

LIFFORD LOCAL AREA PLAN

2007 - 2013



DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL



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FOREWARD

This Local Area Plan was prepared by the Central Planning Unit (Department of Planning and Economic Development, Donegal County Council), in accordance with Sections 18 – 20 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2006. The Plan was adopted on 24th September 2007 and became operational on 8th October 2007.

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS A LOCAL AREA PLAN?

A Local Area Plan is a statutory land use plan document and map(s) (consistent with the objectives of the County Development Plan¹) detailing policies and objectives to ensure the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The Plan enables local communities to become involved in the Plan making process, offering valuable insights about life in the area and identifying solutions and opportunities for the future.

It is acknowledged that not all strategic objectives will be achieved during the 6-year Plan period, however it is important to identify these objectives so there is a commitment towards achieving them over the longer term.

The Plan was carefully prepared, having taken into consideration existing services, infrastructure, land-uses, planning proposals and outstanding planning permissions. Environmental considerations and the concept of Sustainable Development underpin all policy.

1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Lifford is a historic plantation town with known origins from the early 1600s. Lifford castle was built in 1527, by Manus O'Donnell to prevent the encroachments of the O'Neills from Strabane. They later destroyed the castle following O'Donnell's death. In 1609, under the Plantation of Ulster, Sir Richard Hansard (A soldier from Lincolnshire, who served in Ireland throughout the Nine Years War (1594-1603)) was granted Lifford and much of the surrounding area.

Upon the grant, he was conditioned to found a corporate town, to construct a school, build a church, provide housing for at least 30 persons, and to maintain a ferry link over the Finn. By 1611, the Plantation Commissioners reported that Lifford had a good strong fort and 58 houses. Two years later the Borough of Lifford was created by a Charter of Incorporation. No evidence of this walled town remains today. The town has, since then, evolved through a range of political, social, military and economic factors. In addition, the town has been contained by a number of environmental factors such as rivers, flood risk and topography.

The Courthouse, erected in 1746, was designed by Michael Priestly. In 1773 a hospital was created in the town. The governors house was erected in 1763 and located in the middle of the courtyard contained 85 cells, debtors' apartments, a schoolhouse, a chapel used by all denominations, and apartments for the large number of staff employed. The building was destroyed in 1907 with stones being used to build the Long Tower in Derry, and developments in Sion Mills and Murlog.

The Strabane – Letterkenny railway (via Lifford) opened in 1909, however it closed in 1960, and thereafter the bridge was used for buses and lorries until the Council improved the local road network. The 8 Council houses in the Diamond opened in 1937.

¹ County Donegal Development Plan 2006 - 2012

The County House was originally established as a reformatory for the punishment of young vagabonds, beggars, prostitutes, pickpockets, idle apprentices. Later it became a military barracks being used by the British army until the beginning of the 1st World War. The Free State army occupied the building until 1925 and in 1930, it was re-opened as the administrative offices of Donegal County Council.

The town has also been identified as an 'Archaeological Complex' in the Record of Monuments and Places and is protected under the National Monuments Acts (1930 – 2004). This designation suggests the presence of significant archaeological heritage within the town.

1.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

This Local Area Plan has been prepared in accordance with national policy guidance such as the National Development Plan, the National Spatial Strategy, and the Regional Planning Guidelines. In addition, the preparation of this Plan has been guided by Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2007, and the County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012.

Within the Regional Planning Guidelines, Lifford was identified as a **Town with a Special Function** (Centre of Governance). The County Development Plan reaffirms and seeks to safeguard this designation by stating that, 'The Council recognise the importance of Lifford as the Centre of Local Governance and in the administration/delivery of public services'.

1.4 RETAIL CONTEXT

Lifford is an Inter-Gateway/Strategic Transport Corridor within the County Retail Hierarchy². It shares this position, alongside Buncrana, Ballybofey/Stranorlar and Donegal Town, and is only superseded by Letterkenny. Therefore Lifford, strategically located on the N14 corridor and a Gateway to the County, resides within the retail hierarchies fourth tier (i.e. basic convenience and lower order comparison shopping).

Accordingly Lifford can accommodate a level of County/regionally focused retailing (e.g. warehouse retailing) as well as retaining important retail functions for its urban and rural catchment populations. This may include large convenience and medium sized comparison retailers where appropriate.

Under the sequential approach, Towns with Special Functions should accommodate increased levels of locally focused convenience and comparison retailing appropriate to the level of growth experienced in each centre, and subject to an assessment being made of the impact on vital local retailing centres.

N.B. In 2005, a retail floorspace study in the County indicated that there were 323m² of convenience and 576m² of comparison floorspace in the town.

1.5 POPULATION

Lifford has a population of 1,776 (N. B. This represents a 1.4% increase in population from 2002), however 3,383³ live within the immediate hinterland, i.e. the District Electoral Divisions of Clonleigh North and South. In addition, the population of Strabane is currently over 15,000 (N.B. in 2001, it was 13,456⁴). This represents a considerable catchment and arguably a critical mass which could attain a number of important services.

The preliminary census figures released in 2006 are not available for the town of Lifford, therefore a population assessment has been taken based on the number of residential units built (October 2006) and the average household formation size of 2.8* persons per household would indicate an estimated population of 1776. In addition, there are 161 approved and as yet unbuilt residential units within the town⁵.

² Retail Strategy – County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012, Appendix D

³ CSO – Census Statistics Office 2006 Preliminary figures

⁴ NISRA – Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency

⁵ Source - Donegal County Council, Planning and Economic Directorate, December 2006

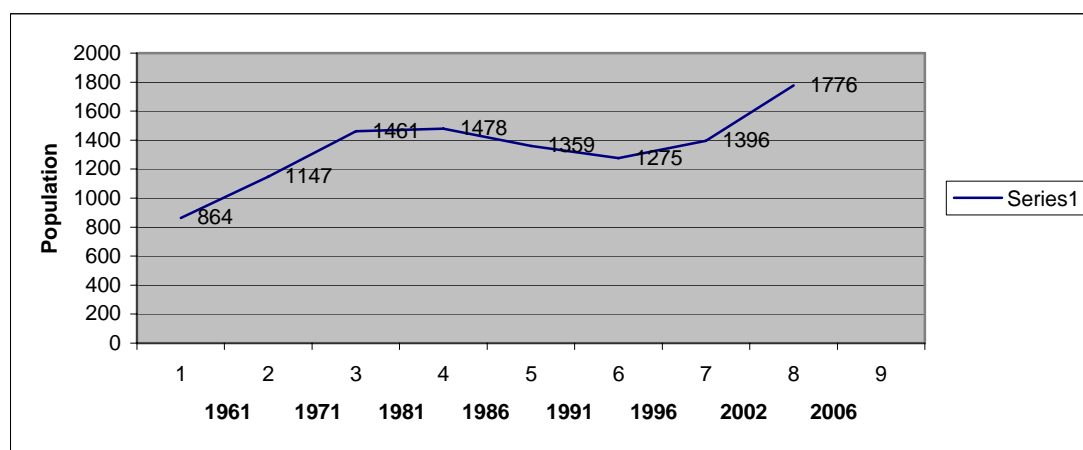
Table 1. Population

Year	1961	1971	1981	1986	1991	1996	2002	2006
Population	864	1147	1461	1478	1359	1275	1396	1776
% Change		+ 283	+ 14	+ 17	+ 119	- 84	+ 121	+ 380

Source: Census Statistics Office

*The preliminary CSO figures released in 2006 are not available for the town of Lifford; therefore a population assessment was taken based on the number of residential units built (October 2006) and the average household formation size of 2.8 persons per household.

Figure 1. Lifford Population 1961 – 2006



Source: Census Statistics Office

1.6 EMPLOYMENT

There are a number of significant employers within the town including local retailers/restaurants, the military barracks, the greyhound stadium and the County Council. Lifford is conveniently located within 25 kilometres of the much larger urban centres of Letterkenny and Derry a linked Gateway in the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines, and shares a border with Strabane along the River Foyle. It is apparent that many employees in the town already commute from Northern Ireland. Proposals to further enhance local employment opportunities will be encouraged throughout the town.

1.7 PUBLIC CONSULTATION – KEY ISSUES RAISED

An important aspect of the Plans preparation was the need to liaise directly with the local community. Therefore public notices were placed in newspapers circulating in the area, advertising a public 'Drop In' event and inviting written comment. This event was held in the Lifford Clonleigh Resource Centre on 18th October 2006. The consultation exercise generated considerable interest and a number of key areas of interest to local residents and businesses have been identified in table 2.

Table 2. Public Consultation

No	Issue	Response Policy Reference
1	Infrastructure	
a.	Deficiencies in water pressure along the Stranorlar and Letterkenny Roads since the construction of a number of new developments.	New development proposals will be required to demonstrate their sources of water.
2	Built Environment	
a.	Neglect and dereliction are issues that were consistently raised during the consultations and the impact on the visual attraction of the town, particularly at the very entrance to the town, which is an important Gateway to the County. Specific areas were identified, as needed remedial attention.	A number of Opportunity Sites have been identified around the town to promote the redevelopment of under-utilised, vacant and derelict sites and buildings.
b.	There is a need to promote quality riverfront developments.	Refer to Specific Objective 6.
c.	There is a need for Town Renewal.	Refer to Specific Objective 1.
d.	Remove instances of dereliction.	A number of Opportunity Sites have been identified around the town to promote the redevelopment of under-utilised, vacant and derelict sites and buildings.
e.	Environmental Improvements, e.g. Seating/Lighting and Street signage.	It is considered that these measures can be best addressed/implemented, through a Town Renewal Scheme and application of appropriate standards to private developments.
3	Traffic	
a.	Impact of Bypass.	The impact will be demonstrated through the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.
b.	New access road through to Roughan.	Refer to Land Use Zoning Map.
c.	Roundabout at Bridge.	Refer to Specific Objective 3.
d.	Road safety/Pedestrian Crossings into town.	Refer to Specific Objective 12.
e.	Car Parking.	Refer to Land Use Zoning Map and Policy RT4.
f.	Strong support for the introduction of Traffic Management/One Way Traffic.	Refer to Specific Objective 8 and Policy RT2.
4	Amenities/Riverfront Development	
a.	High quality mixed use developments should address the river frontage.	Refer to Specific Objective 6.
b.	There is a need for a Public Walkway/ fishing facilities including jetty/Peoples Park.	Refer to Land Use Zoning Map.

c.	Lifford Courthouse, the Greyhound Track, the cinema and the Athletic Club, GAA grounds are the only visitor attractions to the town.	While recognising the importance of these attractions, the Plan will promote a range of retail and other cultural services to enhance the tourism potential within the town, which resides on some of the best angling waters in the Country.
5	Economic Development	
a.	The town should have a hotel.	Refer to Policies EC 1 & 2.
b.	There is a need for Enterprise Units – however there is currently little demand as rates; tax breaks and other incentives are better in Northern Ireland.	Refer to Policies EC 1 & 2.

SECTION 2

PLAN AIM & OBJECTIVES

2.1 AIM

To consolidate the town by concentrating development within serviced spaces/corridors from the core outwards, that will enable the progressive extension of services throughout this and subsequent Plan periods.

To facilitate development that improves the quality of life for residents, local business and those visiting the town and which allows for a safe, attractive and vibrant place to live.

2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- SO 1** To enhance the physical appearance of the town, through the redevelopment of derelict and opportunity sites, through environmental improvements, the development of backlands and the reinforcement of existing street patterns.
- SO 2** To conserve the built environment/archaeological complex and to protect structures for the enjoyment of present and future generations.
- SO 3** To improve the entrance to the town through roundabout realignment/landscaping.
- SO 4** To facilitate development proposals, which accord with the Masterplan at Lifford Common.
- SO 5** To facilitate the development of an extended town centre in accordance with the guidance established in this Plan.
- SO 6** To facilitate high quality development proposals, which address river frontage, comprise adequate setback to provide for such development and to enable the development of a public riverside walkway.



- SO 7** To reserve lands for the creation of a new inner relief road from the N14 to the Machinery Yard, and to protect the proposed N14/A5 (Manorcunningham - Lifford/Strabane) Realignment.
- SO 8** To introduce a Traffic Management Plan within the Town Centre.
- SO 9** To reserve lands for the provision of Community/Recreation/Educational use.
- SO 10** To safeguard the role of Lifford as the Centre of Governance in the County.
- SO 11** To implement a street signage programme throughout the town.

- SO 12** To develop a series of pedestrian crossings to inter-connect residential areas with the town centre. Crossings at the following locations will be promoted; the Hospital, Coneyburrow Road and opposite Lifford Common.
- SO 13** To encourage the development/redevelopment of opportunity sites and to remove instances dereliction through sensitive restoration



- SO 14** To extend the public footpath and lighting from the town centre to the Curragh Lane.
- SO 15** To facilitate the development of a public street market within the town.
- SO 16** To facilitate the development of Lifford as a sporting Centre of Excellence.
- SO 17** To develop a new wastewater treatment works, on lands identified within the Plan area.

N.B. The numbers correspond with the locations identified on the land use-zoning map.

SECTION 3 POLICIES

3.1 GENERAL

- G1** All development proposals shall adhere to the County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012, Appendix A: Development Guidelines and Technical Standards and Appendix E: Location, Siting and Design – Rural and Urban.
- G2 Established Development** - These comprise areas of the town where a principal use has been established. In most cases, the building line and road frontage associated with these areas are satisfactory and shall be maintained. Where vacant plots and under-utilised lands exist in these areas, localised mixed-use infill development that is compatible with adjacent uses shall be encouraged. Any developments carried out in these areas shall comply with both Location, Siting and Design Guide – Rural & Urban 2006 and the Town Centre Design Framework set out in this document.
- G3 Opportunity Sites** - To promote the sustainable redevelopment of these undeveloped, derelict, vacant and serviced sites, for a variety of compatible mixed-use redevelopment proposals, e.g. retail, office, community, residential, cultural, professional. In all cases, the development proposal shall make a positive contribution to the space, having regard to the quality and character of the predominant streetscape.
- G4 Redevelopment Site** - Redevelopment sites have been identified on lands, which have, in the main, suffered from vacancy, dereliction and general under-utilisation. In most instances, an established building line can be identified and where this is the case, these shall be maintained. Where no building line exists, one shall be created, providing for continuity and the distinct meandering and variation which are the foundations of the Donegal street and which comply with parameters set out in the Town Centre Design Framework. This policy encourages the consolidation of key town centre areas through the redevelopment of under-utilised, vacant, and derelict buildings and lands. Uses that will be permitted shall be town centre in nature, comprising a mix of local facilities, residential, retail, cultural etc.
- G5 Signage** - All commercial and business buildings contain signage in the Irish language of an area, size and prominence that is at least equal to the area, size and prominence of signs provided in other languages. Signage in the Irish language only will be encouraged.
- G6 Signage** - Ensure that the provision of all signage by Public Authorities and Public Bodies contain signage in the Irish language, of an area, size and prominence that is at least equal to the area, size and prominence of signs provided in other languages.

3.2 RESIDENTIAL

It is a policy of the Council to ensure that residential proposals:

- R1** Comply with the requirements of Appendix A; Development Guidelines and Technical Standards for Housing in Urban Areas, County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012, Section 1.2 Standards and Requirements for Housing Developments in Urban Areas.

- R2** Comply with the requirements of Appendix B; Childcare Strategy, County Donegal Development Plan 2006 - 2012, to secure the adequate provision of childcare facilities.
- R3** Comply with the requirements of Appendix C; Housing Strategy, County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012 and Part V agreements for the provision of social and affordable housing. These will be required on all lands zoned for residential or for a mixture of residential or other uses, in accordance with the provisions of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 – 2006.
- R4** Comply with the requirements of Appendix E; Location, Siting and Design Guide – Urban, County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012.
- R5** Consider associated and ancillary community uses, such as; play areas, community facilities, crèche's, schools, small convenience/neighbourhood stores and chemists within existing and proposed residential areas.
- R6** Consider single permanent houses/apartments on residential lands, established development sites, gap, infill/brownfield sites, on vacant upper floors and within the defined town centre/opportunity sites, provided that the developments prove compatible with existing and proposed neighbouring uses.
- R7** Explore and implement the use of renewable energy and sustainable construction methods/materials in the current 2004 – 2008 housing programme.
- R8** Require that housing schemes incorporate traffic-calming measures, pick up/set down points for public transport/school buses and safe off-street play areas.
- R9** Holiday home developments (both single and permanent, including apartment units) will be considered in accordance with Policy RH6, County Donegal Development Plan 2006 - 2012.
- R10** Facilitate the refurbishment of rundown/dilapidated dwellings whether for permanent or holiday home usage. Any proposal must respect the scale of refurbishment and any extension to same should respect the residential amenity of adjoining properties.
- R11** Apply the current development charges or development contribution scheme, as had been adopted by the Council at that time.
- R12** All residential proposals on sites in excess of 1.0 hectare will be required to provide a variety of dwelling types to counteract undue social and community segregation and to provide suitable housing for the elderly and disabled.
- R13** A range of residential densities will be promoted throughout the town. Town and edge of town centre sites may accommodate gross densities of approximately 40 units per hectare. Lower residential densities will be considered on the peripheral lands, i.e. approximately 20 units per hectare.
- R14** Part V agreements for the provision of social and affordable housing will be required on all lands zoned for residential or for a mixture of residential or other uses, in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2006.
- R15** It is the policy of the Council to zone land in addition to those zoned 'Residential' as 'Residential Reserve', in the event that the supply of residential

land being exhausted within the Plan period, proposals for development on land zoned as Residential Reserve, will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that;

There are insufficient lands zoned residential that can serve the housing needs of the town.

The lands zoned residential are overtly constrained by ownership or infrastructure to facilitate development.

The development will contribute to the consolidation of existing established residential neighbourhood and will contribute to the provision of services, infrastructure and facilities including better links with the existing town centre.

3.3 COMMUNITY/RECREATION/EDUCATION

It is a policy of the Council to:

- CRE1** Consider a wide range of community facilities on the strategic site identified for such community infrastructure (e.g. new school, health/community centre, church and ancillary facilities).
- CRE2** Require the provision of a purpose built childcare facility for developments in excess of 75 units, in accordance with the County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012, Appendix B, Childcare Strategy.
- CRE3** Require the provision of a children's playground within developments in excess of 100 units.
- CRE4** Facilitate the development of Lifford as a Centre for Sporting Excellence.
- CRE5** Facilitate the development of formal new public open spaces, including the development of a town park with interconnecting pedestrian linkages on all reserved amenity lands, Sites MR1 and 3.
- CRE6** Require that a minimum of 15% of the total site area remain as quality public open space. The public space should be a formal landscaped area, centrally located within the development, as opposed to incidental and poorly maintained and unplanted grass verges, which although in themselves are important to soften the built environment, have little or no recreational value.
- CRE7** Require that all areas of open space shall be clearly defined, incorporating specific functions, well overlooked and highly accessible.
- CRE8** Provide for the provision of interconnecting amenity walkways throughout developments, and along the former railway embankment as identified on the land-use zoning map.
- CRE9** Facilitate the development of a formal recreation area/play facilities within community lands.
- CRE10** Facilitate and enhance the development of existing and proposed sporting/recreational and ancillary infrastructure.

3.4 BUILT HERITAGE

Objective

It is an objective of the Council to secure the preservation (in situ, or as a minimum, preservation by record) of: The archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.



- BH1** All development proposals within the Archaeological Complex and/or which affect Protected Structures (RPS), their curtilages and or settings shall adhere to Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2004. In such instances, development proposals shall be referred to the County Heritage and Conservation Officers and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- BH2** All development proposals shall adhere to the principles established within Appendix E: Location, Siting and Design, Rural & Urban, County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012.
- BH3** To protect the character of buildings/structures and their surrounding curtilages identified on the Record of Protected Structures and all subsequent additions to the list throughout the Plan period.
- BH4** Development proposals either above or below ground, within the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest shall not be detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or it's setting.
- BH5** Development proposals, which may affect Recorded Monuments and/or their settings, shall be referred to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the County Heritage Officer. Note the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has the statutory responsibility for ensuring compliance with the National Monuments Acts. Any advice that the Heritage Office offers is likely to reflect the advice already received by the Planning Authority from the National Monuments Section, DoEHLG. The advice of the Heritage Office cannot be a substitute for the advice of the National Monuments Section but the Heritage Office will be pleased to provide whatever advice it can.
- BH6** Developments proposals that, due to their location, size or nature, have implications for the archaeological heritage should be subject to archaeological assessment. Such developments include those that are located at or close to archaeological monuments or sites, those that are extensive in terms of area (1/2 hectare or more) or length (1 kilometre or more) and developments that require an Environmental Impact Statement.



BH7 The Council will protect the archaeological heritage from damage.

3.5 NATURAL HERITAGE

NH1 The Rivers Finn and Foyle have been identified under a European Union Directive, as candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), i.e. prime wildlife conservation areas. The plan seeks to protect this important conservation area, from inappropriate developments, which would adversely affect wildlife. N.B. These areas are also prone to flooding. (See Appendix II for Site Synopses).



3.6 ROADS TRANSPORTATION

RT1 To reserve and safeguard the indicative new roads and access points, identified on the land-use map.

RT2 Support the introduction of a Traffic Management Plan within the town centre.

RT3 To prohibit all new accesses onto the proposed N14/A5 Manorcunningham to Strabane, National Primary Route Realignment.

RT4 To maintain the development free buffer corridor as indicated on the land use map, located alongside the N14 Manorcunningham – Lifford/Strabane Draft Realignment Corridor.

RT5 To facilitate public car parking on brownfield or under-utilised town centre sites within the defined town centre area.

RT6 All development proposals shall provide car parking in accordance with the County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012, Development Guidelines and Technical Standards, Appendix A.

RT6 To support proposals that improve public transport infrastructure.

3.7 EMPLOYMENT/COMMERCIAL/RETAIL

EC1 To facilitate the development of a wide range of employment generating/commercial uses (e.g. enterprise units/hotel/offices).

- EC2** To facilitate the development of a Neighbourhood Centre, within the Masterplan Area, to primarily serve the residents within the area. A neighbourhood centre generally consists of small group of shops, typically comprising a newsagent, small supermarket, ATM, grocery store, sub-post office and other small shops of a local nature serving a small localised catchment population.
- EC3** To promote and encourage the provision of regional and County level retail functions.
- EC4** The sequential approach, as identified within the County Retail Strategy; Appendix D, County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012, should remain the chief guide for deciding where new retail development (See Table 1) should be located. The following areas are identified in descending order;
1. Zoned town centre areas (i.e. Archaeological Complex).
 2. If a town centre site is inappropriate, unsuitable or unavailable, then edge of centre areas within 300–400 metres of the town centre.
 3. Out of centre sites should be considered only after town centre and then edge of centre sites can be conclusively discounted in terms of size, availability, accessibility and feasibility.

Table 1. Preferred Retail Uses for Lifford

Retail Centre Type	Convenience	Comparison	Bulky Goods
Inter Gateway – Strategic Transport Corridor Centres	Shopping Centres Superstores Discount Foodstores	Shopping Centres Stand Alone Higher Order Comparison Stores	Retail Warehousing Retail Parks Factory Outlet

Ref. County Retail Strategy, County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012, Appendix D.

3.8 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION/CULTURAL

- PC1** To facilitate the development of public administration offices/buildings to reaffirm Lifford's position as the Seat of Governance in the County.
- PC2** To promote the development of an Archive facility and to support its future expansion and improvement.

3.9 FLOODING

The River Deele and Swillyburn Scheme consist of Office of Public Works (OPW) embankments, backdrains and channels that outfall to the sea in low tide via a series of sluices. These interventions have benefited a large area, from flooding. An OPW Report in 2006⁶, indicated that, from Ballindrait, the River Deele overflowed its banks every year after heavy rain, and that the road is liable to flood after every 5 years approximately. The Council therefore accept the need to exercise caution within these benefiting lands and have identified them as the **Deele Corridor Area**. The following policies will apply;

⁶ www.floodmaps.ie

- F1** The Council will require certificates (accompanied with planning applications) from competent persons for development proposals within the Deelee Corridor Area and on sites in excess of 1 Ha, to demonstrate that proposals will not contribute to flooding within the relevant catchment. Development proposals should not, by themselves or cumulatively subject an area to inappropriate risk of flooding or exacerbate such a risk at other locations.



- F2** The Council will require a detailed flood risk assessment (accompanied with planning applications) from competent persons, for development proposals within the Deelee Corridor Area and on sites in excess of 1 hectare. The assessment should identify proposals for the storage or attenuation of run/off discharges (including foul drains) to ensure the development does not increase the flood risk in the relevant catchment.
- F3** Development must so far as is reasonably practicable incorporate the maximum provision to reduce the rate and quantity of runoff. e.g.:-
- Hard surface areas (car parks, etc.) should be constructed in permeable or semi-permeable materials.
 - On site storm water ponds to store and/or attenuate additional runoff from the development should be provided.
 - Soak-aways or french drains should be provided to increase infiltration and minimise additional runoff. (Such sustainable design/construction measures are desirable in most areas and essential in floodplains, areas liable to flooding, and areas where the conveyancing capacity of watercourses is marginal. In all of these cases development that reduces the rate of absorption or increases the rate of runoff increases the risk of flooding of lands and properties downstream).
- F4** For developments adjacent to watercourses of a significant conveyance capacity any structures (including hard landscaping) must be set back from the edge of the watercourse, except where there is an existing building line, to allow access for channel clearing/maintenance (A setback of 5m-10m is required depending on the width of the watercourse).
- F5** Development consisting of construction of embankments, wide bridge piers, or similar structures will not normally be permitted in or across flood plains or river channels. Such structures restrict/obstruct flow and increase the risk of flooding to property and land upstream. If it is considered necessary, in exceptional cases, to permit such structures, they should be designed to minimise and/or compensate for any potential negative effects.
- F6** All new development must be designed and constructed to meet the following minimum flood design standards: -
- For Urban areas or where developments (proposed or anticipated) are involved - the 100-year flood event.
 - For Rural areas or where further developments (proposed or anticipated) are not involved - the 25-year flood.
 - Along the Coast and Estuaries - the 200-year tide level.

- Where streams open drains or other watercourses are being culverted - the minimum permissible culvert diameter is 900mm. (Access should be provided for maintenance as appropriate). (The application of higher design standards may be appropriate in certain cases where the level of risk and/or uncertainty warrant it e.g. hospitals or other emergency services, main roads, chemical plants, cultural repositories, etc).

3.10 SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Plan identifies and reserves a 1-hectare site for the 'existing and proposed wastewater treatment works', this is an area adjacent to the existing wastewater treatment site. The identification of this site has been made in the absence of a detailed technical, financial, and environmental suitability assessment of the site, which will be dealt with in the preliminary report for the scheme, which has not yet commenced.

- S1** All development proposals shall adhere to County Donegal Development Plan 2006 - 2012, Appendix A; Development Guidelines and Technical Standards, Section 1.3.
- S2** The Council will require that all new commercial and multiple residential developments connect to the new wastewater treatment works, pending the completion of same.
- S3** All development proposals shall make provision for the delivery of all utilities and infrastructural requirements within their lands (i.e. water, sewerage and telecommunications). Proposals for the disposal of surface and wastewater shall be carried out in consultation with the Water, Environment and Emergency Services.

SECTION 4 TOWN CENTRE/MASTERPLAN POLICIES

4.1 TOWN CENTRE POLICIES

TC1 TOWN CENTRE

The overall objective within the town centre is to improve vitality and viability. Therefore this area will remain the commercial centre of the town, consisting of a wide variety of retail, business, service, cultural, entertainment and residential uses, of a suitable scale and character and sympathetic to those adjacent uses. The Council will encourage development, which seeks to enhance the urban form, by reinforcing street patterns.



All significant development proposals within the defined Archaeological complex shall be subject to independent Archaeological Assessment as part of planning applications.

In addition, all development within the Town Centre shall comply with the County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012, Appendix E: Location, Siting and Design – Urban and Rural and the Town Centre Design Framework (Policies TC8 – TC13).

TC2 TOWN CENTRE EXTENSION

An area of undeveloped backland has been identified for an extension of the town centre. The Council will promote quality mixed-use and compatible town centre uses, e.g. café/restaurants, retail, boutiques, offices, cultural/heritage centres and residential uses. This new pedestrian friendly area shall form the natural extension from the original town centre, through visual and pedestrian interconnectivity and replicate existing urban form (streets, laneways).

As Lifford is an archaeological complex and a town of historic and architectural importance, there is a need to promote high standards of urban design within this town centre extension area.

Accordingly;

- Buildings should have a stone or other suitable render finish.
- Windows should have a vertical emphasis/Windows and doors shall have hardwood frames.
- Development proposals (between 2 & 3 storey terraces) shall provide direct frontage onto a centralised and pedestrian friendly civic open space (Public Square).
- Appropriate hard and soft landscaping, street furniture and public lighting will be promoted throughout such developments.
- Streets/Lanes to be named in accordance with the County Placenames Committee.

TC3 AREA OF STRONG TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

Much of the centre of Lifford has been identified as an Area of Strong Townscape Character. Special care will be required for all development proposals within this area having regard to the established townscape character and its archaeological and architectural significance

TC4 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The Council support the introduction of the Traffic Management Plan within the town centre.

TC5 ESTABLISHED DEVELOPMENT

These comprise areas of the town where a principal use has been established. In most cases, the building line and road frontage associated with these areas are satisfactory and shall be maintained. Where vacant plots and under-utilised lands exist in these areas, localised mixed-use infill development that is compatible with adjacent uses shall be encouraged. Any developments carried out in these areas shall comply with the County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012, Location, Siting and Design Guide – Rural & Urban 2006 and the Town Centre Design Framework set out in this document.

TC6 OPPORTUNITY SITES

To promote the sustainable redevelopment of these undeveloped, derelict, vacant and serviced sites, for a variety of compatible mixed-use redevelopment proposals, e.g. retail, office, community, residential, cultural, professional. In all cases, the development proposal shall make a positive contribution to the space, having regard to the quality and character of the predominant streetscape.



TC7 REDEVELOPMENT SITES

Redevelopment sites have been identified on lands, which have, in the main, suffered from vacancy, dereliction and general under-utilisation. In most instances, an established building line can be identified and where this is the case, these shall be maintained. Where no building line exists, one shall be created, providing for continuity and the distinct meandering and variation which are the foundations of the Donegal street and which comply with parameters set out in the Town Centre Design Framework (TC8 - 13). This policy encourages the consolidation of key town centre areas through the redevelopment of under-utilised, vacant, and derelict buildings and lands. Uses that will be permitted shall be town centre in nature, comprising a mix of local facilities, residential, retail, cultural etc.

4.2 TOWN CENTRE DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The following policy framework outlines specific design elements relevant to Lifford, which will inform future development proposals in relation to design and layout. All developments shall comply with the County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012, Location, Siting and Design Guide – Rural & Urban 2006, employing a contextual approach and respecting the surrounding streetscape having regard to the following;

TC8 BUILDING LINE

New developments shall respect existing building line by maintaining its continuity and recreating the distinct meandering and variation. Stepping back from the established building line may be acceptable in the following circumstances:

- To identify and accentuate important public/landmark buildings.
- Where it can be demonstrated that through innovative design that positive enhancement of the town and streetscape will result.
- Where well-designed and safe public space is to be provided.

TC9 PLOT SIZE

New developments shall reflect the dimensions of traditional plots. This can be achieved through the breaking up of the façade, roofline and building line. Should new or existing development seek to amalgamate adjoining plots, this should not be apparent from the street, as the new build shall incorporate variations in the composition of the façade in order to reflect historical plot size.

TC10 ROOFLINE

The roofline of any new development shall reflect the gable ended, steep pitched form of the traditional roofline. Slate shall be used as the principle roofing material. New development shall apply the traditional roofline format, which comprises slight variations with stepping up and stepping down of eaves and ridge to break up form. The traditional stout chimneys associated with our towns and villages shall form part of any redevelopment or new build project. These shall be located so as to break through the ridge of the building.

TC11 DENSITY

The density of any new development shall respect town centre density ranges (See Policy R13). In general, higher densities are encouraged provided they can be accommodated:

- Without injuring the character of the area.
- By taking an imaginative and sensitive approach.
- Where the development comprises a quality development.
- Sufficient, high quality open space has been provided.
- The development does not constitute over-development of the site in terms of injurious impact on neighbouring property.

TC12 ACCESSIBILITY

Areas of road frontage often comprise key access points to backlands. These indicative access points are identified (on the landuse zoning map) and to ensure that they are protected, no development shall be permitted at these points. Links into and out of new developments will use key access points as identified in this document, where this is not possible, an alternative, preferably shared access shall be created. Any such access will provide for safe movement through the space using the design of buildings and layout of the site to achieve this. Developments shall use the homezone concept (See Policy GP4) in terms of accessibility and layout.

TC13 WIRESCAPE

In the interests of improving the built fabric, all development proposals incorporating wires, pipes and cables should be under grounded (i.e. electrical, gas, water, sewerage, telecoms, broadband, fibre optics).

The Masterplan seeks to promote the sustainable development of these, edge of town centre greenfield lands. The Plan creates significant development opportunities for the extension of retail, residential, community, and infrastructural services and for the long-term development of the town.

4.3 MASTERPLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Masterplan seeks to promote the sustainable development of these, edge of town centre greenfield lands. The Plan creates significant development opportunities for the extension of retail, residential, community and infrastructural services and for the long-term development of the town.



The Masterplan, while flexible, provides a blueprint for the development of the area, through road linkages and the identification of lands for specific uses. It will provide opportunities for the economic regeneration of the town as there is currently limited retail/commercial floorspace and car parking provision within the existing historic town centre area, or indeed the capacity to extend these services. The Masterplan promotes high quality mixed-use developments, including a wide variety of housing types, commercial uses, civic open space, parkland, community uses (e.g. school/health centre/community facility), hotel/leisure uses and fire station. It will also promote substantial formal recreational areas, in a safe inclusive environment. Developments will be required to improve connectivity back to the river, by providing pedestrian/cycle linkages along the former rail embankment.

The proposed new service road will provide access to new developments, will alleviate town centre congestion and will redirect Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's) out of the town centre.

GENERAL POLICIES

GP1 URBAN DESIGN CONTEXT

The evolution of the built character of Lifford has created variety and visual interest. Many classic buildings have defined prominent sites in the town (e.g. Gateway, Courthouse, Garda Station/Beauty Rooms, Harte's Bar and the Church of St. Lugadius). There is therefore a context to maintain this high standard of boundary treatment, through the urban extension of these lands. Development proposals in the Masterplan area shall respect and reflect the existing historic character of Lifford, in terms of the scale of developments, the use of materials and design of structures. Incongruous development proposals will not be permitted.

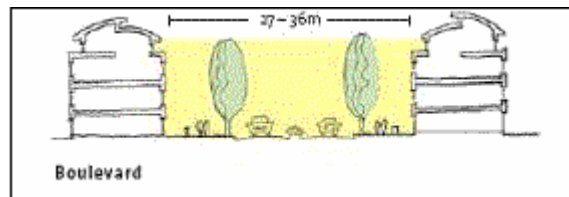
The Local Area Plan promotes the extension of the existing town centre and will therefore support quality urban design principles. i.e.) the creation of a strong continuous shared building line (streetscape). This will ensure visual interest and a pleasant sense of enclosure. Deviation from the building line will be considered, on occasion to add to the public realm, with public civic space.

Plot sizes have traditionally been very narrow in Lifford. This has allowed for taller structures to maximise spatial requirements. These buildings lend themselves well to mixed uses, i.e.) shops, clinics, restaurants along ground floors and offices, apartments or townhouses on higher floors. The creation of mixed-use areas, rather than homogenous business areas ensures that towns are not closed down at night. Mixed-use developments improve overlooking, diminishing the opportunities for crime and

vandalism, and enables people to live closer to schools, shops and work, reducing the need to use private cars.

Developments abutting the service road afford an opportunity to create an extension of the town centre, through the development of taller buildings along this service road. A solid to void ratio of 2.5:1 (width to height – See Figure 1 for example) will be promoted to allow for this enclosure. Taller landmark buildings should dominate prominent locations, i.e.) roadside frontage (N14), corner sites, at junctions, terminal sites.

Figure 1. Example of Solid/Void Relationship



All development proposals shall make provision for safe landscaped pedestrian linkages throughout their developments, to facilitate pedestrian mobility back into the town centre. These provisions shall be made in addition to the access roads and pavements identified within the Masterplan.

GP2 ROADS/STREET LAYOUT

The Masterplan has identified a new road/street layout which favours permeability through linked routes. This layout permits variety and interest and helps to create a sense of place by providing opportunities for through travel, reducing traffic speeds, improving pedestrian safety and connectivity between developments. The primary objective of providing a service road alignment from the N14 through to the Roughan, remains, however this alignment may still be revised, having regard to the prevailing site topography and pending the completion of a detailed site survey analysis. In addition, the layout of internal and minor internal access roads will be guided by the preferred layout as illustrated on the landuse-zoning map, with some flexibility built in to account for variations in topography and site conditions. The service road shall make provision for the delivery of infrastructure (water, sewerage, telecoms, public lighting etc).

The Masterplan promotes grid and distorted grid systems (road and street layouts to take cognisance of site topography). In addition, the use of high quality dual aspect, corner buildings will be required to define and enhance vistas.

The service road shall enable bus services to provide a service within these lands. Cycle ways and pedestrian walkways shall also be provided along the service road. High quality landscaped and street trees (indigenous broadleaf species) shall be planted along the service road and within access roads to soften the built environment and to create pedestrian cycle friendly linkages between developments.

Occasional on-street parking will be considered along access roads. Traffic Calming measures will be required along access roads to reduce traffic speeds (e.g. traffic islands, speed ramps, shortened streets, on street parking, staggered junctions, pedestrian linkages etc). Public lighting and tactile paving will be required throughout the development.

GP3 RESIDENTIAL

The overall objective is to promote a wide variety of house types and sizes throughout the development, to cater for the diverse needs of all sections of the community and the ever changing demographic needs within society.

Where higher densities are promoted, terraced, courtyard, mews, apartment and a mixture of these developments will be appropriate. These higher density residential uses will be of the highest design quality, and will allow for quality landscaped public/private civic space, with shared and grouped car parking. Car parking shall be provided in accordance with County Development Plan standards, i.e. 2 per house/1.25 per flat etc.

The development of safe walkways and pedestrian linkages throughout the Masterplan area is vital. Such public spaces must be well lit, supervised and landscaped. In addition, developers will be required to provide for tree lined avenues throughout developments, hedgerow/shrub and flowerbed planting, and low stone walls to form enclosures around residential quarters.

GP4 HOME ZONES

The Council will promote the development of Home Zones. Home Zones are residential areas where existing streets and roads in an area have been altered, or where new developments have been designed to promote pedestrian/cycling activities, as opposed to wide thoroughfares, which are generally designed to accommodate cars. These alterations/new developments force motorists to drive with greater care and at lower speeds. The provision of benches, flower beds, play areas, lamp posts, fences and trees are often used to alter the streets and roads, and they offer many additional community benefits to the Home Zones and are considered to enhance the beauty of an area and increase property values, as the area becomes more desirable.

GP5 INFRASTRUCTURE/UTILITIES

All development proposals shall make provision for the delivery of all utilities and infrastructural requirements within their lands (i.e. Water, sewerage and telecommunications). Proposals for the disposal of surface and wastewater shall be carried out in consultation with the Water Environment Emergency Services.

MASTERPLAN POLICIES

MG1 & 2 MIXED USE

These strategic entrance sites afford the possibility to make a significant contribution to the urban townscape through the development of high quality, mixed-use Gateway developments. This will enable; e.g. ground floor, commercial/retail uses, and upper floor, residential and office uses. Developments shall have dual aspect; i.e. to address road frontage along the N14 and to form an open envelope around, e.g.) pedestrianised inner courtyard, civic open space (with hard and soft landscaping, to enable and encourage pedestrian mobility into and through the site).

Proposals will be required to demonstrate links with public transport provision. Sites MG1 and MG2 shall complement one another in terms of scale and massing of developments. The Council will not permit the development of filling stations or other incompatible uses on these lands.

MG3 MIXED USE

Proposals will be required to demonstrate links with public transport provision. The Council will not permit the development of filling stations or other incompatible uses on these lands.

MR1 RESIDENTIAL

These lands have been reserved primarily for residential uses. New developments should seek to create high quality areas with a strong sense of local identity and community. Developments shall consist of a variety of different house types and styles to reflect changed needs, household formation rates, N.B. There are currently 2.8 persons per household in County Donegal. The Council will consider ancillary and small-scale community and retail infrastructure and amenity areas, where it can be demonstrated that the development will primarily serve the local community.

The following criteria shall be applied to residential development in these areas:

- Development shall make provision for a landscaped public park in co-ordination with adjacent lands.
- Development to make provision for a crèche facility in lieu of development in excess of 75 units.
- Internal Access Roads (6m diameter), 3m landscaped verge, 3m pavement.
- The development proposal shall retain and incorporate existing trees and hedgerows within the overall development.
- A minimum of 15% of the total site area shall be provided as landscaped public open space within the development.
- Proposals will be required to demonstrate links with public transport provision.

MR2 RESIDENTIAL

These lands have been reserved for primarily residential use. New developments should seek to create high quality areas with a strong sense of local identity and community.

MR3 RESIDENTIAL

These lands have been reserved for primarily residential use. New developments should seek to create high quality areas with a strong sense of local identity and community.

Development to make provision for a landscaped public park in co-ordination with adjacent lands shall be developed for a wide variety of house types and sizes. Densities of approximately 40 per hectare will be encouraged. Lower densities may be considered on peripheral and edge of development lands.

MR4 RESIDENTIAL (LOW DENSITY)

These lands have been reserved primarily for residential use. New developments should seek to create high quality areas with a strong sense of local identity and community.

MR5 RESIDENTIAL (HIGH DENSITY)

These lands have been reserved primarily for residential use. New developments should seek to create high quality areas with a strong sense of local identity and community.

MR6 RESIDENTIAL (LOW DENSITY)

These lands have been reserved primarily for residential use. New developments should seek to create high quality areas with a strong sense of local identity and community.

MR7 RESIDENTIAL (LOW DENSITY)

These lands have been reserved primarily for residential use. New developments should seek to create high quality areas with a strong sense of local identity and community.

MR8 RESIDENTIAL/LANDMARK SITE

This site occupies a strategic site, as it terminates the view from the main road. Therefore development proposals must therefore make a major contribution to the overall streetscape.

MCRE COMMUNITY/RECREATION/EDUCATION

These lands have been reserved for the longer-term delivery of community infrastructure (e.g. education, community, health, cultural uses and associated ancillary facilities, i.e. playing fields).

NC1 NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

One neighbourhood centre will be considered within the Masterplan area, where it can be demonstrated that it is primarily intended to serve a neighbourhood need (e.g. convenience shop, post office, hairdressers, café, ATM etc). The development shall be of an appropriate scale to its neighbourhood location. The development shall not give rise to adverse transport effects and shall not detract from the vitality or viability of the town centre.

O1 OPPORTUNITY SITE

These lands have been reserved as an opportunity site for a variety of/and or mix of development uses, compatible within an edge of town centre site. The zoning also takes cognisance of the existing greyhound complex and entertainment facilities.

O2 OPPORTUNITY SITE

These lands have been reserved as an opportunity site for a variety of/and or mix of development uses, compatible within an edge of town centre site.

P PUBLIC PARK

The public park, situated between MR1 and MR3 shall be landscaped and shall provide formal play areas, a child's playground and safe pedestrian walkways. Vehicular traffic shall be removed from the perimeter of the park.

Developments will be required to address the park frontage (either partial, i.e. crescent or entire enclosure), this will enable the better definition of this public space by creating enclosure within the park, which in addition provides surveillance.

Site landscaping should utilise the prevailing site topography/levels and retain existing landscape features, e.g. trees/hedgerows.

SECTION 5

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

In accordance with Article 19 (4) (a) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 – 2006, Local Area Plans shall contain information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Plan (See Table 3).

The preparation of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not mandatory for Local Area Plans with a population of less than 10,000 persons. SEA is a systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed policy, plan or programme initiatives in order to ensure that they are fully included and appropriately addressed at the earliest stage of decision making on par with economic and social considerations. Notwithstanding this, it is a requirement to screen all proposed Plans and programmes to consider whether they require SEA. A 'Screening Report' was prepared and issued to the prescribed authorities. The County Council considered that a SEA was not merited for the preparation of this Local Area Plan. The prescribed authorities, who were consulted did not have any comments to make.

The following table 1 represents an appraisal of the likely significant impact on the environment of the implementation of the policies in the Local Area Plan. It must be clearly recognised that the following brief assessments, simply have regard to the perceived positive and adverse environmental impacts, associated with the proposed policies.

An assessment of the economic and social consequences of these policies has not been considered in this section. However, both of these factors remain very important material considerations and are generally the two primary factors, which drive development proposals. It is considered that the implementation of this Plan will largely prove positive in terms of its impact upon the environment.

Table 1. Likely Significant Impact on the Environment of the implementing the policies of the Plan.

Positive ○ Negligible □ Negative ●
Not Applicable N/A

Policy Ref.	Policy	Landscape Conservatio	Cultural and Built Heritage	Energy Efficiency	Sustainable Transport	Reduction of Waster/ Pollution	Natural Resources
2.1	Residential	□	□	○	○	□	□
2.2	Community/Education	○	○	○	○	□	□
2.3	Town Centre/Retailing	○	○	○	○	□	□
2.4	Conservation of the Natural and Built Environment	○	○	○	N/A	○	○
2.5	Industry/Employment	□	□	□	□	□	□
2.6	Roads/Transportation	□	□	○	○	○	●
2.7	Telecommunications/Water and Sewerage Infrastructure	□	□	○	○	○	□
2.8	Tourism/Recreation	○	○	□	○	□	N/A

SECTION 6

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES

RPS No. on Map/Ref No	Name	Description/Rating	Photograph
1/ 40800814	Ballyduff House	Detached five bay two storey house built circa 1800 with projecting entrance porch to east, circa 1850, two bay single storey extension to north, dormer attic and two-storey to rear. Regional	
2/ 40800810	Garda Station/ Beauty Rooms	Terraced three bay three-storey gable fronted Tudor revival Garda Station/Beauty Salon, with two storey gabled projection to centre, built circa 1850. Regional	
3/ 40800813	Outreach Centre	Detached three bay two storey former rectory built circa 1910 with gable to front and canted corner and box bay single storey windows and two storey returns to rear, now in use as an Outreach Centre. Regional	
4/ 40800806	Old Court-house Visitors Centre	Detached eight bay single storey over basement former Courthouse and County Gaol built 1746 with Gibbsian pedimented door case with carved coat-of-arms over, renovated circa 1985, now in use as a restaurant/library and museum with internal mezzanine. National	
5/ 40800802	Church Hall	Detached four bay Gothic Revival Church Hall with projecting gabled entrance porch, built 1863. Regional	
6/ 40800801	Church of St. Lugadius	Detached Gothic-Revival Church of Ireland church built circa 1620 with three-storey tower added to west end circa 1800, and to vestry to north-east corner, with aisle extension to north built 1863 and interior remodelled. National	

APPENDIX II

RECORDED MONUMENTS (Donegal Sheet No. 071)

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) of County Donegal identifies all known sites protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994.

No. On Map/ Monument No.	Townland	Classification
RM1/DG071-00301	Drumboy (Clonleigh South)	Standing Stone Site
RM/DG071-00302	Drumboy (Clonleigh South)	Standing Stone Site
RM2/DG071-004	Drumboy (Clonleigh South)	Standing Stone Site
RM3/DG071-008	Lifford Townparks (Clonleigh South)	Town
RM3/DG071-00801	Lifford Townparks (Clonleigh South)	Church and Graveyard
RM4/DG071-009	Lifford	Standing Stone Site
RM 5/DG071-007	Townparks (Clonleigh South)	Standing Stone Site
RM6/DG071-006	Lifford	Standing Stone Site
RM7/DG071-005	Townparks (Clonleigh South)	Standing Stone Site

APPENDIX III

SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION

RIVER FINN

SITE CODE: 002301

20.6.2003

This site comprises almost the entire freshwater element of the Finn and its tributaries - the Corlacky, the Reelan sub-catchment, the Sruhamboy, Elatagh, Cummirk and Glashagh, and also includes Lough Finn, where the river rises. The spawning grounds at the headwaters of the Mourne and Derg Rivers, Loughs Derg and Belshade and the tidal stretch of the Foyle north of Lifford to the border are also part of the site. The Finn and Reelan, rising in the Bluestack Mountains, drain a catchment area of 195 square miles. All of the site is in Co. Donegal. The underlying geology is Dalradian Schists and Gneiss for the most part though quartzites and Carboniferous Limestones are present in the vicinity of Castlefinn. The hills around Lough Finn are also on quartzite. The mountains of Owendoo and Cloghervaddy are of granite felsite and other intrusive rocks rich in silica. There are many towns along the river but not within the site. These include Lifford, Castlefinn, Stranorlar and Ballybofey.

The site is a candidate SAC selected for active blanket bog, lowland oligotrophic lakes, wet heath and transition mires all habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected for the following species listed on Annex II of the same directive - Atlantic Salmon and Otter.

Upland blanket bog occurs throughout much of the upland area of the site along the edges of the river. However more extensive examples are found at Tullytresna and in the Owendoo/Cloghervaddy Bogs. The blanket bog is dominated by Bog Cotton (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.). Pool and hummock systems are a feature of the flatter areas, with Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), mosses (*Racomitrium lanuginosum*, *Sphagnum capillifolium* and *S. papillosum*), lichens (e.g. *Cladonia portentosa*) and the liverwort, *Pleurozia purpurea*, occurring abundantly on the hummocks. The scarce bog boss, *Sphagnum imbricatum*, is a component of some hummocks. *Sphagnum magellanicum* is found in wet flats by pools, while *S. cuspidatum* occurs abundantly within the pools themselves.

Towards the base of the northern slope and on the southern slope at Tullytresna, flushes occur with bright green lawns of Bog Mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) and abundant Rushes, particularly Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and Jointed Rush (*J. articulatus*). On the summit is an undulating system of hummocks and hollows, and Ling Heather is more common.

A valley bog fills the low-lying areas to the north east of Lough Finn, which is dominated by Deer Grass, Bog Cotton, Purple Moor-grass and Heather. Mossy hummocks occur in the wetter areas.

Transition mires or quaking bogs or scraws occur at several locations, usually at the interface between bog or lake or stream. In Owendoo/Cloghervaddy there are many examples of small lakes south of Belshade. Some of the lakes contain floating scraws of the bog moss (*Sphagnum recurvum*), Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), Mud Sedge (*Carex limosa*) and Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*). West of Owendoo River there is an extensive area of scraw with a similar suite of species but with a different abundance. Quaking areas are also associated with blanket bog at Cronamuck and Cronakerny. At Cronamuck, a small level flushed area occurs at the base of a slope leading into a flushed stream. Diversity including diagnostic species is good.

Wet Heath is associated with the blanket bog throughout the site and is found on the shallow peats and better-drained slopes. In Owendoo/Cloghervaddy this is mostly wet heath characterised by Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Heather, Mat Grass (*Nardus stricta*), Heath Rush (*Juncus squarrosus*) and Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*). The heath often grades into flush vegetation dominated by Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*).

Lowland oligotrophic lakes are found at Loughs Finn, Belshade and Derg as well as in many of the smaller lakes within the site. Lough Derg is a large oligotrophic lake situated north of Pettigo. This is an area of extensive blanket bogs and conifer plantations, which make up the lake catchment. Typical species seen at the three lakes include a sparse covering of Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*) along the lakeshores, Water Lobelia (*Lobelia dortmanna*), the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*, Bog Pondweed (*Potamogeton polygonifolius*), Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) with Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*) and Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*) in the margins.

Lough Finn holds a population of Arctic Charr (*Salvelinus alpinus*). This fish is a relative of salmon and trout and represents an arctic-alpine element in the Irish fauna. In Ireland this fish occurs only in a few cold, stoney, oligotrophic lakes. It is listed in The Irish Red Data Book as threatened in Ireland. The Charr in Lough Finn are unusual in that they are dwarfed. Dwarfed Charr only occur in one other Lough in Ireland, Lough Coornasahom, Co. Kerry and they are therefore of national importance.

Charr are very sensitive to water quality and therefore changes in the catchment such as afforestation should be avoided to maintain this population. Lough Derg is also important for Arctic Char though it was last recorded there in 1990/91.

On the tidal stretches within the site the main habitats are the river itself, mudflats and the extensive reedbeds that have colonised the former mudflats. The habitats found are typically freshwater in nature. The large reedbeds are dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) with some Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*). Succession is demonstrated nicely within a small area with the change from mudflats to reedbeds and on to willow and Alder scrub.

Other habitats present within the site include a fringe of wet grassland/marsh along some river stretches dominated by Rushes (*Juncus* spp.) grading into species-rich marsh in which sedges are common. Among the other species found in this habitat are Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*). Around Lough Derg wet fen type vegetation occurs in places with Purple Moor-grass, Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*), Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*) and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). There is also some Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*) and Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*). Other wet areas include Horsetails (*Equisetum* spp.),

Where banks are steeper, particularly around Lough Derg and along the deep mountain valley of the upper stretches, dry, steep slopes support Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Heather, Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*). There are areas of scrub surrounding parts of the lake margins, along the channels and on the ungrazed islands. These are composed of Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Willow (*Salix* spp.), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*). Understorey plants include abundant ferns and mosses. The Rare Narrow-leaved Hellebore (*Cephalanthera longifolia*) occurs on the shores of

Lough Derg. This species is listed in The Irish Red Data Book and is protected under the Flora Protection Order, 1999.

Small pockets of conifer plantation, close to the lakes and along the strip both sides of the rivers, are included in the site.

The Finn system is one of Ireland's premier salmon waters. Although the Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) is still fished commercially in Ireland, it is considered to be endangered or locally threatened elsewhere in Europe and is listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. Commercial netting on the Foyle does not begin until June and this gives spring fish a good opportunity to get into the Finn. The Finn is important in an international context in that its populations of spring salmon appear to be stable while declining in many areas of Ireland and Europe. The salmon fishing season is 1st March to 15th September. Fishing for spring salmon is best east of Stranorlar while the grilse run through to the upper reaches. The grilse run peaks here - depending on water - usually in mid June. The estimated rod catch from the Finn is approximately 500-800 spring salmon and 4,000 grilse annually producing about 40% of the total Foyle count. The Loughs Agency has a management regime in place called the control of fishing regulations. If enough salmon are not past the counter at Killygordon at a certain key date then both the angling and commercial fishing can be closed for set periods.

The site is also important for Otter (*Lutra lutra*), another species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. It is widespread throughout the system. In addition, the site also supports many more of the mammal species occurring in Ireland. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include the Badger and the Irish Hare. Common Frog, another Red Data Book species, also occurs within the site.

Golden Plover, Peregrine and Merlin, threatened species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, breed in the upland areas of the site. A Red Listed species Red Grouse occurs on the site, while the scarce Ring Ouzel, another Red List species is also known to occur.

Agriculture, with particular emphasis on grazing, is the main landuse along the Finn and its tributaries. Much of the grassland is unimproved but improved grassland and silage are also present, particularly east of Ballybofey. The spreading of slurry and fertiliser poses a threat to the water quality of this salmon river, particularly in this region as the river is subject to extensive flooding. Fishing is a main tourist attraction on the Finn and there are a large number of Angler Associations, some with a number of beats. Fishing stands and styles have been erected in places. The River Finn is a designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive. Other aspects of tourism such as boating are concentrated around Lough Finn.

Afforestation is ongoing, particularly along the western sections of the site adjacent to the headwaters and around the shores of Lough Derg. Recent planting has been carried out along the Cronamuck River. Forestry poses a threat in that sedimentation and acidification occurs. Sedimentation can cover the gravel beds resulting in a loss of suitable spawning grounds.

The site supports important populations of a number of species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, and several habitats listed on Annex I of this directive, as well as examples of other important habitats. Blanket bog is a rare habitat type in Europe and receives priority status on Annex I of the European Habitats Directive. The overall diversity and ecological value of the site is increased by the presence of populations of several rare or threatened birds, mammals and fish.

Source: www.npws.ie

LAND USE ZONING OBJECTIVES

RESIDENTIAL

To reserve lands primarily for Residential Use.

RESIDENTIAL RESERVE

To reserve additional lands to Residential Reserve. (Refer to Policy R15).

ESTABLISHED USE

These comprise areas of the town where a principal use has been established. In most cases, the building line and road frontage associated with these areas are satisfactory and shall be maintained. Where vacant plots and under-utilised lands exist in these areas, localised mixed-use infill development that is compatible with adjacent uses shall be encouraged.

AGRICULTURAL

Rural lands in nature, which reside inside the proposed realignment corridor. Sufficient lands have been reserved for development purposes and accordingly it is considered premature to zone these lands for development uses.

AMENITY

To maintain these areas for amenity and recreational uses.

OPPORTUNITY SITES

To promote the sustainable redevelopment of these undeveloped, derelict, vacant and serviced sites, for a variety of compatible mixed-use redevelopment proposals, e.g. retail, office, community, residential, cultural, professional. In all cases, the development proposal shall make a positive contribution to the space, having regard to the quality and character of the predominant streetscape.

GENERAL EMPLOYMENT

To promote a wide diversity of compatible employment generating uses on these lands, which currently accommodate the existing Post Office Dispatch Centre and Fuel Filling Station with ancillary retail unit.

MIXED USE

These town and edge of town centre sites have been reserved for mixed-use development proposals, which would be compatible in scale and use within a Town Centre. Proposals shall make a positive contribution to the space, having regard to the quality and character of the neighbouring streetscape and shall provide public open space and encourage pedestrian mobility within and through the site.

CAR-PARKING

All development proposals shall provide car parking in accordance with the County Donegal Development Plan 2006 – 2012, Development Guidelines and Technical Standards, Appendix A.

To facilitate public car parking on brownfield or under-utilised town centre sites within the defined town centre area.

REDEVELOPMENT

Redevelopment sites have been identified on lands, which have, in the main, suffered from vacancy, dereliction and general under-utilisation. In most instances, an established building line can be identified and where this is the case, these shall be maintained. Where no building line exists, one shall be created, providing for continuity and the distinct meandering and variation which are the foundations of

the Donegal street and which comply with parameters set out in the Town Centre Design Framework (TC8 - 13). This policy encourages the consolidation of key town centre areas through the redevelopment of under-utilised, vacant, and derelict buildings and lands.

Uses that will be permitted shall be town centre in nature, comprising a mix of local facilities, residential, retail, cultural etc.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

To facilitate the development of public administration offices/buildings to reaffirm Lifford's position as the Seat of Governance in the County and to promote the development of an Archive facility and to support its future expansion and improvement.

PUBLIC UTILITY

Lands reserved for the development of a new Waste Water Treatment Plant.

MILITARY BARRACKS

Lands reserved for the continued uses and development of Lifford Military Barracks.

DEELE CORRIDOR AREA

The River Deelee and Swillyburn Scheme consist of Office of Public Works (OPW) embankments, backdrains and channels that outfall to the sea in low tide via a series of sluices. These interventions have benefited a large area, from flooding. The Council therefore accept the need to exercise caution within these benefiting lands and have identified them as the Deelee Corridor Area. (Refer to Section 3.9, Policies F1 – F6).

COMMUNITY/RECREATION/EDUCATION

Consider a wide range of community facilities on the strategic sites identified for community infrastructure (e.g. new school, health/community centre, church and ancillary facilities).

SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION

The Rivers Finn and Foyle have been identified under a European Union Directive, as candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), i.e. prime wildlife conservation areas. The plan seeks to protect this important conservation area, from inappropriate developments, which would adversely affect wildlife. N.B. These areas are also prone to flooding. (See Appendix II for Site Synopsis).

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The Council support the introduction of a Traffic Management System, in the town centre, including the use of a One Way Traffic System on Butcher Street, Main Street and on Bridge Street.

AREA OF STRONG TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

Much of the centre of Lifford has been identified as an Area of Strong Townscape Character. Special care will be required for all development proposals within this area having regard to the established townscape character and its archaeological and architectural significance.

AREA WITH STRONG POTENTIAL FOR URBAN RENEWAL

Derelict areas in need of urban renewal have been defined within the town centre, wherein the objective is to promote the sustainable and sensitive redevelopment of these areas with appropriate and compatible associated town centre uses.

N14 LIFFORD/MANORCUNNINGHAM DRAFT REALIGNMENT CORRIDOR

This proposed road realignment corridor will remain protected for the delivery of the National Primary Road.

AREA/CENTRE OF SPORTING EXCELLENCE

Lifford is home to a number of sporting associations, including the Athletics, Gaelic and Soccer Clubs Greyhound Track/Restaurant and Coursing Club. The town is also located along the Sustrans cross border cycle network, has a gym, playing fields, synthetic running track and an astroturf playing field. Accordingly the Plan recognises the importance of sport to Lifford, and will continue to facilitate a wide range of recreational uses and associated ancillary infrastructure to elevate Lifford as a Centre for Sporting Excellence for the North West region.