quality living environment and to settle the pattern of future growth through the designation for the use of particular areas for particular purposes and the appropriate servicing of selected areas. The specific housing objectives echo those of other town plans; to provide adequate serviced land to meet private and public housing needs; to continue to improve residential amenities; to revitalise the residential potential of the town through infill housing and the re-use of upper floors of commercial properties; to provide a high quality living environment which is important for sustaining communities. Other specific objectives are included relating to layout, naming of new developments, appropriate finishes and materials, connectivity of housing areas, diversity in design etc.

Kinsale Development Plan 2003

Planning Policy in relation to Housing in Kinsale Town is based on a number of stated planning principles including; the need to sustain and support the local resident population in the town, through the provision of a range of affordable housing and house types as well as year round employment and community facilities; the need to masterplan important sites to balance the threats of inappropriate residential development; ensure that all new residential developments are well linked and permeable as is in character with the area; provide guidance on the quality of new build and restorations to maintain standards; and, encourage high density and infill development within the town provided it is in keeping with the character of the area. Specific objectives in relation to a range of housing matters including, estate design and layout, provision of open space within residential developments, the naming of new developments and residential densities are stated in the plan. The plan is currently being reviewed and a new plan is expected to be adopted by the end of 2009.

Macroom Development Plan 2003

Macroom Town Council has a very large boundary so, unlike some other Town Council areas, there is no shortage of land for the expansion of the built area of the town within this boundary. The plan sets out population and household targets for the town and adequate lands to accommodate this level of growth have been zoned. The 2001 Housing Strategy is incorporated into the plan and it is a specific objective of the plan to secure the

implementation of those parts of the plan that apply to the town council area. It is the Housing Policy of the Council to encourage well planned residential development within the Urban Area and to discourage ribbon development. Some of the other specific housing objectives include; to carry out an Action Plan for undeveloped lands north of the town within the bypass; to ensure that prime development lands within walking distance of the town centre are used at the higher range of densities and to acquire land for Local Authority Housing in the town. The Town Development Plan was adopted in 2003 and the review of the plan has commenced. A new Plan is expected to be adopted in 2009.

Mallow Development Plan 2004

This Plan was adopted in 2004 and one of the strategic development principles relating to housing is to 'consolidate and strengthen urban form both north and south of the River Blackwater and improve the quality of residential neighbourhoods through better interconnectivity and accessibility to community facilities and services'. Detailed policy and specific objectives in relation to Housing are contained in Chapter 5 of the Plan and the 2001 Housing Strategy has been incorporated into the plan. Policies in the plan include, regeneration of existing neighbourhoods, policies on housing densities, provision of open space and mix of house types and sizes.

Midleton Development Plan 2003

The Midleton Development Plan was adopted in 2003. The Town has a restricted development boundary such that much of the recent development in the town has taken place outside of the boundary in the area under the control of the County Council, and consequently limited scope for provision of social and affordable housing by the Town Council. The plan recognises the large waiting list and the need to progress infill schemes as a matter of urgency. The policy objectives for Housing are stated as; to encourage residential development within the town area and to co-operate with Cork County Council in implementing the CASP objectives for a major increase in housing in the Midleton area; to implement the Housing Strategy and minimise the creation of large single class housing areas, and; to protect and improve existing residential amenities. A number of specific objectives are included for housing - to acquire derelict and under-utilised sites in the town for Infill Council housing and to co-operate with the private sector in the provision of housing where possible. The Plan was varied in 2005 to take account of the provisions of the Midleton Special Local Area Plan 2005, as they relate to the Town Council area. The variation included a new specific objective to secure the provision of at least 1,000 new dwellings within the Town Council area from mid 2003 up to the year 2020.

Skibbereen Development Plan 2004

The Skibbereen Development Plan zoned over 140 acres of undeveloped land for residential use, which is more than adequate to cater for the growth of the town in the plan period. The Housing and Community Facilities Policy Objectives are stated as follows; to provide adequate serviced land to meet private and public housing needs; to continue to improve residential amenities; to revitalise the residential potential of the town through infill housing and the re-use of upper floors of commercial properties; to continue to improve educational and civic amenities including open space and to preserve and improve the towns social facilities and amenities, with particular emphasis on the improvement of the river front. Numerous specific objectives are listed in the plan relating to issues such as estate design and layout, landscaping, special needs housing and provision of community facilities.

Youghal Development Plan 2003

Youghal Development Plan was adopted in 2003 – the Plan is currently being reviewed with a new plan due for adoption in 2009. The current plan confirms that there is adequate zoned and serviceable land within the town council area to meet projected housing demand for the plan period, though the need to progress schemes to address the large waiting list for social housing is also acknowledged. The policy objectives for Housing identified in the plan are as follows; to provide adequate serviced land to meet private and public housing needs; to

encourage residential development within the Urban area and to secure the co-operation of Cork County Council in discouraging ribbon development on the approach roads to the town; to provide sufficient public housing to meet future demand; to minimise the creation of disproportionately large single class housing areas, and; to protect and improve existing residential amenities. It is also an objective of the Plan to secure the objectives of the 2001 Housing Strategy.

Local Area Plans

In September 2005, the County Council adopted 10 electoral area local area plans for Bandon, Bantry, Blarney, Carrigaline, Fermoy, Kanturk, Macroom, Mallow, Midleton and Skibbereen electoral areas. They represent the final step in achieving countywide coverage of plans from the strategic to the detailed local level. These plans bring forward the development plan policies at the local level and address the planning issues faced in the villages and rural areas for the County, including the establishment of the settlement hierarchy for the electoral area and the detailed planning policy and zoning maps for the settlements. Three Special Local Area Plans have been adopted for Midleton, Carrigtwohill and Blarney-Kilbarry that will guide new development to take advantage of the proposals to establish a suburban rail network for Cork including the opening of new railway stations on this section of the route. The County Council, together with Mallow Town Council have also adopted a Special Local Area Plan for Mallow that takes account of the towns 'hub' status arising from the National Spatial Strategy – this plan was adopted on 25th June 2007.

The Cork Docklands Development Strategy adopted by the City Council in 2001, sets out a long term vision for the Docklands area of the City that builds on the unique character of Cork and the dramatic setting of the Docklands. The North Docks Local Area Plan was adopted in 2005 on foot of this strategy to provide more detailed guidance to realise the vision set out in the strategy. The South Docks Local Area Plan was adopted by the City Council in February 2008. This Plan envisages 20,000 people living in the South Docks area by 2027 and 25,000 persons employed in the area.

Non-statutory Area Action Plans (AAPs) have also been adopted for a number of areas of the City where it is envisaged that the City Council will have a driving role in delivering change, namely Cornmarket Street Area Action Plan, Blackrock Village Area Action Plan, Bishopstown & Wilton Area Action Plan and Coburg Street & St. Patrick's Hill Area Action Plan. The City Council also intends to prepare a Farranferris Local Plan.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE AND LEGISLATION **Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002**

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002, inter alia, amends Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 in order to ensure a more timely delivery of social and affordable housing units. The Amendment Act gives developers more choice in the means by which they can choose to comply with the requirements of Part V, including the options of land off-site and a cash payment. When any option other than the transfer of land on-site is being considered, the Act sets out the matters that must be considered by the Planning Authority, being; whether such an agreement will contribute effectively and efficiently to the achievement of the objectives of the housing strategy; whether it constitutes the best use of the resources of the housing authority to ensure an adequate supply of housing; the need to counteract undue social segregation; whether it is in accordance with the provisions of the development plan and, the time within which housing is likely to be provided as a consequence of the agreement.

The Act also amended Part V of the Principal Act that related to the withering of certain permissions so as to restore the normal limit for the duration of planning permission. The payment of a levy to the local authority for houses/ apartments not completed to wall plate

level was introduced on those permissions that would have otherwise been subject to the withering rule.

The Amendment Act also reduced the size of a site for which an exemption certificate can be obtained from 0.2 hectares to 0.1 hectares.

Circular AHS 4/06 - Guidelines on Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2002 – 2006: Implementation Issues

Guidelines were issued by the Minister in November 2006 covering two main areas: i) the planning application process and the need to ensure Part V compliance, and ii) a standardised approach for the sale of affordable homes directly by developers/ builders to applicants nominated by the local authority.

Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2008

The Bill, published in July 2008, is to improve housing services and their delivery by giving effect to the programme of social housing reform measures outlined in the Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities policy document published in February 2007. Among the key provisions of the bill are the introduction of a new incremental purchase scheme, the introduction of new powers in relation to anti-social behaviour and the removal of the clawback anomaly.

Housing Refugees: Good Practice in Housing Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities

This document, produced by the Housing Unit in 2003 in conjunction with the DoEHLG and the City and County Managers Association, gives guidance on the steps that Local Authorities should implement in order to achieve good practice in the various aspects of their housing management function. It draws on practical examples of reforms that have been put in place in different authorities around the country and provides checklists of the different stages that should be followed in implementing good practice.

It outlines policies and issues which have implications for the practice of housing refugees, and the aims and objectives of good practice in housing refugees. The guidelines make a number of good practice recommendations under the following headings – planning and strategic management of housing services for refugees (including housing strategies), good practice in housing provision for refugees, and racism and ethnic monitoring.

Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities, February 2007

'Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities' is the government's statement of housing policy. It sets out a range of actions aimed at; building sustainable communities, responding to housing need in a way that improves choice and tailors support taking account of the households position in the life-cycle, and the effective delivery of housing programmes. Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities sets out the policy context to ensure the best use of the investment in housing earmarked in the NDP. Some of the specific actions set out in the document include

- the introduction of new schemes¹³ to support social housing tenants seeking home ownership and a reformed grant scheme to adapt housing to meet the needs of the elderly and people with a disability,

¹³ Such as the incremental purchase scheme, based on the development of the 'shared equity' concept whereby tenants would be allowed to use their rental payments to build up an equity stake in a local authority house in an incremental fashion in return for paying a premium on the rent and taking over

- guidance to local authorities to support the building of sustainable communities and introduction of the requirement for new proposals for social housing to be "sustainable community proofed",
- introduction of a Sustainable Communities Fund (€8m in 2007) to support regeneration and tackle anti-social behaviour,
- new legislation to support the social housing reform programme and use of land, and
- focus on maintaining quality of the social housing stock.
- Since Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities was published, a new set of best practice design guidelines, Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, have been produced which replace the Social Housing Design Guidelines.

Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Statement on Housing Policy 2007

These guidelines, published by the DoEHLG, are intended to assist in the implementation of policies set out in Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities. The aim of the guidelines is to identify principles and criteria that are important in the design of housing and to highlight specific design features, requirements and standards of relevance.

Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Consultation Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities, February 2008)

This revises and updates the Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities published in 1999.

It sets out a range of policy recommendations regarding:

- the key role of Development Plans and Local Area Plans in setting out policies and standards for sustainable development,
- the role of urban design in creating sustainable communities (including 12 best practice design guide criteria) with particular reference to design and layout of housing schemes,
- key components of sustainable residential development in urban areas,
- the promotion of higher density development in appropriate areas and the appropriate densities and forms of development in smaller settlements,
- issues affecting individual dwellings and quality of life, and
- implementation issues.

Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide, February 2008

This documents complements the above document focusing largely on the issues presented in housing schemes in the 30-50 unit per hectare density range. The guide provides best practice advice on the practical implementation of the policies contained in the guidelines. It is based around 12 questions that have been drawn up to encapsulate the range of design considerations for residential development within the context of neighbourhood, site and home with each question being responded to by a range of positive indicators.

The core aim of the Guide is to provide developers, designers and planners with the information and support they need to improve the design quality and sustainability of the development schemes with which they are intended.

Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, April 2005

These guidelines, published by the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government in April 2005, differentiate between urban and rural generated housing and the variety of different areas in any county that both types impact upon. The document reinforces the main principles of the National Spatial Strategy in this regard. Reference is made throughout the document to contrasts in development trends between rural depopulation in

responsibility for the maintenance of the dwelling. Each of the questions is illustrated with examples of best practice from Ireland and further afield.

some areas and strong pressure for development in rural areas close to urban centres. The guidelines state that tailored settlement policies should be included in development plans. Other sections of the guidelines focus on more practical/technical issues in the assessment of planning applications from both engineering and environmental/heritage perspectives.

Rental Accommodation Scheme

The Rental Accommodation Scheme was introduced in 2005. The scheme is for people who are receiving rent supplement, usually for more than 18 months, and who need long-term housing. The objective of the scheme is that rent supplement recipients will have their long-term housing need catered for by local authorities using accommodation based solutions.

The achievement of the above objective seeks to realise the following benefits:

- minimise dependence on the rent supplement scheme [for recipients with long-term accommodation needs],
- facilitate social mix through providing a wider geographical spread of social housing through RAS,
- expand the amount of private rented accommodation available on a long-term basis for SWA/RIS tenants through the procurement of new rental accommodation on a long-term basis,
- improve the quality, suitability and usage of private rented accommodation,
- achieve better value for money in provision of accommodation for persons in need of long-term social housing,
- co-ordinate and integrate the efforts of local authorities, voluntary and cooperative housing bodies and the private sector in the provision of long-term housing supports,
- improve tenant choice through the creation of a graduated system of housing supports.

Local authorities will enter into contractual arrangements with accommodation providers to secure the medium to long-term availability of private rented accommodation for the RAS. It is expected that over time housing authorities will build up a register of private-rented accommodation to which they will nominate RAS recipients.

Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments:

These guidelines were issued by the DoEHLG in September 2007 and are intended to replace the 'Guidelines on Residential Developments in Urban Renewal Designated Tax Incentive Areas'. They provide minimum standards for :

- Floor areas for different types of apartments,
- Storage spaces,
- Sizes for apartment balconies / patios, and
- Room dimensions for certain rooms.

Residential Density Guidelines

The Residential Density Guidelines were published in September 1999 and promote higher residential densities in city/town centres, brownfield sites, inner suburban/ infill sites, other suburban/ Greenfield sites, institutional lands and towns and villages. The guidelines promote the most effective use of zoned land by avoiding low density sprawl and promotion of efficiency in the use of energy, transport and natural resources. Both the City and County Councils have adopted policies in their development plans to reflect the objectives of the Guidelines. Much of the substantive policy content of the guidelines has been carried forward into Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Consultation Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities published in February 2008.

APPENDIX 2: MARKET AREA PROFILES:

As part of the 2001 Joint Housing Strategy Housing Market Areas¹⁴ were established to facilitate analysis at sub county level based on the following criteria:

- Strategic Plans – Both the Cork Area Strategic Plan and, North and West Strategic Plan demarcate a number of areas within their respective studies. To optimise the work and information contained within these studies, the market areas share boundaries at all feasible locations with the Strategic Plans.
- House Price Survey – The Housing Market Survey results were used to identify sub-areas and consolidate market areas already defined.
- Demographic & Socio-economic Analysis - Demographic and socio-economic data was used to establish the profile of each area and further consolidate area differences. Important factors include population and household change/densities and employment statistics.
- Other Factors – Regard was also had to other relevant factors such as distribution of social housing, significant infrastructure and development plans.

Metropolitan Area:

The Metropolitan Area includes Cork City, suburbs, and the Metropolitan Towns of Ballincollig, Blarney, Carrigaline, Carrigtwohill, Cobh, Glanmire/Riverstown, Midleton, Passage West and Tower. The area is co-terminus with Metropolitan Cork as defined in CASP and is further divided into North, South and East Metropolitan Areas.

In 2006 the population of Metropolitan Cork was 272,541 representing an increase of almost 6% over 2002 population of 257,355. East Metropolitan experienced 19.7% population growth; south metropolitan 4.9% and north metropolitan experienced the least growth at just 0.47% above 2002 levels. Expected annual population growth rates between 2006 and 2020 for Metropolitan East, South and North are 4.31%, 1.18% and 2.47% respectively.

The Metropolitan area is expected to absorb a significant population and jobs growth over the next 20 years. This requires very deliberate measures to encourage a significant shift towards development locations that can be made accessible by good public transport facilities particularly rail.

The Area is an important employment hub, and generates significant inward commuting. Significant employment areas include the City Centre, which has high concentrations of office and retail employment. Cork Airport and Harbour, including Ringaskiddy and Cobh, is a major employer in port related and pharmaceutical industries, with Ringaskiddy in particular containing a number of chemical industries. Cork Airport and associated business park is a substantial employer.

Little Island, located in the East Metropolitan Area, is a significant employment centre including manufacturing, warehousing, engineering and office related activities.

Significant employment sectors in the North Metropolitan Area include light industry, and business and technology.

¹⁴ A comprehensive list of the DEDs/Wards in each housing market area is contained in Appendix 6

Average new house prices in 2006 vary from €383,616 in the South Metropolitan Area to €356,215 and €342,514 in the North and East Metropolitan Areas respectively. Significant concentrations of social housing are prevalent in the North Metropolitan Area, particularly within the Cork City Council area.

Ring Area:

The Ring Area skirts the Metropolitan Area – it includes the ring towns of Bandon, Macroom, Mallow, Fermoy and Youghal. The Metropolitan Area exerts a strong influence on this Area particularly with regard to employment. Youghal and hinterland is sub-divided based mainly on a weaker housing market.

In 2006 the area had a population of 92,017 representing an increase of 14% over the 2002 figure of 80,648. Between 2006 and 2020 the area is expected to experience a population growth rate of approximately 1.18% per annum.

A considerable amount of commuting takes place to the Metropolitan area, however there are a number of important employment areas within the Ring area also. It includes the hub town of Mallow which has strong agricultural and freight related industries. Bandon and hinterland has a number of retail and agriculturally based industries. Fermoy accommodates significant employment in high tech and office based industry.

The average price for a new house in the Youghal and hinterland area in 2006 was € 287,712 and in the remainder of the Ring area was €331,487.

South Coast:

The South Coast covers the entire coastline west of Cork Harbour. It includes the ring town of Kinsale.

In 2006 the area had a population of 58,125 representing an increase of 8% over 2002 figure of 53,810. Between 2006 and 2020 the area is expected to experience a population growth rate of approximately 0.64% per annum.

Population densities are low in the more peripheral area, such as Beara and Sheeps Head peninsulas.

Traditionally tourism has been a major employer in the area but in recent years there has been growth in alternative industries such as high-tech industries in Clonakilty.

The average price for a new house in the Kinsale area in 2006 was €388,962, in the Clonakilty/Skibbereen area it was €342,514 and in the Bantry/Castletownbere area it was €315,113

North and West Rural:

The North and West Rural area extends westerly from Macroom, and stretches Northwards from Dunmanway to the County Boundary.

In 2006 the area had a population of 36,061 representing an increase of 4% over 2002 figure of 34,658. Between 2006 and 2020 the area is expected to experience a population growth rate of approximately 0.96% per annum.

The Rockchapel (Northwest corner) area has experienced population loss in the last two censuses. The area has a low population density and lacks major settlements. There is a

high proportion of elderly and large outmigration of young adults, particularly females, giving the area an unbalanced demographic structure.

There is a significant manufacturing industry located within the Ballydesmond/Knocknagree area. Elsewhere farming and agriculturally related industries are the main sources of employment. There are few significant growth industries in the area however there is potential to diversify and develop a mix of manufacturing and service industry. Much of Kanturk is within the journey to work catchment of Tralee/Killarney as well as Cork.

The average price for a new house in the area in 2006 was €274,011.

Charleville / Mitchelstown:

This area includes the towns of Mitchelstown and Charleville and their respective hinterlands. The area is differentiated from the North and West Rural area by the existence of two main arterial routes, higher population densities and stronger housing and employment markets.

In 2006 the area had a population of 22,551 representing an increase of 5.6% over 2002 figure of 21,358. Between 2006 and 2020 the area is expected to experience a population growth rate of approximately 1.07% per annum.

Farming and in particular agriculturally related industries such as dairy products are the main source of employment. This area falls within the Atlantic Gateways Corridor.

The average price for a new house in the area in 2006 was €306,759

APPENDIX 3: CONSULTATION PROCESS:

Relevant consultation material for the Housing Strategy has been drawn from four main sources:

- Submission and observations received during the Draft Joint Housing Strategy public consultation period of 14th December 2007 to 22nd February 2008. Twelve such submissions were received.
- Response to a press advertisement placed on behalf of all the planning authorities involved in the Joint Housing Strategy Review. Three submissions were received at this stage.
- Relevant responses to invitations for submissions made by the County Council with regard to the review of its development plan.
- Relevant issues raised during a stakeholders workshop organised by the County Council with regard to the review of its' development plan; and
- The County Council's Housing Land Availability Study that was prepared in September 2006 in consultation with the Construction Industry Federation.

APPENDIX 4: 2006 HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY STUDY DEFINITIONS

The following definitions were used in the compilation of the County Council's Housing Land Availability Study tables:

- **Gross Area:** The total area of the parcel of zoned land in hectares;
- **Net Housing Area:** The area (in hectares) within the zoned land parcel that is suitable for housing development.
- **Number of units completed Summer 2006:** The number of housing units within the zoned land parcel that were completed (ready for occupation) at the baseline date of the study.
- **Number of units under construction Summer 2006:** The number of housing units within the zoned land parcel that were under construction at the baseline date of the study. For the purposes of the study units were considered to be under construction where site works had commenced.
- **Number of units not started but with permission at Summer 2006:** The number of housing units for which planning permission had been granted but where construction had not started at the baseline date of the study. Both full and outline planning permissions are included in this category.
- **Estimated number of units on remainder of zoned land:** This figure has been calculated on a site-by-site basis using the portion of the net housing area where permission has yet to be granted and an estimate of the density that is likely to be achieved in a future planning permission. Account has been taken of factors such as the character of neighbouring development and the topography of the area.
- **Number of units which can commence immediately:** Sites or the phases of sites where development has not started but can commence immediately. Sites included in this category are the subject of a full planning permission.
- **Number of units which can commence in less than two years:** Sites or the phases of sites where development cannot commence immediately, but where any constraint to development is likely to be overcome in time for dwellings to commence within 2 years.
- **Number of units which can commence in more than two years but less than five years:** Sites or the phases of sites where development cannot commence immediately, but where the constraint to development is likely to be overcome in time for dwellings to commence in more than 2 but less than 5 years;
- **Number of units which are unlikely to commence within five years:** Sites or the phases of sites where development is unlikely to commence within 5 years by virtue of major physical constraints or other constraints.

Appendix 5: Estimated social and affordable housing need

Calculation of the percentage of households which are eligible for either social or affordable housing:

1: The difference between the average disposable income in 2001 and in 2004 was calculated:

$$18,869 - 15,629 = 3,240 \text{ (this equates to a 20.730692\% difference)}$$

2: Using Bacon's 'Income Bands' provided in Table 5 of Vol 2 of the 2001 Housing Strategy an Income Band figure was calculated for 2004 by increasing each income band provided by Bacon by 20.730692%. Each individual income band was then split into each of the Housing Market Areas.

3: The number of new households within the relevant income band could be identified by Housing Market Area by using the same proportions used in the 2001 analysis for the 2004 analysis. This identifies the number of new households required for each Housing Market Area for 2004.

4: The Monthly disposable income was identified by dividing each income band by 12. Based on the annuity formula, the percentage of households which are eligible for either social or affordable housing is established. This calculation is executed by establishing the monthly repayment rate on an 'entry level' new home in each housing market area and establishing the number of households for whom 35% of net disposable income would allow them to meet this repayment.

In estimating the social and affordable housing need from 2006 to 2020 the following steps have been taken:

1. The total number of households likely to need social or affordable housing between 2006 and 2020 is estimated as 38,900, this figure being 45.3% of overall housing need. It is assumed that this percentage, suggested by the demographic and income distribution assessment of affordability, will remain constant over 20 years.
2. Added to this figure is an estimation of the current net social and affordable housing need. Affordable housing need is difficult to quantify as it only becomes apparent when a scheme is advertised. The best available information on which to base an estimation of social housing need is the social housing waiting lists. Available sources of data are the housing needs assessment (HNA) returns made to the DoEHLG triannually and the local authority waiting lists. As stated in section 5, it is supposed here that 65% of the current housing waiting list is a reasonable reflection of current net social housing need i.e. current net social housing need is estimated at 7636 households.
3. The total projected social and affordable housing need is 46,536
4. Based on an assumption that an affordable house costs 30% less than the entry level price in the Metropolitan Housing Market areas and the Ring and Kinsale areas, and 15% less than the entry level price in the North West Rural and Charleville Housing Market areas and the remainder of the South Coast Housing Market Area, the social and affordable proportions of overall social and affordable demand is estimated as 51% social and 49% affordable.

5. In this Strategy it has been assumed that the Cork Local Authorities will continue to provide a building and acquisitions programme of their own to meet the need for social and affordable housing.
6. Casual vacancies: As set out in paragraph 5.19, with the exception of a fall of 0.3% between 2005 and 2006, the vacancy rate has been on the rise since 2001, increasing by an average of approximately 0.42% per year. While specific measures are being taken to address the vacancy rate by the various authorities any decrease is likely to be counterbalanced by an overall increase in social housing stock. It is estimated that the rate could be 450 per annum.
7. To estimate the social housing output of the voluntary housing sector data was collected regarding projected output between 2006 and 2012. From this a yearly average was calculated and projected forward to 2020 giving a total social unit output of 3628. While the provision of affordable housing by the voluntary housing sector is not currently facilitated by legislation it is expected that this issue could be resolved within the lifetime of the strategy. The estimated output of voluntary housing from the voluntary sector is 1000 units.
8. Sale of Local Authority Housing Stock: The DoEHLG published statistics on the sale of local authority housing stock were used to establish a yearly average between 2001 and 2006 of 133 units. This amounts to an estimated sale of 1862 units over the strategy period. This total has been deducted from the overall social housing supply.
9. The estimated new housing units that will be developed between 2006 and 2020 in the County and City are 87,844 and 23,793 respectively¹⁵. It is assumed that Part V will not apply to approximately 15% of these figures. When 20% is applied to the remainder it is estimated that in the County and City 19,933 and 4,045 units respectively will accrue. This translates to a Part V social housing supply of 8,478 units and a Part V affordable housing supply of 10,500 units.

¹⁵ These figures differ from those indicated in Section 3 as they are derived from strategic area analysis rather than housing market area analysis.

Table 20: Household Income by Market Area 2004

2004 Income (€)	South Metropolitan		North Metropolitan		East Metropolitan		Ring		South Coast		North West Rural		Charleville/Mitchelstown	
	H'holds	%	H'holds	%	H'holds	%	H'holds	%	H'holds	%	H'holds	%	H'holds	%
10902	1	0.1	2	0.4	5	0.6	23	1.8	14	2.4	6	2.4	5	2.3
13761	21	1.8	12	2.6	20	2.3	22	1.7	8	1.4	5	2	5	2.3
14134	12	1	8	1.7	11	1.3	9	0.7	6	1	1	0.4	1	0.7
16582	6	0.5	4	0.8	5	0.6	5	0.4	3	0.5	1	0.5	0	0
17301	7	0.6	5	1.1	5	0.6	9	0.7	2	0.4	1	0.5	2	0.8
18693	25	2.1	12	2.6	14	1.6	19	1.5	9	1.5	3	1	3	1.5
19386	7	0.6	4	0.8	11	1.3	6	0.5	3	0.5	1	0.5	0	0
19955	5	0.4	3	0.7	11	1.3	53	4.2	42	7.1	17	6.7	11	5.3
24353	50	4.2	21	4.7	35	4.1	47	3.7	20	3.4	13	5.3	12	6
24951	26	2.2	14	3.2	20	2.3	23	1.8	14	2.4	4	1.5	3	1.6
28222	14	1.2	6	1.4	8	0.9	1	0.9	5	0.9	2	0.9	1	0.7
28545	26	2.2	10	2.2	14	1.6	19	1.5	9	1.5	3	1	3	1.5
29056	14	1.2	8	1.7	9	1	18	1.4	11	1.9	5	1.9	3	1.5
30670	59	4.9	20	4.5	27	3.2	44	3.5	25	4.3	7	2.9	9	4.6
30857	8	0.7	5	1.2	25	2.9	114	9	59	10	29	12	17	8.3
31475	19	1.6	7	1.5	16	1.9	14	1.1	6	1	1	0.5	2	0.8
38114	98	8.2	41	9.2	90	10.5	107	8.4	28	4.8	23	9.2	20	9.8
39043	53	4.4	28	6.2	50	5.8	48	3.8	20	3.3	6	2.4	6	3.1
39909	6	0.5	4	0.8	16	1.9	72	5.7	57	9.6	22	8.7	12	6
43876	60	5	15	3.7	25	2.9	42	3.3	23	3.8	7	2.9	6	3.1
44488	27	2.3	12	2.7	21	2.5	25	2	6	1	4	1.5	3	1.5
45886	30	2.5	15	3.4	25	2.9	37	2.9	17	2.9	7	2.9	4	2.2
48593	113	9.5	39	8.8	68	8	100	7.9	34	5.7	13	5.3	16	7.6
48705	73	6.1	24	5.3	57	6.7	67	5.3	28	4.8	18	7.2	16	7.6
49901	39	3.3	16	3.6	30	3.5	32	2.5	17	2.9	5	1.9	5	2.3
49942	36	3	13	3	41	4.8	30	2.4	5	0.9	4	1.5	3	1.5
56444	21	1.8	8	1.7	14	1.6	17	1.3	6	1	3	1	1	0.7
58112	21	1.8	10	2.2	14	1.6	23	1.8	14	2.4	6	2.4	3	1.6
61340	85	7.1	23	5.1	44	5.1	65	5.1	34	5.7	10	3.8	11	5.3
62950	27	2.3	8	1.7	27	3.2	19	1.5	6	1	3	1	1	0.7
67363	116	9.7	32	7.2	60	7	90	7.1	31	5.2	12	4.8	11	5.3
87753	86	7.2	19	4.3	38	4.5	58	4.6	28	4.8	10	3.9	8	3.8
New Hlds (2004)	1191		449		856		1268		589		252		203	
% with Social/affordable housing need	44.5		49.4		44.9		38.6		59.8		43.8		42.9	

The teal shading on the above table represents the cut off point below which there is a social housing requirement. This is calculated for each housing market area using the income band below the monthly repayment on an affordable 'entry level' home and adding to this half of the households that fall into the next income band.

The blue shading on the above table represents the cut off point below which there is social/affordable housing requirement. This is calculated for each housing market area using the income band below the monthly repayment on an 'entry level' home and adding to this half of the households that fall into the next income band.

APPENDIX 6: DEDS / WARDS BY HOUSING MARKET AREAS

Market Areas are an amalgamation of individual District Electoral Divisions (DED's). Appendix 8 lists DED's by market areas, and thus enables the identification of specific locations by the relevant market area. This is particularly relevant where reserved land policy varies between market areas (i.e. between Metropolitan and other market areas), or within the Metropolitan Area where the reservation of land for social housing varies (Refer to Policies 2.1 a), b), c) and d)).

South Metropolitan			North Metropolitan		East Metropolitan
<i>Ballinlough A</i>	<i>Glasheen A</i>	<i>Tramore C</i>	<i>Blackpool A</i>	<i>St Patrick'S B</i>	CORKBEG DED
<i>Ballinlough B</i>	<i>Glasheen B</i>	<i>Turner'S Cross A</i>	<i>Blackpool B</i>	<i>St Patrick'S C</i>	ROSTELLAN DED
<i>Ballinlough C</i>	<i>Glasheen C</i>	<i>Turner'S Cross B</i>	<i>Churchfield</i>	<i>Shanakiel</i>	COBH URBAN DED
<i>Ballyphehane A</i>	<i>Greenmount</i>	<i>Turner'S Cross C</i>	<i>Commons</i>	<i>Shandon A</i>	KNOCKRAHA DED
<i>Ballyphehane B</i>	<i>Knockree A</i>	<i>Turner'S Cross D</i>	<i>Fair Hill A</i>	<i>Shandon B</i>	CAHERLAG DED
<i>Bishopstown A</i>	<i>Knockree B</i>	BALLINCOLLIG DED	<i>Fair Hill B</i>	<i>Sunday's Well A</i>	CARRIGTOHILL DED
<i>Bishopstown B</i>	<i>Mahon A</i>	BALLYGARVAN DED	<i>Fair Hill C</i>	<i>Sunday's Well B</i>	LISGOOLD DED
<i>Bishopstown C</i>	<i>Mahon B</i>	BISHOPSTOWN DED	<i>Farranferris A</i>	<i>The Glen A</i>	RIVERSTOWN DED
<i>Bishopstown D</i>	<i>Mahon C</i>	CARRIGALINE DED	<i>Farranferris B</i>	<i>The Glen B</i>	TEMPLINACARRIGA DED
<i>Bishopstown E</i>	<i>Mardyke</i>	DOUGLAS DED	<i>Farranferris C</i>	<i>Tivoli A</i>	BALLYSPILLANE DED
<i>Browningtown</i>	<i>Pouladuff A</i>	DUNDERROW DED	<i>Gurranebraher A</i>	<i>Tivoli B</i>	MIDDLETON RURAL DED
<i>Centre A</i>	<i>Pouladuff B</i>	INISHKENNY DED	<i>Gurranebraher B</i>	BLARNEY DED	MIDDLETON URBAN DED
<i>Centre B</i>	<i>South Gate A</i>	LEHENAGH DED	<i>Gurranebraher C</i>	CARRIGROHANE BEG DED	CLOYNE DED
<i>City Hall A</i>	<i>South Gate B</i>	MONKSTOWN RURAL DED	<i>Gurranebraher D</i>	DRIPSEY DED	COBH RURAL DED
<i>City Hall B</i>	<i>The Lough</i>	MONKSTOWN URBAN DED	<i>Gurranebraher E</i>	GREENFORT DED	
<i>Evergreen</i>	<i>Togher A</i>	CARRIGALINE DED	<i>Knocknaheeny</i>	MATEHY DED	
<i>Gillabbey A</i>	<i>Togher B</i>	KILPATRICK DED	<i>Mayfield</i>	OVENS DED	
<i>Gillabbey B</i>	<i>Tramore A</i>	LISCLEARY DED	<i>Montenotte A</i>	RATHCOONEY DED	
<i>Gillabbey C</i>	<i>Tramore B</i>	TEMPLEBREEDY DED	<i>Montenotte B</i>	ST. MARY'S DED	
			<i>St Patrick'S A</i>	WHITECHURCH DED	

City Council Wards in Italics, COUNCIL DEDS IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Ring Area		
KNOCKMOURNE DED	KILSHANNIG DED	BALLYCOTTON DED
LEITRIM DED	MALLOW NORTH URBAN DED	YOUGHAL RURAL DED
COOLE DED	GLENVILLE DED	ARDAGH DED
CURRAGLASS DED	KNOCKANTOTA DED	YOUGHAL URBAN DED
CARRIGNAVAR DED	BLACKPOOL DED	GARRYVOE DED
CASTLELYONS DED	MOUNTRIVERS DED	BALLINTEMPLE DED
CASTLEHYDE DED	KILCULLEN DED	INCH DED
MACLONEIGH DED	CLONMOYLE DED	KILLEAGH DED
AGHINAGH DED	AGLISH DED	DUNGOURNEY DED
KILBERRIHERT DED	MASHANAGLASS DED	TEMPLEBODAN DED
MACROOM URBAN DED	BALLYGORMAN DED	CLONMILT DED
LEIGHMONEY DED	WARRENSCOURT DED	DANGAN DED
KNOCKROE DED	MOVIDDY DED	MOGEEELY DED
BRINNY DED	BALLYMURPHY DED	CASTLEMARTYR DED
KILBONANE DED	MURRAGH DED	IGHTERMURRAGH DED
TEMPLEMARTIN DED	GREENVILLE DED	KILCRONAT DED
KNOCKAVILLY DED	TEMPLEMICHAEL DED	CLONPRIEST DED
MALLOW RURAL DED	INISHANNON DED	KILMACDONAGH DED
CAHERDUGGAN DED	BENGOUR DED	
KILMACLENINE DED	KILBROGAN DED	
DROMORE DED	BALLYMARTLE DED	
MALLOW SOUTH URBAN DED	TEADIES DED	
FIRMOUNT DED	BANDON DED	
BALLYNAMONA DED	BALLYMODAN DED	
KILLATHY DED	BOULTEEN DED	
KILDINAN DED	CASHEL DED	
WATERGRASSHILL DED	BAURLEIGH DED	
GORTROE DED	KILWORTH DED	
RATHCORMACK DED	GLANWORTH EAST DED	
AGHERN DED	FERMOY URBAN DED	
FERMOY RURAL DED	CARRIG DED	
CANNAWAY DED	KILCOR DED	
MAGOURNEY DED	BALLYNOE DED	
GOWLANE DED	BALLYNAGLOUGH DED	
RAHAN DED	KILLEAGH DED	
BALLYCLOUGH DED		

South Coast			
BALLINSPIITTE DED	CROOKHAVEN DED	KNOCKS DED	GLANLOUGH DED
KILMONOGE DED	CLONAKILTY URBAN DED	ROSSMORE DED	DURRUS EAST DED
KINURE DED	MYROSS DED	DRINAGH DED	DURRUS WEST DED
FARRANBRIEN DED	TULLAGH DED	GARRANES DED	GLENGARRIFF DED
RATHCLARIN DED	ABBEYMAHON DED	ARGIDEEN DED	CURRYGLASS DED
BALLYFOYLE DED	LOWERTOWN DED	CASTLEVENTRY DED	SEEFIN DED
KINSALE URBAN DED	TOORMORE DED	CAHERMORE DED	BEAR DED
NOHAVAL DED	ROSSCARBERY DED	BREDAGH DED	AHIL DED
KILBRITTAIN DED	DUNMANUS DED	CAHERAGH DED	BANTRY URBAN DED
COOLMAIN DED	BUTLERSTOWN DED	TIMOLEAGUE DED	SHEEPSHEAD DED
LAHERNE DED	GOLEEN DED	CLOONKEEN DED	DOUCE DED
BALLYMACKEAN DED	CLONAKILTY RURAL DED	CARRIGBAUN DED	KEALKILL DED
BALLINADEE DED	KILKERRANMORE DED	COOLCRAHEEN DED	MEALAGH DED
CULLEN DED	DUNBEACON DED	CLOGHDONNELL DED	SCART DED
BALLYFEARD DED	COURTMACSHERRY DED	WOODFORT DED	BANTRY RURAL DED
KINSALE RURAL DED	KNOCKSKAGH DED	SHREELANE DED	KILCATHERINE DED
KILMOYLERANE DED	CASTLEHAVEN NORTH DED	COOLAGH DED	KILNAMANAGH DED
KILNAGROSS DED	ARDFIELD DED	AGHADOWN NORTH DED	KILLACONENAGH DED
DROMDALEAGUE NORTH DED	KILFAUGHNABEG DED	SKIBBEREEN RURAL DED	ADRIGOLE DED
DROMDALAEGUE SOUTH DED	RATHBARRY DED	SKIBBEREEN URBAN DED	KILCASKAN DED
KILMALODA WEST DED	KILLEENLEAGH DED	TEMPLEOMALUS DED	COULAGH
KILMALODA EAST DED	GORTNASCREENY DED	CASTLEHAVEN SOUTH DED	AGHADOWN SOUTH DED
BALLYDEHOB DED	BALLYBANE DED	DERRY DED	CAPE CLEAR DED
SKULL DED	KILCOE DED		

North West Rural			
BARLEYHILL DED	COOLCLOGH DED	MANCH DED	COOLMOUNTAIN DED
BEALANAGEARY DED	NAD DED	KILBRIN DED	DRINAGH DED
BEALANAGEARY DED	KILCORNEY DED	BARNACURRA DED	DUNMANWAY SOUTH DED
CAHERBARNAGH DED	BANTEER DED	DROMINA DED	KINNEIGH DED
CLONDROHID DED	DERRYFINEEN DED	KILMEEN DED	KEALE DED
CLONFERT WEST DED	DOONASLEEN DED	BALLINGURTEEN DED	CASTLETOWN DED
COOMLOGANE DED	CULLEN DED	ALLOW DED	AULTAGH DED
GORTNATUBBRID DED	CRINNALOO DED	GLENLARA DED	MILANE DED
KNOCKATOOAN DED	ROSKEEN DED	DERRAGH DED	TEERELTON DED
KNOCKNAGREE DED	MEENS DED	CLONMEEN DED	CANDROMA DED
MILFORD DED	BOHERBOY DED	CASTLEMAGNER DED	INCHIGEELAGH DED
NEWTOWN DED	NEWMARKET DED	GORTMORE DED	CLEANRATH DED
RAHALISK DED	KILNAMARTERY DED	CASTLECOR DED	TINCOORA DED
ROWLS DED	BALLYHOOLAHAN DED	GREENANE DED	BEALOCK DED
SLIEVEREAGH DED	DRISHANE DED	KNOCKTEMPLE DED	BALLYMONEY DED
TULLYLEASE DED	KANTURK DED	BAWNCROSS DED	CARRIGBOY DED
ULLANES DED	RATHCOOL DED	CLONFERT EAST DED	DUNMANWAY NORTH DED
WILLIAMSTOWN DED	SKAGH DED	ROSNALEE DED	GARROWN DED

Charleville/Mitchelstown	
BALLYARTHUR DED	LISCARROLL DED
BUTTEVANT DED	BALLYHOOLY DED
CHARLEVILLE DED	WALLSTOWN DED
CLENOR DED	SHANBALLYMORE DED
FARAHY DED	TEMPLEMARY DED
IMPHRICK DED	CHURCHTOWN DED
KILDORRERY DED	GLANWORTH WEST DED
KILGULLANE DED	CASTLETOWNROCHE DED
MARSHALSTOWN DED	MITCHELSTOWN DED
MILLTOWN DED	KILCUMMER DED
MONANIMY DED	KILPHELAN DED
SKAHANAGH DED	ARDSKEAGH DED
SPRINGFORT DED	DERRYVILLANE DED
STREAMHILL DED	DONERAILE DED
TEMPLEMOLAGA DED	