



**Comhairle Contae  
Dhún na nGall**  
Donegal County Council

## **Buncrana & Environs Development Plan 2014–2020**

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

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## Introduction

The Development Plan is the statutory land use planning document that will manage development within the Buncrana & Environs area over a 6 year period. Physical changes can relate to the pressures and growth within the town and rural area, renewal and regeneration, protection of our heritage (natural and man-made), as well as the many and varied pressures on the landscape in the form of different types of development.

The Plan is located within the functional area of Donegal County Council and sets out the Council's strategic land use objectives and policies for the overall development of the town up to 2020 and beyond to a horizon year of 2030. It incorporates a Core Strategy that is strategic in nature, for the purposes of developing objectives and policies to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## EU Directives/National Guidelines

The Core Strategy is aligned to the requirements of relevant EU directives and National Guidelines such as the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), including the objectives of the North West River Basin Management Plan, the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in relation to protecting the integrity of Natura 2000 sites and the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009.

## Legal Framework

The Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Planning & Development Act 2000 (As amended). In addition, a Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment have been carried out resulting in an Environmental Report Appendix II & SEA Statement, which accompanies this Plan together with a Natura Impact Report. Both reports have helped to shape this plan.

## Interpretation

In this Plan save where the context otherwise requires, 'The Council' means Donegal County Council unless as otherwise stated. 'The Plan' means the Buncrana and Environs Development Plan 2014-2020.

## Document Layout

This Plan is comprised of the following documentation:

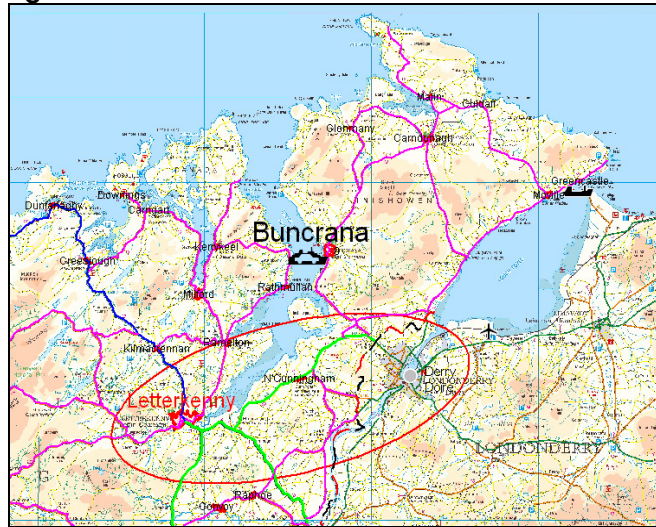
- Written Statement (Core Document) & associated Land Use Zoning Maps (1A and 1B), Built and Natural Heritage Map.
- Housing Strategy (Appendix 1).
- Environmental Report (Appendix 2).

For the avoidance of doubt, where there is conflict or disparity between maps and text, the written statement takes precedent. Furthermore, where reference is made to compliance with the provisions of any National, Regional or County policy or guidelines and it is subsequently updated or amended then that update or amendment shall be complied with.

## Background

Buncrana is the second largest town in terms of population in Donegal after Letterkenny strategically located in the Inishowen peninsula, 23km from Derry City and 43km from Letterkenny (Figure 1 refers). The town traditionally had a strong textile industry from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century until recently and now performs as an important service centre in the County and is recognised as a popular tourist destination. Buncrana is accessed by the R238 from Derry and in recent years a Car Ferry has linked the town with Rathmullan, located across Lough Swilly. Further analysis of the socio- economic background is set out within this chapter of the Plan.

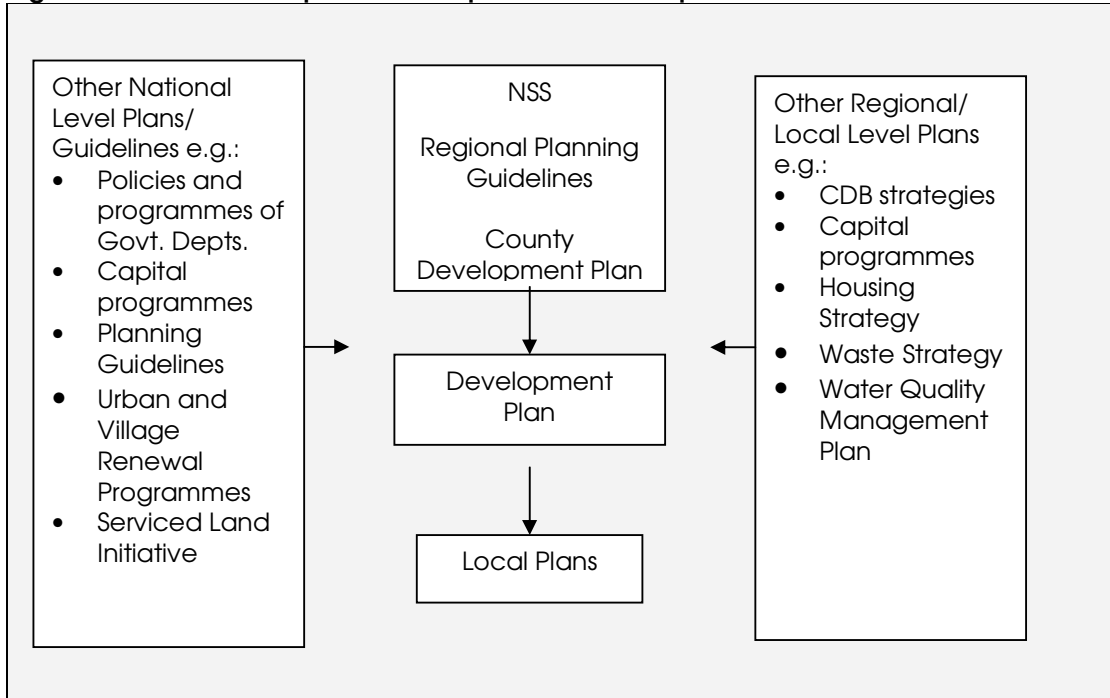
Figure 1: Location of Buncrana



## Planning Context

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), requires that a Development Plan shall, in so far as it is practicable, be consistent with national plans, policies or strategies where it relates to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and this is demonstrated in Figure 2. The Buncrana & Environs Development Plan sits within a hierarchy of other strategic plans, both in the National and Regional context and these are considered in more detail on the following pages.

Figure 2: Interrelationship with Development and other plans



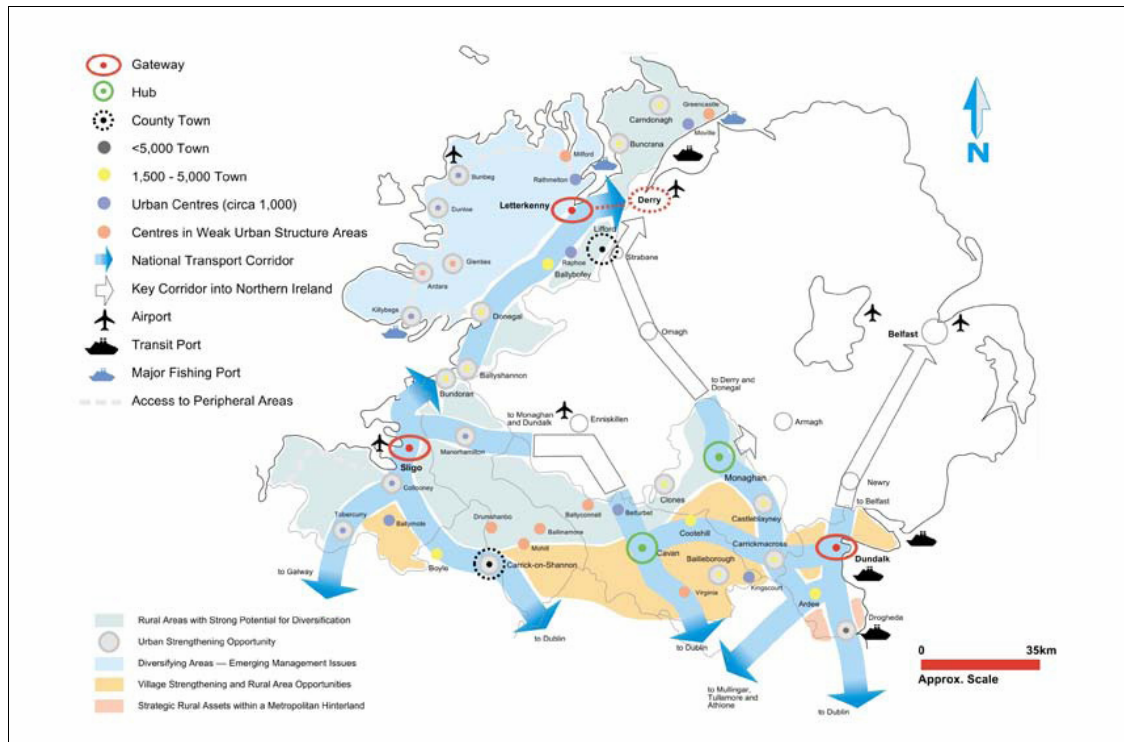
#### National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020 (NSS)

The NSS is a planning framework designed to achieve a sustainable balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth across the Country. The NSS emphasises the central role of designated Gateways, in functioning as the economic drivers for their Region and in the Donegal context, designated Letterkenny-Derry as a linked Gateway.

The strategy has identified a number of key areas for consideration in a spatial context including the need to co-operate on key strategic planning issues with Northern Ireland and to ensure that there are sufficient infrastructure links between the Region and the rest of the Country and Northern Ireland.

The NSS has identified Buncrana as an 'Urban Strengthening Opportunity' defining towns of this nature as being located on important economic and transport corridors with a capacity to grow (Figure 3 refers). The NSS also describes Buncrana as one of several centres that have built up important functions in a variety of areas including tourism, retailing and employment in a variety of enterprises.

Figure 3: Framework for the Border Region



Source: National Spatial Strategy 2002

### NSS Refresh (Update and Outlook Report)

The Government's National Spatial Strategy (2002) was updated in 2010 with the following recommendations:

- Capital investment in physical infrastructure needs to be much more closely aligned with settlement policy, to integrate strategic planning and investment prioritisation so that infrastructure provision is efficiently targeted and co-ordinated.
- Support for the Government's Smart Economy policy objectives for economic renewal, with co-ordinated investment in key Gateways such as Letterkenny, which have strong potential and critical mass of population to drive economic progress.
- Introduce 'Core Strategies' to the Development Plan to emphasise the strategic role and relevance of Regional Planning Guidelines in guiding and co-ordinating local development, and to ensure greater coherence between National land use policy, Capital Investment Programmes, Development Plans and Local Area Plans.
- High quality, compact urban environments, which can improve quality of life, reduce travel demand, optimise the use of infrastructure and reduce negative social and environmental costs.
- Protect and improve water quality, conserve and improve natural ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Economic development strategies need to address opportunities for providing new and diversified types of local employment in rural areas.
- Capital investment in physical infrastructure should be more closely aligned with settlement policy.

Whilst the government has indicated that it intends to develop a successor, the existing NSS continues to serve as Ireland's national level of planning framework.



### **National Planning Policy Guidelines**

The Planning Act requires Development Plans to be consistent with Ministerial Guidelines. Among the most directly relevant to the preparation of this Development Plan are:

- Development Plans Guidelines, 2007.
- Implementation of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), 2004.
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, 2009.
- Retail Planning Guidelines, 2012.
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the Design Manuals, 2009.
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, 2013.

The full schedule of guidelines is available at [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)

### **Border Regional Authority – Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 (RPGs)**

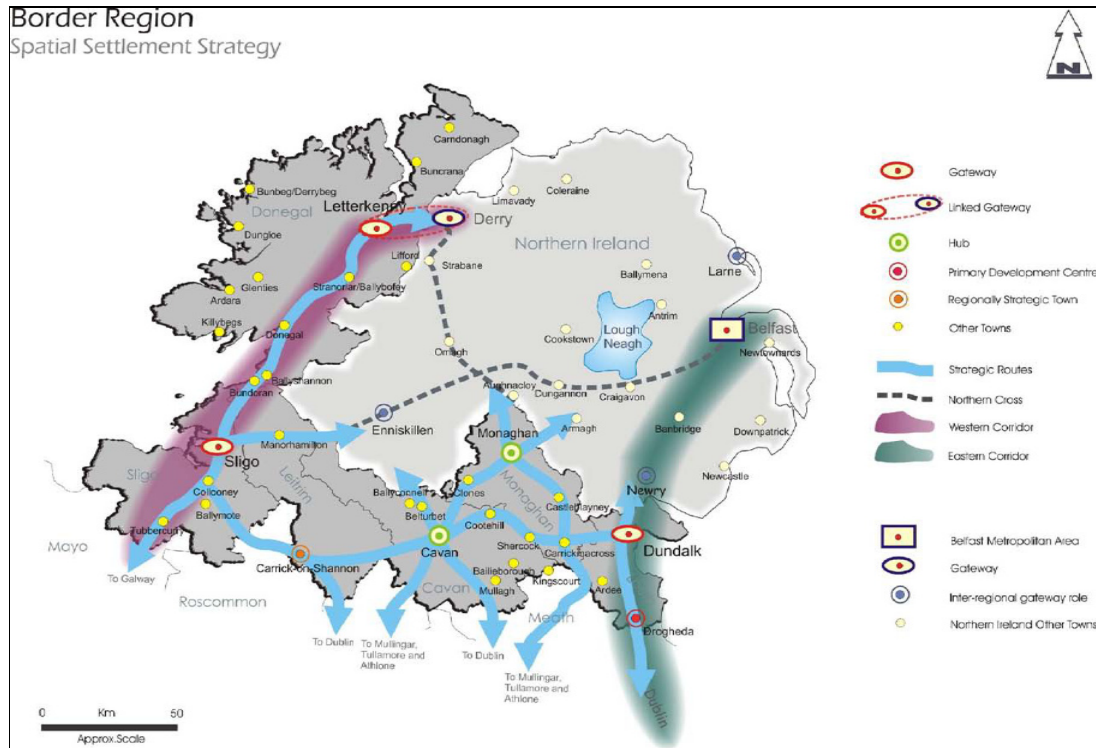
The Border Regional Authority (BRA) is currently responsible for promoting coordination between the local authorities of Donegal, Cavan, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo (This role is to be transferred to the Regional Assembly as part of government's Action Programme for Local Government). The BRA published the Border Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG's) in September 2010 that provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the sustainable development of the region for a 12-year period up to 2022. The Guidelines provide for the integration of spatial planning, the economy and infrastructure provision and address cross border issues through alignment of the strategy with the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland.

The key strategic goals of the RPG's include the following;

- To improve connectivity and mobility links.
- To promote innovation, economic growth and competitiveness in the County's development potential and to facilitate emerging sectors to provide sustainable jobs.
- To protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment and built heritage.

The RPG's outline a Core Strategy for the Region. The growth strategy adopted in the RPG's is the 'balanced development model'. The main aims of this are to strengthen the critical mass of key urban settlements, to outline a policy framework for the remaining share of population and to sustain and revitalize lower tier settlements and rural areas. Specifically in relation to County Donegal, the Guidelines identify a total population growth for the entire of the County, of 12,927 persons to 2016. Of this, the RPG's indicate that 2,700 population growth shall occur in the Letterkenny Gateway and that the remaining share of 10,227 persons shall occur within the rest of the County. Growth in Buncrana is therefore to be provided through the remaining share.

Figure 4: Spatial Settlement Strategy



Source: Regional Planning Guidelines 2010

### County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 (CDP)

The CDP was adopted in June 2012 and sets out the Council's strategic land use objectives and policies for the overall development of the County up to 2018 and beyond to a horizon year of 2022.

The CDP incorporates a Core Strategy that provides a 5 tiered settlement hierarchy. This hierarchy consists of;

- Letterkenny Gateway (Tier 1) as the primary driver of growth in the County.
- Strategic Support Towns and Villages (Tier 2).
- Strong Towns and Villages (Tier 3).
- Small Villages (Tier 4).
- Rural Areas (Tier 5).

The aim of the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan 2012- 2018 is to set the coordinated framework for the development of the County through an urban settlement hierarchy that will guide the location of new growth, perform as a mechanism to coordinate investment programmes, ensure sufficient supply of zoned housing land and implement necessary environmental safeguards.

The CDP Core Strategy is consistent both with the National and Regional Development objectives of the National Spatial Strategy and population targets which were established by the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region published in September 2010. These population objectives were expressed through a settlement hierarchy, which was evidenced and quantitatively based. The settlement hierarchy of the CDP provides for the distribution of this remaining share (10,227 persons) throughout the County (excluding Letterkenny).

Buncrana is positioned within Tier 2 'Strategic Support Towns' of the settlement hierarchy where the main aim for this Tier is for managed growth so as to continue to support sufficient critical mass in order to sustain the vibrancy and vitality of these centres and therein perform in a supporting role to the Gateway. Buncrana along with the other Tier 2 towns of Bundoran & Environs, Ballybofey-Stranorlar, Ballyshannon and Environs, Killybegs, Dungloe, Bridgend, Donegal Town and Carndonagh have been allocated 50% of the growth share of the County in the settlement hierarchy, or a total population increase of 5,113 persons. This 5,113 has been distributed throughout the tier on a pro rata basis (based on a % of the total population in the entire tier) with the result that Buncrana has an allocated target growth of 1,381 persons by 2018, and leading to a projected population of 8,580.

Tier 2 towns have an important role in relation to supporting economic growth in the County. Policy CS-O-9(b) of the County Donegal Development Plan aims to establish Buncrana as a key growth centre for population as well as a key centre for economic growth across the sectors.

#### **Donegal County Strategy for Social, Cultural and Economic Development 2012–2014**

Other local documents relevant to the County Development Plan include An Stratéis (County Strategy). An Stratéis provides a socio-economic and cultural strategy for the County and was prepared following extensive consultation with County Development Board partners, key stakeholder bodies and groups, locally, regionally and on a cross border basis. The County Strategy provides a blueprint for the delivery of public services and development for the county to 2014. The Development Plan is the statutory statement on land use strategic matters but there is substantial interaction between An Stratéis and Development Plans, as each will assist in setting a context for the other. They reflect and reinforce each other rather than compete or conflict in policy terms.

The Donegal County Development Board is a representative body of local government, local development, state agencies, educational and business interests and the community and voluntary sector. It launched a ten year development strategy An Straitéis in April 2002, which was recently reviewed with the launch of a development strategy for the period 2012–2014 at the end of 2012. The County Strategy has the following vision statement, which was agreed by all members:

"For the community of Donegal, at home and abroad, to work collectively for an inclusive and sustainable society, based on the following principles:

- A safe, healthy and just society.
- A successful economy and employment opportunities for all.
- Where every member of society can reach their full potential.
- Where culture and languages play a central role.
- With appropriate use of our natural resources.
- With responsibility towards present and future generations and the wider community, locally, regionally and nationally, and
- With due regard to the environment".

There is an emphasis in the County Strategy on harnessing all of the County's resources - it's people, it's landscape, it's coastal waters. Sectors such as Tourism, the Green Economy, Culture and the Donegal Diaspora are focused on and will provide a framework within which collaborative actions can be progressed. The key themes around which the CDB strategy is based are:

Goal 1: To Ensure Best Access to Supports and Services for all in Donegal.

Goal 2: To Ensure the Continued Development and Sustainability of the County's Cultural Resources.

- Goal 3: To promote Enterprise and Skills development in the region.
- Goal 4: To develop a Donegal Brand across all sectors.
- Goal 5: Tourism Destination Development for Donegal.
- Goal 6: To develop Donegal as a lead region for the Green Economy.

This strategy seeks to build on the collaborative work undertaken locally to date and will support the implementation of Government Policy, by focusing on local needs and opportunities. The cross border context is recognised in the Strategy as being of key importance to County Donegal, particularly in the context of advancing the wider aims of the North West Gateway Initiative and the critical mass which is available given Donegal's close proximity to Derry - the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city on the Island of Ireland.

The economy of Donegal will continue to rely on the creation of viable sustainable jobs arising from inward investment, indigenous enterprise and the development of natural resources. Key areas will be e.g. renewable energies (onshore and offshore), creative economy, tourism, culture, etc. While the County faces many challenges, this strategy recognises and maps out how to address these challenges and bring about beneficial change in County Donegal, building on our resources.

#### **River Basin District (NWRBMP) 2009-2015**

In accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive, Ireland is committed to manage all waters through a catchment-based process, and the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) is the mechanism for achieving this. The plan aims to protect all waters within the district and, where necessary, improve waters and achieve sustainable water use.

The implementation of the RBMP seeks to bring incremental improvement leading to many waters in Donegal reaching at least 'Good' status by 2015. Where waters are currently at less than good status, they must be improved until they reach good status and there must be no deterioration in the existing status of waters.

The Crana and Mill Rivers flow through Buncrana. Over the past 20 years the Crana River at Westbrook and the Mill River at Tullydish have maintained 'Good' water quality status. However the Crana River at Ballymagan and the Mill River at the Railway Bridge have experienced a deterioration in water quality from 'High' and 'Good' status respectively to 'Poor' in both cases. It is an objective of the Water Framework Directive to ensure these rivers return to Good or High water quality status. Accordingly, the Council will seek to manage development to safeguard these waters.

In 2010 the Crana Water Management Unit Action Plan indicated that there were 4,163 septic tanks in this Water Management Unit (WMU). Of this total, 1,082 septic tanks pose a risk to water quality in 2 river bodies due to their density, location and hydrogeological conditions. In Buncrana there are 2,205 houses connected to the mains sewer and 162 septic tanks. The source of total phosphorus load is predominantly from agriculture (42%), wastewater treatment plants (23%) and forestry (16%). Industrial discharges and unsewered properties are also sources of nutrients in the WMU.

#### **National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (*Building Resilience to Climate Change*), DECLG, December 2012**

The Framework sets the policy context for a strategic national adaptation response to climate change in Ireland. Over time, the approach above will bring about more compact and less energy-intensive forms of urban development and assist in adapting to climate change effects such as flood risk.

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, requires development plans to contain an additional mandatory objective for the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas, including the promotion of measures to reduce energy demand, man-made greenhouse gas emissions and address the necessity for adaptation to climate change, having regard to location, layout and design of new development. This can be regarded as a mandatory objective on climate change.

The EU Commission have established the following binding targets for Ireland: a 20% reduction, in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, relative to 2005 levels, and to meet Renewable Energy Target of 40% electricity generation by 2020.

By 2020, Ireland will have achieved 20% improvement in energy efficiency across all sectors and 33% energy end-use efficiency savings target for the public sector. The location, design and construction of domestic and commercial development can have a significant effect on greenhouse gas emissions.

**Table 1: Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Ireland**

Activity	%
Agriculture	30
Energy	22
Transport	19
Industry & Commercial	15
Residential	12
Waste	2

Source: EPA 2011

The main sources of greenhouses gases nationally is detailed in Table 1, however not all of these activities are prevalent in Buncrana. Notwithstanding this, there are a number of local activities such as the manufacturing of concrete, transportation and heating, building, livestock/fertilisers which are all potentially local sources of greenhouse gases. Accordingly, there is a need to sustainably manage these activities to an appropriate level.

The preparation of an evidenced based 'Core Strategy', will influence the location, quantum and phasing of development land. Climate change may give rise to rising sea levels and the Council will carefully manage this through appropriate measures, such as engineering works. This will also influence the location and phasing of land to be delivered through the evidencing based Core Strategy, which will deliver the quantum of housing identified in the Regional Planning Guidelines and the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018. This will have a positive consequential impact towards reducing greenhouse gases. Flood management policies will also have a positive impact.

#### **Population & Socio Economic Context**

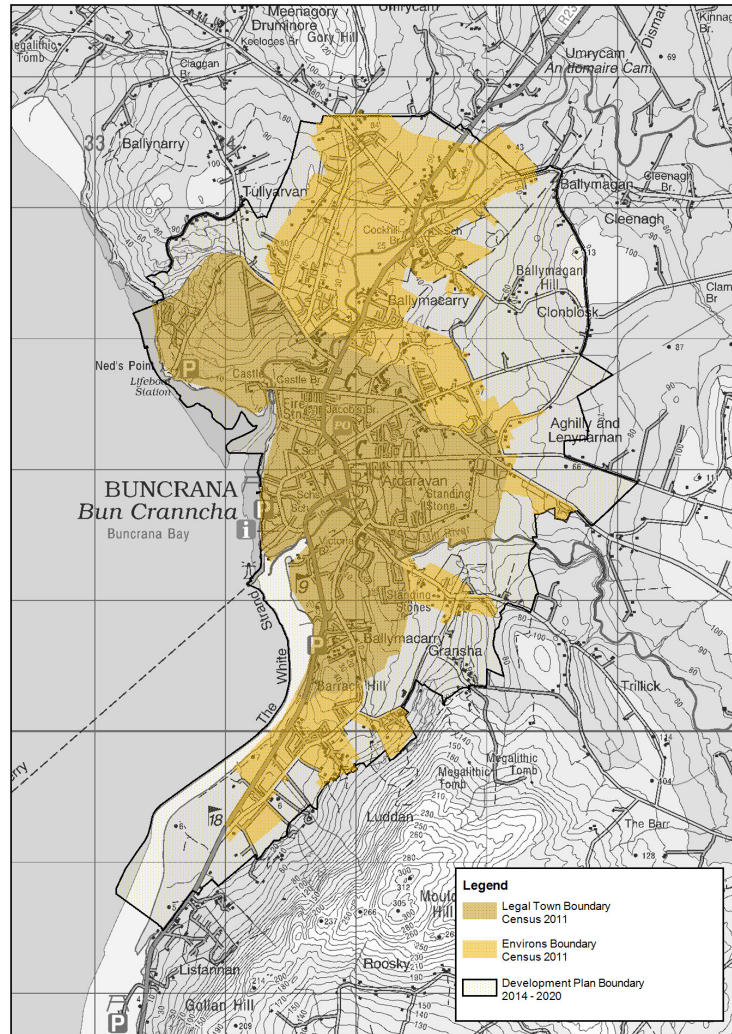
The population of Buncrana Town & Environs in 2011 was 6,839, CSO 2011. This demonstrates a strong growth of 13.6% from the 2006 census population of 5,911 compared to a 9.3% increase in Donegal and an 8.1% increase nationally. Despite this level of growth, the trend, in terms of the spatial concentration of growth, is that it has occurred on the edge of the town rather than within the town centre or built up fabric of the town. This is evidenced in Table 2 which illustrates that of the total population growth over the period 2006-2011 in Buncrana Town and Environs area (+928 persons), only 4% of this growth has occurred within the legal town area whereas 96% has occurred in the environs area (Refer to Figure 5).

It should be noted that census data set out, relates to the former area of Buncrana Town Council and Environs, which is a geographically smaller area than that of the Development Plan. This comparison of the geographical areas is demonstrated in Figure 5.

**Table 2: Population change in Buncrana Legal Town and Environs (2006-2011)**

Census Area	Population 2006	Population 2011	Actual population growth	% of total growth occurring within each census area
Buncrana Legal Town and Environs Area	5,911	6,839	928	15.7
Buncrana Legal Town Area	3,411	3,452	41	4
Buncrana Environs Area	2,500	3,387	887	96

**Figure 5: Development Plan Boundary 2014-2020 Relative to the Census (2011) Areas of Buncrana Legal Town and its Environs.**



An analysis of the dependency ratio for the area of Buncrana legal town and environs reveals that 54% of the population are classified as being dependant. This is lower than the rate for County Donegal (56.9%) reflecting the higher number of people of working age within the urban context of the town than in the wider County Donegal scenario.

In terms of the age break down of population within Buncrana Town and Environs area, there is a strong consistent number of children in each of the years in the 0-11 age cohort with a slight increase in the number of children within the 0-5 preschool age group. This in turn may have implications for the provision of primary and secondary education facilities.

The unemployment rate in Buncrana was 31.1% in 2011, and is reflective of the increasing unemployment rate in both the County and the State. The labour force is strong in terms of educational qualifications attained, with 38% of the population aged 15 and over having a third level education. Chapter 3, Economic Development provides more detailed analysis of available economic indices.

Buncrana is connected to the rest of the National Road network via two Regional roads, the R238 and a short section of the R239 from Burnfoot to Bridgend further linking to the N13, the National Primary road that connects the linked Gateway of Letterkenny and Derry. These strategic road connections are important to Buncrana's role in the County as a Strategic Support Town. Public transport is provided by Lough Swilly Buses services and according to the 2011 census, the percentage of people using public transport, walking or cycling to work was 25%. This figure is relatively low given that a high percentage of people (72%) live within 30 minutes of their place of work or school in Buncrana with 54% of the population having less than 15 minutes to travel to work or school.

68% of households have private access to broadband, which compares to 65.1% nationally. This figure demonstrates strong virtual connectivity of the town within the region. The town has a relatively new residential building stock with 60% of properties built after 1991, therefore quality in the existing building stock is high. A high percentage of properties were unoccupied at the time of the census, 28%. Although this is consistent with Donegal's vacancy rate, which was 28.6% the national average was substantially lower at 14.5%. There are also a large proportion of houses that are rented within the town amounting to 32% compared to 29% nationally. The census revealed that the household size in the town is predominately 1-4 persons and on average there are 5-6 rooms in properties. The majority of properties within the area have oil central heating. In terms of sewage 89% of properties are connected to the public sewer compared to 69.5% nationally and 94% are connected to the Public mains water compared to 78% nationally. These infrastructural trends contribute to the river water quality within Buncrana, which is of a relatively good scoring (3 out of a possible 5 overall).

### **Appropriate Assessment**

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires the protection of the designated species and habitats of Natura 2000 sites. Therefore any plan or project with the potential to impact on the conservation objectives of designated sites is required to take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species as well as significant disturbance of species for which areas have been designated and may be subject to Appropriate Assessment.

An Appropriate Assessment of the Buncrana & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020 was carried out pursuant to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and Section 177T of the Planning and Development Acts. The Natura Impact Report concluded a finding of No Significant Effects following stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process. Any potential impact on the Natura 2000 network has been mitigated against through amendments of existing policies

and objectives. The determination of the Appropriate Assessment is that there is no requirement to proceed to stage 3 of the AA as there is no significant detrimental effect identified as the result of implementation of the Plan to the integrity of any European site.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Within a land use Development Plan process the SEA is a systematic process that predicts and evaluates the likely environmental effects of implementing a plan and provides an understanding of the environmental consequences of implementing the objectives and policies of a plan.

The Environmental Report contained within Appendix 2 of this document concluded that the implementation of the Buncrana and Environs Development Plan 2014- 2020 would have an overall positive effect on the environmental status of the town and its environs. Whilst a number of policies and objectives would have an overall positive impact there may be elements of them that could also contain potential for conflict but where they do arise the policies and objectives should be mitigated to an acceptable level and appropriate provision has been made in the Plan in this regard. An SEA Statement also accompanies the Plan setting out how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

### **Key Issues to Address**

Buncrana is located within the hinterland of Derry City, the fourth largest City in the island of Ireland, which is a joint Gateway with Letterkenny in the National Spatial Strategy. It has long established social, cultural and economic relationship with Derry and occupies a strategic location within the peninsula of Inishowen and provides access to Fanad Peninsula via the Swilly Ferry Service to Rathmullan. The key physical, social, cultural and economic opportunities and issues that must be addressed in this plan include:

- The need to promote Buncrana as a Development Centre, with a Tourism focus, so that it performs to its maximum potential as a support town to the Letterkenny/Derry linked Gateway and to the wider peninsula.
- The need to plan against urban sprawl and provide for the sequential growth of the town.
- The need to consolidate and strengthen the town centre.
- The need to harness the economic potential of the heritage of the town in a sustainable way.
- The need to provide or facilitate the provision of hard infrastructure (e.g. transport, communications, water, wastewater) and soft infrastructure (e.g. schools, community/ social facilities, amenities, public spaces and services etc.) necessary to support existing and future development at appropriate locations.
- The need to protect the environmental assets of the town and its environs.



## Chapter 2 Core Strategy

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The Core Strategy is the growth strategy for the town and it represents an evidenced and quantitatively based spatial planning framework. It is consistent with the hierarchy of plans including the National Spatial Strategy 2002, the Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 (RPG's) and the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018. The RPG's set the framework for population growth in the County up to 2016. As referenced in Chapter 1 the projected population targets, which were established by the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region, informed the settlement hierarchy and Core Strategy in the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018. In the County Development Plan 2012- 2018, Buncrana is positioned within Tier 2 'Strategic Support Towns' of the settlement hierarchy with a target growth of 1,381 persons, (Table 7 of the CDP 2012- 2018 refers).

### **Strategic Development Options Alternatives:**

Working within the above figures there are 3 strategic alternative development options now considered. In considering the appropriateness of the alternatives, focus is on the delivery of a sustainable strategy that is consistent with the hierarchy of plans.

### **Alternatives:**

The following are the three alternatives considered:

1. Continuation of existing policy framework.
2. Incremental growth/consolidation and the continuation of the existing environmental protection.
3. Incremental growth/consolidation and strengthening of the existing environmental protection.

The following paragraphs set out the nature of each alternative together with the key characteristics of the alternative and the likely impacts that will arise.

### **Strategic Alternative 1: Continuation of existing policy framework**

This alternative would comprise the continuation of the zoning framework adopted in the Buncrana and Environs Development Plan 2008-2014 wherein (a) the town centre area would be identified for strengthening (b) Existing areas would be identified as 'General Employment' (c) Defined areas of 'Local Environment' would be identified that provided for limited development where the landscape has the capacity to absorb and (d) The identification of the existing 'Residential (Phase 1)' lands supported by 'Strategic Residential Reserve'.

The key principles of this strategic alternative are as follows:

1. Identification of town centre and expanded area at Ardaravan Square including retail strategy requiring sequential approach to retail proposals supported by the identification of 'opportunity' sites outside the town centre the regeneration of which is encouraged.
2. A proportion of Porthaw, Buncrana Castle and its environs and coastal lands in this area would be identified to ensure that no further development takes place.
3. Identification and prioritisation of infrastructural improvements.
4. Identification of 'Residential (Phase 1)' lands on coastal side of outer relief road.
5. Identification of 'Strategic Residential Reserve' lands on eastern side of outer relief road to fulfil long term housing needs beyond the life of the plan.

6. Identification of lands on eastern side of outer relief route, and lands at Barrack Hill, as 'Local Environment' providing for one off housing where the landscape has the capacity to absorb the development proposed.
7. Support and protect existing economic base by identifying economic opportunities at Luddan and Ballymacarry, along the key strategic transport node connecting the R238 and route of outer and inner relief roads and at lands immediately north of the town centre along inner relief road and Cockhill Road.
8. Continued protection of 3 Protected Structures and identification of a 'Special Character Area' to seek to protect the built heritage.

Having regard to the foregoing, this alternative would result in the continuation of existing patterns of development and would therefore see the population growth continue to weaken in the urban core of Buncrana and grow at a high rate in the environs of the town. It is considered that this approach would not be consistent with the Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 and the County Development Plan 2012- 2018 in that the development pattern would weaken the town centre and its ability to support economic growth and vitality. Furthermore it would not direct development to locations with appropriate infrastructure and would encroach on the Natural environment.

### **Strategic Alternative 2: Incremental growth/consolidation and continuation of the environmental protection**

This alternative would reduce the quantum of land zoned in the Buncrana and Environs Development Plan 2008-2014 as 'Residential (Phase 1)' for immediate development of housing in line with the County Development Plan 2012-2018 and the remaining residential land is then rezoned to 'Strategic Residential Reserve' for future residential development beyond the lifetime of the Plan. This alternative continues to provide environmental protection within a proportion of the area of Porthaw, Buncrana Castle and its environs and coastal lands to ensure that no further development takes place.

The key principles of this strategic alternative are as follows:

1. To ensure that the quantum of housing land supply does not exceed the housing lands requirement as set out in the County Development Plan 2012-2018 Core Strategy.
2. Identification of 'Strategic Residential Reserve' outside the town centre to fulfil long term housing needs beyond the lifetime of the plan.
3. Consolidation of urban footprint.
4. Encouraging growth of the town in a sequential manner outwards from the core so as to make the best use of planned infrastructure.
5. Same level of environmental protection of the Development Plan 2008-2014 which identified a proportion of Porthaw, Buncrana Castle and its environs and coastal lands in this area would be identified to ensure that no further development takes place.
6. Support and protect the existing economic base of Buncrana to ensure that this Tier 2 settlement is a key centre for economic growth as set out in the CDP 2012-2018 Core Strategy.
7. Identify and prioritise infrastructural improvements to ensure the growth of Buncrana as a tier 2 settlement in line with the CDP 2012-2018 Core Strategy.
8. Identification of town centre and expanded area at Ardaravan Square including retail strategy requiring sequential approach to retail proposals.

Having regard to the foregoing, it is considered that this alternative would be an acceptable option as it is broadly in line with Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 and the CDP 2012-2018 in terms of population and land supply, which would focus the primary residential land in and around the town centre and expand outwards in an incremental manner. However, the quantum of land within 'Strategic Residential Reserve' would far exceed the potential demand for housing within the 2030 horizon of this plan and would not reflect

planned infrastructure provision. It would facilitate sporadic development outside the main built up form of the town, thus negating the opportunity to achieve a consolidated urban form.

**Strategic Alternative 3: Incremental growth/consolidation and strengthening of the existing environmental protection.**

This alternative would examine all land zoned in the Buncrana and Environs Development Plan 2008-2014 as 'Residential (Phase 1)' and 'Strategic Residential Reserve' and identify sufficient lands to deliver the quantum of housing for Buncrana over the plan period as provided for in the CDP 2012-2018. The plan would also identify a Strategic Residential Reserve landbank that could be reviewed through future development plans and any surplus lands would be rezoned for Agricultural/Rural use. This alternative also provides a greater degree of environmental protection within Porthaw, Buncrana Castle and its environs and coastal lands in recognition that this is an important transitional green area between the coast and the built up urban form of the Northern section of the plan area in terms of its landscape, wildlife, amenity and historic value.

The key principles of this strategic alternative are as follows:

1. To ensure that the quantum of housing land is consistent with the housing lands requirement as set out in the County Development Plan 2012-2018 Core Strategy.
2. Identification of an appropriate quantum of 'Strategic Residential Reserve' outside the town centre to fulfil long term housing needs beyond the lifetime of the plan.
3. Consolidation of urban footprint.
4. Encouraging growth of the town in a sequential manner outwards from the core so as to make the best use of planned infrastructure.
5. High level of environmental protection in line with the Habitats Directive and to support the CDP 2012-2018 core strategy of concentrating development in the core of the town.
6. Support and protect the existing economic base of Buncrana to ensure that Buncrana as a tier 2 settlement is a key centre for economic growth as set out in the CDP 2012-2018 Core Strategy.
7. Identify and prioritise infrastructural improvements to ensure the growth of Buncrana as a tier 2 settlement in line with the CDP 2012-2018 Core Strategy.
8. Identification of town centre and expanded area at Ardaravan Square including retail strategy requiring sequential approach to retail proposals.

Having regard to the foregoing, this alternative would result in a positive change in development patterns resulting in the primary residential land in and around the town centre and expanding outwards in a sequential manner, with the 'Strategic Residential Reserve' further outside the main built up form of the town. This approach would provide for the orderly and sequential development of serviced lands and the creation of a coherent urban form, which can be readily serviced by public infrastructure and transport. In terms of environmental issues the conservation of biodiversity has been strengthened and expanded in recent years and this alternative reflects this emphasis and in particular is compatible with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

Having regard to the foregoing, it is considered that this Alternative 3 would be an appropriate option and would be compatible with the strategy set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 and the CDP 2012-2018. This Strategy provides the framework for deciding on the scale, phasing and location of lands to be zoned for 'Residential (Phase 1)' use and for a mixture of residential and other uses, having regard to existing services and planned investment over the coming years. It also identifies an appropriate quantum of land for future potential residential use beyond the lifetime of this plan, which are zoned as 'Strategic Residential Reserve'. This approach provides for the orderly and sequential

development of serviced lands and the creation of a coherent urban form, which can be readily serviced by public infrastructure and transport. It also identifies potential residential lands reserved for delivery through future plan reviews.

Although the Core Strategy establishes the population target and housing land requirements for the plan, the Housing Strategy is the mechanism to address overall social housing needs within the plan area. It has been informed by the Core Strategy and will continue to focus on the need to provide social housing.

As a consequence of introducing this Core Strategy, there will be a significant reduction in the volume of lands zoned for 'Residential (Phase 1)' use, compared to the provisions of the 2008-2014 Development Plan. In addition, the quantum of lands zoned as 'Strategic Residential Reserve' shall be reduced to reflect population growth trends over the plan horizon to 2030 and the release of these lands shall be considered as part of subsequent plan reviews, subject to housing need, availability of capacity in infrastructure, development is sequential and that it accords with the Government's Urban Design Manual 2009.

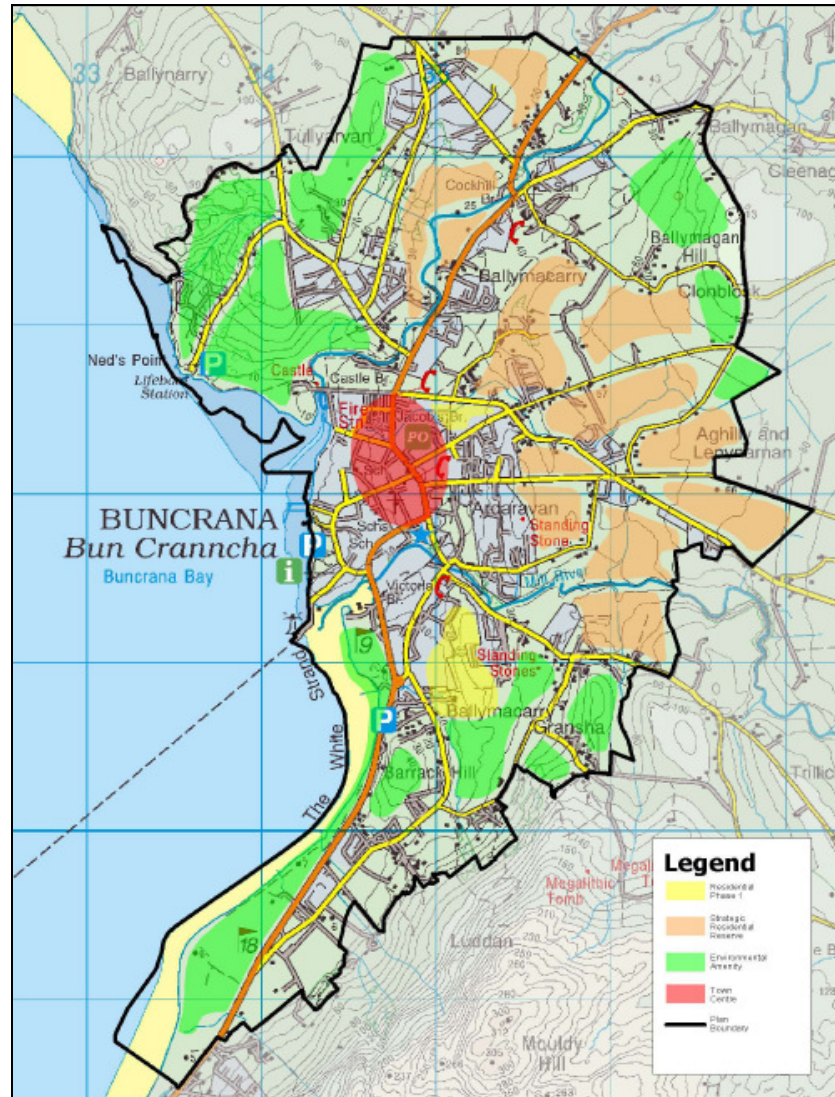
### **Context for the Core Strategy**

The Buncrana & Environs Development Plan 2008-2014 was made within the context of a rapid rate of development and in particular the growth in the retail sector within the town centre. After the adoption of the Plan in 2008, there has been a sharp slowdown in growth, demand for development and implementation of planning permissions in line with national economic trends. As a result, priorities in relation to investment in infrastructure and services needs reviewing in conjunction with identification of the key growth areas in the town.

This Plan identifies sufficient land to accommodate the Housing Land Requirements (HLR) for between 580 and 808 residential units on lands which are located close to the town centre, which are appropriate in terms of accessibility to roads, footpaths, lighting, water, sewer and access to a range of services and employment locations (and which are not subject to flooding or locational constraints due to the presence of protected habitats). In addition to the HLR, there exists a substantial residential supply made up of houses for sale and extant permissions (circa 300 units @ November 2013).

The Core Strategy establishes the prioritisation and targeting of scarce public investment, in both hard infrastructure (e.g. transport, communications, water and wastewater.) and soft infrastructure (e.g. schools, community and social facilities and services, amenities, public spaces etc.). It represents best practice for future residential development within Buncrana and its environs and provides a phasing strategy for the promotion of brownfield and infill development over some greenfield lands.

Figure 6: Core Strategy Diagrammatic Map



### Physical Development Trends

Since the adoption of the Buncrana & Environs Development Plan 2008-2014 there has been a significant drop off in development, the overall trends and spatial pattern of development in the town has continued. The development of the Inner Relief Road has created a number of development opportunities particularly around Ardaran Square. In addition, there are now a number of strategically important vacant and unoccupied brownfield sites, which were previously major employment centres.

The provision of an upgraded sewerage scheme for Buncrana shall facilitate the future development of the town. The scheme is funded through the Water Services Investment Programme 2010- 2012 and will provide appropriate treatment and capacity in respect of wastewater. This investment is a critical enabler for the delivery of the Core Strategy and will be a key determinant for the future development of the town.

## Methodology

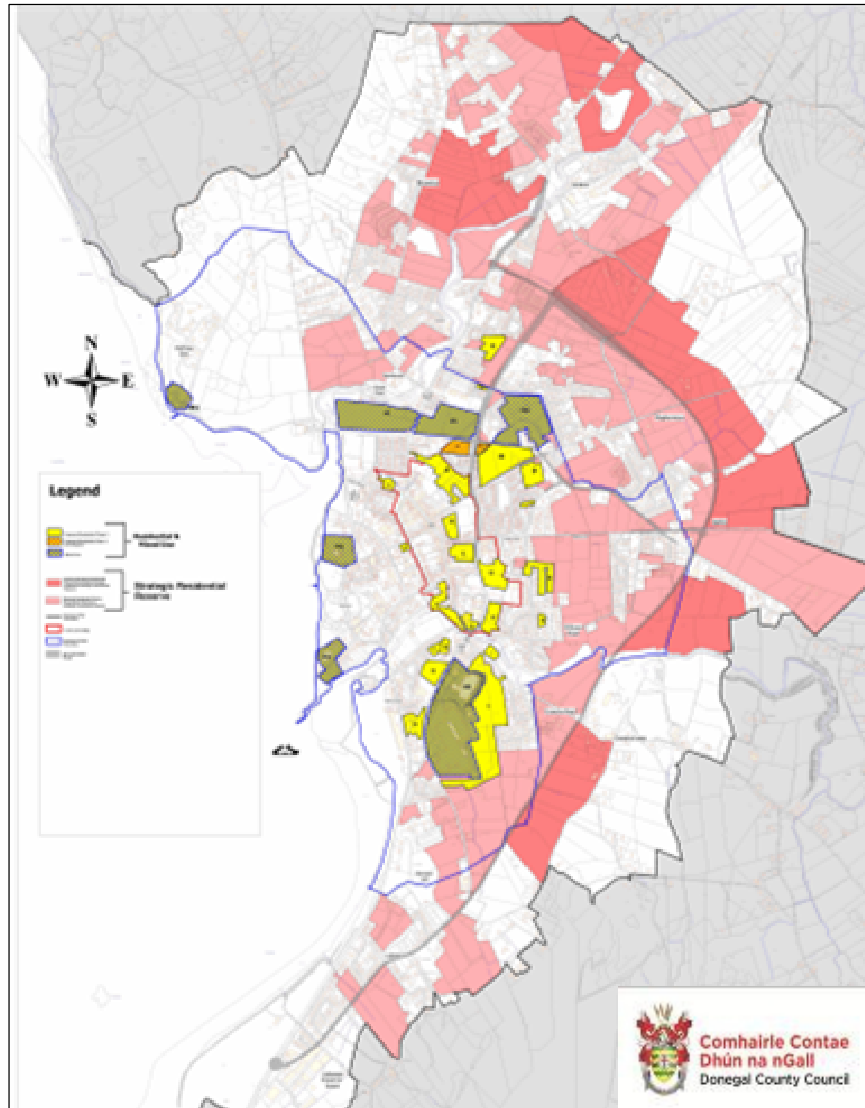
In order to ensure that this Plan provides for the necessary supply of zoned land for immediate residential development (Residential Phase 1) capable of accommodating the projected population of 1,381, in a manner consistent with the RPG's, without over-zoning, it was necessary to review the extent of lands zoned for residential purposes in the 2008-2014 Development Plan.

The methodology to identify the quantum of lands for release as phase 1, is based on a number of key guiding principles as follows:

- i. Priority is given to lands where wastewater, water supply and storm drainage can be appropriately provided without mechanical or electrical equipment. By prioritising lands that can be serviced in this manner, there are reduced associated risks both in terms of ongoing maintenance and servicing requirements as well as reduced risk of impact on the environment as a result of failure of services.
- ii. Development will be guided in a sequential manner, outwards from the core area in order to maximise the potential of existing and future infrastructure provision, promote the achievement of sustainability, avoid 'leap-frogging' to more remote areas and to make better use of under utilised land.
- iii. Priority will be given where the 12 Design Criteria set out in the publication 'Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide' (DEHLG, 2009) can be appropriately implemented.
- iv. Lands zoned residential shall be primarily for residential use. However, policy will provide that single residential dwellings shall be considered where the proposal will not hinder the future residential development potential of such lands.
- v. The Core Strategy introduces robust policies to ensure common services are provided to the necessary standard so as to ensure appropriate quality developments.
- vi. The identification of lands will support the objectives of the Housing Strategy, Transportation Strategy and Retail Strategy.

Having regard to the key guiding principles, further detailed analysis of specific areas of land within Buncrana has been carried out, in order to establish an evidenced based approach to the identification of the quantum of residential land. This assessment comprised of the consideration of indicators, constraints and opportunities in relation to the lands, both in the context of the singular effect and the cumulative effect, on the implementation of the key guiding principles. Figure 7 demonstrates 371 Hectares of land considered in the analysis and, as referenced above, these are made up of lands that were zoned 'Residential (Phase 1)' and 'Strategic Residential Reserve' in the 2008-2014 Development Plan (as varied).

Figure 7: Areas Considered and Identification of the Quantum of Residential Lands



The nature of analysis of the areas shown on Figure 7 included a broad range of indicators some of which are more critical than others in terms of representing enablers to development. In this regard, some of the key indicators include environmental considerations, capacity of existing infrastructure, planned infrastructural programmes, flood risk, accessibility to town centre and suitable storm drainage. In addition, the Council recognise the significant number of housing units that have been granted planning permission but have not yet been implemented (referred to as extant planning permission) which in the case of the lands within the Plan Area, totals circa 300 (November 2013) housing units. In addition there are housing units within unfinished housing developments and vacant properties, all of which are in addition to the population targets set by the RPG's. The Council will continue to advance the appropriate resolution of unfinished housing developments, including reconfiguration of developments in appropriate circumstances.

### Core Strategy Table

Table 3 details the population growth target and the Housing Land Requirements (HLR) that are derived from the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region published in September 2010 and the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018, as referenced in Chapter 1 of this plan. The broad housing land requirements set out in the CDP 2012- 2018, have been refined in this Core Strategy having regard to the Census 2011 data that has become available and it indicates that the average household size in Buncrana is 2.63 persons per house, which is less than the 2.8 persons per household provided for in the Regional Planning Guidelines and the County Donegal Development Plan. Therefore, as demonstrated in Table 4 it is appropriate to use the Census data on household size in calculating the Housing Land Requirement necessary to deliver the quantum of population growth provided for through the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018. As a result, Table 4 applies an average household size of 2.63 persons/ house resulting in the need for 525 new housing units to be delivered over the period of the plan. At a density of 12units/ ha and applying the approach set out in the RPGs to allow for an additional 50% (to provide for market choice), this would require approximately 66ha of land. Therefore, in line with the approach in the RPGs, it is necessary to zone 66ha of land for the delivery of the required housing units over this plan period. In effect, this Housing Land Requirement (66ha) will have the potential to supply a total of around 788 new housing units over the plan period. Table 5 consists of specific information in relation to each site that is identified as making up the quantum of lands to deliver the required number of housing units over the plan period. In the case of each site, Table 5 shows potential that may be derived at an appropriate density taking into account a variety of considerations, including the need to have regard to the context of the site and the density and layout of any adjoining existing development. Table 5 summarises the potential yield that may be provided through the Core Strategy (580- 808 units) and the total proposed supply of zoned land (65 ha) with potential for residential development in Buncrana.



**Table 3: County Donegal Development Plan 2012–2018 - Core Strategy Table/Land Supply**

Tier	Location	Core Strategy Population allocation	Number of Housing units required	Housing Land Requirement (HLR) (Ha)	Existing zoning @ 30/08/12 (Ha)	Proposed zoning (Primarily residential lands) (Ha)	Housing yield (Primarily residential lands)	Housing yield (Not primarily residential land)	Shortfall/ excess (HA)
	County	12,927	4,577	338	1,749	227	4,229	1,937	-111
2.	Buncrana	1,381	493	62 (based on 12 units per Ha)	430 (Combination of lands zoned R, SRR, TC, OPP, LE & ED)	62	672	72	0
<b>Totals</b>							<b>744 units</b>		

Note. The figures published in the CDP 2012 – 2018 were based on an average household size of 2.8 persons per household, however since the Plan was adopted, census data for 2011 identifies an average household size of 2.63 persons per household for Buncrana

**Table 4: Core Strategy Table for Buncrana**

Core Strategy Pop Allocation	Number of units required	Housing Land Requirement (HLR) <sup>1</sup>	Potential number of housing units that could be supplied by HLR <sup>2</sup>	Proposed Zoning (Residential Phase 1 Lands Ha) <sup>3</sup>	Proposed Housing Yield (Residential Lands)	Proposed Housing Yield (Other Lands Units)	Shortfall / Excess (Units)
1,381	525	66Ha (based on 12 units per Ha) or 27-41Ha(at 19 – 29 per Ha)	788	20 Ha	350- 484	230- 324	▪ Excess of 20 units (Based on the highest potential yield of 808 units)
<b>Total = 580- 808 units</b>							

Note. The figures published in columns 2 and 3 were based on an average household size of 2.63 persons per household, CSO 2011. This updates the figures from the County Core Strategy (CDP 2012 – 2018).

<sup>1</sup> Incorporates additional 50%

<sup>2</sup> Incorporates additional 50% i.e. 525 units x 1.5

<sup>3</sup> Consists of the combination of 'Mixed Use' sites and sites identified within the 'Town Centre'

### **Existing Residential Supply & Housing Land Requirements (HLR)**

The 2011 Census indicates that there are currently 3,299 units within the census boundary for Buncrana. Of these, 698 were vacant (21.16%) leaving 2,601 occupied. The average household size is now 2.63 and the population is 6,839. In addition to this residential supply, there are significant numbers of potential residential units with extant/live planning permissions that have not been developed to date (300 units @ November 2013).

From the analysis of population trends, it is considered that the housing demand outlined in this strategy marks the upper end of any demand, as the depressed housing market trends may continue for a further number of years.

### **How the 'Residential (Phase 1)' Sites Were Identified**

The Core Strategy and Housing Land Requirement resulting in potential need of 788 units enabled the Planning Authority to determine the approximate quantum of land to be zoned as 'Residential (Phase 1)' and the appropriate density range for each site. As indicated previously, residential sites were identified on the basis of their proximity to the town centre, areas of employment and other residential areas, accessibility and the possibility to develop public transport, the level of infrastructural services and whether there are concerns of impacts of flooding or upon environmental designations.

A total of 31 suitable sites are identified in and around the town centre. The majority of sites have been zoned 'Residential (Phase 1)' while a number of other sites have 'Mixed Use' potential, and three unfinished estates have been included in this Housing Land Allocation. All these are prioritised for development over the plan period.

This evidence based approach allows greater certainty regarding development opportunities, and where the funding priorities will be directed, to ensure that the town centre is consolidated. This growth can be directed to those areas that can best accommodate and facilitate sustainable growth.

### **Residential Density**

The proposed residential densities that are suggested in this plan for the individual residential zones informs the quantum of land to be zoned, including the number of sites and it should influence the nature and form of housing to be developed. However, it is at application stage that the applicant will need to demonstrate that the proposed development integrates satisfactorily with development in the area and is of an appropriate density and complies satisfactorily with the DEHLG Guidelines 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' published in 2009. This approach is expressed through Policy H-P-15, Chapter 9.

Developments should be of high quality and attractive places where people want to live. There is a need to consider the prevalent urban form in the town to ensure that development proposals fit well in terms of scale and character with established development. There is also a need to consider the demographic profile and likely tenure in the design and layout of developments.

Table 5: Table of Core Strategy Sites, Residential (Phase 1) and Mixed Use (Refer to Map 1B)

Ref.	Proposed Zoning	Area of Site (Ha)	SEA Impact <sup>4</sup> (Low/Medium/High)	Approximate Housing Yield
<b>Town centre sites (identified with residential potential)</b>				
A	Town Centre, Residential (Phase 1) & Car Park	4.17	Low	70-90
B	Town Centre & Residential (Phase 1)	0.93	Low	20-30
C	Town Centre & Residential (Phase 1)	1.0	Low	25-40
D	Town Centre (Primarily Retail & some Residential (Phase 1))	1.58	Low	10-20
E	Town Centre (Primarily Retail & some Residential (Phase 1))	1.0	Low	5-10
F	Town Centre & Commercial & Residential (Phase 1)	0.67	Low	8-13
<b>Total from Town Centre sites (identified with residential potential)</b>	--	<b>9.35</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>138- 203</b>
<b>Total Residential (Phase 1) sites</b>				
G	Residential (Phase 1)	1.13	Low	35-45
H	Residential (Phase 1)	0.91	Low	25-50

Ref.	Proposed Zoning	Area of Site (Ha)	SEA Impact <sup>4</sup> (Low/Medium/High)	Approximate Housing Yield
I	Residential (Phase 1)	0.31	Low-Medium	6-8
J	Residential (Phase 1)	1.22	Low-Medium	50-60
K	Residential (Phase 1)	0.16	Low	1-2
L	Residential (Phase 1)	0.35	Low-Medium	6-12
M	Residential (Phase 1) (These lands appear on PFRAM mapping and while there is development potential, this may only be considered through mitigation/ site engineering solutions).	0.82	Low	7- 15
N	Residential (Phase 1) (These lands appear on PFRAM mapping and while there is development potential, this may only be considered through mitigation/ site engineering solutions).	0.28	Low	2- 3
O	Residential (Phase 1)	3.4	Low	80-100
P	Residential (Phase 1)	1.06	Low	25-35
Q	Residential (Phase 1)	0.32	Low	2- 3
R	Residential (Phase 1)	0.46	Low	7- 9
S	Residential (Phase 1)	0.19	Low	2
T	Residential (Phase 1)	7.61	Low	76- 114

Ref.	Proposed Zoning	Area of Site (Ha)	SEA Impact <sup>4</sup> (Low/Medium/High)	Approximate Housing Yield
U	Residential (Phase 1)	0.14	Low	4
V	Residential (Phase 1) <sup>5</sup>	0.25	Low	4
W	Residential (Phase 1) <sup>6</sup>	1.22	Low	1
X	Residential (Phase 1) <sup>7</sup>	0.1	Low	6
Y	Residential (Phase 1)	0.8	Low	11
<b>Totals in relation to Residential (Phase 1) sites</b>		<b>20.73</b>	Low	<b>350- 484</b>
<b>Mixed Use Sites (with an element of residential)</b>				
M3	Mixed Use 3	2.4	Medium	25-35
M4	Mixed Use 4 & Residential (Phase 1)	2.0	Low-Medium	15-20
M5	Mixed Use 5 (Non Convenience Retail) & Educational	12.6	Low-Medium	30- 38
M6	Mixed Use 6	5.5	Low-Medium	17- 21
M8	Mixed Use 8	12.45	Low-Medium	5- 7
<b>Total in relation to Mixed Use Sites</b>		<b>34.95</b>	--	<b>92- 121</b>
<b>TOTAL (Combining sites identified as Residential (Phase 1) and sites identified as Mixed Use with an element of Residential)</b>		<b>65.03</b>	--	<b>580- 808</b>

<sup>4</sup>Of implementing the proposed zoning.

<sup>5</sup>Unfinished Estate. Oakfield Close, Planning History 06/90005, 24 occupied, 4 no start.

<sup>6</sup>Unfinished Estate. Cockhill Road, Planning History 07/70007, 2 occupied, 1 vacant, 1 no start.

<sup>7</sup>Unfinished Estate. The Courtyard, Planning History 05/90003, 26 occupied, 6 no start, 6 to DPC and 2 to wall plate.

### **Strategic Residential Reserve**

The Development Plan Guidelines, DEHLG 2007, outline the strategic role of the development plan, in recognising the wider policy context and setting out a strategic spatial framework so as to provide a clear view ahead in development terms for the area the development plan covers. In this context, this Core Strategy addresses the evidenced based need for development over the lifetime of the plan and takes a longer-term strategic view beyond the period of the plan by continuing to provide a strategic landbank of residential lands described as 'Strategic Residential Reserve'.

The Council has considered 3 mechanisms for how to best deal with the excess of land zoned for housing in the 2008-2014 Development Plan as follows:

- 1) Prioritising/phasing development.
- 2) Alternative objectives.
- 3) Discontinuing the objective.

The Council has chosen a combination of the first two mechanisms, through zoning sufficient land to deliver the quantum of housing units required over the plan period as Residential (Phase 1) and Mixed Use and by identifying a strategic landbank to the plan horizon of 2030 (Zoned Strategic Residential Reserve). Lands that were previously zoned Strategic Residential Reserve but which are not considered appropriate for residential development over the foreseeable plan periods are zoned for alternative purposes, mainly agricultural/rural.

Proposals for the development of the 'Strategic Residential Reserve' lands for housing will not be considered during this plan period as these lands are surplus at present. 110 Ha of residential lands have been identified as 'Strategic Residential Reserve.' The Council will monitor and review the uptake of zoned land for 1<sup>st</sup> phase residential development and the uptake of extant planning permissions, vacant houses and unfinished developments and this will inform future reviews of the plan including the need or otherwise for release of SRR lands. 'Strategic Residential Reserve' lands are identified in the separate A0 Map Entitled Map 1A, Land Use Zoning Map.'

### **Other issues for the Core Strategy to consider**

#### **Retail Strategy (Refer to Chapter 4).**

This Core Strategy identifies specific Town Centre sites with retail potential (Mixed Use). The town centre is identified on Map 1, and covers 33.81 Ha. It is primarily concentrated along Upper and Lower Main Street; however it has recently extended eastwards into Ardaravan Square. There is also convenience retailing along Cockhill Road. This shall remain the primary location for retail development, in accordance with the Sequential Approach, which is endorsed within the Retail Planning Guidelines, 2012. A land use survey in 2013, identified vacancy levels of 9.66 % in the town centre, a fall from levels from 12.3% 2007<sup>8</sup>.

The CDP Core Strategy has identified Buncrana as a Tier 2 settlement, and a 'Strategic Support Town', to the linked Gateway of Letterkenny/Derry. As a consequence of this designation, its proximity to Derry a massive hinterland and the high quality in its built heritage, natural environment and shorefront location, it is considered that Buncrana is well placed to harness economic development and tourism. Relevant town centre policies are mainly located in the following chapters; Retail and Built and Natural Heritage.

The Retail Planning Guidelines 2012 indicate that a development plan should be evidence-based through supporting analysis and data including the broad requirement for additional

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<sup>8</sup> The vacancy figures relate to numbers of units (including residential) and do not considered floorspaces.

retail floorspace in terms of quantity and type. The Guidelines provide information to assist in the assessment of retail floorspace stating however that a new simplified methodology is being prepared by DECLG and the outcome of this will be communicated. Section 3.2.1 of the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 outlines the potential need for a more comprehensive review of the County Retail Strategy on foot of the recent publication of the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012. This review at County level will subsequently set the strategic framework.

**Areas designated for significant development during the period of the development plan.**

All the proposed sites for 'Residential (Phase 1)' use and those 'Mixed Use' sites that are identified as having potential for an element of residential development, including a number of 'Town Centre' sites, have been identified and evaluated in terms of their development credentials. The sites have been numbered (A–Y, M3, M4, M5, M6 & M8), area of sites stated, and indicative densities are set out in Table 5.

**Availability of public transport within the catchment of residential or commercial development, and retail centres.**

Buncrana does not have a town bus service, school buses operate during school terms. In addition, a number of private bus operators provide services to and through Buncrana connecting the wider Inishowen area to Letterkenny, Derry and further afield.

The availability of these services are of strategic importance in terms of providing for the daily public transportation needs for the existing population as well as the needs of tourists to Buncrana, which is defined as a Tier 2 Strategic Support Town to the Letterkenny/Derry Gateway.

In the absence of a town bus service within the town, accessibility has formed part of the assessment to prioritise 'Residential (Phase 1)' lands. In this regard, considerations included the proximity to town centre, walking distance of town centre and services, existence of physical infrastructure in place such as sewers, water supply, footpaths and street lights has informed the assessment.

**Core Strategy Relationship with Housing Strategy**

The Core Strategy is aligned with the Housing Strategy as it determines the location, quantum and density of new housing units within the town, as these lands are now zoned as both residential and mixed use (with some residential potential). It also provides a summary of statistical information and analysis. As a consequence of this zoning, any proposed housing development on zoned lands will be required to provide for the appropriate provision of social and affordable housing.

**Flooding**

The issue of flooding along with an appropriate policy framework has been developed at Chapter 10 to address flood risk management for Core Strategy sites.

**Monitoring**

Monitoring and implementation of the Plan, particularly the Core Strategy is essential in terms of measuring the effectiveness of the Plan and establishing potential conflicts that may require further assessment. Monitoring of the Plan will be guided through the monitoring schedule set out in Appendix 2, Environmental Report, Section 9.0.

**Table 6: Land Use Zoning Objectives (Refer to Land Use Zoning Map)**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Objective</b>
Residential (Phase 1)	To reserve land primarily for residential development as guided within the Housing Land Requirement of the Core Strategy.
Strategic Residential Reserve	To reserve lands as Strategic Residential Reserve, that may be considered for primarily residential growth over the longer-term period (i.e. beyond the life of this plan).
Town Centre	To reserve lands for a diverse mix of commercial, retail, office, cultural, leisure/entertainment, residential and other uses appropriate to the town centre and to promote the Town Centre as the primary retail location thereby enhancing vitality and viability.
Community/Service	To reserve appropriate land primarily for community, educational, institutional, health, cultural, recreational and amenity purposes.
Amenity/Recreation	To conserve and enhance lands solely for formal and informal open spaces and amenity areas and to make provision for new recreation facilities.
Mixed Use/Tourism	To reserve strategic lands/sites for a variety of appropriate mixed-use developments, including landmark buildings/tourism/cultural, educational, community and residential uses, provided that they are compatible with the wider area whilst recognising built, natural and habitat features of importance that are specific to the site.
General Employment	To reserve appropriate land for commercial, industrial and non-convenience retail purposes (in accordance with the Sequential Approach).
Established Development	To ensure the protection of the character and biodiversity of established areas and to allow for new development that is both appropriate and orderly in the context of the established area.
Infrastructure	To reserve land for the purposes of infrastructure and utilities.
Coastal Protection Area	To conserve and protect the scenic landscape character of these coastal lands.
Agricultural/Rural	To provide for a spatial development pattern that is sustainable and related in form and scale to the level of existing physical and social infrastructure in the area and that can be integrated and absorbed into the landscape.

## Core Strategy Objectives

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- CS-O-1:** To continue to promote Buncrana as a Strategic Support Town to the Letterkenny/Derry Gateway.
- CS-O-2:** To ensure that housing land supply is consistent with the Housing Land Requirement (HLR) provided for in the County Donegal Development Plan 2012 - 2018 and to direct new residential development to the lands identified as Residential (Phase 1) (Sites A- Y) or to 'Mixed Use' sites M3, M4, M5, M6 and M8.



- CS-O-3:** To reserve future strategic landbank as 'Strategic Residential Reserve' as residential land supply to facilitate growth beyond the life of the Plan.
- CS-O-4:** To encourage the sustainable growth of the town in a sequential manner outwards from the core so as to make best use of existing and planned infrastructure and to consolidate and strengthen urban form.
- CS-O-5:** To align investment in infrastructure (physical, cultural and social) with the priorities for growth unless, in specific instances, environmental considerations dictate otherwise.
- CS-O-6:** To build and strengthen Buncrana as a centre for sustainable economic growth across the sectors, including the promotion of the town as a Tourism Hub for the area.
- CS-O-7:** To seek the resolution of unfinished residential development.
- CS-O-8:** To promote the integration of land use and transportation so as to encourage modal shift and the development of sustainable transportation policies, including public transport, walking and cycling.
- CS-O-9:** To safeguard and improve the quality of all surface, ground and coastal waters in accordance with the North West River Basin Management Plan.
- CS-O-10:** To protect and enhance the character of Buncrana's built heritage and its scenic coastal setting, as an important historic and economic resource to enhance trade, tourism and employment opportunities.
- CS-O-11:** To identify and harness cultural and heritage assets of Buncrana and to ensure the sustainable use of identified important resources.

## Core Strategy Policies

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- CS-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to guide development in a sequential manner, outwards from the Town Centre, in order to maximise the utility of existing and future infrastructural provision, promote the achievement of sustainability, avoid 'leap-frogging' to more remote areas and to make better use of under utilised land.
- CS-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to monitor the uptake of 'Residential (Phase 1)' lands (Sites A- Y) and 'Mixed Use' sites 'M3, M4, M5, M6 & M8,' together with monitoring of housing land supply through extant permissions, vacant properties and unfinished housing developments and to ensure the sufficient and appropriate use of these assets prior to consideration of release of 'Strategic Residential Reserve.'

- CS-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that developments give effect to the 12 Design Criteria set out in the Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide (DoEHLG, 2009).
- CS-P-4:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that the design and layout of development proposals promotes accessibility and does not obstruct, significantly narrow, physically encroach upon, or otherwise restrict the safe use of established, or the route of potential strategic linkages.
- CS-P-5:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that development proposals make efficient use of land and does not otherwise hinder the future development potential of backlands.
- CS-P-6:** It is the policy of the Council to consider proposals that seek to resolve existing unfinished residential development, including through the appropriate reconfiguration of developments, and such proposals shall be considered outside the population targets set by the Core Strategy.

## Chapter 3 Economic Development

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### Background

Buncrana is located close to the City of Derry, which is the 4th largest city in Ireland. The County Development Plan 2012-2018 has designated Buncrana as a 'Tier 2 Settlement, Strategic Support Town, immediately below the linked Gateway of Letterkenny / Derry. The functional area of the linked Gateway extends to Buncrana and it was estimated as having a population of 113,099 persons in 2011. Available third level institutions within the wider North West Region includes the Letterkenny Institute of Technology, University of Ulster Campuses at Magee and Coleraine, Northwest Regional College at Derry, National Fisheries College at Greencastle and the Tourism College at Killybegs; These facilities currently enrol approximately 35,000 students.

Whilst Project Kelvin has not been extended to Buncrana, it provides direct international telecommunications connectivity between the Letterkenny/Derry Gateway in the North West of Ireland with North America and Europe. The road infrastructure provides connectivity from the rest of the Region, through a network of roads, namely the N15 National Primary Road (from Derry to Letterkenny and onward to Sligo) and via a number of 'A' Class roads in Northern Ireland (A6 from Belfast, A5 joining the N2 from Dublin). Buncrana is also accessible to the City of Derry Airport, Belfast International Airport and George Best Belfast City Airport. Furthermore the Port at Lisahally, Derry City, provides another mode of transport, which is readily accessible from the town. Therefore, Buncrana is well placed to harness its assets and to play its role within the context of cross border and inter-regional co-operation, which is key to the development of the region.

The economy of Buncrana is an important contributor to the success and prosperity of the County as a whole. Historically Buncrana had been a major textile centre from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century until the closure of Fruit of the Loom in 2006. The growth of the construction industry absorbed many of these job losses, however this industry has been in significant decline since 2007. The largest employers in the town include the Department of Social Security, supermarkets, hotels and the schools, most of which are located within and around the town centre. This has established a good employment base on which other opportunities to expand and grow shall be explored. The town also benefits from activity in the local sector made up of a number of indigenous Small and Medium Enterprise's and these contribute positively to job creation in the locality. Again, this activity provides a solid base around which further clustering of innovative and new enterprises will be encouraged.

Buncrana is an important tourist destination, located along the scenic Inishowen 100 and Wild Atlantic Way touring route. It is recognised for its quality in the natural environment as well as character and sense of place in relation to the built environment, including its streetscapes. Historically, there have been strong cross border tourism connections where Buncrana provided a summer retreat for many Northern Ireland residents.

The range of tourist attractions within the town is extensive and includes Swan Park, the Shorefront Walk to Ned's Point/Father Hegarty's Rock, Tullyarvan Mill, Shorefront Park, Lisfannon Golf Course and Beaches. In addition, Buncrana can perform as a base from which there is access (through for example Buncrana – Rathmullan Car Ferry and the Fahan Marina) to a broad range of other existing tourist attractions in the County. In addition, there are a number of tourist projects currently being developed within and around Buncrana,

including the Amazing Grace Tourist Initiative, Malin Waters, Inch Levels Wildfowl Reserve, St. Patrick's Day Festival and Buncrana Festival. Fáilte Ireland is currently developing a strategic tourism project and marketing campaign entitled 'Wild Atlantic Way' to establish a touring route which will extend along the entire West Coast of Ireland from Malin Head to Cork. It will showcase the scenery and unique culture of the west coast of Ireland providing easy access to a range of experiences along the route. Within a short drive, local attractions include Fort Dunree, Mamore Gap, Grianan an Aileach, Inch Levels Wildfowl Reserve, Burt Castle and Glenveagh National Park.

The continued promotion and enhancement of the tourism offer within the town as well as emphasis on the connections and linkages to the broader countywide tourism network such as walking routes (Refer to chapter 6 in relation to walking and cycling), is critical and will form a key element of the economic strategy for the town.

The economy of the town is supported through strong road, rail, sea and air access to wider markets, in particular as a result of the proximity of Buncrana to Derry. The continued investment in these connections is critical in order to achieve economic growth. In particular, strategic connections are established in Derry at Lisahally Port, City of Derry Airport and the existing rail network through Northern Ireland and onwards to Dublin. In addition, a seasonal car ferry operates between Buncrana and Rathmullan during the summer months providing direct access to the Fanad peninsula and West Donegal.

Recent improvements have been made to telecommunications and also to power supply in Coolkeeragh, Co. Derry. These are necessary to provide an appropriate environment to attract inward investment and allow for business to occur in the town and wider region. Opportunities also exist to benefit from infrastructural projects within the regional context (e.g. Project Kelvin and A5). Additionally strong links with third level institutions can enable Buncrana to avail of investment opportunities in emerging growth sectors and foreign direct investment.

### **Buncrana Employment Trends**

As a result of the global economic crisis, the employment trends nationally, as well as locally within the town has been changing significantly. The most recent figures from the Census 2011, reveals strong employment growth in a number of key sectors like retail, health and, education; it highlights reductions in construction related sectors and also indicates a service industry in decline. It also positively identifies a youthful population to supply future Labourforces in Buncrana and broader. It demonstrates high attainment of education and qualifications and an environment of continuing education and upskilling. The following summary and key facts of employment and economic population trends show a changing landscape in terms of the components of the workforce, the upskilling that is being undertaken and to some extent, the merging of the more traditional male/ female roles. In the main, the trends reflect countywide patterns and, to some extent show a population which is adapting to the challenges that the economic downturn has presented.

#### **Persons within and outside the labour force - Summary:**

The labour force is growing and upskilling.

#### **Persons within and outside the labour force key facts:**

- There were 3013 persons in the labour force in Buncrana in 2011 compared to 2595 persons in 2006.
- Male Labour force Participation Rates are higher in Buncrana than female rates.

- Female Labour force Participation rates in Buncrana are lower than in County Donegal.
- 2201 persons who live in Buncrana were not part of the labour force in 2011.
- There has been growth in the number of 'students or pupils' indicating an emphasis on education, training and upskilling.
- The increase in the number of persons who are students is mainly driven by males.
- More females 'retired' than males.
- A larger number of males are now 'staying at home looking after family' than in 2006.

### **Components of the Labour force- Summary:**

Unemployment has increased, reflective of the County and National trend.

#### **Components of the Labour force key facts:**

- There were 939 persons in Buncrana, unemployed or first time job seekers, an increase of 566 persons since 2006.
- Males are twice more likely to be unemployed or first time job seekers than females.

### **The Workforce- Summary:**

The workforce is changing; Numbers of women in the workforce is increasing and employment in 'professional workers' and the 'managerial and technical' sector are increasing.

#### **The workforce key facts:**

- There was an increase in the percentage of the population in the labourforce in Buncrana who fall into the 'professional workers' or 'managerial and technical.'
- The top employment sector is wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles'.
- Construction now accounts for only 7% of the total number of persons at work compared to 17% in 2006.
- The number of females at work increased over the period 2006- 2011.

### **Education- Summary:**

There is a young educated working population

#### **Education key facts:**

- Of the existing population in Buncrana, there is a strong future supply of young people as 45% of the population are under 30 years of age.
- The population aged 15 and over are highly skilled with 38% having completed education to third level or higher.
- Areas such as business, law, manufacturing, engineering, construction and computing dominate the fields of study completed.

### **The Dependant Population- Summary:**

The age- dependency ratio is 54%; it comprises a vibrant young adult population and wellness and longevity in the older population.

#### **The Dependant Population key facts:**

- The age-dependency ratio for Buncrana is 54%, therefore for every one older or younger person, there are 1.8 people at work who live in Buncrana.
- There is a strong supply of young population to supply the future labour force.
- A greater number of people are in the 'older' category indicating improved health, wellness and longevity.

#### **Economic Strategy**

Buncrana is well positioned to become a strong employment centre, with a focus on tourism, and there may be opportunities to attract investment from the IT, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, food processing and electrical/electronics sectors. The focus on tourism will be broad ranging and will be delivered through a variety of measures which will include the reservation of land for recreation and amenity, continued investment in recreation and amenity infrastructure, protection and enhancement of the built heritage of the town, appropriate marketing and promotion as well as cross border cooperation on mutually beneficial projects.

To facilitate the appropriate growth of the economy in Buncrana, the Plan identifies an appropriate mix of lands that will have sufficient capacity to accommodate new economic developments. In doing so, regard has been had to infrastructural capacity in relation to water and waste-water, environmental and conservation designations, vehicular access, opportunities for the clustering of economic developments, the capacity of the town centre and the capacity for new economic activity on brownfield or infill sites. In general terms and subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, provision has been made for new economic development on lands zoned (a) 'General Employment' (b) Within the 'Town Centre' (c) At a number of identified 'Opportunity Sites' (referred to in more detail below) and (d) Within areas identified as 'Established Development'. Importantly, further lands have been identified as 'General Employment' to provide for the expansion of the existing Lisfannon Business Park which was transferred from the Industrial Development Agency to Donegal County Council in October 2010 and this included land assets of 5.4 acres of land. The County Council will continue to promote employment/enterprise uses on these lands. Other 'General Employment' lands are located at Milltown Business Park and a number of vacant and derelict former business sites are suitable for appropriate use.

#### **Walking and Cycling**

Walking and cycling are the key components to movement and accessibility in towns and rural areas. They benefit the environment and the population by reducing pollution, noise and traffic congestion, as well as contributing to healthy more active lifestyles. They are also tourism assets to the area.

Buncrana has a well established network of popular cycle/walkways which primarily extends along the Shore Front into Swan Park (along the Crana River). It also extends along the shores of Lough Swilly to Ned's Point/Fr Hegarty's Rock and beyond to Stragill Strand.

The town has an active Walking and Cycling Group and in May 2012 the Buncrana Walking and Cycling Strategy was published which identifies potential routes. As the terrain is largely

flat and scenic, there are endless opportunities to further develop resources for these activities.

**Figure 8: Swan Park**



**Figure 9: Porthaw**



**Table 7: Walking/Cycling Routes**

Route No.	Potential Routes	Source
1	Existing Walks /Trails	Buncrana Walking & Cycling Strategy 2012 (Map 4)*
2	Existing Pedestrian Infrastructure	Buncrana Walking & Cycling Strategy 2012 (Map 1)*
3	Historic Route	Buncrana Walking & Cycling Strategy 2012 (Map 5)*
4	Slí na Slainte Route	Buncrana Walking & Cycling Strategy 2012 (Map 6)*
5	Cycle Paths	Buncrana Walking & Cycling Strategy 2012 (Map 7)*
6	Lane/Access from Upper Main Street (Immediately right of Super Value) to lands alongside rear car-park, back to Ferris' Lane.	Land Registry 2013
7	Lane/Access to River from Mill Bridge	Land Registry 2013
8	Lane/Access way alongside Flanagan's Furniture Factory	Land Registry 2013

\*Walking and Cycling Strategy, May 2012.

#### **'Mixed Use' Sites**

Eight sites have been identified by reason of their scale, strategic location and potential use, as 'Mixed Use' sites, the objective of which is to reserve strategic lands/sites for appropriate mixed use development; including landmark buildings/tourism/cultural, educational, community and residential uses, provided that they are compatible with the wider area whilst recognising built, natural and habitat features of importance that are specific to the site. One site in particular (Mixed Use 1- Ned's Point- M1) is specifically identified in response to the tourism potential that exists at this coastal location. The planning framework set out for each site forms a guide to the type of development that may be appropriate at each location. Any specific development proposals that are not referred to shall be considered

on their own merits subject to the constraints identified in the planning frameworks and subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### **Buncrana Shorefront and Harbour Related Activities**

Buncrana's shorefront location and proximity to Blue Flag beaches and a marina, creates opportunities to further develop the marine leisure sector on Lough Swilly. The harbour is a valuable recreational asset facilitating coastal walks, swimming, sailing, angling/fishing, boat touring and other water based activities. There are six piers and slipways providing access to the sea but these are concentrated in the heart of the town where parking and launching is very difficult.

Buncrana Pier provides berthage for the Lough Swilly Ferry, a number of small fishing boats and for the RNLI search and rescue boat. Dredging work at the pier has enabled more vessels to use the pier, during Spring tides, particularly the RNLI vessel, which provides a vital search and rescue service. The boats can now operate 24 hours per day and all year round. All of these services are vital to the area for the commercial and economic growth of the area. A large privately operated marina, located at Fahan provides berthage for up to 250 leisure craft.

The use of marinas and jetties needs to be carefully managed to prevent environmental degradation of the coastal area and to prevent conflict between recreational activities and the primary function of the harbour. Any development of ports, marinas and jetties will require Screening for Appropriate Assessment and, depending on the size and likely impact of development may be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

### **Fisheries, Aquaculture & Processing**

Lough Swilly is important for the harvesting of shellfish such as clams and oysters. It is vital that these receiving waters are free of pollutants. Accordingly wastewater treatment plants should ensure that no pollution can enter the lough, which is a protected Special Area of Conservation and a Special Protection Area.

## **Economic Development Objectives**

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- E-O-1:** To facilitate the sustainable development of Buncrana as a Development Centre with specific focus upon Tourism.
- E-O-2:** To promote innovative, economic sectors and encourage clustering, thus enabling mentoring and shared service provision between companies and/or with third level educational institutions.
- E-O-3:** To facilitate cross-border collaboration to enable and sustain regional economic, cultural and social development opportunities.
- E-O-4:** To ensure that sufficient land is provided at appropriate locations for employment generating uses and that such land will be protected from inappropriate development that would prejudice its long-term development.
- E-O-5:** To facilitate and direct appropriate employment generating developments into the plan area.



- E-O-6:** To provide adequate infrastructure, including water, wastewater treatment and waste management facilities to accommodate future sustainable economic growth and job creation.
- E-O-7:** To ensure high quality urban design incorporating contemporary architecture and quality public spaces.
- E-O-8:** To consolidate existing industrial areas and to protect residential amenities and environmental vulnerabilities.
- E-O-9:** To pursue the implementation of recommendations contained within the Buncrana Walking and Cycling Strategy 2012, including the development/enhancement of routes labelled in Table 7, subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and, where relevant, subject to compliance with the requirements of the SEA Directive (S.I. No. 435 of 2004 as amended).

## Economic Development Policies

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- E-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to implement the Economic Development Strategy to sustain existing employment and facilitate job creation in appropriate locations in the town.
- E-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to consider appropriate employment and mixed-use developments in the following locations, and subject to all relevant material planning considerations, national and regional guidance, environmental and conservation designations and subject to Policy E-P-3;
- (a) Within the defined 'Town Centre' or;
  - (b) On lands zoned 'Mixed Use' or;
  - (c) On lands zoned 'General Employment' or;
  - (d) On lands zoned 'Established Development.'
- E-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council that any proposal for economic development use, in addition to other policy provisions of this Plan, will be required to meet all the following criteria;
- (a) It is compatible with surrounding land uses existing or approved;
  - (b) It does not harm the amenities of nearby residents;
  - (c) There is existing or programmed capacity in the water and wastewater infrastructure or alternatively, suitable developer-led improvements can be identified and delivered;
  - (d) The existing road network can facilitate additional vehicular traffic generated by the proposed development or suitable developer-led improvements are identified and delivered to overcome any road deficiencies;
  - (e) Adequate access arrangements, parking, maneuvering and servicing areas are provided in line with standards set out in Table 25, Chapter 11, or as otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority;
  - (f) It does not create a noise nuisance;
  - (g) It is capable of dealing satisfactorily with any emission(s);
  - (h) It does not adversely affect important features of the built heritage or natural heritage including Natura 2000 sites;
  - (i) It is not located in an area at flood risk and/or will not cause or exacerbate flooding;

- (j) The site layout, building design, associated infrastructure and landscaping arrangements are of high quality and assist the promotion of sustainability and biodiversity;
- (k) Appropriate boundary treatment and means of enclosure are provided and any areas of outside storage proposed are adequately screened from public view;
- (l) It does not compromise water quality nor the programme of measures contained within the North Western River Basin (NWIRBD) Management Plan 2009-2015.

- E-P-4:** It is the policy of the Council to support the appropriate development of Business Park and Incubator units for Small and Medium Enterprises subject to all material planning considerations, all other relevant policies of the Plan and subject to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (where applicable).
- E-P-5:** It is the policy of the Council to require the provision of open access fibre connections and vendor neutral ducting.
- E-P-6:** It is the policy of the Council that proposals for development, including home based employment development, shall be considered where it can be clearly demonstrated that:
- (a) The proposal is of an appropriate scale for it's location;
  - (b) The proposal would not give rise to adverse environmental and transport effects or be prejudicial to residential amenity.
  - (c) Subject to policy E-P-2.
- E-P-7:** It is the policy of the Council that proposals for employment generating tourism related development will be supported and promoted where the proposal:
- (a) Is located within appropriately zoned lands.
  - (b) Is of a scale and nature appropriate to it's location.
  - (c) Is compatible with existing adjoining land uses and their amenities.
  - (d) Would not constitute a traffic hazard.
  - (e) Satisfies policy E-P-2.
- E-P-8:** It is the policy of the Council that proposals for employment generating development will be required to ensure the protection and enhancement of matters of biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape that may be affected by the proposed development.
- E-P-9:** It is the policy of the Council to assess proposals for the development of lands identified as 'Mixed Use' sites having regard to all relevant material planning considerations, relevant policies of this Plan including the relevant policy E-P-10 to E-P-17 relating to each 'Mixed Use' site and other national/regional guidance and relevant environmental and conservation designations including compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- E-P-10: **Mixed Use 1- Ned's Point (M1)****  
This scenic coastal site comprises a battery and ordnance ground with stone revetments, ditches and a low tower dating from 1812, a small pier, a deep-sea diving centre and RNLI lifeboat station and slipway within a small clearing in a wooded area on the shores of Lough Swilly. Part of the site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). The Fort is historically and architecturally important (NIAH), accordingly, any development

proposal on these lands should seek to sensitively reuse/refurbish the existing structure as part of any redevelopment proposal.

The site has potential for sensitive development as a tourist facility given its scenic location. Accordingly, the Council will seek the reuse of the fort in any development proposal advanced. Any proposal shall be of a massing and scale that respects the sensitive location of the site. Given that part of the site is NHA and SAC any development of the site must be sensitively designed and not damage nor detract from the natural environment. The existing coastal walk shall be protected as a public amenity.

**E-P-11: Mixed Use 2 – Edge of Town Centre (M2)**

This is a flat open agricultural field and a prime 'edge of town centre' site and would lend itself particularly for Educational use, having regard to its proximity to the town, adjacent residential areas, room to expand and a range of access points which would enhance access to and from the site in a circuitous manner. The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Maps (PFRAMS) indicate flood risk within part of the site therefore any proposal will be required to comply with the Flood Risk Objectives and Policies of this Plan set out in Chapter 10.

**E-P-12: Mixed Use 3 – Brownfield Site Shorefront (M3)**

This brownfield site was the former Fruit of the Loom dyeing plant and remains occupied by this vacant commercial / industrial building of substantial size and scale. This site is coastal, and resides between low-density residential lands to the north and east and a large public amenity area to the south. The western side forms part of a coastal walk from Buncrana pier (M4) through to Ned's Point (M1), and further north along the coast. This site could lend itself to a mixed-use development of high architectural design that may include appropriate commercial, residential, retail and leisure uses that should harness the amenity, coastal and tourism elements at this prime location. Any proposed development will be required to ensure the protection of the amenity shore walk and the SAC and NHA. Any proposal shall be of a massing and scale that respects the sensitive location, and the scale and massing of any surrounding properties. Any proposal may also be considered on a phased basis subject to proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**E-P-13: Mixed Use 4 – Brownfield Site and Pier (M4)**

The brownfield site housed the former Swilly Hotel. It is a locally prominent site and forms a vista from various parts of the town and surrounding hinterland. The location which is easily accessible is close to the town centre and existing public amenity areas and would lend itself to residential, leisure, tourism, marine and mixed development. Any development must be of a high architectural and environmental quality having regard to the coastal, prominent location adjoining a SAC and NHA. Any proposed architectural design shall be of an informed resolution considering historical evolution, context, neighbouring building heights and orientation and, is subject to a visual impact assessment to ensure any development does not detract from any aspect to/from the shorefront and/or from any of the approach roads into/out of the town and that it reflects that the former Swilly Hotel site is one of the most important and prominent sites within the town, not only historically and culturally but importantly visually. Any proposed development at this location shall consider traffic movements that may be associated with the development in the context of the existing traffic movements and flows associated with the ferry service. Any proposal shall be of a massing and scale that respects the sensitive location.

- E-P-14: Mixed Use 5 – Brownfield Site – Ballymacarry (M5)**  
This site (12.6 Ha) comprises the former Fruit of the Loom factory, a comparison goods outlet and undeveloped lands. Adjacent uses are industry/enterprise and residential. The site benefits from key access on the southern side of the town to the Letterkenny – Derry economic corridor and also benefits from proximity to the Inner Relief Road. Development on this site may be appropriate for a mix of uses within the overall site including community, education, residential, light industrial and bulky goods retail. Developments should have regard to the existing adjacent road network and the residential amenities of adjoining properties. There are potential flooding issues associated within this large flat site, which resides under a steep hill, therefore any proposal will be required to comply with the Flood Risk Objectives and Policies of this Plan set out in Chapter 10.
- E-P-15: Mixed Use 6 – Rockytown (M6)**  
The lands are located in close proximity to the town centre and within surrounding residential development. The lands represent a unique development opportunity to provide for a mix of development that may have potential to contribute to the social and community infrastructure that serve the area. Given the location of the lands within a high-density urban environment, any proposals for the site shall make provision for active recreational enjoyment by the wider community including planting of indigenous tree species. The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Maps (PFRAMS) indicate flood risk within part of the site therefore any proposal will be required to comply with the Flood Risk Objectives and Policies of this Plan set out in Chapter 10.
- E-P-16: Mixed Use 7 – Cockhill Road (M7)**  
This 'Edge of Town Centre' site is located west of Mixed Use 2. It has strong potential for 'Educational/Community' uses and is located beside high quality community and recreational facilities. The site is also close to Swan Park and the historic access to Buncrana Castle (a Protected Structure) and therein to the overall context and setting of the protected structure, and also the need to provide protection to the views and character to be had from the public walkways that exist and that are delineated as proposed in this plan. Therefore, any future proposal must ensure the development proposal provides for the integration and protection of the context and setting of the protected structure, and the integration of existing and proposed walkways in such a manner so as to harness these historical, cultural and environmental resources. All existing mature trees within the site should be integrated within any development proposal. The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Maps (PFRAMS) indicate flood risk within part of the site therefore any proposal will be required to comply with the Flood Risk Objectives and Policies of this Plan set out in Chapter 10.
- E-P-17: Mixed Use 8 – Tullyarvan (M8)**  
This site is located immediately north of the extensive sylvan riverside landscape of Swan Park, which links the historical sites of Tullyarvan Mill to east, Ned's Point to west, Buncrana Castle (a Protected Structure) to south and the Town Centre and the substantial built up fabric of the town located within walking distance to east. The site consists of a number of low lying fields along the southern portion of the site that are formed by mature trees and hedgerows. The fields within the northern portion of the site slope upwards, towards established housing development on more elevated and prominent lands to north. Linear detached housing fronts the public road to east.

This site has significant constraints to development, including absence of access to wastewater sewers by gravity flow, lack of adequate capacity at the Westbrook wastewater pumping station to facilitate significant development, road network deficiencies at Wilson's Bridge and the environmental sensitivity of Swan Park, Crana River and the Coastline, which is a Natura 2000 site.

Notwithstanding, having regard to the identification of Buncrana as a Tourism Development Centre for the County and to the location of this site in proximity to strategic walkways, to the coastal environment and to Swan Park, this site provides for an opportunity to consider tourism, community, sport, leisure, allotments, garden centres, open space, recreational amenities and tourism facilities that are appropriately sited and designed so as to integrate with the sensitive landscape, cultural and environmental assets. Any such development shall also:

- (a) Ensure the adequate and appropriate provision of infrastructure including waste water pumping facilities to public sewer network and upgrading of access to Cockhill Road. As regards wastewater disposal, best and most efficient use of the site shall be required where connection to existing gravity flow sewer network can be achieved and thereafter any proposal shall be required to demonstrate the appropriate provision of strategically located wastewater pumping facilities that will have the capacity to service the wider area.
- (b) Provide for the appropriate retention and integration of existing trees, hedgerows and natural landscape features.
- (c) Consider flood risk in accordance with Flood Risk Objectives and Policies set out at Chapter 10 of this Plan having regard to identified flood risk set out in the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Maps (PFRAMS).
- (d) Ensure compliance with relevant policies of this plan and have regard to environmental and conservation designations including the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

In addition the Council shall consider other appropriate development formats that can demonstrate compatibility with the sensitive assets of this site, including provision of one-off housing, subject to all relevant material planning considerations, relevant policies of the plan, other regional and national guidance and relevant Environmental Designations.

- E-P-18:** It is the policy of the Council to support the appropriate provision of interpretation points/signage/boards in relation to the town's natural environment assets and surrounds.
- E-P-19:** It is the policy of the Council to support the implementation of proposals for the appropriate development of tourism flagship projects, such as a Marine Discovery Centre subject to all material planning considerations, National and Regional guidelines, all relevant policies of this plan and having regard to environmental and conservation designations including the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- E-P-20:** It is the policy of the Council to facilitate, where possible the continued operation of the Buncrana - Rathmullan ferry route.
- E-P-21:** It is the policy of the Council to encourage the appropriate provision of high quality tourism accommodation subject to all material planning considerations, National and Regional guidelines, all relevant policies of this plan and having

regard to environmental and conservation designations including the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

- E-P-22:** It is the policy of the Council to continue to support and expand the existing festival calendar and promote arts and culture within the town.
- E-P-23:** It is the policy of the Council to harness the economic benefits of the tourism industry through sustainable means, including the conservation and protection of the built and natural heritage.
- E-P-24:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that development proposals facilitate the route of potential linkages (such as linear parks, roads, footpaths, trails, cycleways) through the site where the planning authority considers that a strategic opportunity exists to provide a linkage to or between adjoining areas.
- E-P-25:** It is the policy of the Council to preserve rights of way, which give access to seashore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility.
- E-P-26:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that the design and layout of multiple residential, community, large scale industrial and commercial development incorporates distinct and effective provisions for pedestrians, cyclists, people with special mobility needs and vehicular traffic movements within the site and its locality.
- E-P-27:** It is the policy of the Council to encourage the development of amenity walks/ cycleways along the indicative routes as identified on the Land Use Zoned Map 1A and recorded within Table 7, subject to all material planning considerations and to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (where applicable).

## Chapter 4 Retail

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### Background

The town centre of Buncrana is concentrated around Upper and Lower Main Street, and extends eastwards from Lower Main Street into a new quarter at Ardaravan Square, where a number of new retailers have established. The retailing offer in the town is diverse with provision across the retailing types and is characterised by a mix of both independent businesses and a number of larger footprint national stores. Vehicular accessibility through the town centre has been improved by means of the linkages to Ardaravan Square, which has, in particular, alleviated congestion along the Main Street. The Square is also accessible from the new Inner Relief Road, which has also enabled access to be provided for the new Garda Station and Social Welfare Office.

The vitality and viability of the town centre area is further discussed in this chapter through the 'Town Centre Land Use Survey' and the subsequent 'Trends and Analysis' section. In response to the levels of vacancy in the Town Centre identified in the 'Town Centre Land Use Survey,' the Plan prioritises the Town Centre as the primary retail location to enhance the vitality and viability of the town.

Buncrana's hinterland extends to Derry, where longstanding family, community and economic ties remain strong. In this regard, Buncrana has always sought to attract the sterling customer. The constant fluctuations in exchange and VAT rates have meant trade has fluctuated. Nonetheless, it is important to continue to build on the economic corridor between Buncrana, Derry and Letterkenny, which also forms part of the 'Strategic Road Network' in the County Development Plan 2012-2018. This is to be achieved by means of enhancement of the attraction of alternative retail activities, particularly comparison goods. In this regard, it is essential that the retail function of Buncrana serves both the local needs of the town together with the wider Inishowen area whilst at the same time establishing a competitive retail function with that of Derry and Letterkenny.

The retail offer, in conjunction with initiatives such as free car parking (for the first half hour) make the Town Centre an appealing destination to shop and this is complemented by the quality of the natural and built environment in the town in establishing a positive retailing environment with a distinctive sense of place.

The challenge that presents in this plan is to establish a framework that will support the ongoing vitality and viability of the town centre area and achieve land uses on lands outside this area that will be compatible with and complement the vitality and viability of the town centre retailing core.

### Policy Context

The retailing and town centre strategy is guided by the Retail Planning Guidelines issued by the DECLG, April 2012. The Guidelines have five key policy objectives:

1. Ensuring that retail development is plan-led.
2. Promoting town centre vitality through a sequential approach to development.
3. Securing competitiveness in the retail sector by actively enabling good quality development proposals to come forward in suitable locations.
4. Facilitating a shift towards increased access to retail areas by public transport, cycling and walking in accordance with the Smarter Travel strategy.
5. Delivering quality urban design outcomes.

The guidelines state that, 'In general there should be a clear presumption stated in favour of central or edge-of-centre locations for new developments'. The Guidelines also indicate that a development plan should be evidence-based through supporting analysis and data including the broad requirement for additional retail floorspace in terms of quantity and type. Existing retail floorspace within Buncrana is further discussed in this Chapter. The Guidelines provide information to assist in the assessment of retail floorspace stating however that a new simplified methodology is being prepared by DECLG and the outcome of this will be communicated. Section 3.2.1 of the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 outlines the potential need for a more comprehensive review of the County Retail Strategy on foot of the recent publication of the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012. This review at County level will subsequently set the strategic framework for any necessary further analysis of the Retail Strategy of the Buncrana & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020.

### **Sequential Approach**

The Retail Strategy of this Plan adopts the sequential approach of which the order of priority is to locate retail development in the town centre, and only to allow retail development in edge of centre or out-of-centre locations where all other options have been exhausted. This approach is provided for in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012. In this regard, retail development should only be proposed in an edge of centre site where the applicant can demonstrate, and the planning authority is satisfied, that there are no sites or potential sites, including vacant units, within the town centre that are suitable, available and viable.

Furthermore, where proposed new retail developments on out-of-centre sites have the potential to significantly undermine and compromise the goal of maintaining the vitality and viability of the established town centre, they shall be subject to a detailed retail impact assessment where these issues, in particular the issue of significant trade diversion from the town centre, are addressed, in detail and mitigation of such impacts considered.

### **County Development Plan 2012-2018 Core Strategy**

This retail strategy in respect of Buncrana & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020 is also guided by the 'Core Strategy' contained within the 'County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 (CDP)'. Within the settlement hierarchy set out in the CDP, Buncrana is identified as a 'Tier 2 Settlement, a Strategic Support Town', immediately below the linked Gateway of Letterkenny/Derry. The CDP Core Strategy describes the role of a 'Strategic Support Town', as having an identifiable physical strategic infrastructure link with Letterkenny and having an important strategic sub-county role as a service centre. As evidenced in Buncrana, the Core Strategy of the CDP states that a 'Strategic Support Town' also has an existing established population, the rate of which has been increasing over intercensus periods and that they present strong vitality, vibrancy, social and community offer. The evidence of strong vitality and vibrancy also indicates a reasonable employment level within a 'Strategic Support Town.' Furthermore, capacity in wastewater treatment and water supply to support growth within a 'Strategic Support Town' is either currently available or is likely to be available within the lifetime of the plan. Significant need is identified in these locations for social housing schemes with ease of access to a range of social facilities and services.

In this policy context, Buncrana has a key role to play, building on the town's connections with the Gateway and the identified economic corridor. The high quality of Buncrana's built heritage, together with the natural beauty and coastal landscape setting, provide opportunities to harness enhanced economic growth through tourism and this economic sector will contribute to the retail vibrancy of the town.

### **County Retail Strategy**

The County Retail Strategy is contained within the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 and it aims to manage growth in the 'Strategic Support Towns' in order to continue to



support sufficient critical mass to sustain the existing vibrancy and vitality of these centres so as to perform in a supporting role to the Gateway with key strategic connections resulting in a network of strategic towns. Buncrana is considered to form an integral role within this network of strategic towns.

The Strategy also identifies the retail types, which would be expected to locate in 'Strategic Support Towns': Large Foodstores, Discount Food Stores, Retail Parks/Warehouses, Factory Outlet Centres, Retail Warehouse Clubs (Cash & Carry's) and Local (Neighbourhood) Shops.

### **Backland Development**

While most development has occurred along Main Street, the development of Ardaravan Square has demonstrated how underutilised and/or landlocked backlands can provide major development opportunities within the Town Centre. Some of these lands are difficult to develop due to problems with access, configuration/complex land assembly and protection of amenities of surrounding development, however the development of these backlands would contribute to the reinforcement of the vitality and vibrance of Upper Main Street in particular and are considered to be a positive measure in terms of protecting and enhancing the role of the wider town centre.

### **Car Parking**

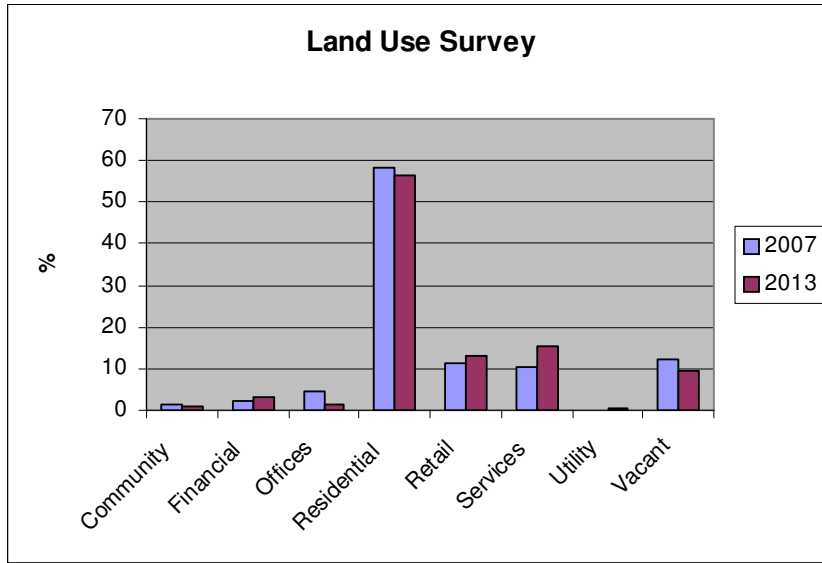
In recent years a number of car parking areas have been developed around the Town Centre. This has created enhanced trading/business opportunities and surplus parking facilities are available. The practise of each development proposal making provision for on-site car parking can have a negative impact upon the ability to deliver an appropriate development proposal within an urban context and thus the preference in this plan is for the developments to utilise public parking facilities where surplus car parking is available within easy walking distance or where public parking facilities are to be delivered at a location that will facilitate the development. In those circumstances it will be necessary for the developer to make a financial contribution towards the provision of those facilities.

### **Town Centre Land Use Survey**

A town centre land use survey was undertaken in 2007 and a separate survey has been completed (March 2013) which identifies the levels of vibrancy and vacancy throughout a number of areas within the town centre. The 2013 survey recorded the following landuses: Community, Financial, Office, Residential, Retail, Services and Utilities.

The graphs show a percentage representation of the various land uses and vacancy levels along each street and provide a picture of the various roles of each street and therein this survey reaffirms that the town centre core area is accurately identified in Map 1A and 1B, Land Use Zoning Maps.

Figure 10: Town Centre Land Use Survey (March 2013)



Source: Central Planning Unit, DCC, 8/3/13

Figure 11: Upper Main Street Land Use Survey

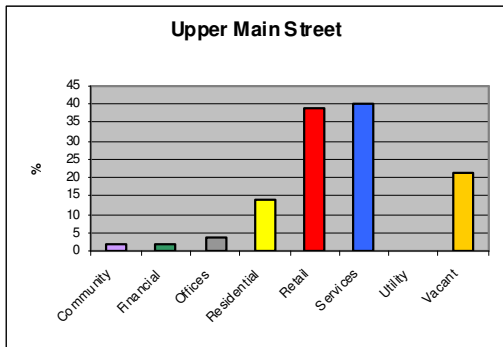


Figure 12: Lower Main Street Land Use Survey

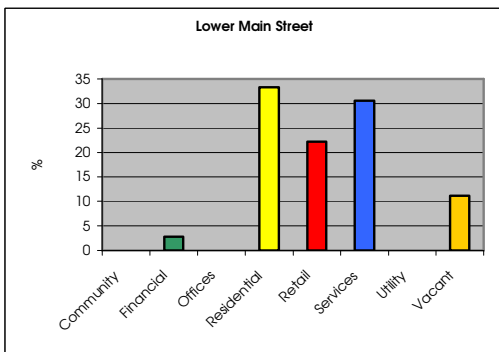


Figure 13: Cockhill Road Land Use Survey

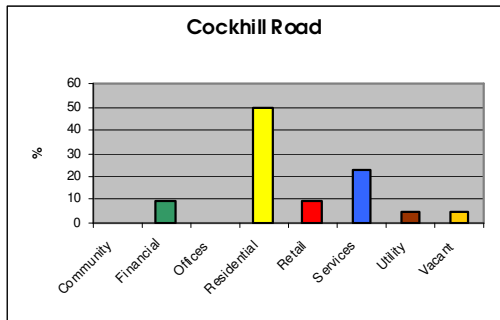


Figure 14: Ferris Lane Land Use Survey

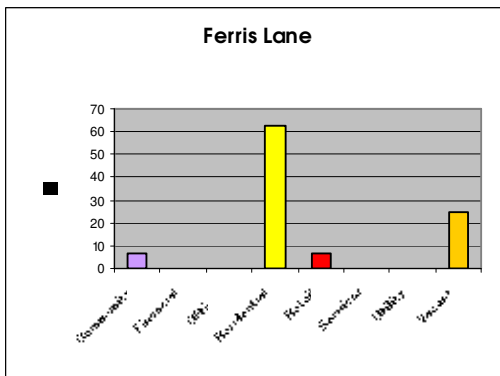


Figure 15: Church Street Land Use Survey

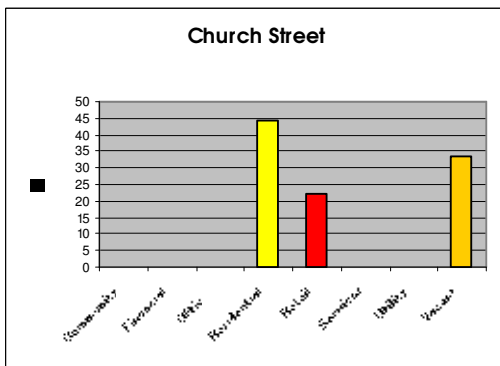


Figure 16: St. Mary's Road Land Use Survey

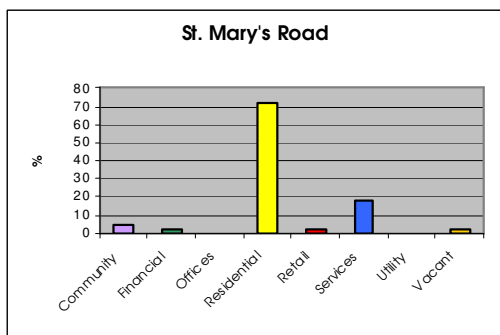


Figure 17: Maginn Avenue Land Use Survey

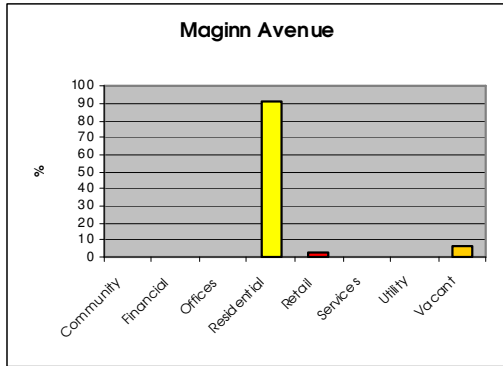


Figure 18: St Oran's Road Land Use Survey

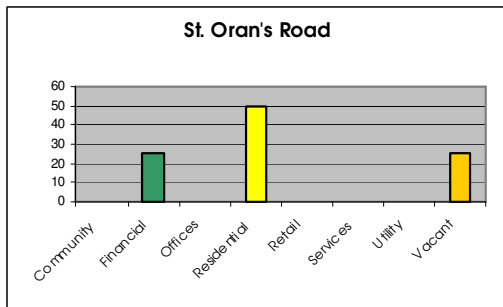


Figure 19: Millbrae Land Use Survey

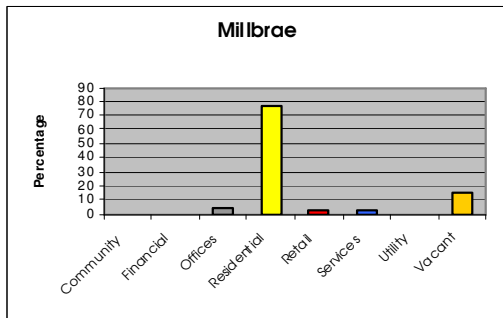


Figure 20: Ardaravan Square Land Use Survey

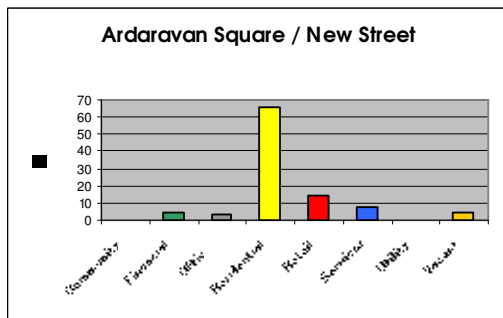
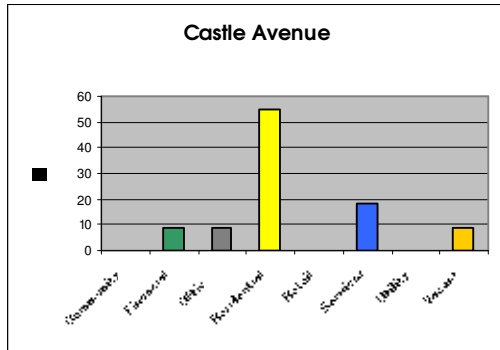


Figure 21: Castle Avenue Land Use Survey



### Trends and Analysis

The core retail area of the town is established and operating predominantly in the area of Upper Main Street, Lower Main Street and Ardaravan Square. It is these areas into which new retail development should be guided so as to protect the existing vitality and viability of these core retail areas. At present, the predominant land uses are as follows:

- Upper Main Street: Mixed uses which are predominantly retail, services, financial, offices and residential. The high percentage of residential units indicates a high level of living above the shop although there are a number of units along Upper Main Street that are residential use in their entirety. Vacancy and dereliction rate is high indicating a threatened decline in the town centre function.
- Lower Main Street: Mixed uses that are predominantly residential, retail and service.
- Cockhill Road: Primarily residential uses with some retail uses.
- Ferris Lane: Primarily residential.
- Church Street: Primarily residential.
- St. Mary's Road: Primarily residential with a small percentage of community, offices, retail and services.
- Maginn Avenue: Primarily residential.
- St. Oran's Road: Mixed uses including residential and retail. NB: Only the eastern side of the road is recorded within the Town Centre.
- Millbrae: Primarily residential.
- Ardaravan Square: Primarily residential, retail, services and financial. Higher percentage of residential than retail indicating efficient use of living over the shop within the new build properties along this street.
- Castle Avenue: Mixed uses including residential, financial, services and retail. High vacancy rate.

It should be understood that the survey recorded the use of each property but not the floor space. The recent development of Ardaravan Square has proven to be a successful extension to the town centre and has attracted a number of multinational retailers to the town. The combined retail floorspace is significant and the area still has further potential to attract more retail investment. However due to the large number of apartments (living over the shop), the total number/ratio of landuses may infer that this is primarily a residential area, but in fact it is a vibrant mixed retail and residential quarter.

The survey indicates that Upper and Lower Main Street exhibit the more significant quantum of town centre uses in the form of retail, financial, service, office and commercial. Ardaravan Square also shows a significant level of retail activity but the range of uses are confined to retail and residential only, with no offer in terms of wider town centre uses such as office, services and financial land uses. This analysis shows that the area of the town

centre as defined on the land use zoning maps, is appropriate in terms of representing the extent of the town centre area that provides for the needs of the plan area and beyond. It is these areas into which new retail development should preferably be guided so as to protect the existing vitality and viability of these core retail areas and to sustain their future growth and strengthening.

### **Floorspace**

The retail function of the town continues to operate mainly through independent retailers, although there are four major convenience retailers in the town (LiDL, EuroSpar, ALDI and Super Valu), that provide approximately 5,900m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace (i.e. Aldi = 1250m<sup>2</sup>, Lidl = 1320m<sup>2</sup>, Super Valu = 2,300m<sup>2</sup> and 1,000m<sup>2</sup>).

The Milltown Business Park also accommodates approximately 2,900m<sup>2</sup> floorspace over two factory/retail units, which provides a diverse range of retail, services and supplies. In addition, Hegarty's Furniture shop on Upper Main Street comprises approximately 1,400m<sup>2</sup> floorspace at ground floor level. Unfortunately, Flanaghans Furniture Store at Looking Glass Brae, which was a flagship retail outlet for Buncrana, has closed its premises, which represents a net loss of 810 m<sup>2</sup> of comparison retail floorspace.

### **Vacancy/dereliction rates**

In 2007, the level of vacancy recorded in the survey within the entire area of the town centre was 12.37% of the total number of units within the town centre. The town centre land use survey carried out in March 2013 recorded vacancy across the entire town centre at 9.66% of the total number of existing units in the town centre (N.B. This also includes residential units). Although the survey records an overall reduction in vacancy since 2007, the actual vacancy rate has not in real terms declined. This is explained through a further assessment of the uptake of units at three key retail sections of the town centre namely along Upper Main Street, Lower Main Street and Ardaravan Square. In this regard, vacancy levels in Upper and Lower Main Street have remained fairly consistent over the period 2007- 2013. However, in Ardaravan square, the vacancy level recorded in 2007 was high, due to the nature of the development as recently constructed and not fully established. However, in 2013, a significantly lower vacancy rate in Ardaravan Square has been recorded as the development is fully complete and the processes for leasing of retail units and rental/ sale of apartments within the development has had sufficient time to be established. Therefore, the vacancy rate relating to Ardaravan Square in 2013 is a more accurate representation of the vitality of this part of the town. Taking this into account, the survey work indicates that vacancy in the town centre overall has at most, remained constant and may have, in real terms, increased slightly, as would be expected to be the case given the nature of the economic climate.

### **Retail Strategy**

The analysis and evaluation of the retail centre in Buncrana has informed the approach to the retail and town centre strategy and regard has been had to those policies within the Buncrana and Environs Development Plan 2008-2014. It is considered that many of the policies contained in the previous plan remain applicable and as a result have been included in this plan.

The Retail Strategy is guided by Retail Planning Guidelines, published in April 2012 by the DECLG. The guidelines state that, retail developments should accord with the Sequential Approach. The total amount and type of floorspace in Buncrana is outlined in Table 8.

**Table 8: Retail Floorspace in Buncrana 2005-2013**

Retail Floorspace				
Year	Convenience (m2)	Comparison (m2)	Bulky (m2)	Total (m2)
2005	2,916	7,252	4,024	14,192
2007	X	X	X	27,211
2013	5,432	X	X	X

Source: Central Planning Unit 2013

## Retail Objectives

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- R-O-1:** To manage growth in Buncrana to support sufficient critical mass that sustains and builds upon the existing vibrancy and vitality of the town centre enabling it to perform a supporting role to the Letterkenny/Derry Gateway.
- R-O-2:** To ensure consistency with the DECLG Retail Planning Guidelines 2012 and any subsequent updates of this document.
- R-O-3:** To promote a diversity of retail types within the town and to encourage high quality specialist and niche shops and restaurants and other non-retail uses to improve the range, vibrancy and the overall shopping experience.
- R-O-4:** To strengthen the population base of the town centre, including through residential uses on upper floors and as part of infill schemes.
- R-O-5:** To promote a high design quality in the form and layout of retail proposals in a manner that contributes to the physical quality of the town.
- R-O-6:** To enhance connectivity between the town centre and peripheral residential and commercial areas.
- R-O-7:** To facilitate the development of a Casual Trading Area(s) within the town centre.
- R-O-8:** To promote a higher density and greater diversity through backland, infill and mixed-use development.
- R-O-9:** To promote the regeneration of derelict land and buildings within the town centre for appropriate uses, including retail uses.
- R-O-10:** To promote retailing as part of the town's tourism economy.

## Retail Policies

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- R-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to consider all retail proposals in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities - Retail Planning, DECLG April 2012, the 'Retail Design Manual – A Good Practice Guide', including the Sequential Approach.
- R-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that development proposals within the town centre and built up urban areas:

- (a) Provide for distinctive buildings of a high architectural quality, which contribute to a distinct sense of place and a quality public realm.
- (b) Create strong street frontage by either, adhering to the established building line in the immediate area or establish a new building line immediately adjoining the public road where a reasonable opportunity exists to do so. A greater setback will be permitted where the development would provide for the creation of a high quality public realm with appropriate design elements such as landscaping and street furniture.
- (c) Respect, where appropriate, the context of the adjoining buildings, adjacent streetscape or buildings in the immediate area, in terms of design, height, scale and mass etc.
- (d) Respect the style, architectural detailing (in terms of design/arrangement of fenestration, fascia/soffit treatment, general finishes and materials), eaves height, roof pitch, roof line, and overall building form and height, as appropriate, in areas characterised by traditional vernacular or high quality streetscape.
- (e) Create buildings of a human scale by providing for a fine grain of development, in terms of overall scale, fenestration, size/proportions, signage and detailing and appropriate breaking of building forms along street frontages into narrow horizontal distances.
- (f) Promote, where appropriate, visual interest through modulation and detailing of architectural elements (e.g. detailing/treatments of eaves, windows, frontages, slight variations in roof lines, setback).
- (g) Utilise, where appropriate adaptable and accessible design on the ground floor to ensure their future re-use for alternative functions (e.g. retail/commercial).
- (h) Avoid the use of industrial type cladding, or the glazing of extensive area of the proposed development.
- (i) Give effect to the 12 Design Criteria set out in the Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide (DEHLG, 2009).
- (j) Appropriate consideration of environmental assets and environmental and conservation designations.

**R-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council to protect and enhance the character of the Area of Special Townscape Character, as part of any public realm improvements or public infrastructure schemes. Such works/developments shall;

- (a) Ensure the protection and where necessary the reuse of historic street furniture, such as kerbing, paving, lamps, plaques etc.
- (b) In new development, use materials appropriate to the character of the area and promote high quality urban design.

**R-P-4:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that the design and layout of development proposals promotes accessibility and otherwise does not obstruct, significantly narrow, physically encroach upon, or otherwise restrict the safe use of established, or the route of potential strategic linkages.

**R-P-5:** It is the policy of the Council to encourage and facilitate the re-use and redevelopment of vacant or derelict lands or buildings within the town centre for a variety of appropriate mixed uses subject to all material planning considerations and to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (where applicable).

**R-P-6:** It is the policy of the Council to seek to provide high quality public realm and to improve pedestrian, cyclist and public transport access subject to all material



planning considerations and to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (where applicable).

- R-P-7:** It is the policy of the Council to encourage contemporary architecture which provides for a high quality design and utilises high quality durable materials and is sympathetic to the overall height, scale, and mass, and would not be otherwise incongruous with, the adjacent buildings or streetscape.
- R-P-8:** It is the policy of the Council to seek to secure the vitality and viability of the retail function of the town centre. In doing so, the Council shall implement the following measures:
- (a) To make provision for additional public car parking at alternative suitable locations that may become available over the life of this plan.
  - (b) To review traffic management measures, to improve circulation within the town centre.
  - (c) To consider opportunities that can underpin the role of Market Square, to act as a shared space that delivers strong linkage between the Main Street and the new retail quarter at Ardaravan Square.
  - (d) To encourage the appropriate regeneration and reuse of vacant, derelict and rundown buildings.
  - (e) To pursue completion of the Inner Relief Road to relieve congestion in the town centre and to pursue the preferred route of the Outer Relief Road.
  - (f) To encourage the development of strong street frontage along the Inner Relief Road.
  - (g) To encourage appropriate proposals for alternative transport options within the town centre including opportunities for public transport and for implementation of dedicated cycle and pedestrian pathways.
  - (h) To explore opportunities to establish a programme to 'green' the town centre by means of protection of existing trees, hedgerows, green spaces together with new planting to augment and complement existing biodiversity.
  - (i) To protect archaeological heritage and buildings of cultural or architectural heritage.
  - (j) To ensure compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- R-P-9:** It is the policy of the Council to guide retail development to town centre locations and to ensure that they provide for:
- (a) Adequate servicing in terms of infrastructure, access, car parking.
  - (b) Appropriate linkages both vehicular and pedestrian to the wider town centre.
  - (c) Appropriate and high quality architectural design that responds to the need to create a high quality urban environment.
  - (d) Protection of biodiversity.
  - (e) Incorporation of public/civic space into development proposals where appropriate.
  - (f) Appropriate consideration of environmental assets and environmental & conservation designations.
- R-P-10:** Proposals for a neighbourhood shop at locations outside the town centre shall be considered where it can be demonstrated there is or will be a neighbourhood shop to serve existing and or permitted multiple residential developments whether singularly or cumulatively, subject to compliance with all other relevant retail policies.

- R-P-11:** Proposals for retail uses outside the town centre shall only be considered where it satisfies policy R-P-10 or alternatively where the following can be demonstrated:
- (a) That the sequential approach can be satisfied demonstrating that it is not possible to provide the form and scale of development that is required on a site within the town centre in terms of size, availability, accessibility and feasibility; and
  - (b) That there will be no material adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the existing town centre by demonstrating that the proposal would:
    - Not diminish the range of activities and services that the town centre can support.
    - Not cause an increase in the number of vacant properties in the primary retail areas of Upper Main Street, Lower Main Street and Ardaravan Square that is likely to persist in the long term.
    - Ensure a high standard of access by private car, public transport and by foot.
    - Link effectively with the existing retail core of Upper Main Street, Lower Main Street and Ardaravan Square.
    - Not cause an adverse impact on the retail core of Upper Main Street, Lower Main Street and Ardaravan square either by itself or cumulatively when taken with other existing or permitted retail developments.
    - Accord with other policies and objectives of this plan and the proper planning and sustainability of the area; and
  - (c) Complies with other retail policies within this plan.
  - (d) That there will be no negative impact on environmental assets or environmental and conservation designations.
- R-P-12:** Proposals for 'backland development' in the town centre, shall be encouraged so as to open up lands that are currently under utilised or land locked to a multiplicity of uses, particularly retail, residential, office and service. Proposals for such development will be subject to the following:
- (a) Appropriate mix of uses dependant on the location and surrounding established uses.
  - (b) Appropriate scale and massing in the context of surrounding properties.
  - (c) High quality of architectural design that responds to the creation of a quality urban environment and that may include the provision of public/civic space
  - (d) Appropriate vehicular and pedestrian linkages with Upper and Lower main Street (where relevant) and/or with the most conveniently located public car parking provision.
  - (e) Adequate provision of infrastructure and services.
  - (f) Appropriate consideration of environmental assets or environmental and conservation designations.
- R-P-13:** It is the policy of the Council that shop fronts shall:
- (a) Be of a high quality in terms of overall design, colour and materials.
  - (b) Respect the architectural characteristics of the building, in terms of scale, proportion, finishes, materials and relationship to upper levels.
  - (c) Respect the existing streetscape and traditional shop fronts in the area including in terms of scale, proportion, plot width, overall grain of development, arrangements of fenestration, facia treatment, colouring, materials, and finishes,
  - (d) Avoid the use of excessively scaled box facias, plastic canopies over shop fronts, external security shutters, brash colours, flashing or neon lighting.
  - (e) Retention of traditional shopfronts and hand painted shopfronts including signage.

- R-P-14:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that adequate provision is made for car parking and associated servicing arrangements, in accordance with the Car Parking Standards (Chapter 11). The utilisation of public parking facilities will be encouraged instead of on-site parking facilities, where they have spare capacity and are available within easy walking distance of the site or where public parking facilities are to be provided by the Council within easy walking distance of the site and have capacity to facilitate the development. In those circumstances a development contribution shall be made towards the cost of providing those facilities.
- R-P-15:** Adequate provision shall be made within car parks for people with disabilities in accordance with best practice. Where a reduced level of parking provision is accepted, this will not apply to the number of such spaces.

## Chapter 5 Built and Natural Heritage

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### Built Heritage

#### Background

Our architectural heritage is a finite resource, expressing the ongoing evolution of our towns and villages. Buildings, monuments and landscapes are tangible links to our past, informing our being and reinforcing our sense of place. These places, towns and villages continue to evolve and change through time. The architectural heritage of Buncrana provides not an impediment to new development but rather an asset to be protected, harnessed and integrated in a sustainable way into the future development of the town.

Buncrana is fortunate to have a compact town centre characterised by a strong architectural character. There is significant potential to enhance the attraction, vitality and viability of this area by building upon the quality of the built heritage to create an attractive townscape in which to work, invest, shop and visit and subsequently to realise the resultant economic benefits. In particular, the opportunities to contribute to the tourism potential of the town are significant and this will assist in the identification of Buncrana as a Development Centre with a specific focus on tourism. This approach can be implemented through the appropriate development of built heritage, through appropriate and targeted environmental improvements and importantly through a partnership approach with the community stakeholders particularly local businesses and shopowners who should benefit from increased trade and footfall.

While many of the buildings along the Main Street are of architectural value in themselves, it is the cumulative character and detailing of the buildings and their interaction as a streetscape that presents significant value and opportunity. Taken together, the buildings along Main Street are informed by the stepped ridgeline, the repetition of chimney detail, the vertical fenestration and the relationship of solid to void. This street profile is not altogether unusual in rural Ireland. Where the inherent value and the unique character of individual towns and villages excel however, is in the detailing of these same buildings. The careful and informed management of the location and detailing of signage and lighting, the location/ frequency and spacing of street lighting, the siting of bins, the orientation of seating, as well as the appropriate and informed use of textures and materials, adds to the character of the town. It is the cumulative appearance of all these elements that informs the unique quality and value of the town.

There are many towns, which have embraced their architectural character and consequently have become successful and vibrant urban areas (e.g. Westport, Galway and Kilkenny). Buncrana is well placed to harness its varied heritage potential within the wider context of its setting within the peninsula, the Letterkenny/Derry Gateway, accessibility to Derry Airport and its association with its Diaspora, including Tip O'Neill.

The architectural fabric in Buncrana and its environs currently comprises of three Protected Structures (Table 9) and there are a number of other structures that could be considered for addition to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) as, within the last two years, the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government has undertaken extensive survey work on the architectural heritage of the town. This survey has resulted in the identification of 101 buildings/structures on the register entitled, National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), (see Chapter 11). These structures are all worthy of protection and continued use.

The Council intends to bring these buildings forward for consideration for formal protection, by proposing these structures, as Protected Structures. The process of protecting these structures will be considered separate from the Development Plan process and will involve extensive public consultation. The purpose of the designation of protected structure status is to ensure that any changes or alterations to the building and or its setting are carried out in such a way that the existing special character is retained and enhanced. Therefore works which would, in the opinion of the planning authority have a material effect on the character of the structure will require planning permission.

In addition, the Council recognise the merit of identifying an 'Area of Special Townscape Character' (ASTC) around the town. This area has been informed by the concentration of valuable and unique architectural heritage evident throughout the plan area that can positively contribute to Buncrana's sense of place.

The Council recognise that the best method to ensure the long-term survival of a historic building is to secure a constant use for the building. In this context, the Council will implement a proactive approach to the management of our built heritage. This will involve consultation with owners and occupiers and provision of advice and guidance through the Council Conservation Architect.

## Built Heritage Objectives

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- BH-O-1:** To preserve, protect, enhance and record the architectural heritage of the Plan area.
- BH-O-2:** To work closely with community voluntary and statutory agencies to develop the tourism potential of Buncrana, including rich architectural and natural heritage of the area.
- BH-O-3:** To investigate the potential of designating appropriate Architectural Conservation Areas within the Plan area.

## Built Heritage Policies

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- BH-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to conserve and protect all structures (or parts of structures) and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures that are of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.
- BH-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to review the Record of Protected Structures on an ongoing basis, and to add structures (or parts of structures) of special interest as appropriate.
- BH-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council to promote a high quality public realm and to ensure that the design of buildings respect and have regard to their context and neighbouring amenity.
- BH-P-4:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure the repair, sustainable reuse and appropriate refurbishment of vernacular/historic buildings/structures, which make

a positive contribution to the built heritage of the area including those as referred to on any National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. A number of guiding principles will be used to implement this policy:

- (a) Alteration, extension and restoration shall be carried out to best conservation policy.
- (b) Proposals shall demonstrate and reflect an appreciation of the historical evolution of the building and the characteristics, materiality and importance of the building.
- (c) Protection relates not only to the structure in question but also to the building context, setting and informed curtilage.

- BH-P-5:** It is the policy of the Council that shop fronts shall;
- (a) Be of a high quality in terms of overall design, colour and materials.
  - (b) Respect the architectural characteristics of the building, in terms of scale, proportion, finishes, materials and relationship to upper levels.
  - (c) Respect the existing streetscape and traditional shop fronts in the area including in terms of scale, proportion, plot width, overall grain of development, arrangements of fenestration, facia treatment, colouring, materials and finishes.
  - (d) Avoid the use of excessively scaled box facias, plastic canopies over shop fronts, external security shutters, brash colours, flashing or neon lighting.
  - (e) Retention of traditional shopfronts and hand painted shopfronts including signage.
- BH-P-6:** It is the policy of the Council to promote the appropriate reuse of derelict and under used urban land subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (where applicable).
- BH-P-7:** It is the policy of the Council to facilitate and support the implementation of local design plans and other community led projects to enhance the environment of the town. The design plans shall be prepared through a public consultation process and shall be consistent with other policy provisions of this Plan.
- BH-P-8:** It is the policy of the Council to continue to seek funding to carry out and publish a detailed research project within the 'Area of Special Townscape Character', which shall;
- (a) Record the architectural history of the area.
  - (b) Identify the elements of the area that inform the character of the area, such as railings, boundary condition, architectural detail, landscape, key views and prospects, landmark buildings.
  - (c) Identify design guidance and policies in relation to appropriate forms of new development.
  - (d) Raise awareness and understanding of the special aspects of the townscape using consultation and information exchange as a key element of the project.
  - (e) Promote the area as an attractive place to live and invest in identifying the area as a key asset in encouraging tourism potential.
- BH-P-9:** It is the policy of the Council to protect the character and integrity of the 'Area of Special Townscape Character', including the promotion of a higher quality built environment and to carefully consider all elements, which make this up including lighting, benches, paving, bins, signage, parking, wirescape etc. The following principles shall be considered.
- (a) Buildings identified within the ASTC shall be reused/refurbished as a preference to demolition.

- (b) Traditional railings, stone kerbing, steps, gates and boundary condition shall be retained.
- (c) Use of appropriate heritage range colours will be encouraged. Bright neon colours shall not be permitted.
- (d) New proposals respect the context and setting of key existing buildings that contribute to the character of the area. Key existing buildings are those referred to on the Record of Protected Structures and on any survey/data on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.
- (e) Existing building lines shall be retained.
- (f) Buildings included on any National Inventory of Architectural Heritage listing are to be reused/refurbished as a preference over demolition.
- (g) New proposals reflect the proportion, scale and massing of the existing streetscape.
- (h) The protection of amenity and open space associated with buildings and groups of buildings.

**BH-P-10:** It is the policy of the Council to manage areas of 'Historic/Long Established Residential Areas' so as to ensure the townscape character, setting and design of these unique neighbourhoods are protected. As such inappropriate intervention or redevelopment, as identified, which may negatively impact upon these streetscapes will not be permitted.

**Table 9: Record of Protected Structures**

No./Ref./ Name/Address	Description/Rating/Special Interest
1/4090 2907/ Drift Inn/ Railway Road	<p><b>Description:</b> 1860-1865. Detached 6 bay, 2 storey former railway station built 1864 with gabled dormers, projecting gabled end-bay to right hand side and entrance bay 3 bay single storey former sheds to left hand side extended by one storey.</p> <p><b>Rating:</b> Local</p> <p><b>Special Interest:</b> AP (Architectural, Personality)</p>
2/4080 0102/ Mill River Bridge	<p><b>Description:</b> 1700-1750. 3 arch road bridge over waterfall built, 1740, with extended westwards twice with rubble stone voussoirs vault abutments and parapets.</p> <p><b>Rating:</b> Regional</p> <p><b>Special Interest:</b> ASM (Architectural, Streetscape Setting, Material)</p>
3/40902901/ Buncrana Castle/Swan Park	<p><b>Description:</b> 1710-1720. Detached 7 bay, 2 storey over basement house built 1718 with projecting roofed pavilions on both sides, 2 bay, 2 storey extension to south left hand side and split level stair return to rear and breakfront to central 3 bays with open pedimente.</p> <p><b>Rating:</b> National</p> <p><b>Special Interest:</b> AGH (Architectural, Grouping, Historic)</p>

## Archaeological Heritage

### Background

Buncrana and the surrounding region have a rich archaeological past, e.g. Grianán an Aileach, located just South of Buncrana was the great "royal fort" of Aileach, and Iron Age fortress generally accepted as the seat of the Kingdom of Aileach. Its strategic location suggests the area was the historical centre of culture and politics during the rule of the early Irish Chieftains.

Buncrana was home to the O'Doherty Clan, who took over O'Doherty's Keep, the defensive tower near Swan Park. This is the only surviving part of an original 14th century Norman castle. In 1812, Isaac Todd bought the entire town and the townlands of Tullydish, Adaravan and Ballymacarry, on behalf of the trustees of the Marquess of Donegal. His nephews inherited the castles, and they later became known as the Thornton-Todds. The castle remains as a private home today. A total of 20 Recorded Monuments are located within the plan area (Table 10).

The archaeological heritage of the town is an important element of broader cultural heritage and is an important part of the tourism attraction of the town and wider Inishowen area. The protection of the archaeological heritage will therefore contribute to the establishment of Buncrana as a Development Centre in the County with a particular focus on tourism.

**Table 10: Recorded Monuments**

No./SMR No.	Class	Area/Townland
1/DG029-018	Bullaun stone	Tullyarvan
2/DG029-01902	Souterrain	Clonbeg
3/DG029-01901	Ringfort (Rath/Cashel)	Clonbeg/Tullyarvan
4/DG029-011	Ringfort	Ballymagan Upper and Lower
5/DG029-020	Enclosure	Ballymagan Upper and Lower
6/DG029-024	Souterraine	Tullyarvan
7/DG029-02502	Dwelling	Tullyarvan
8/DG029-025001	Castle - tower house	Tullyarvan
9/DG029-0226	Enclosure	Ballymacarry
10/DG029-027	Cashel	Ballymacarry
11/DG029-028	Cashel	Ardaravan
12/DG029-031	Standing Stone	Ardaravan
13/DG029-030	Short Cist	Ardaravan
14/DG029-032	Enclosure	Aghilly and Lenynarnan
15/DG029-038001	Standing stone	Gransha
16/DG029-038002	Standing stone	Gransha
17/DG029-039001	Standing stone	Gransha
18/DG029-039002	Standing stone	Gransha
19/DG029 04101	Burial ground	Luddan
20/DG029-043	Midden	Luddan



## Archaeological Heritage Objective

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### AH-O-1

To conserve and protect the archaeological heritage of the area for present and future generations.

## Archaeological Heritage Policies

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- AH-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to protect and enhance the integrity of Archaeological Monuments and their settings and to secure the preservation in-situ of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places.
- AH-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to protect the character, settings of and views from National Monuments/Recorded Monuments and to manage development, which would be considered to (visually or physically) intrude upon or inhibit the enjoyment of the amenities of these sites.
- AH-P-3:** It is a policy of the Council to protect where appropriate, the character and setting of any unrecorded archaeological object or site.

## Natural Heritage

### Background

The area of the Buncrana & Environs Development Plan is host to many natural heritage resources in the form of special designations (SAC's, SPA's and pNHA's), woodland areas, shorefront, tree lined rivers and parkland. These resources are important environmental assets in the town and contribute to the quality of life and character of Buncrana, which is particularly important in attracting tourism.

Specifically, EU and National protected sites are set out in Table 11 and Figure 23. Located on the Lough Swilly SAC and SPA, the protected sites include the wooded valleys that follow the Mill and Crana Rivers into Lough Swilly. Porthaw Glen is also an important natural habitat, which has European protection, i.e.) SAC. The Swilly shoreline has a number of important designations, including SAC, SPA and pNHA. It is also a designated shellfish water and has a Blue Flag beach at Lisfannon.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment of the Plan have been carried out, in which the protection of the natural heritage of the town is emphasized. The strategy of this plan in relation to natural heritage ensures that, cumulatively, the objectives and policies of the plan provide appropriate protection to environmental assets and designated sites and that implementation shall provide adequate mitigation where relevant. Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) specifically requires the protection of the designated species and habitats of Natura 2000 sites. Therefore any project with the potential to impact on the conservation objectives of designated sites is required to take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats species as well as significant disturbance of species for which areas have been designated and maybe subject to Appropriate Assessment.

Figure 22: Crana River

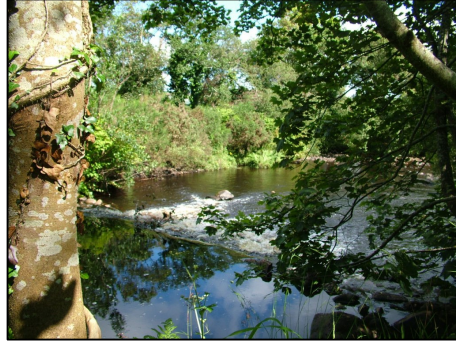
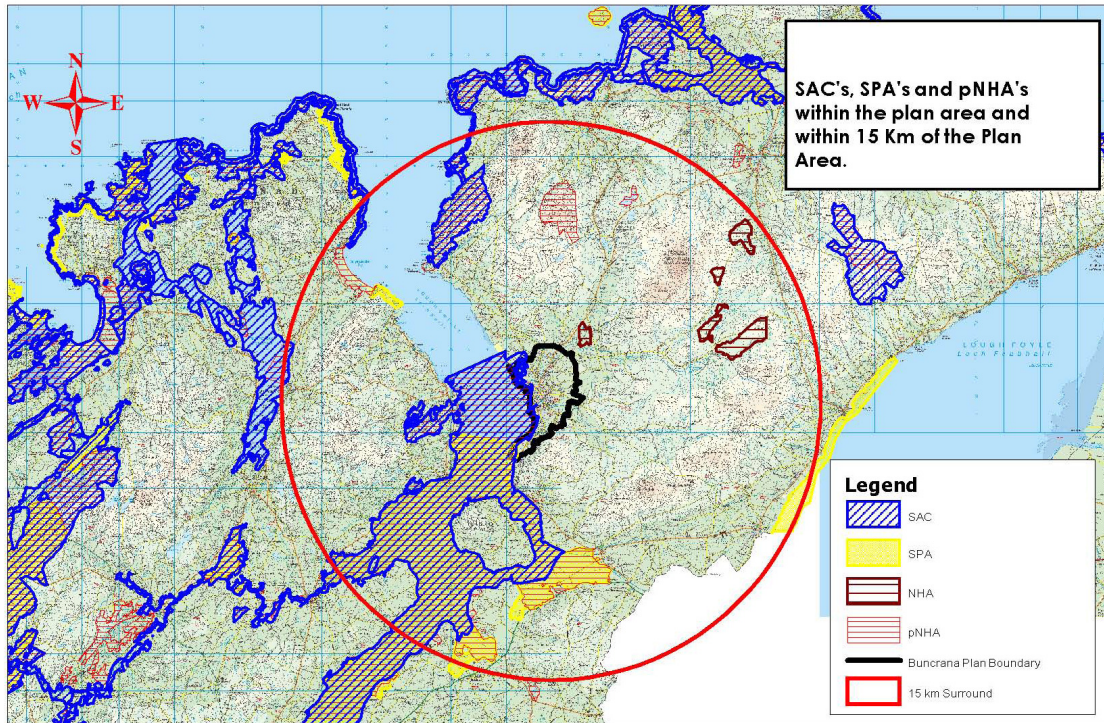


Table 11: Natura 2000 Sites and Natural Heritage Areas

Site	Code	Name
Special Area of Conservation	002287	Lough Swilly
Proposed Natural Heritage Area	000166	Lough Swilly including Big Isle, Blanket Nook and Inch Lake
Special Protection Area	004075	Lough Swilly

Figure 23: Natura 2000 and NHA designations



Geology is now recognised as an intrinsic component of natural heritage within the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Planning and Development Regulations, Heritage Act 1995, and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000. The Heritage Act, and the Planning legislation in particular, place responsibility upon Local Authorities to ensure that geological heritage is adequately addressed within Development Plans. While the most important geological and geomorphological scientific sites will be designated as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), the National Heritage Plan (2002) has recommended the recognition and protection of other important sites known as County Geological Sites (CGS). The Irish Geological Heritage Programme (a partnership between the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) and NPWS) recommends the very best geology sites in the Country for NHA designation. It also identifies many CGS, that although of national, regional and local geological heritage importance will not receive the statutory protection of NHA sites.

In relation to Buncrana, the geology in the area was formed during the Lower Carboniferous Period. The underlying bedrock includes Fahan slate formation. The river valley of the Mill River flows over a narrow band of Culdaff limestone with a sill of metadolerite along the rivers southern embankment extending from the estuarine zone inland. Sandy gravels and conglomerates overlie bedrock.

## Natural Heritage Objectives

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- NH-O-1:** To protect, the rich biodiversity of Buncrana for present and future generations.
- NH-O-2:** To comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and have regard to the relevant conservation objectives, management plans, qualifying interests and threats to the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.
- NH-O-3:** To maintain the conservation value of all existing and/or proposed SAC's, SPA's and pNHA's and RAMSAR sites including those plant and animal species that have been identified for protection.
- NH-O-4:** To protect and improve the integrity and quality of Designated Shellfish Waters, and the North West River Basin Management Plan.
- NH-O-5:** To protect the character of the landscape where and to the extent that, the proper planning and development of the area requires it, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.
- NH-O-6:** To ensure where appropriate the protection and conservation of hedgerows, stone walls and traditional field boundaries as natural heritage corridors and migration routes for wildlife where they are shown to play a significant heritage role.

## Natural Heritage Policies

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- NH-P-1:** It is policy of the Council to ensure development proposals do not damage or destroy any sites of international or national importance, designated for their wildlife/habitat significance.
- NH-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure the protection of Natura 2000 sites in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and to have regard to the relevant conservation objectives, qualifying interests and threats to the integrity of these designated areas including areas designated as such during the lifetime of the plan.
- NH-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council to require the consideration of designated Shellfish Waters and their Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes in all development proposals within their catchments and to ensure the implementation of identified measures within Pollution Reduction Programmes including periodic review.
- NH-P-4:** It is the policy of the Council to safeguard and enhance the local landscape and natural environment, including the seascape, by ensuring any new developments do not detrimentally impact on the character, integrity, distinctiveness or scenic value of the area.
- NH-P-5:** It is the policy of the Council to take into consideration any Landscape Character Assessment that is carried out for the County.

- NH-P-6:** It is the policy of the Council to preserve the views and prospects of 'Special Amenity Value and Interest' as shown in the Land Use Zoning Map 1A.
- NH-P-7:** It is the policy of the Council to require the consideration of the impact of potential development on habitats of natural value that are key features of the area's ecological network and to incorporate appropriate mitigating biodiversity measures into development proposals.
- NH-P-8:** It is the policy of the Council to retain and protect significant stands of existing trees/hedgerows/woodlands, and seek increased planting of native trees, where appropriate, in new developments.
- NH-P-9:** It is the policy of the Council to seek protection of stone wall boundaries where they are shown to play a significant heritage role. Where the demolition of such stone walls is unavoidable, the reinstatement of stone walls at revised location/set back within site using agreed local materials and techniques will be required.
- NH-P-10:** It is the policy of the Council to conserve and protect the lands identified as 'Coastal Protection Area' on Map 1A, Land use Zoning map, with the exception of appropriate agricultural or recreational development. Proposals for agricultural or recreational development within the identified area will be considered having regard to all material planning considerations, all other relevant policies of the Plan, National/Regional Guidelines and having regard to all environmental and conservation designations.
- NH-P-11:** It is the policy of the Council to protect 'County Geological Sites' (CGS). Accordingly the Council will adopt a precautionary approach to development proposals with the potential to impact upon a CGS. Proposals should be accompanied by a detailed report from a competent person setting out the potential impact to ensure that an informed decision can be made. Where significant harm to the CGS is deemed likely, planning permission will not be granted unless there are overriding considerations of public importance to the County.

## Surface Water

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### Background

The Crana and Mill Rivers flow through Buncrana. Over the past 20 years the Crana River at Westbrook and the Mill River at Tullydish have maintained 'Good' water quality status. However the Crana River at Ballymagan and the Mill River at the Railway Bridge have experienced a deterioration in water quality from 'High' and 'Good' status respectively to 'Poor' in both cases. It is an objective of the Water Framework directive to ensure these rivers return to Good or High water quality status. Accordingly, the Council will seek to manage development to safeguard these waters.

**Table 12: River Water Quality Values**

Year	Crana River /Westbrook	Crana River/ Ballymagan	Mill River/Bridge	Mill River/Tullydish
1991	4-5	5	4	5
1996	4	4-5	3-4	5
1998	4	3-4	4	4-5
2001	4	4		

Year	Crana River /Westbrook	Crana River/ Ballymagan	Mill River/Bridge	Mill River/Tullydish
2004	4	4	4	4
2007	4	4	3	
2010	4	3	3	4
Q Legend	Good	Poor	Poor	Good
Q Linear	4	3	3	4

Please note the Q values are only one element of WFD status.

## Surface Water Objective

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**SW-O-1:** To maintain, protect, improve and enhance the quality of surface waters and ground waters in accordance with the Programme of Measures contained in the North Western (NWIRDB) River Basin Management Plan 2009- 2015 or any amendment to it.

## Surface Water Policies

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**SW-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to maintain, protect and enhance the quality of surface and ground waters in accordance with the Programme of Measures contained within the North Western River Basin (NWIRBD) Management Plan 2009-2015.

**SW-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to require the disposal of surface water run-off in an appropriate and environmentally sensitive manner. Developments that fall within the immediate catchment of the Crana River, Mill River and Lough Swilly may require the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

## Chapter 6 Infrastructure

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### Background

Identified as a 'Strategic Support Town' Buncrana is recognised as a centre for population and economic growth within County Donegal. The implementation of this strategy in respect of Buncrana is underpinned by the availability and capacity of existing and planned infrastructure across the spectrum of transport, water, wastewater, and telecommunications. The coordination of programmes of investment with the strategy for growth in the plan area is essential. The Core Strategy of this Plan (Chapter 2) takes account of the availability of the necessary infrastructure to accommodate new growth and sets the context for the phased growth of the town in an incremental manner outwards from the core.

At present, Buncrana is strategically located so as to benefit from good access to wider infrastructural networks particularly as a result of its proximity to Derry City, the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in Ireland. Derry has port, rail and air facilities and road linkages to Belfast and Dublin. Lisahally Port is located 26km away in County Derry. City of Derry airport is only 32km from Buncrana and has regular flights to the UK and summer charter flights to Spain and Portugal, with programmed further expansion. A seasonal car ferry operates between Buncrana and Rathmullan during the summer months providing direct access to the Fanad peninsula and West Donegal.

In particular, key investment priorities, including medium and long term projects that will influence the development of Buncrana include:

- Buncrana Sewerage Scheme/ Inishowen Sludge Management Scheme.
- Town and Village Sewerage Scheme (Bundle 1 including Buncrana).
- Inner Relief Road.
- Outer Relief Road.
- A5 dualling project from Aughnacloy, Co. Monaghan to Newbuildings, Co. Derry (via Omagh/Strabane).
- Investment in the 'Strategic Road' from Buncrana to Derry.

A high quality of infrastructure is essential for the sustainable future development of Buncrana in terms of enhancing access to Buncrana and free-flow of traffic, for both residents and visitors, towards attracting inward investment and new developments, and for the provision of adequate water supply and wastewater disposal.

### Roads

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Buncrana is linked to Letterkenny and Derry by the N13 and R238 respectively. The R238 is the towns' regional road link between Bridgend/Derry and Carndonagh. These corridors are important routes and form part of the County's 'Strategic Road Network' as identified in the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 and in particular the Bridgend to Buncrana route is treated as a National Road for planning purposes in order to safeguard the carrying capacity of the road. The existing local road network is of varying quality particularly in more peripheral areas.

A number of strategic road projects (Table 13) have been identified as priorities to improve circulation around the town. This is not an exclusive list and the Council will consider all

proposals for other new road developments on their individual merits and in accordance with the current Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

**Table 13: Strategic Road/Infrastructure Projects**

No./Priority (Refer to land use zoning map)	Project	Action	Timeline	Public/ Private
T1/1	Cockhill Bridge	New Bridge	1-10 years	Public
T2/2	Aghilly Road	Widening/Realignment	1-5 years	Public
T3/3	Road at Marina Park	Widening/Realignment	1-5 years	Public
T4/4	Mill Bridge	Widen/Strengthen	5-10 years	Public
T5/5	Inner Relief Road	Completion	5-10 years	Public
T6/6	Wilson's Bridge	Widen/Strengthen	> 10 years	Public
T7/7	Outer Relief Road	Start	> 10 years	Public/ Private

Since the adoption of the Development Plan in 2008, a number of public car parks have been developed around the Town Centre. As a consequence, there is currently sufficient car parking capacity to meet the necessary needs. In view of this, it is considered appropriate to relax the prescribed car parking standards in the town, in accordance with Policy RD-P-7 where it can be demonstrated that there is not a significant need and where there are locally available public car parking spaces. This balanced approach is important in terms of promoting the town centre and supports the Council's strategy for the economic development of the town centre (Chapters 3 and 4 refer).

It is evident that there are few immediate localised public transport services in the town, however the purpose of the Core Strategy of this plan (Chapter 2 refers) is to focus developments close to the town centre to limit the need to travel by private car and to increase critical mass, and encourage/incentivise private operators to provide bus services to these areas. The reliance on the private car is evident in Table 14, which sets out the number cars per household and the associated number of persons (CSO 2011). This demonstrates that 79% of households in Buncrana have at least one car. This is further evidenced in Table 15 (Population aged 5 years+ by means of travel to work, school or college) wherein 64% of the total population in Buncrana aged 5+ travel to work, school or college by private car. This is likely to be mirrored by the number of persons whose place of work is outside the town. Positively, Table 15 indicates that 17% of the population aged 5+ travel to work, school or college by foot. Having regard to the limitations in terms of alternatives to the private car, this figure is quite substantial and indicates that there is a strong basis on which to continue to assess and invest in walking routes within the town, that serve both a daily and functional need as well as the better known tourism type walkways. The Council's policy in this regard is set out in Chapter 3, Economic Development.

**Table 14: Buncrana households with cars**

No. of Cars	Persons	%
No car	535	21
One car	1,272	50
Two cars	626	25
Three cars	78	3
Four or more cars	20	1

Source: CSO 2011



**Table 15: Population aged 5 years+ by means of travel to work, school or college**

Transport Mode	Persons	%
On foot	618	17
Bicycle	16	0.4
Bus, minibus or coach	247	7
Train, DART or LUAS	8	0.2
Motorcycle or scooter	4	0.1
Car driver	1,300	36
Car passenger	1,026	28
Van	233	7
Other	87	2
Not stated	83	2
Total	3,622	100

Source: CSO 2011

The new 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' (DMURS) was jointly published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in March 2013. The new manual shall apply to urban roads and streets (with a speed limit of 60Km/h or less) and aims to end the practice of designing streets as traffic corridors and instead focus on the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges shall not apply, other than in exceptional circumstances, as set out in Section 1.3 of the Manual. This approach is reflected in Chapter 11 of this Plan, 'Development and Technical Standards.'

The Manual sets out a design approach, aimed at the delivery of safe, attractive and vibrant streets through a design process that is influenced by the type of place in which the street is located and which balances the needs of all users. The design manual has the potential to deliver improved quality public realm, protect heritage and tourism potential and promote civic confidence and attract stakeholder confidence and job creation. This Manual recognizes the importance of assigning higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists, without unduly compromising vehicle movement, in order to create secure connected places that work for all members of the community.

## Road Objectives

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- RD-O-1:** To protect the corridors and routes and acquire the lands necessary for transportation improvement projects as identified in the Land Use Zoning Map 1A subject to the environmental, safety and other planning considerations.
- RD-O-2:** To achieve quality strategic links between Buncrana and other strategic settlements in particular to the linked Gateway of Letterkenny-Derry and to the 'Strategic Support Town' of Carndonagh.
- RD-O-3:** To deliver optimum accessibility within the plan area consistent with the Core Strategy, together with ease of movement and to facilitate appropriate proposals for modal shift.

## Road Policies

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- RD-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to support and facilitate an improved roads infrastructure, and improved connectivity from Buncrana to both the Letterkenny-Derry Gateway and to Carndonagh, building on the role of Buncrana as a 'Strategic Support Town' to the linked Gateway subject to environmental, safety and other planning considerations.
- RD-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to protect the identified route corridors for, 'Strategic Road/Infrastructure Projects', Table 13 and to promote these developments subject to environmental, safety and other planning considerations.
- RD-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council to promote and facilitate the development of an integrated and sustainable transport network through:
- (a) Promoting a public transport system.
  - (b) Facilitating a linked network of walkways and cycle paths.
  - (c) Consolidating development and thereby improving local roads and footpaths.
- RD-P-4:** It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the provision of the proposed Outer Relief Road (No. T7) and to protect the route from development subject to the following:
- (a) New individual accesses (excluding farm access) will not be permitted direct access onto the proposed Outer Relief Road. Consideration may be given where it is demonstrated that no alternative access exists and that the access shall not prejudice the carrying capacity or safety of the road.
  - (b) New development affected by the relief road corridor shall be designed to anticipate and mitigate the operational and environmental impacts of the road, including noise impact. A noise impact assessment report may be required in the assessment of any planning application and the setback requirement that will be required will be informed by that assessment.
  - (c) New development that may be facilitated by the outer relief road, may be required to make a financial contribution towards the construction of the route by means of a special contribution in accordance with, Section 48(2)(c) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (As amended).
- RD-P-5:** It is the policy of the Council to investigate new and improved linkages between the R238/Inner Relief Road junction (No. T5) (Ballymacarry) and the L1671 and/or L1641 (Tullyarvan) roads subject to environmental, safety and other planning considerations.
- RD-P-6:** It is the policy of the Council to maintain and enhance the Car Ferry service.
- RD-P-7:** It is the policy of the Council to require development proposals to provide adequate provision for car parking and associated servicing arrangements. The precise amount of car parking will be determined according to the specific characteristics of the development and its location having regard to the standards set out in Chapter 11. A reduced number of car parking spaces may be acceptable where;
- (a) Through a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) it forms part of a package of measures to promote alternative transport modes; or
  - (b) The development is in a highly accessible location well served by public transport; or

- (c) The development would benefit from spare capacity available in nearby public car parks, car parks habitually open to public use or on on-street car parking; or
- (d) It is clear to the Planning Authority that one of the uses is daytime use and the other is evening use; or
- (e) It can be established that members of public visit the site by pre-arranged coach/bus; or
- (f) The exercise of flexibility would assist in the conservation of the built or natural heritage, would aid the renewal of areas in need of regeneration, would facilitate a better quality of development or the beneficial reuse of an existing building.

Proposals to relax the prescribed car parking standards in the town, may be sought through written agreement between the applicant and the Planning Authority, where it can be demonstrated that there is not a significant demand and where there are locally available public car parking spaces. In assessing car-parking provisions the Council will require that a proportion of the spaces to be provided is reserved for people with disabilities in accordance with best practice. Where a reduced level of parking provision is accepted, this will not normally apply to the number of reserved spaces to be provided.

- RD-P- 8:** It is the policy of the Council to require that developments that will generate high volumes of vehicular traffic will be required to provide an appropriate traffic management plan in order to fully assess the suitability of the proposal.
- RD-P- 9:** It is the policy of the Council to require the provision of ducting for broadband and all other utility services when developing new roads/repairing existing roads.
- RD-P-10:** It is the policy of the Council to seek provision, improvement and extension of public footpaths and lighting at appropriate locations subject to environmental, safety and amenity considerations.
- RD-P-11:** It is a policy of the Council to require that all development proposals comply with the Development and Technical Standards' set out in Chapter 11 to promote road safety.

## Water and Waste Water

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Buncrana's water supply is sourced from Lough Doo and supplied via the Slavery water treatment plant. Water is supplied to the south of the town from the Eddie Fullerton Dam. Drinking water supply to serve Buncrana is both of sufficient quantity and quality to cater for the existing and planned growth in the town.

The existing Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) provides primary level treatment and is located close to Victoria Bridge, Railway Road. The treated effluent is then discharged to Lough Swilly via a long sea outfall. The discharge from the WWTP has been licensed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The existing population equivalent (P.E) of the discharge was calculated to be 7,364 in 2012. The WWTP is designed to treat wastewater for a P.E. of 13,200, however the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations, 2001 require that secondary level treatment be provided once the P.E. reaches 10,000. The population growth allocation set out in the core strategy of 1,381 persons. There is sufficient existing capacity to cater for this increase and extant permissions (currently 1,200 P.E.).

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Governments Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2013 includes a scheme at planning stage to upgrade the WWTP and provide sludge management facilities. The Preliminary Report has been prepared and this assessed the future requirements for the agglomeration of Buncrana and the recommended scheme includes:

- Expansion and upgrade of the WWTP to cater for a design P.E. of 13,200 and provide secondary level treatment with disinfection prior to discharge;
- Provision of sludge holding, thickening and dewatering facilities for the wastewater treatment sludge.

There is limited space available on the existing WWTP site therefore there is a need to reserve land to facilitate upgrades to the treatment process and this is shown on the land use zoning map which identifies the existing site together with an expanded area zoned as 'Infrastructure.'

In addition to the public sewerage facilities there are an estimated 162 private septic tanks within the town area according to the census.

## Water and Waste Water Objectives

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- WW-O-1:** Seek to ensure a satisfactory level of service, through sustainable systems, in respect of water supply, as follows:
- (a) An adequate and secure supply of clean and wholesome drinking water to existing areas of supply and to those areas within the plan area that are identified for growth in the Core Strategy;
  - (b) Protect and improve the quality of the existing drinking water supply in accordance with the most current drinking water regulations;
  - (c) An adequate supply of water for industrial and commercial need, where appropriate through partnership with the private sector;
  - (d) Protecting and conserving water resources through minimisation of leakage and promotion of public awareness and involvement in water conservation.
- WW-O-2:** Seek to ensure a satisfactory level of service, through sustainable systems, in respect of:
- (a) Providing adequate treatment for all waste water entering a public collection system in accordance with the relevant waste water discharge licence issued by the Environmental Protection Agency;
  - (b) Adequate controls for the treatment and disposal of commercial and industrial waste water, where appropriate through partnership with the private sector.

### 6.3.2 Water and Waste Water Policies

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- WW-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the ongoing provision of a constant and quality potable water supply.

- WW-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to;
- (a) Seek to ensure the ongoing provision of waste-water disposal by maintaining and improving existing mains, pumping stations and treatment plant.
  - (b) Seek to upgrade the existing sewerage infrastructure to the appropriate level of treatment, extend the existing network and develop a sludge hub.
  - (c) Seek to upgrade the existing water infrastructure by extending the existing network.
  - (d) New developments and/or extensions to existing developments shall only be permitted where connection to public wastewater network can be made, with the exception of development provided for under Policy WW-P-4.

- WW-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council to monitor wastewater treatment capacity on an ongoing basis, to ensure there is sufficient capacity to accommodate new development, in accordance with the EPA licence.

- WW-P-4:** It is a policy of the Council to ensure that waste water generated is collected and discharged in a safe and sustainable manner that is consistent with the combined approach outlined in the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 and with the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan and in doing so the following will apply:

Proposals for a single dwelling (or equivalent) in an un-sewered area will only be permitted where the planning authority is satisfied that the development, when considered in addition to existing and previously approved development, would not adversely affect the ability to meet the objectives set out in the North Western International River Basin Management Plan. When making a planning application the applicant must submit information on the type of on-site treatment system proposed and evidence as to the suitability of the site for the system proposed. Site suitability assessors must carry out all assessments in accordance with the guidance provided in the Code of Practice and should submit a completed Site Characterisation Form as contained in Appendix B of the Code of Practice.

The following are also required:

- a) The waste water treatment system must comply with the latest revision of the Code of Practice for Waste Water Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e.  $\leq 10$ ) published by the Environmental Protection Agency and the system must be selected, designed and installed in accordance with this Code of Practice.
- b) Proprietary treatment systems where required must have Irish Agrément Board Certification or meet a recognised independent verifiable standard.
- c) Prior to occupation of the dwelling a certification of performance, based on post construction testing and completed by a competent agent must be submitted.
- d) Prior to occupation, owners shall have in place a programme of regular operation and maintenance for the waste water system installed.

## Waste Management

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The County Donegal Waste Management Plan 2006–2010 envisaged a new Civic Amenity Site/Recycling Centre for Buncrana by 2010 and two different centres are currently operated by the private sector in the town. The town also has three centrally located bring bank facilities.

### 6.4.1 Waste Management Objectives

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**WM-O-1:** To encourage the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste.

**WM-O-2:** To seek to ensure adequate services are provided for:

- the collection, treatment and disposal of household waste in conjunction with the private sector including hazardous and electrical/ electronic waste (WEE);
- the collection, treatment and disposal of commercial and industrial waste, where appropriate through partnership with the private sector.

### 6.4.2 Waste Management Policy

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**WM-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to support and promote the implementation of the County Council's Waste Management Plan and any forthcoming Regional Waste Management Plan, subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (where applicable).

## Telecommunications

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Telecommunication networks are essential elements for economic and social development. Broadband and telephony infrastructure supports all economic sectors, seeks to provide universal access to public services, is crucial to the national and international exchange of goods and services, and acts as a catalyst in changing economic interrelationships through rapid technological change. The rapid and continuous development of Information Communication Technologies (ICT), and the extensive growth in the use of the Internet as an increasingly important access gateway to international trade in goods and services, social networking interaction and the emerging convergence of main stream media broadcasting and mobile communication applications, are generating an ever growing demand from business, educational, media broadcasting and residential users for higher access speeds, more capacity and greater reliability and resilience.

Recent years have seen considerable progress achieved through National and EU co-funded projects in addressing the broadband core network and international connectivity deficits, through the implementation of the Metropolitan Area Networks Schemes in Buncrana. This is evidenced by 70% of households in Buncrana having a PC and internet access.

### Connectivity/Project Kelvin

Project Kelvin is an extensive submarine fibre optic cable that directly connects NW Ireland to North America for the provision of high speed online data transfer. The cable is being deployed to Armagh, Ballymena, Belfast, Castleblaney, Coleraine, Derry, Dundalk, Drogheda, Letterkenny, Monaghan, Omagh, Portadown and Strabane.

Local companies are attracted to the high capacity, extremely secure and reliable network. Businesses can now increase their communications and next-generation Internet service offerings as well as increase their access to a larger marketplace of available service providers.

The completion of the project will launch Donegal and the region as an attractive alternative location option to global companies, such as leading financial houses, exchange markets, service providers and media companies, who require fast, competitively priced, resilient and low latency bandwidth. The Kelvin Initiative has the potential to channel further complementary investment into telecommunications infrastructure development in the region, thereby securing future economic competitiveness. Buncrana is well placed to benefit significantly from this investment particularly having regard to the paralleled physical accessibility of Buncrana to the transport gateways of the region. Taking account of this, the plan makes provision for sufficient lands for the purposes of 'General Employment' (Chapter 3 refers) that will be suitable to accommodate new economic development that the Kelvin Initiative may give rise to.

### **Infrastructure Telecommunication Objective**

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**TC-O-1:** To facilitate the development and delivery of a sustainable telecommunications network through a range of telecommunication systems, developed with due regard to natural and built heritage and to environmental considerations.

### **Infrastructure Telecommunication Policies**

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**TC-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to support and facilitate the development and delivery of a sustainable telecommunications network within Buncrana and its environs through a range of telecommunications systems that are developed having regard to natural and built heritage, environmental considerations and, where applicable, subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

**TC-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to support and facilitate the telecommunications industry to develop a high speed broadband network.

**TC-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council to require the co-location of new or replacement antennae on existing masts and co-location and clustering of new masts on existing sites, unless a fully documented case is submitted for consideration, along with the application explaining the precise circumstances which mitigate against co-location and/or clustering. New telecommunications antennae and support structures shall be located in accordance with the provisions of the Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities 1996, (or as may be amended) and they shall not normally be favoured beside schools, protected structures or archaeological sites and other monuments. Operators shall endeavour to locate in industrial estates or in industrially zoned lands.

**TC-P-4:** It is the policy of the Council to consider proposals for replacement telecommunications antennae and or support structures within Areas of Special Townscape Character, only in circumstances where any proposed new antennae can be sited and located in a manner that does not negatively impact on the visual amenities of any such area. Any proposal for replacement antennae shall be subject to all material considerations, including environmental designations and amenity considerations.

- TC-P-5:** It is the policy of the Council to consider proposals to replace telecommunications support structures within Areas of Special Townscape Character only in circumstances where any proposed new support structure can be sited and located in a manner that does not negatively impact on the visual amenities of such area. Any proposal for replacement antennae support structures shall be subject to all material considerations, including environmental designations and amenity considerations.
- TC-P-6:** It is a policy of the Council that in order to avoid a proliferation of outdated and/or redundant infrastructure remaining in the landscape beyond its effective use date, planning permission for masts and associated proposals shall be for a period of 5 years, and will be conditioned to be removed and the site reinstated on decommissioning unless a grant of permission has been secured for a further 5 year period.
- TC-P-7:** It is a policy of the Council that access roads associated with telecommunications development must be designed and landscaped to avoid visual and environmental disruption of the landscape, comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and have regard to the relevant conservation objectives, qualifying interests and threats to the integrity of Natura 2000 site.



## Chapter 7 Community, Education & Health

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### Background

In line with its role as a 'Strategic Support Town', Buncrana performs as an important service centre in the County where the appropriate level and mix of community, education and health facilities contributes to the capacity of the town to meet the needs of its growing population. Continued support for vibrant and diverse community, education and health sectors within the town is critical in sustaining a good measure of quality of life and in terms of building upon the strategic function of Buncrana as a key service centre. As outlined in the following paragraphs, the type of services established in the town within the community, education and health sectors are of a strategic nature, designed so as to meet needs at a high level in terms of the hierarchy of service provision and, in a spatial context to service the town as well as a wider geographical catchment within Inishowen.

In terms of community activity, there is a very active voluntary and community sector in Buncrana evidenced by the large and diverse range of clubs, societies and sporting organisations. Many of these groups have ambitions to further develop facilities and services.

The education needs of the town and the surrounding wider catchment are served by 5 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and an Adult Education and Training Centre. 540 students were enrolled at Crana College at September 2011, while Scoil Mhuire had around 700 students.

A number of these schools are currently proposing to extend their facilities to cater for rising demand. Accordingly there is a need to facilitate this growth through the identification of appropriate objectives, policies and land use zoning that will be sufficient to supply future education needs, in a manner consistent with the Code of Practice published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government entitled, 'The Provision of Schools & the Planning System', July 2008.

The following schools are currently seeking new/improved accommodation;

- Crana College (Post Primary). Currently sited on 2.76 acres.
- Gaelscoil Bhun Cranncha (All Irish Primary School), currently located in temporary accommodation at the Buncrana Youth and Community Co. Ltd). Currently approximately 170 pupils.
- Coláiste Chineal Eoghain (All Irish Post Primary), which has been granted provisional recognition by the Department of Education and Skills, currently operating in rented accommodation at Tullyarvan Mill Complex.

Within the town centre and the outer edge of the town centre, vibrancy in terms of community facilities is evidenced through religious institutions, a library, cinema, pubs and restaurants and a number of charity based retail activities. The vibrancy of the town centre in terms of the community sector in particular is demonstrated in the Town Centre Land Use Survey, Chapter 4 of this Plan.

Sporting needs are serviced through Buncrana Leisure Centre, which offers a host of facilities including a swimming pool, fitness suites, running track, tennis courts, basketball courts, grass and all weather pitches, as well as a training programme. The town benefits from a vibrant GAA Club, which facilitates both Gaelic Football and Hurling whilst young people are targeted through the work of a youth club (including a youth drop-in centre) and soccer club at Cockhill and Castle Avenue. Other sporting facilities are also provided in a private

capacity in the town such as the Buncrana Golf Club, Buncrana Angling Club and the Deep Sea Diving Centre at Ned's Point. These groups contribute to the community vitality of the town and also make a significant contribution to the economy, particularly in relation to tourism,

Buncrana has a wealth of natural amenity and recreational lands particularly along the riverbanks and along the shoreline including an excellent coastal walkway from the Shorefront extending to Stragill Beach some 1 km north of the plan area. These amenities add to the identity of the town as a clean and healthy environment and are supported by pockets of open space and recreational space throughout the plan area. The plan strategy recognises these areas as important assets of the town and aims to harness the existing natural amenity areas so as to provide quality recreation and amenity facilities, to protect these areas from unsuitable developments and to deliver on the potential and opportunity that is presented so as to add to the tourism product and resource in the town. These areas are zoned 'Amenity/Recreation' on the Land Use Zoning Map 1A.

Health services in Buncrana are provided through the health centre, managed by the HSE and through Buncrana Community Based Hospital with 30 beds provided for elderly people and day care services also. Other services include respite care, convalescence, rehabilitation, palliative care, short term continuing care, mental health services, physiotherapy, and chiropody services. Buncrana Health Clinic offers dental, speech and language therapy, Public Health Nursing, Psychology and Social Worker services.

## Community, Education and Health Objectives

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- CEH-O-1:** To integrate the planning and sustainable development of the town with the community, education and health requirements of its population.
- CEH-O-2:** To develop Buncrana as an attractive place to live and work through the development of vibrant and sustainable communities.
- CEH-O-3:** To facilitate the continuing promotion, protection, harnessing and sustainable development of the community, education and health sectors in Buncrana subject to environmental designations and considerations.
- CEH-O-4:** To facilitate a coordinated approach to the delivery of community, education and health infrastructure and provision of services through the work of the various Council Directorates, as well as inter- agency liaison and co-operation with statutory and other relevant organisations including cross border initiatives.

## Community, Education and Health Policies

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- CEH-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that all areas of community development, including the provision of social infrastructure, are appropriately incorporated into planning in Buncrana, subject to consideration of all material planning matters, other relevant policies of this Plan, relevant National/Regional Guidance and subject to environmental considerations and conservation designations.

- CEH-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to meet the educational needs of the town, by facilitating appropriate extensions to existing educational institutions and/or the appropriate development of new educational buildings, subject to consideration of all material planning matters, other relevant policies of this Plan, relevant National/Regional Guidance and subject to environmental considerations and conservation designations.
- CEH-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council to accord with the following documents, or any updates to these documents, in the planning of education provision, including the processing of planning applications and the identification of education sites:
- 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System – A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities,' Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, July 2008.
  - 'Technical Guidance Document TGD20 - TGD25,' Department of Education and Skills, September 2007.
  - 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas,' Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, May 2009 (and accompanying Urban Design Manual).
- CEH-P-4:** It is the policy of the Council to support and promote the development of existing and new recreation and sports facilities where the proposal:
- Is easily accessible and conveniently located.
  - Makes provision for adequate access and parking.
  - Does not detract from the amenities/character of the area nor the residential amenities of any properties.
  - Does not result in negative impacts on environmental and conservation designations.
  - Complies with all other objectives and policies of this plan.
- CEH-P-5:** It is the policy of the Council to support and promote the development of cultural and arts related projects and to support the existing community library.
- CEH-P-6:** It is the policy of the Council to develop parks and public amenity areas in appropriate locations subject to all material planning considerations including environmental designations together with ensuring compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. This shall be achieved through the following measures:
- Support for existing parks and amenity/recreation areas and promotion of new public amenity areas and walkways throughout, to establish a network of quality recreational areas.
  - Support for the development of walkways and a linear recreational area along the banks of both the Mill River and the Crana River as identified on the Land Use Zoning Map (Map 1A) and ensure that new development does not detract from the visual sensitivity of the shorefront.
  - Support for the development of the Shorefront and coastal fringe of Buncrana as a recreational and amenity area as identified on Land Use Zoning Map (Map 1A and B) and Build and Natural Heritage (Map 2).
- CEH-P-7:** It is the policy of the Council to protect the recreational, environmental and conservation integrity, and the visual quality of all beaches within and adjacent to the plan area, including Lady's Bay Buncrana and Lisfannon Beaches.

## Chapter 8 Childcare Strategy

### Background

There is a need to provide high quality childcare facilities in Buncrana and there are clear economic benefits for the provision of childcare. The lack of accessible, affordable and appropriate childcare facilities makes it difficult for many parents/guardians to access employment, and this particularly evident in the female population. Childcare is also a potential area of employment in its own right and the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018 has identified that there were 756 registered people employed in the provision of childcare services in Donegal. It is government policy to increase the number of childcare places and facilities available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community.

The 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare facilities' published in July 2001 provides a framework for Childcare provision and it has informed the Childcare Strategy within the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018. It in turn sets the context for the strategy within this plan for Buncrana and its Environs.

The Objectives and Policies of this plan seek to facilitate and promote the appropriate development of childcare facilities.

### Childcare Services

At present there are 10 childcare services in and around Buncrana (Table 16).

**Table 16: Childcare Providers and other Childcare Services**

Name	Address	Service
Adult Education Training Centre Crèche	Millfield Heights, Shore Road	Community/Full Day Care
Buncrana Community Playgroup	Shore Rd, Shore Front	Community/Sessional
Cockhill Community Pre-School	Glen Auibhin, Clonbeg, Cockhill	Community/Sessional
Desertegney Community Playgroup	Glebe, Linsfort	Community/Sessional
Little Acorns Montessori Playschool	Cockhill Road	Private
Magic Moments Playgroup	Sea Crest, Shore Road	Private/Sessional
Naiónra agus Culturlann Buncranncha	Cluain Cumhaill	Community/Full Day Care
St Nichola's Pre-School for Special Needs Children	Cockhill Road	Full Day Care
St. Oran's Community Playgroup	Cockhill National School,	Community
The Playhouse	Millfield Heights	Private
<b>Childminding Services</b>		
Shelly's Childminding Service	Ludden	
<b>Parent &amp; Toddler Group</b>		
Buncrana P&T Group	St. Mary's Hall, St. Mary's Road	
Cockhill Community P&T Group	Clonbeg, Cockhill	

Source: Donegal County Childcare Committee 2012

### **Need and Demand for Childcare Facilities in Buncrana**

In 2002, there were 1,353 persons aged 0-14, by 2006 this had increased to 1,463. The 2011 Census identified youth population in Buncrana for 0-14 as 1,625 and from 0-19 as 2,095, or 23.76% and 30.63% of the total population respectively. Thus the total numbers of children have increased significantly since 2002.

### **Assessment Criteria**

The following criteria will be applied in the assessment of planning applications for childcare facilities:

1. Consultation with the Pre-school inspection team to ensure the plans meet the Pre-School Services Regulations 2006 (if applicable).
2. Consultation with the DCCC to ensure the proper steps to starting a childcare service are taken.
3. Demonstrated need for the childcare provision in the area (e.g. through a survey, detailed business plan), awareness of other local childcare facilities.
4. Suitability of the site for the type and size of facility proposed.
5. Local traffic conditions.
6. Safe access and convenient parking for customers and staff. (Provision for vehicles to enter and leave a facility in forward gear and/or a lay-by facility along the frontage of developments will be required in most cases).
7. Potential noise and nuisance generated by traffic or by outdoor play.
8. Availability of outdoor play areas and details of management of same.
9. Number of such facilities in the area and the effect of a proliferation of such uses on the overall character of an area.
10. Intended hours of operation (i.e. 24 hour operations could be problematic).
11. Visual Impact.

### **Childcare Objectives**

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- CH-O-1:** To enable the provision of quality sustainable and adaptable childcare facilities in a variety of appropriate locations in Buncrana.
- CH-O-2:** To require as part of planning applications for new residential developments that provision be made for appropriate purpose built childcare facilities where such facilities are deemed necessary by the planning authority.
- CH-O-3:** To promote childcare facilities at locations that deliver optimum accessibility, ease of movement and modal shift.
- CH-O-4:** To consult and work with Donegal County Childcare Committee, local development partnerships/groups, Health Boards, and the County Development Board in the provision and monitoring of childcare facilities and in establishing baseline information systems.
- CH-O-5:** To support the provision of childcare facilities using the Irish language.
- CH-O-6:** To recognize childcare as an area of local employment creation and of importance to the social and economic progress of Buncrana.

**CH-O-7:** To promote equality and address disadvantage/social exclusion in the provision of childcare facilities.

## Childcare Policies

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**CH-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to consider all proposals for childcare facilities in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare facilities, 2001 and the Assessment Criteria of this Chapter.

**CH-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to promote and support, where the need is identified, the provision of childcare facilities in areas adjoining existing and proposed community facilities such as schools, health centres and other community facilities, and within residential areas, at appropriate locations.

**CH-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that appropriate childcare facilities are provided to service new residential developments, where adequate facilities do not already exist. In this regard the recommendation of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings, contained in the Childcare Guidelines (June 2001), will be used as an indicative guide only and the assessment of need for a facility will also be informed by the advice contained in Appendix 2 of these Guidelines, having regard to such considerations as the make up of the proposed residential area, an estimate of the need for childcare that will be generated as a consequence of the development and any evidence based analysis of childcare needs that is provided. As a result of this assessment and in collaboration with Donegal County Childcare Committee, the Council will consider whether specific childcare facilities are required as part of that development. Developers may as an alternative be required to make another more appropriately located site available.

- These childcare provisions will also apply to social and affordable housing.
- The Council will also consider short-term arrangements within existing housing area where longer-term facilities are planned but have not yet been provided.

## Chapter 9 Housing

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### Background

In line with the Core Strategy (Chapter 2), the Council's strategy in relation to housing is to ensure that adequate provision is made to accommodate the projected growth in persons of an additional 1381 persons by 2018, in line with the Core Strategy of the County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018. Therefore, using an evidenced based methodology, the most appropriate lands have been identified to supply the first phase quantum of need, totaling 33 hectares, and are identified on the Map that accompanies this Plan, entitled 'Map 1B Land use Zoning Map extract.'

The 1<sup>st</sup> phase quantum consists of a combination of sites identified as 'Residential (Phase 1)' and other sites identified as 'Mixed Use.' Generally, these are focused on lands located proximate to the centre of the town and where the facilities to service development are readily available or can be made readily available without the need for mechanical or electrical plant/equipment. In relation to the 'Mixed Use' sites, a number of these are located within the defined Town centre and therefore it is expected that a percentage of each mixed use site will yield residential units and contribute to the quantum of housing units provided for in the Core Strategy. In addition, a number of other 'Mixed Use' sites are important brownfield sites, the regeneration of which are sustainable and will add to the character of the town. Again, a percentage of these 'Mixed Use' sites are expected to yield residential units in conjunction with other appropriate uses.

A further 101 hectares of land are identified as 'Strategic Residential Reserve' that will supply need over a longer term time frame, beyond the life of the current plan. The release of this land will be considered through future reviews of the Plan and managed through a clear and transparent evidenced led approach that will involve annual assessment of the uptake of land zoned 'Residential (Phase 1)'.

The need for quality residential development will continue to be emphasized in terms of design, layout, materials and finish, so as to integrate new development effectively with surrounding established and planned areas and to provide for connectivity and accessibility of movement within, from and to neighbourhoods. This approach is guided by Ministerial Guidelines entitled 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas,' published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, May 2009 (and accompanying Urban Design Manual).

Government guidelines promote the achievement of higher densities in appropriate locations and emphasize the importance of high standards of design and layout to ensure that the highest quality of residential environment is achieved. Having regard to the need to identify sufficient lands to meet the Housing Land Requirements, the Council will implement a balanced approach in relation to density so as to promote appropriate higher density developments in suitable locations and also recognize that density shall be informed having regard to the prevailing spatial characteristics of surrounding lands which may, in some cases, result in the appropriate implementation of lower densities.

### Residential Stock

As referenced in Chapter 1, Buncrana has a good quality existing stock of housing, with Census 2011 indicating that 60% of properties are built from 1991 onwards and the majority of properties within the area have oil central heating. The Council will seek to protect this

housing stock and the amenity of the residential areas to ensure they remain attractive places to live.

In relation to house completions, between 2006 and 2011, 389 new dwellings were completed in Buncrana. There are currently 698 vacant units (Source: CSO 2011) within the plan area and planning permission exists for a further 300 units (November 2013) which have yet to be constructed. The 2011 Census data indicates that a significant proportion of houses are rented within the town amounting to 32% compared to 29% nationally. The census also indicates that the household size in the town is predominately 1-4 persons and on average there are 5-6 rooms in properties. The mix of house types proposed in an area should be influenced by a range of factors including the need to provide a range of housing types and tenures, the mix of existing housing stock in the area, the need to provide a choice of housing suitable to all age groups and persons at different stages of the life cycle and the need to cater for special needs groups such as the elderly or disabled.

### **Housing Strategy**

The Housing Strategy, prepared under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), seeks to encourage and facilitate the level of housing supply necessary to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the population within the plan area including the need for a mix of house types. The quantum of housing supply is confirmed in terms of the population growth targets, in the Core Strategy (Chapter 2 refers). The Core Strategy and the Housing Strategy refocus the pattern of residential growth through a plan led, evidence based approach providing for development at locations that have the service and infrastructural capacity to accommodate new housing development.

The Council recognise the significant supply of housing units that could be provided through unfinished housing estates, extant permissions and vacant properties in addition to the population targets set by the RPG's. The use of these existing material assets for the provision of social and affordable housing will be encouraged where appropriate.

### **Social and Affordable Housing**

Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 requires that the Housing Strategy make provision for both social and affordable housing. In this regard, this strategy defines social housing as rented housing provided either by the Local Authority, or by a voluntary operative housing body or accommodation provided through the Rental Accommodation Scheme. Affordable Housing is defined as owner occupied, or shared ownership/incremental purchase scheme housing provided at a price below market value.

The focus of social housing delivery has shifted, over this past number of years, away from reliance on construction and acquisition towards a greater role for more flexible delivery mechanisms. It is envisaged that the focus of future housing supply will lie with the expanded suite of non construction supply options including:

- Social Housing Leasing Initiative
- Rental Accommodation Scheme
- Expanded Role of Voluntary and Cooperative Sector
- Loans and Grants to purchase/improve dwellings.

There will be very limited capital investment in local authority construction or acquisition and what capital funding is available will be prioritised to meet special needs, to support regeneration and to maintain and improve the housing stock. The majority of accommodation to be provided for Travellers will also come through these mechanisms. Future new build projects in respect of standard social housing will be primarily delivered by the Voluntary and Co-operative sector through build to lease and other innovative financial mechanisms. The Council have been and will continue to progress the voluntary schemes,



particularly the Capital Assistance Scheme, through interagency meetings with the Health Service Executive. The Council will be targeting special needs cases where it is clear that the Council's existing social housing programme of direct build, leasing/rental accommodation scheme is unable to cater for the needs of these clients.

Given the difficulties experienced by the Council in terms of disposal of existing affordable units and allied to the slow down in the housing market generally, it is not envisaged that the provision of further affordable housing will form a significant aspect of the Council's housing programme in the immediate future. The position in relation to the Incremental Purchase Scheme will be kept under review during the lifetime of the plan.

The change in social housing policy particularly with regard to the severely curtailed construction programme has resulted in the local authority having to review its policy on the acquisition of suitable landbanks for the supply of social housing. It is not intended to acquire any additional landbanks in the short to medium term and it is further intended to maintain its existing landbank rather than dispose of same in anticipation of future demands for social housing supply not being capable of being delivered through the suite of non construction options.

### **Meeting Needs**

The response to meeting the housing need will involve a range of allocation of tenancies under the Council's own Social Housing Programme and the Voluntary Housing Programme, the Rental Accommodation Scheme, the provision of assistance in the form of loan schemes and the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

In meeting this need, guidance in relation to the availability of various activation measures for the provision of social housing support will be essential. While the implementation of Part V of the Planning and Development Act will be an important feature in meeting need, it will not play as significant a role as previously envisaged given the substantial downturn in the construction industry. In this regard, Part V should continue to be implemented in terms of 15% reservation for Social and Affordable housing.

The Council's social housing programme will focus mainly on housing supply through the Social Housing Leasing Initiative and Rental Accommodation Scheme. All of the measures proposed, coupled with the development of the 'life cycle' approach in the assessment of housing need at a particular point in time will serve to meet the social housing need on a sustainable basis over the next 5 to 10 years.

## **Housing Objectives**

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- H-O-1:** To identify the appropriate quantum and range of lands to meet future housing need including social housing need.
- H-O-2:** To ensure future sufficient strategic landbank.
- H-O-3:** To promote quality in new residential areas.
- H-O-4:** To promote the delivery of sustainable integrated residential neighbourhoods through new residential development.

- H-O-5:** To ensure that new residential development is not carried out in advance of the implementation of planned programmes in relation to investment in hard infrastructure (e.g. roads, footpaths, waste water, and water supply) and social and community infrastructure.
- H-O-6:** To ensure that key infrastructure necessary to support new multiple residential development is delivered in a timely manner that supports sustainable neighbourhood development.
- H-O-7:** To reserve 15% of land zoned for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses for the provision of social housing.
- H-O-8:** To provide suitable accommodation for members of the travelling community.
- H-O-9:** To recognise the significant supply of housing units that could be provided through unfinished housing estates, extant permissions and vacant properties in addition to the population targets set by the RPG's. The use of these existing material assets for the provision of social housing will be encouraged where appropriate.

## Housing Policies:

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- H-P-1:** New housing development shall be guided to those lands identified as 'Residential (Phase 1)' and to those lands identified 'Mixed Use' where residential development is identified as appropriate in the relevant planning framework contained in Chapter 3 of this Plan. In addition, consideration will be given to appropriate proposals for development at other locations as follows:
- (a) Within lands identified as 'Established Development.'
  - (b) Within the town centre subject to the policies set out in Chapter 4 of this Plan.
  - (c) Within an entire existing unfinished housing development where the entire development has commenced, or, within that part of an existing unfinished housing development where only part of the development has commenced. The number of residential units that may be permitted shall not exceed the number of units permitted within the unfinished development, or part thereof as applicable.

All proposals shall be subject to all relevant material considerations, relevant policies of the Buncrana & Environs Development Plan 2014-2018, other Regional and National guidance and relevant Environmental designations.

- H-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to carry out an annual Housing Monitor to monitor housing growth within the plan area. Monitoring will provide essential information on the uptake of land identified for housing by identifying planning permissions granted as well as survey of implementation of planning permissions. It shall also measure housing yield against the provisions in Table 5 of the Core Strategy (Excluding any yield in respect of unfinished developments as referenced under Policy H-P-1).
- H-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council to consider all housing proposals in accordance with the Core Strategy/Housing Land Requirements established within this Plan and with the, Guidelines on 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009' or any subsequent amendment to it.

- H-P-4:** Proposals for single dwellings shall only be permitted on lands identified as 'Residential (Phase 1)' where it can be clearly demonstrated that;
- (a) The location of the house would not compromise the ability of the site to facilitate the provision of comprehensive integrated residential development/s utilising the entire site area; and
  - (b) The location of the house would not compromise the line of any proposed relief road; and
  - (c) The proposal would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties or be injurious to the general character of the surrounding area, shall accord with other objectives and policies of this Plan, and shall not impact negatively on environmental designations.
- H-P-5:** The Council will ensure the adequate supply of future strategic landbank through the identification of lands as 'Strategic Residential Reserve' for the purposes of supplying housing needs beyond the life of the plan and subsequent to the sufficient and appropriate uptake of lands zoned 'Residential (Phase 1)' and 'Mixed Use' sites 'M3, M4, M5, M6 & M8' together with appropriate uptake of supply available through extant planning permissions, vacant houses and unfinished developments. The Council will examine and manage the appropriate release of 'Strategic Residential Reserve' lands on the basis of a clear and transparent evidenced led approach that will involve annual assessment of the uptake of land zoned 'Residential (Phase 1)' and having regard to relevant environmental designations. Release of 'Strategic Residential Reserve' lands shall only be carried out in the context of a variation or review of the development plan.
- H-P-6:** Proposals for single dwellings will only be permitted on lands identified as 'Strategic Residential Reserve' where it can be clearly demonstrated that;
- (a) The location and layout of the dwelling would not compromise the ability of the site to facilitate the provision of long term multiple residential development(s) upon release of the land in accordance with its strategic function under Policy H-P-5; and
  - (b) The location and layout of the dwelling would not compromise the line of any proposed relief road or infrastructure corridor; and
  - (c) The scale and form of the development would respect the existing character of the area and shall not have an adverse impact to the existing character of the area or the residential amenity of adjoining properties; and
  - (d) The proposal can reasonably connect to the future provision of mains services to the area; and
  - (e) The development will not prejudice access to land within the reserve for future development and will not contribute to forms of ribbon development that cumulatively could result in the land locking of the 'Strategic Residential Reserve'.
  - (f) The development will not impact negatively on relevant environmental designations.
- H-P-7:** It is the policy of the Council to guide development in a sequential manner, outwards from the core area in order to maximise the utility of existing and future infrastructure provision, promote the achievement of sustainability, avoid 'leap-frogging' to more remote areas and to make better use of under utilised land subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (where applicable).
- H-P-8:** It is the policy of the Council that, applications for residential development will be assessed in the light of all relevant material planning considerations including, the

availability of infrastructure, relevant environmental designations and the scale and form of development in the area.

- H-P-9:** It is the policy of the Council that development proposals for new multiple residential development (2 units or more) shall provide all infrastructure necessary to support the delivery of services and quality of life to the new residential development and its neighbourhood, prior to the first occupancy of any unit. Any such infrastructural provision shall include, but not be confined to, service connections to existing utility networks, neighbourhood facilities, childcare facilities, open space provision, bus stops, cycleway, footpaths and public lighting. Adequate security shall be provided, to ensure satisfactory completion and maintenance of development, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 11, Development and Technical Standards, and it shall not be released until those requirements have been complied with and evidenced to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority. Furthermore, no connection shall be permitted to any public sewer or watermain until this has been established and documented.
- H-P-10:** In addition to residential proposals within lands zoned 'Residential (Phase 1)', complementary scaled facilities may be considered such as crèche facilities, play facilities, small convenience store(s) subject to all other relevant policies of this plan, relevant national/ regional guidance, relevant environmental designation and in the context of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- H-P-11:** The Council will require that proposals for new residential development are of a design concept, form and layout that will contribute to the delivery of sustainable residential neighbourhoods in line with, the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government publications entitled, 'Sustainable Residential Development In Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities,' May 2009, and 'Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide,' May 2009, and policies H-P-7 and H-P-8 of this plan.
- H-P-12:** The Council shall use the 12 criteria set out in the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government publication, 'Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide', May 2009, during both pre- application consultations and at planning application stage for housing schemes. In addition, new housing schemes will be required to demonstrate:
- (a) That the design is sympathetic and responsive to the site characteristics including the landform, exposure to climate, and the built and natural heritage.
  - (b) That the design provides for a high quality residential development both in terms of the overall site and also in relation to the individual dwelling in recognition of the acceptance of higher densities.
  - (c) That the design considers all aspects of the layout in totality ensuring compatibility between structures, public amenity spaces, landscaping, and access to and within the site, and
  - (d) That the design does not interfere negatively with the residential amenity of adjoining/adjacent properties and that new homes offer an appropriate level of amenity, privacy, security and energy efficiency.
  - (e) That the design promotes and encourages walking and cycling.
  - (f) That the design provides for the right quantity and quality of public open space in line with Policy H-P-17 and H-P-18.
  - (g) That the design includes measures to ensure satisfactory standards of personal safety and traffic safety within the neighbourhood.

(h) That the design considers all relevant Environmental designations.

- H-P-13:** Direct pedestrian and cycle linkages shall be provided within proposals for new residential developments interconnecting with central amenity areas, adjoining neighbourhood developments and neighbourhood facilities subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. Linkages shall be provided in addition to the primary access to the development and shall be designed to maximise passive surveillance from surrounding properties, be well lit and maintained and the materials and finish shall be of a high quality. Linkages that follow indirect routes and/or to the rear of properties shall normally not be considered acceptable.
- H-P-14:** New residential developments shall be laid out and orientated in order to make use of the landscape characteristics including local features and vistas, and maximise opportunities presented from passive solar gain. Development adjacent to amenity areas shall be orientated to face onto the amenity areas and provide maximum informal surveillance. Locating amenity areas to the rear of properties will not be permitted.
- H-P-15:** Proposals for new residential development shall demonstrate that a housing density appropriate to its context is achieved, and provides for a sustainable pattern of development whilst ensuring the highest quality residential environment. Lower density ranges may be required having regard to the density and spatial pattern of development on lands that abutt the site. In addition, housing densities will be considered in the light of all other relevant objectives and policies of this plan, including the objectives and policies set out in Chapter 2, Core Strategy. The range of densities referred to in Table 5 are to be taken as an indicative guide and may be deviated from subject to appropriate justification and subject to consideration in the context of the uptake of 'Town Centre' Sites A- F, 'Residential (Phase 1) sites A- Y' and 'Mixed Use sites M3- M8,' and in the context of the Core Strategy.
- H-P-16:** Proposals for residential development shall provide a mixture of house types and sizes in order to reasonably match the requirements of different household categories within the Plan area, including those groups with particular special needs. The Council will seek to achieve a balance of housing stock to meet the needs and aspirations of the people residing within the Plan area.
- H-P-17:** Multiple residential developments in general shall include a minimum of 15% of the overall site area reserved as public amenity area in accordance with the following guidelines: The provision of public amenity open space within new residential developments shall:
- (a) Be conveniently located within the development, and designed as an integral part of the overall layout acting as a natural focal point that contributes to the visual enhancement of the development, and
  - (b) Be of a high quality design, providing for a multi function of uses, through the use of hard and soft landscaping techniques including equipped formal play areas, informal greens, furniture, paved and planted amenity areas, and
  - (c) Provide adequate lighting and signage, and highly accessible linkages with the surrounding public footpath network and other designated amenity areas, and
  - (d) Include a programme of maintenance.

- H-P-18:** New residential developments shall provide landscaping to provide screening, enclosure, shelter, and acoustic barriers to enhance the overall visual/environmental impact of the development. Detailed landscaping schemes shall be required with planning applications and will include:
- (a) Species, variety, number and location of trees, shrubs and other features to be provided, and
  - (b) Proposals to retain and incorporate existing trees and hedgerows within the development.
  - (c) Programme of implementation of the landscaping scheme.
- H-P-19:** New residential developments shall provide for adequate off-street car parking to facilitate the development in accordance with the standards set out in Chapter 11, Development and Technical Standards.
- H-P-20:** It is the policy of the Council to require compliance with the Housing Strategy and that 15% of all land zoned for residential uses (or for a mix of residential and other uses) be reserved for the purpose of social/affordable housing as stipulated in Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000, as amended. Any application for permission for residential development on lands referred to above shall include an agreement under these provisions regarding:
- (a) Transfer of part of lands within application site; or
  - (b) The building and transfer of houses within application site; or
  - (c) Transfer of fully or partially serviced site within application site; or
  - (d) Transfer of other lands; or
  - (e) The building and transfer of housing on other lands; or
  - (f) The transfer of fully or partially serviced sites on other lands;
  - (g) The payment of an agreed sum of money; or
  - (h) Entry into a rental accommodation availability agreement; or
  - (i) Lease of houses on lands within the site or the functional area of the planning authority
  - (j) A combination of two or more of options (a) to (i) above.
- And this agreement shall provide for the appropriate provision of social/affordable housing.
- The detail of any such agreement shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and shall be conditional on any grant of permission.
- H-P-21:** It is the policy of the Council both to protect the residential amenity of existing residential units and to promote design concepts for new housing that ensures the establishment of reasonable levels of residential amenity.
- H-P-22:** The Council will permit development that involves the sub division of residential sites only where it can be clearly demonstrated that:
- (a) The existing house is not part of an overall development and the proposal would compromise the original layout of which the existing house formed part thereof, and
  - (b) The curtilage of original dwelling is not subdivided by more than 50% by the proposal, and
  - (c) The footprint of the proposed dwelling would not exceed one third of the new curtilage, and

- (d) The proposal would not appear incongruous with the density, massing, scale, proportions, materials and overall design and character of the existing property and the character of the street scene and surrounding area; and
- (e) The proposal would not adversely effect the visual and residential amenity of adjoining properties and the surrounding area or give rise to adverse transport or road safety effects and will provide an acceptable level of parking for every separately occupied dwelling, and
- (f) The proposal would not reduce the provision of adequate private amenity space for the existing dwelling and will provide sufficient private amenity space for any new separately occupied dwelling(s).
- (g) The proposal would not adversely affect the amenity of adjoining properties.

- H-P-23:** Proposals for the conversion of a building into flats or the conversion of existing large flats into smaller units will normally be permitted, provided that:
- (a) The building/site is capable of accommodating the additional residential amenities; and
  - (b) The proposal would not hinder traffic movement or prejudice the safety of road users or pedestrians; and
  - (c) The proposal includes amenities comprising refuse disposal facilities, drying areas and access to private outdoor amenity space; and
  - (d) The proposal is for self-contained flats; and
  - (e) Where appropriate, the proposal shall include convenient and adequate off-street car parking that integrates with the neighbouring properties
  - (f) The proposal meets minimum standards specified in 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments', Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government, September 2007.
- H-P-24:** Proposals for extension to a dwelling shall be considered subject to the following criteria:
- (a) The development reflects and respects the scale and character of the dwelling to be extended and its wider settlement;
  - (b) Provision is made for an adequate and safe vehicular access and parking; and
  - (c) The proposal would not adversely affect the amenity of adjoining properties.
- H-P-25:** Proposals for the re-use of upper floors above retail and commercial premises within the plan area for the purposes of residential accommodation shall be considered subject to demonstration that:
- (a) The development does not prejudice existing commercial activity or result in the loss of residential amenity; and
  - (b) The development creates suitable pedestrian and vehicular access arrangements.
- H-P-26:** Residential developments will provide a mixture of house types (one, two, three bedroom) in suitable locations to meet the needs of the disabled and elderly. Agreements under Section 96(2) may allow for both to be provided or suitably offset as a contribution to social housing.
- H-P-27:** The Council will continue to assess the need to provide accommodation for the travelling community and will seek to identify suitable locations throughout the plan area for the provision of group housing and permanent/temporary halting site accommodation to meet this demand in accordance with the *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2015*.

**H-P-28:** It is the policy of the Council to implement the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2015 and more specifically, policies contained within Section 7 of that document.

**H-P-29:** It is the policy of the Council to facilitate an appropriate provision of one-off housing in 'Agricultural/Rural' areas where the applicant can demonstrate that they need a new house at this location and can provide evidence that they, or their parents, have resided in those areas for a period of at least 7 years. All proposals shall be subject to all relevant material considerations, relevant policies of the Buncrana & Environs Development Plan 2014-2018, other Regional and National guidance and relevant Environmental Designations.



## Chapter 10 Flooding

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### Background

The changing climate will present challenges within the plan area, based on the vulnerability to climate risk and the capacity to adapt. A pro-active approach is to be adopted to address the challenges posed by climate change which involves preparing for projected impacts and integrating appropriate responses into the development of policies, plans and programmes. This plan seeks to enable an appropriate framework to be implemented that integrates climate change objectives.

Flooding from rivers is a natural occurrence, which can never be entirely prevented. Notwithstanding this, the Council will seek to minimise such risk in vulnerable areas. It is difficult to predict flooding with great accuracy due to the multitude of variables for assessing flood risk, e.g. catchment size, soil and geology type and porosity, height of groundwater tables, gradients, average annual rainfall, presence of rivers and lakes and urban areas, tidal flooding. It is predicted that flood events will become more frequent and severe as a result of climate change.

In 2007, the Floods Directive 2007/60/EC became operational, as a result of which Member States are now required to assess if their watercourses and coastlines are at risk from flooding, and are required by 2015 to map the flood extent, and assets and humans at risk in these areas and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this risk.

In November 2009, 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' were published by the DoEHLG. The Guidelines state that, 'Development plans should address flood risk by having the necessary flood risk assessments, including mapping of flood zones, in place at the critical decision making phases and the consideration of any subsequent amendments'.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) are the lead agency for flood risk management and are developing indicative flood maps and Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management mapping (CFRAM – a catchment based study involving an assessment of the risk of flooding in a catchment and the development of a strategy for managing that risk in order to reduce adverse effects on people, property and the environment). Buncrana has been identified by OPW as an Area of Further Assessment (AFA) in relation to flooding and therefore CFRAM is being carried out as part of this programme for the town. CFRAM's are due by 2013 and will be followed by the Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans (CFRMP's) by 2015. Flood risk will be assessed in terms of its likely potential impact upon identified 'Receptors', such as, people, property, schools, hospitals, waste water treatment plants. In the absence of this work being completed, the Council will seek to manage development within floodplains and other areas at risk from flooding in a sequential manner based on avoidance, reduction and then mitigation. There is a need to exercise the precautionary approach to development proposals within areas that have historically been known to have flooded. Accordingly, the following **Flood Risk Indicators** will be used in advance of the CFRAMS being published.

These indicators include:

1. Historic Flood Maps [www.floodmaps.ie](http://www.floodmaps.ie)
2. Alluvial Soil Maps [www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie)
3. OPW Benefiting Land Maps [www.floodmaps.ie](http://www.floodmaps.ie)
4. OPW Coastal Flooding Mapping.

5. 6" OSI Maps have areas identified as being, 'Liable to Flood'. The maps also show areas of marsh vegetation, which are known to flourish in floodplains.
6. Site Visit - Local topography and features such as culverts that could cause localised flooding and high water level marks on buildings and cracking from water damage all give good indicators at a site level. Vegetation such as bull rushes can indicate flood zones.
7. Verified local knowledge.
8. Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Maps (PFRAMS) [www.cfram.ie](http://www.cfram.ie) or see land use zoning map.

#### Sequential Approach/Flood Risk Scale

The Council will utilise the Sequential Approach to development proposals in accordance with Tables 17 and 18 and the A – C 'Flood Risk Scale' of High – Moderate - Low probabilities of flood occurrence to assess development proposals. The sequential approach will be further informed upon publication of CFRAMS and if necessary a variation to this Development Plan will be initiated.

**Zone A** – High probability of flooding, i.e.) more than 1% probability or 1 in 100 from rivers and more than 0.5% probability or 1 in 200 from coastal flooding.

**Zone B** – Moderate probability of flooding, i.e.) between 0.1% probability or 1 in 1,000 years and 1% or 1 in 100 years for river flooding and between 0.1% or 1 in 1,000 year and 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding.

**Zone C** – Low probability of flooding, i.e.) less than 0.1% or 1 in 1,000 years for both river and coastal flooding). Flood zone C covers all areas outside of Zones A or B.

**Table 17: Flood Vulnerability and Land Use Guide**

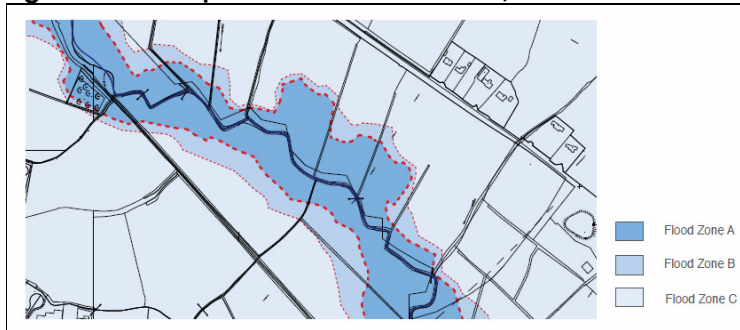
<b>Water Compatible Development</b>
Flood control infrastructure.
Docks, marinas, wharves and navigation facilities.
Ship building, repairing and dismantling, dockside fish processing and refrigeration and compatible activities requiring a waterside location.
Water based recreation and tourism (excluding sleeping accommodation).
Lifeguard and coastguard stations.
Amenity open space, outdoor sports and recreation and essential facilities such as changing rooms, and; Essential ancillary sleeping or residential accommodation for staff required by uses in this category (subject to a specific warning and evacuation plan).
<b>Less Vulnerable Development</b>
Buildings used for: retail, leisure, warehousing, commercial, industrial and non-residential institutions.
Land and buildings used for holiday or touring non-static holiday caravans and camping, subject to specific warning and excavation plans.
Land and buildings used for agriculture and forestry.
Waste treatment (except landfill and hazardous waste).
Mineral working and processing, and;
Local transport infrastructure.
<b>Highly Vulnerable Development</b>
Garda, ambulance, fire stations and command centres should be operational during flooding.

Hospitals and Schools.
Emergency access and egress points.
Dwelling houses, student halls of residence and hostels.
Residential care homes, children’s homes and social services homes.
Caravans and mobile home parks.
Dwelling houses designed, constructed or adapted for the elderly or, other people with impaired mobility, and;
Essential infrastructure, such as primary transport and utilities distribution, including electricity generating power stations and substations, water and sewage treatment, and potential significant sources of pollution in the event of flooding.

**Table 18: Matrix of Vulnerability (See Figure 24 below)**

	<b>Flood Zone A High Probability</b>	<b>Flood Zone B Moderate Probability</b>	<b>Flood Zone C Low Probability</b>
<b>Water Compatible Development</b>	Development Appropriate	Development Appropriate	Development Appropriate
<b>Less Vulnerable Development</b>	Justification Test Required	Development Appropriate	Development Appropriate
<b>Highly vulnerable development</b>	Justification Test Required	Justification Test Required	Development Appropriate

**Figure 24: Example - Flood Zone Areas A, B and C**



## Flooding Objectives

- F-O-1:** To assess all development proposals in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, November 2009, DoEHLG or any amendment to it.
- F-O-2:** To adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management when assessing the location for new development based on avoidance, reduction and mitigation of flood risk.

- F-O-3:** To incorporate flood risk assessment where appropriate into the process of making decisions on projects.
- F-O-4:** To incorporate appropriate climate change adaptation and mitigation considerations into plans, programmes and projects, as more data on impacts becomes available and as experience of dealing with adaptation issues increases.
- F-O-5:** To ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management and to comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and have regard to the relevant conservation objectives, qualifying interests and threats to the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.

## Flooding Policies

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- F-P-1:** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that all development proposals comply with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities', November 2009, DEHLG or any amendment to it and have regard to the relevant conservation objectives, qualifying interests and threats to the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.
- F-P-2:** It is the policy of the Council to manage development proposals within floodplains and other areas at risk from flooding in a sequential manner based on avoidance, reduction and then mitigation subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- F-P-3:** It is the policy of the Council to assess carefully development proposals, which may exacerbate flood risk elsewhere with a view to adopting the same sequential approach for such schemes subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- F-P-4:** It is the policy of the Council to employ a precautionary approach using the sequential approach towards development proposals where there is a known flood risk and to make best use of the available information including the Flood Risk Indicators, unless it is fully justified (see F-P-7) that there are wider sustainability grounds for appropriate development and the flood risk can be managed to an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing flood risk overall.
- F-P-5:** It is the policy of the Council to require applicants/developers to submit, where appropriate, independent 'Flood Risk Assessment' in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines, DEHLG, 2009 (or as updated) and/or 'Surface Water Drainage Calculations', from suitably qualified persons.
- F-P-6:** It is the policy of the Council not to permit development where flood issues have not been, or cannot be addressed successfully and/or where the presence of unacceptable residual flood risks remain for the development, its occupants and/or property elsewhere including, inter alia, up or downstream.
- F-P-7:** Development proposals in urban areas shall be required to undertake a justification test in accordance with the matrix of vulnerability (Table 18) and in

accordance with S.5.15 of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines DEHLG, 2009 setting out that they satisfy the following criteria:

1. The lands are targeted for growth in the Core Strategy.
2. The use of the lands for the particular proposal or development type is deemed to be required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the urban setting, in particular:
  - (a) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the town;
  - (b) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands;
  - (c) Is within or adjoining the established town;
  - (d) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and
  - (e) A planning statement to show why it is considered there are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use or development type in areas at lower risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the town has been provided.
3. A Flood Risk Assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere. N.B. The acceptability or otherwise of levels of any residual risk should be made with consideration for the proposed development and the local context and should be described in the relevant flood risk assessment.
4. The development is considered necessary to meet the objectives of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**F-P-8:** It is the policy of the Council to promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), flood attenuation areas, the controlled release of surface waters and use of open spaces and semi permeable hard surfaces for appropriate development proposals subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

**F-P-9:** It is the policy of the Council to secure and promote in appropriate circumstances the natural role of flood plains as a form of flood attenuation. Agricultural areas and vacant open spaces within floodplains may be considered appropriate for development as formal amenity/recreational areas and public parks, as they also serve as natural flood catchment areas subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

**F-P-10:** It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the development of long and short-term flood remediation works, including embankments, sea defenses, drainage channels, and attenuation ponds to alleviate flood risk and damage to livelihoods, property and business subject to environmental considerations including potential impact on designated shellfish waters and compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

# Chapter 11 Development and Technical Standards

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## General Development

A range of documents containing principles, standards, policies and guidelines for development has been published at National, Regional and County level.

All development proposals shall be subject to relevant material planning considerations, the relevant objectives, policies and standards of this Development Plan (including the appendices), Regional and National strategies, guidance and policies, environmental designations and considerations, and any such designation, consideration or revision published during the lifetime of this plan.

For the purposes of this chapter, some of the most pertinent of these documents are listed below. A list of available planning guidance documentation is accessible on [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie).

- Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities towns & Villages) (DoEHLG 2009) and companion document Urban Design Manual Best Practice Guide, 2008.
- Building a House in Rural Donegal. A Location Siting and Design Guide – Appendix B.
- Traffic Management Guidelines, 2006.
- Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015.
- National Roads Policy.
- Provision of Tourist & Leisure Signage on National Roads.
- Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities, 2007.
- Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards For New Apartments, 2007.
- Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (DoEHLG 1996).
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2009).
- Quarries and Ancillary Activities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2004).
- Wind Energy Development Guidelines for planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2006).
- Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas in Donegal (2007).
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DECLG & DoTTS, 2012)

Development proposals for multiple residential developments shall provide open access fibre connections and vendor neutral ducting throughout the development.

All ducting (public and private) shall be designed and installed in accordance with 'Recommendations for Underground Telecommunications Cable Works - For Road, Commercial and Residential Schemes'.

The Council will endeavour to facilitate the construction of one-off housing in appropriate circumstances in accordance with the Buncrana & Environs Development Plan 2014- 2020. Half inch connections to water mains will be allowed where considerations of good infrastructure management permit. In certain circumstances the Council may require an increased size watermain for the provision of water supply to a single house, instead of a long half inch (12mm) single house connection. In such cases the Council will provide free of

charge the necessary pipes and trunk pipeline fittings up to a maximum of 100 metres length per house on the following conditions:

- That the applicant constructs the pipeline to line, level and specification as agreed with the Water, Environment and Emergency Service of the County Council, and the Town Engineer and facilitates inspection/supervision as required by the Council;
- That the completed pipeline belongs to the relevant Council and no claim of ownership is made by the applicant;
- That a sufficient financial provision has been made, or will be made by the Council to cover the cost of supplies;
- The schedule of connection charges will be amended to introduce a disincentive to householders holding back from applying to connect in such circumstances, and awaiting the works to be completed at the expense of others.

**Notes:**

The standard water connection fee will be waived in such cases, in lieu of works done by the applicant in laying the pipeline. Development contributions levied on the development will be unaffected by this provision. Road opening fees and road reinstatement standards are a matter for the Roads Service of the Council and remain unaffected by this provision.

**Bonds**

Developers shall be required to give adequate security by way of a cash deposit or bond to ensure satisfactory completion and maintenance of development, including maintenance until taken in charge, in circumstances where the development satisfies the Council's policy on Takeover of Private Housing Estates. Where the development satisfies the Council's policy in respect of Takeover but the residents/developer have made alternative suitable arrangements for maintenance, such as a Management company, then the security may be released.

A condition shall be imposed in accordance with the provisions of Section 34(4)(g) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The amount of the security will be calculated on the basis of €5000 per house within a development that contains no mechanical/electrical equipment. In instances where the development contains mechanical/electrical equipment the security shall be €15,000 per house. The developer will be required to provide "as constructed" drawings, CCTV survey, a written report and written certification that infrastructural services have been completed to the required standards before the security is released. Furthermore no connection shall be permitted to any public sewer or water main until this has been established and documented.

## Transport

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**Urban Roads with a speed limit of 60km/ph or less.**

The new Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) was jointly published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in March 2013. The new manual shall apply to urban roads and streets (That is roads with a speed limit of 60Km/h or less) and aims to end the practice of designing streets as traffic corridors and instead focus on the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) shall not apply to urban roads and streets with a speed limit of 60km/h or less, other than in exceptional circumstances, as set out in Section 1.3 of the Manual.

The Manual sets out a design approach aimed at the delivery of safe, attractive and vibrant streets through a design process that is influenced by the type of place in which the street is located and which balances the needs of all users. The design manual has the potential to deliver improved quality public realm, protect heritage and tourism potential and promote civic confidence and attract stakeholder confidence and job creation. This Manual recognises the importance of assigning higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists, without unduly compromising vehicle movement, in order to create secure, connected places that work for all members of the community.

The manual provides guidance on a vast range of road and urban design solutions to street/road layouts such as;

- Residential Layouts
- Cul de Sacs
- Signage
- Visibility Splays
- On Street Parking
- Shared Surfaces
- Roundabouts
- Signalled Junctions
- Alignment and Curvature
- Horizontal and Vertical Deflections
- Priority of road user (Pedestrian/Cyclist/Vehicle)
- Hierarchy of roads and need for differing solutions
- Staggered junctions
- Carriageway Widths
- Design Solutions (Enclosure, Landscaping, Verges, Use of Materials, Connectivity)

**Roads with a speed limit greater than 60km/ph.**

The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) shall apply to all roads with a speed limit greater than 60km/ph. Specifically in relation to visibility splays, the standards set out in DMRB shall apply, however, deviation from these requirements may be considered where it can be proven that the design speed relating to the road in question is such as to require lower 'Sight Stopping Distances' and corresponding 'Y' distance along the visibility splay, than set out in DMRB. In considering any deviation, visibility splays less than those set out in the DMURS shall not be permitted.

**Requirement for Traffic and Transport Statement on All Public Roads:**

Certain development proposals will generate significant trips either by car, commercial vehicle, cycling, walking or public transport, with potentially significant implication for the local road network, this could in some circumstances necessitate changes to the road/junction layout and capacity in order to address road safety concerns and maintain a satisfactory level of service for road users. In these circumstances a traffic and transport assessment (TTA) may be required to fully address the implications arising and assist the evaluation of the planning application. Planning applications requiring an access on to a public road and generating significant additional traffic must be accompanied by a completed Transport and Traffic Statement, i.e. TTS 1 and a TTS 2. These will not normally be required in the case of an application for a single dwelling.

The Traffic and Transportation Assessment shall be an impartial description of the impacts of proposed development and shall outline both positive and negative aspects, the scope of which must be agreed with the Council's Roads Engineers. (Guidance documents include The Traffic and Transportation Assessment Guidelines NRA).



**Requirement for Safety Audit on All Public Roads:**

In certain instances a road safety audit may be required to better inform the assessment of the safety implications of the proposed development and to aid the identification of appropriate measures required to maintain safety standards. Safety audits may only be carried out by 'Safety Audit Teams', the members of which shall be approved by the NRA/Local Authority.

**What to Safety Audit:**

- Road safety audits are mandatory for all planning applications on National Roads HD19/09.
- On Local roads Safety Audits are mandatory for applications in excess of 50 dwellings or other developments of similar traffic types and/or volumes or as deemed necessary by the Council, in the interests of traffic safety.
- On developments where NRA DMRB Standards may be difficult to achieve, the applicant may submit alternatives supported by a feasibility stage safety audit for consideration.

**When to Safety Audit:**

- Feasibility stage (F) – a comparative assessment of options.
- Stage 1 – Completion of preliminary design.
- Stage 2 – completion of detailed design.
- Stage 1/2 - Combined for minor schemes.
- Stage 3 – Completion of construction/prior to open to traffic.

**Roadside Boundaries on roads:**

- The line of existing roadside boundaries within 'Agricultural/ Rural' and 'Amenity' zones shall be retained, where possible, subject to traffic safety considerations, whereby setback may be required to the minimum distance specified in Table 19 below to facilitate the entrance. The setback area shall be soiled to a height no higher than 100mm above the level of the adjacent carriageway and shall be seeded with grass.
- All roadside boundaries to be maintained by landowner to ensure vision line requirements are preserved. (Low Level Planting to ensure visibility).

**Table 19: Roadside Boundaries**

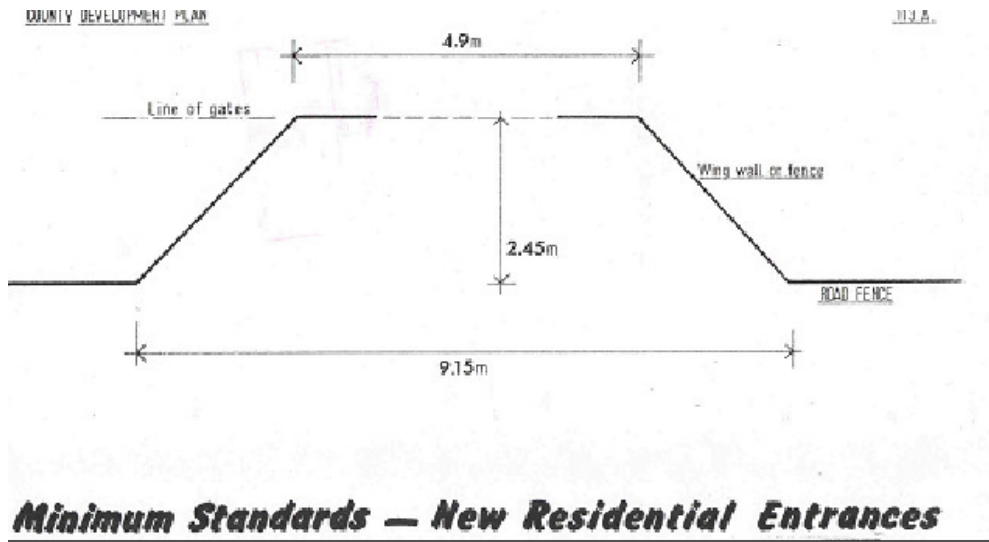
Road Type	Minimum Setback from centre line of road
The R238, Buncrana to Bridgend, where the speed limit is greater than 60kph}	12m
The R238 Buncrana to Camdonagh, where the speed limit is greater than 60kph}.	6.5m
Other roads	5m

Should the existing roadside ownership boundary be further back than the setback identified in the table above, then that boundary shall be retained.

Should the existing adjacent roadside development boundary setback be less than that stated in the table above, the Council shall decide the minimum setback.

**Entrance Details:**

Entrance details for single dwellings on all roads shall be laid out in accordance with Table 19, and Figure 25, Entrance Details and Residential Properties.



**Figure 25: Entrance Details - Single Dwellings**

Entrance radii for all developments other than single dwellings, shall provide public road/development junction radii in accordance with the DMRB in relation to areas with a speed limit greater than 60 kph, and DMURS in relation to areas with a 60kph speed limit or less.

Internal access roads shall be designed in accordance with DMURS and the 'Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas in County Donegal', Donegal Local Authorities and DMURS.

Driveway access shall not be located at the mouth of a junction nor within twice the kerb radius on minor arms of a junction.

**Surface Water and Roadside Drainage- Single Dwellings:**

Adequate provision shall be made for collection and disposal of surface water and existing roadside drainage shall be maintained and surface water road gullies (lockable) or alternative suitable system shall be provided to cater for run-off from the public road.

The entrance shall be designed to prevent discharge of water from site onto public road or footpath. Surface water systems shall preferably be routed to discharge to a suitable watercourse, capable of accommodating the anticipated volume of water (soakpits shall not normally be encouraged). All proposed road works shall include fully designed drainage systems to the final outfall and shall include attenuation systems where necessary particularly on steep sites or at outfalls which may be deemed to be at or near capacity.

**Public Road Junctions:**

Visibility splays at junctions shall be provided in accordance with table 22 and Fig 26 and 27.

**Road Re-instatement on All Public Roads:**

Any damage to public roads occurring as a result of a development shall be repaired to the satisfaction of the Council, where deemed necessary, a cash security may be required to guarantee the satisfactory repair of damage.

In certain circumstances the road network may be deficient in carrying capacity and it may be appropriate to facilitate the development subject to a requirement that road strengthening works be undertaken by the Council at the expense of the developer. In such circumstances a development contribution shall be levied or in appropriate circumstances a condition may be imposed requiring works to be undertaken by the developer to Council specifications, including indemnification of the Council.

**Maximum acceptable gradient on approach to public road:**

The tables below (20 & 21) are indicative of maximum gradients permissible on roads with a speed limit greater than 60km/ph and where NRA DMRB applies. On roads with a speed limit of 60kph or less, the provisions of DMURS (section 4.4) may apply.

**Table 20: Public Roads with a speed limit greater than 60km/ph and where DMRB applies.**

Ref DMRB	Road Type	Desirable Maximum Gradient	Maximum gradient with relaxation
TD 9/07	Regional Roads	5%	6%
	Local Roads	6%	12%

**Table 21: Internal Residential/Industrial Roads with a speed limit of 60kph or less, and where DMRB applies.**

Ref DMRB	Access Point	Section adjacent to public road	Maximum internal road gradient
TD 41-4209	Direct Access	15m @ 2.5% *	10% Gradient
	Single Access **	15m @ 2.5%	

\* Can be relaxed to 10m dwell area and 4% in difficult circumstances.

\*\* Can be relaxed to 5m dwell area and 4% in difficult circumstances.

**Vision Lines at junctions with Public Roads:**

Permanent visibility splays shall be provided to enable emerging drivers using the direct access to have adequate visibility in each direction to see oncoming traffic in sufficient time to make their manoeuvre safely. In urban areas reduced visibility splays can be applied in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.

Vision Lines at junctions with Public Roads with a speed limit greater than 60km/ph shall be in accordance with Figure 26 (and with DMRB). For junctions with public roads with a speed limit of 60kph or less, vision lines shall be in accordance with Figure 27 (and with DMURS).

In all cases X & Y distances should be determined from Table 22.

Where the applicant or their agent can demonstrate and confirm that 85% of traffic travel at a lower speed than the posted or design speed (i.e. the 85th percentile speed), the Council will consider the reduced visibility splays associated with reduced speeds demonstrated.

The following diagram details the method by which the site envelope shall be calculated and presented for all planning applications.

Figure 26: Measurement for visibility splays (X & Y distances) in areas where DMRB applies.

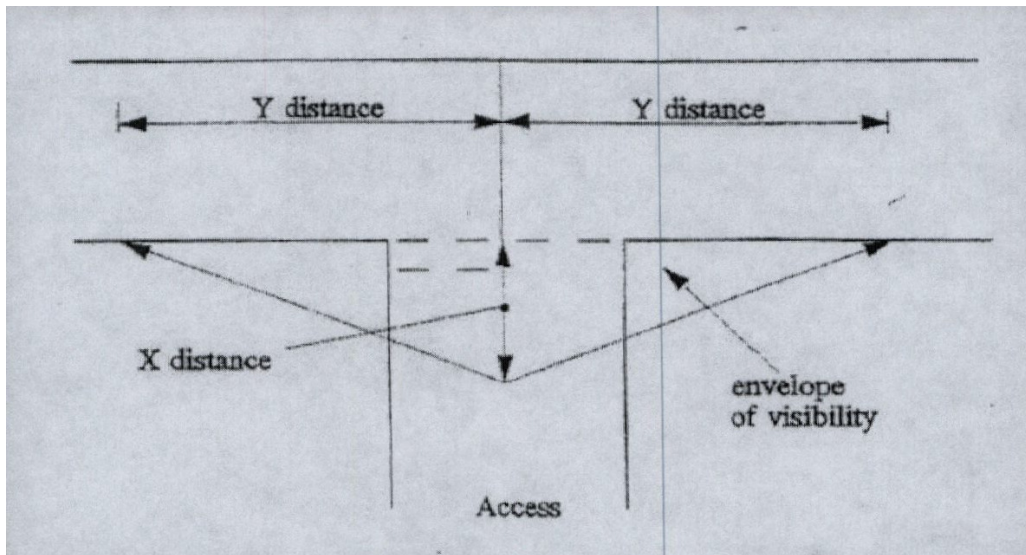
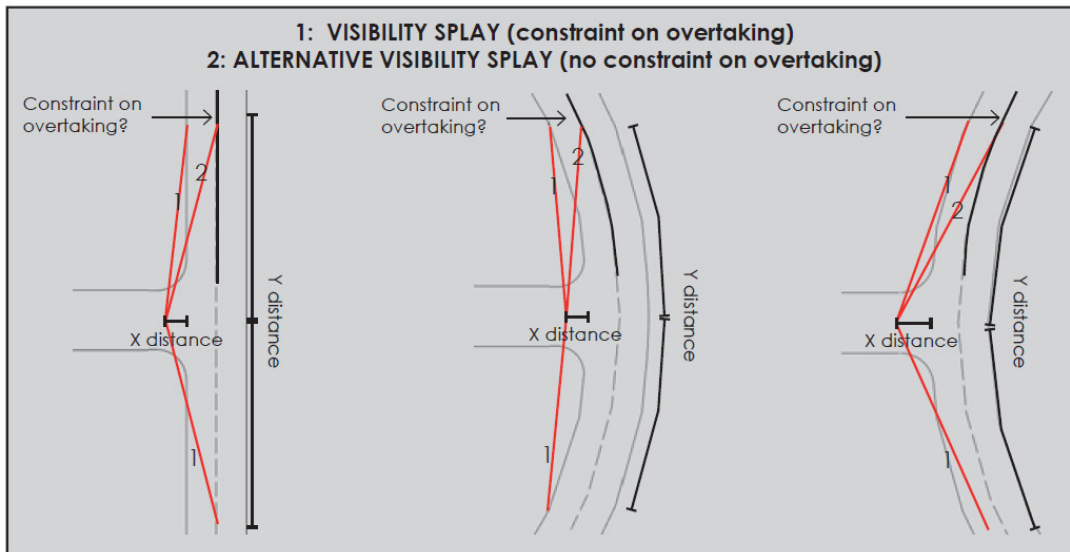


Figure 27: Measurement for visibility Splays (X & Y distances) in areas where DMURS applies.



Definition of 'X' and 'Y' distances:

The 'X' distance is referred to as the setback distance and shall be measured from the continuation of the nearer edge of the major road running lane (edge of carriageway markings and not the hard strip) along the centreline of the direct access. Where a hard shoulder on the major road continues across the line of the direct access, the 'X' distance shall be measured from the back of the hard shoulder.

The 'Y' distance is the minimum permissible vision line and shall be measured from a point on the nearer edge on the main road running lane to its intersection with the centreline of the access road. (Applies to Rural and Urban Non National Roads)

For urban roads, where overtaking is prohibited by a solid white line, a relaxation may be allowed to the left hand side Y visibility splay distance by measuring to the centre line of the road (Measurement 2 in Figure 27), rather than the near side edge of the road (Measurement 1 in Figure 27).

Visibility in the vertical plane shall be measured from a driver's eye-height of 1.05m and 2.0m positioned at the setback distance in the direct access to an object height of between 0.26m and 1.05m.

**Table 22: Vision lines geometry**

Location	Reference document	Access Type	Speed (kph)	Y distance (m)	X distance (m)
Urban (60kph or less)	DMURS Table 4.2	All types	40	36	2.4
Urban(60kph or less)	DMURS Table 4.2	All types	50	49 (see note 1)	2.4 (see note 1)
Urban(60kph or less)	DMURS Table 4.2	All types	60	65 (see note 1)	2.4 (see note 1)
Rural (greater than 60kph)	DMRB Table 23	Multiple Access	50	70 (see note 2)	3/9m (See note 2)
Rural(greater than 60kph)	DMRB Table 23	Multiple Access	60	90 (see note 2)	3/9m (See note 2)
Rural(greater than 60kph)	DMRB Table 23	Multiple Access	85	160	3/9m (See note 3)
Rural(greater than 60kph)	DMRB Table 23	Multiple Access	100	215	3/9m (See note 3)

Note 1: These X and Y distances only apply to urban areas where the posted speed limit is less than or equal to 60 kph.

Note 2: These X and Y distances only apply to rural areas where the posted speed limit is greater than or equal to 60 kph and where the applicant or their agent have demonstrated and certified that 85% of traffic travel at a lower speed than the posted or design speed.

Note 3: When stop sign is erected at junction 3m applies, where yield sign is erected at junction 9m applies.

**Building Setback on Public Roads:**

A minimum of 25m setback will be required from centreline of carriageway on Regional Roads and 15m setback will be required from centreline of carriageway on Local Roads.

Where existing buildings have formed an established building line, new buildings may follow the established building line, and the proposed set back may not be required.

**Stopping Sight Distance:**

Minimum stopping sight distances on Roads with a speed limit greater than 60kph shall be in accordance DMRB as set out in Table 23 below. Deviation from the requirements in Table 23 may be considered where it has been demonstrated and certified that 85% of traffic travels at a lower speed than the posted or design speed. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed (which is the maximum speed that 85% of traffic travels at or below) may be taken as the design speed and therefore stopping sight distance may be reduced to the lower design speed category, at the discretion of the planning authority. Minimum stopping sight distances on roads with a speed limit of 60kph or less shall be in accordance DMURS as set out in Table 24 below.

**Table 23: Stopping sight Distance in areas where DMRB applies**

Design Speed (Kph)	100	80	70	60	50
Stopping Sight Distance (m)	215	160	120	90	70

DMRB ref TD 9/07

**Table 24: Stopping sight Distance in areas where DMURS applies**

Design Speed (Kph)	10	20	30	40	50	60
Stopping Sight Distance (m)	7	14	23	33	45	59

**Table 25: Car/Cycle Parking Standards**

Development	Car-Parking Requirement	Cycle-Parking (no. of stands)
<b>Dwellings/Residential</b>		
Dwelling	2 per Dwelling 1.5 per Terraced Dwelling	None provided external access is provided to back garden/yard otherwise 1 per unit.
Duplex (upper floor dwelling unit)	2 per Dwelling	1 per unit
Apartments/Flat	1.25 per One Bedroom 1.5 per Two Bedroom 1.75 per Three Bedroom	1 per unit
Caravans/Mobile Home	1 space per Caravan/Mobile Home	
<b>Shops/Retail</b>		
Shops/Retail Food	1 per 20m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area. Plus Parking for Delivery Vehicles.	Minimum of 2 per unit. 1 per 500m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area 1 per 250m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area thereafter
Shops/Retail Non Food	1 per 25m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area. Plus Parking for Delivery Vehicles.	1 per 100m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area 1 per 500m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area thereafter

<b>Development</b>	<b>Car-Parking Requirement</b>	<b>Cycle-Parking (no. of stands)</b>
Bulky Goods Retail	1 per 35m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area. Plus Parking for Delivery Vehicles.	Minimum of 2 per unit. 1 per 500m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area
<b>Offices and Professional Services</b>		
Offices and Financial/ Professional and other Services principally to serve visiting members of the public	1 per 30m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 100m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Industrial/Light Industrial/Storage or Distribution</b>		
Heavy Industrial	Assessed on individual merits having regard to the number of workers, operating patterns, location and proximity to public transport but with a minimum of 1 per 2 employees.	Assessed on individual merits having regard to the number of workers, operating patterns, location and proximity to public transport but with a minimum of 1 per 10 employees.
Light Industrial	As above	As above
Warehousing	As above	As above
<b>Hotels/Hostels /Guesthouses</b>		
Hotels/Guest Houses (Excluding internal Bars, Restaurants and Function Rooms)- to be calculated separately.	1 per bedroom Plus 1 space per 10 Bedrooms Staff Car Parking Plus Parking for Delivery Vehicles	1 per 10 Bedrooms with a minimum of 2 stands.
Hostels	1 space per 5 beds	1 per 20 Beds with a minimum of 2 stands.
<b>Restaurants and Take Aways</b>		
Restaurant	1 per 9m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area.	1 per 100m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area
Take Away (including take away counter within restaurants)	Minimum of 5 spaces up to 30m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area and 1 per 10m <sup>2</sup> thereafter.	1 per Take Away
<b>Educational/Childcare Establishments</b>		
Schools- Primary and Secondary	1.5 per classroom	2.5 per classroom
Third level Colleges/other Public/Private Adult/Further Education Facilities	5 per classroom	4 per classroom
Childcare Facilities	1 per employee plus 0.25 spaces per child (as defined by the maximum number of children allowable for the floorspace provided as set out in	1 per 5 employees

Development	Car-Parking Requirement	Cycle-Parking (no. of stands)
	Government Childcare Regulations).	
<b>Healthcare Facilities</b>		
Health Centres, Doctors Surgeries, Healthcare Practitioners, Dentists, Veterinary Surgeries etc	3 per consulting room. Plus dedicated ambulance space at health centres. Plus adequate turning/ manoeuvring space at veterinary surgeries for large animals.	1 per consulting room
Nursing Homes	1 per on duty employee 1 per bed/room visitor car parking plus parking for Delivery Vehicles.	1 per 5 employees
Hospitals	1 space per doctor or consultant. 2 spaces per 3 nursing staff. 1 space per 3 beds. 3 spaces per out patient consulting room. Plus operational space for ambulance service lorries.	1 per 10 staff
<b>Social/Entertainment</b>		
Public Houses without dancing areas	1 per 20m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area.	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area.
Public Houses/Nightclubs/ Music venues with dancing areas	1 per 20m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area. Plus set down area to accommodate a minimum of 3 taxis, 2 bus parking spaces at non town centre sites.	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup> publically accessible floor area.
<b>Social/Religious/Assembly</b>		
Function Rooms/Conference Centres	1 per 10m <sup>2</sup> Plus set down area for taxis/other vehicles and dedicated bus parking as/where appropriate at non- town centre sites.	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup>
Cinema	1 per 5 no. seats	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup>
Theatre	1 per 5 no. seats	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup>
Church	1 per 5 no. seats	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Community/Sports Facilities</b>		
Libraries	1 per 50m <sup>2</sup>	Minimum of 5 spaces
Museums	1 per 100m <sup>2</sup> plus bus parking for Non town centre locations	Minimum of 5 spaces
Sports Hall	1 per 50m <sup>2</sup> plus bus parking	Minimum of 5 spaces
Sports Club/Playing Pitches	30 per Sports Club/Primary Pitch Applications for larger sports clubs and sports grounds with dedicated spectator facilities shall be assessed on their own merits.	Minimum of 5 spaces

1. The above standards should be read in conjunction with the Parking related policies contained within the Infrastructure chapter.



2. The floor spaces listed above shall equate to the net floor space of the development proposed, unless otherwise stated.
3. All other proposals for development types not listed above shall be assessed having regard to specific characteristics of the development including: the number of employees/visitors, hours of operation, location and proximity to public transport etc.
4. Car parking areas shall be landscaped and planted with trees to minimise their visual impact where appropriate.
5. The planning authority shall seek financial contributions in lieu of parking spaces in line with the current Development Contribution Scheme when
  - (a) The developer cannot conveniently provide the required spaces.
  - (b) The Council wishes to develop a centrally located car park rather than a number of individual car parks. The contribution per space will reflect the cost of developing the said alternative space.
6. The Council will be prepared to enter into caretaker agreements with landowners/property owners to provide car parking in towns whereby:
  - (a) The landowner retains full ownership and development potential of the lands concerned.
  - (b) The Council will convert the lands into temporary car parking (usually for a period of at least 5 years).
  - (c) In this policy, adjoining lands owned by different landowners (back lands) may, by agreement with the parties, be aggregated into one single car park.

**Table 26: Dimensions of Parking/Loading Bays**

Dimensions of Parking/Loading Bays	
Car Parking Bay	5m x 2.5m
Circulation Aisles	6m
Loading Bay	Designed and sized for appropriate Service Vehicles

## Industrial and Commercial Development

1. All industrial and commercial development proposals shall be subject to environmental and all other planning considerations and shall be located and designed in accordance with NRA, DMRB or DMURS as relevant, EPA Guidelines and Standards and any such future publications.
2. Landscaping and in appropriate cases, buffer zones between different uses will be required to be provided. Developers shall provide effective screening from the public road or residential areas, where appropriate.
3. All service areas shall be located entirely within the curtilage of the site with adequate manoeuvring space and a suitable means of access to the public road being provided.
4. All waste materials shall be stored to the rear of buildings in environmentally safe conditions and shall be screened from public view.
5. All waste shall be stored in such a manner so as to ensure runoff shall not seep into Surface water drainage system.

6. All runoff from bunded areas shall be collected and disposed off separately from surface water drainage.
7. All fuel connection points or similar discharge points shall be rollover bunded.
8. All ducting (public and private) shall be designed and installed in accordance with 'Recommendations for Underground Telecommunications Cable Works - For Road, Commercial and Residential Schemes'. DCNR

### **Caravan and Camping**

1. Proper consideration shall be paid to the design and landscaping of the park with particular reference to the entrance and reception areas.
2. A maximum density of 50 caravans per hectare (20 per acre).
3. Minimum of 8m between each pitch and a minimum 9m between each pitch and any permanent structure. Additional space will be required where a car will be parked alongside a caravan.
4. Minimum 30m between any pitch and the public road or 15m if suitable screening is provided plus minimum 3m between any pitch and site carriageways.
5. Where such a supply is not available an alternative source of potable water must be provided to the satisfaction of the County Council, i.e. which will permit 136 litres (30 gal) per day per pitch.
6. A fire hydrant conforming to BS750 should be provided on site a maximum of 100m from the furthest pitch. The hydrant should be connected to a 100mm minimum diameter watermain. A fire flow water supply of 2000 litres per minute sustainable for 30 minutes simultaneously with peak daily demand shall be provided for. If no suitable water flow or source is available, storage may be provided. A fire point with hose reels shall be provided within 30m of any pitch.
7. General lighting shall be provided and maintained at all times in good working order for all buildings, caravans, entrances, exits and roads used for internal circulation.

### **Petrol Filling Stations**

1. The following will apply in respect of new petrol filling stations:
  - (a) Where appropriate a low wall, approximately 0.6m in height, shall be constructed along the road frontage.
  - (b) A maximum of 2 road access points shall be provided for, which will be designed and constructed in accordance with the NRA DMRB or NMURS as relevant. The applicant shall submit a document demonstrating compliance with the NRA DMRB or NMURS as relevant as part of the planning application.
  - (c) No advertising or commercial signage shall obstruct visibility over the site access points or front boundary/wing walls.
  - (d) A shop/café of up to 100 square metres of net retail/café area may be allowed when associated with a petrol filling station. Where retail/café space in excess of 100 square metres of net retail/café area associated with petrol facilities is sought the sequential approach to such development will apply.
2. In order to protect the carrying capacity of strategic routes, new petrol filling stations requiring direct access onto such routes, will not be considered outside the 60kph speed limit.

## Record of Protected Structures

The following buildings are included on the Record of Protected Structures in the Plan area:

Table 27: Record of Protected Structures

Ref No. on Map 2/RPS Ref/ Name/Address	Description/Rating/Special Interest
1 / 4090 2907 / Drift Inn / Railway Road	<p><b>Description:</b> 1860-1865. Detached 6 bay, 2 storey former railway station built 1864 with gabled dormers, projecting gabled end-bay to right hand side and entrance bay 3 bay single storey former sheds to left hand side extended by one storey.</p> <p><b>Rating:</b> Local</p> <p><b>Special Interest:</b> AP (Architectural, Personality)</p>
2 /4080 0102 / Mill River Bridge	<p><b>Description:</b> 1700-1750. 3 arch road bridge over waterfall built, 1740, with extended westwards twice with rubble stone voussoirs vault abutments and parapets.</p> <p><b>Rating:</b> Regional</p> <p><b>Special Interest:</b> ASM (Architectural, Streetscape Setting, Material)</p>
3 / 4090 2901 / Buncrana Castle / Swan Park	<p><b>Description:</b> 1710-1720. Detached 7 bay, 2 storey over basement house built 1718 with projecting roofed pavilions on both sides, 2 bay, 2 storey extension to south left hand side and split level stair return to rear and breakfront to central 3 bays with open pedimente.</p> <p><b>Rating:</b> National</p> <p><b>Special Interest:</b> AGH (Architectural, Grouping, Historic)</p>

## National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government has undertaken extensive survey work on the architectural heritage of the town. This survey has resulted in the identification of 101 buildings/structures on the register entitled, 'National Inventory of Architectural Heritage' (NIAH). These buildings are listed in the following table and the locations are shown on map 2 that accompanies this plan. Further details can be viewed on [www.buildingsofireland.ie](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie).

**Note: Category of Interest referred to in the following tables:**

A - Architectural	H - Historical
Ar - Artistic	Sc – Scientific
C - Cultural	So – Social
Ag - Archaeological	T - Technical

**Table 28: National Inventory of Architectural Heritage**

Ref No. relating to Map 2 /NIAH Ref.	Name	Address	Rating/Category of Interest	Condition
1/40815001	Buncrana Castle	Tullyarvan	National/A, Ar, C, Ag, H, So	Good
2/40815002	Buncrana Castle – Remains of Outbuildings	Tullyarvan	Regional/So	Poor
3/40815003	Castle Bridge	Cahir O’Doherty Avenue	Regional/A, T	Good
4/40815004	Buncrana Castle Gateway	Cockhill Road	Regional/A	Fair
5/40815005	Castle Gateway	Cockhill Road	Regional/A	Fair
6/40815006	Quay & Retaining Wall	Cahir O’Doherty Avenue	Regional/A, So	Good
7/40815007	Three tiered former terraced Garda Station	St. Oran’s Road	Regional/A, T	Fair
8/40815008	Former Coastguard Station	Swilly Road	Regional/A, H, So	Good
9/40815009	Ardeelan – Detached three bay house	Swilly Road	Regional/A	Good
10/40815010	Flanaghans Furniture Factory	Swilly Road	Local/A, So	Fair
11/40815011	Detached three bay, two storey house	Swilly Road	Local/A	Good
12/40815012	Swilly Villas – Detached five bay, 2 storey house on irregular plan	Swilly Road	Regional/A, H	Good
13/40815013	Detached three bay, two storey house	Aileach Road	Regional/A, Ar	Good
14/40815014	Cloneen. Detached three bay, two storey house	St. Oran’s Road	Regional/A, Ar	Good
15/40815015	Drift Inn (Former Railway Station)	Railway Road	Regional/A, Ar, H, So	Good

Ref No. relating to Map 2 /NIAH Ref.	Name	Address	Rating/Category of Interest	Condition
16/40815016	Former Railway Watch Tower	Railway Road	Regional/A, H, T	Fair
17/40815017	End of terrace, two bay, three storey over basement house	5 The Crescent, St. Oran's Rd	Regional/A	Good
18/40815018	Terraced, two bay, three storey over basement house	4 The Crescent, St. Oran's Rd	Regional/A, Ar	Good
19/40815019	Terraced, two bay, three storey house	3 The Crescent, St. Oran's Rd	Regional/A, Ar	Good
20/40815020	Terraced, two bay, three storey gable fronted house with attic level	2 The Crescent, St. Oran's Rd	Regional/A	Good
21/40815021	End of terrace, two bay, three storey over basement house with attic level	1 The Crescent, St. Oran's Rd	Regional/A, Ar	Good
22/40815022	Semi detached, two bay, two storey house	St. Oran's Road	Regional/A	Good
23/40815023	Terrace of three, two storey houses	1-3 Rockfort Villas	Regional/A, Ar	Good
24/40815024	Connolly Doyle Solicitors, Pair of semi detached two bay, two storey houses	St. Oran's Road	Local/A	Good
25/40815025	Macetown Villa, Detached three bay, two storey house	St. Oran's Road	Regional/A	Good
26/40815026	Buncrana Town Council Civic Office	St. Oran's Road	Regional/A, Ar	Good
27/40815027	Detached four bay, two storey former house	St. Oran's Road	Local/A, So	Fair
28/40815028	St. Helen's. Detached three bay, two storey house	St. Oran's Road	Local/A	Good
29/40815029	Semi detached end of terrace, two bay, two storey house	Millbrae	Local/A	Poor
30/40815030	End of terrace, two bay, two storey house	Millbrae	Regional/A	Good
31/40815031	Mill River Railway Bridge	Millbrae	Regional/A, So, T	Good
32/40815032	Swan Mills	Millbrae	Regional/A, So, T	Derelict
33/40815033	Mill River Bridge	Looking Glass Brae	Regional/A, T	Good
34/40815034	Millfield House	Milltown Road	Regional/A, Ar	Good
35/40815035	Attached terraced, two bay, two storey house	61 Millbrae	Regional/A	Good
36/40815036	Terraced two bay, two storey house	Millbrae	Local/A	Good
37/40815037	Freestanding Cast Iron Pillar Post Box	Lower Main Street	Regional/A, So, T	Good
38/40815038	Attached two bay, two storey house	Lower Main Street	Regional/A	Good

Ref No. relating to Map 2 /NIAH Ref.	Name	Address	Rating/Category of Interest	Condition
39/40815039	Buncrana Courthouse	Lower Main Street	Regional/A, H, So	Good
40/40815040	Bank of Ireland	Lower Main Street	Regional/A, So	Good
41/40815041	Allied Irish Bank	Lower Main Street	Regional/A, Ar, So	Good
42/40815042	Christchurch Church of Ireland	Main Street/Church St	Regional/A, Ar, So	Good
43/40815043	Christchurch C of I (Parish School)	Church St/St. Mary's Rd	Regional/A, Ar, So	Good
44/40815044	Win Bet Bookmakers	Upper Main Street	Regional/A	Good
45/40815045	Atlantic Bar/Former Hotel	Market Square	Regional/A, H, So	Good
46/40815046	Attached three bay, single storey former shop	Upper Main Street	Regional/A, Ar, So	Good
47/40815047	John Barr, End of terrace, corner sited, two bay, three storey house	Upper Main Street	Regional/A, So	Good
48/40815048	The Plaza	Upper Main Street	Regional/A, So	Good
49/40815049	Attached three bay, two storey house	Upper Main Street	Local/A	Good
50/40815050	Cast Iron Water Fountain Hydrant	Upper Main Street	Regional/A, So, T	Good
51/40815051	Hannon Greene, Attached three bay, two storey office or commercial building	Castle Avenue	Local/A	Good
52/40815052	Attached two bay, single storey over basement with half dormer house	Castle Avenue	Regional/A	Good
53/40815053	Attached two bay single storey over basement with half dormer house	19 Castle Avenue	Regional/A	Good
54/40815054	Terraced two bay, two storey house with attic level	Castle Avenue	Local/A	Fair
55/40815055	Wall Mounted Cast Iron Box	Castle Avenue	Regional/A, So, T	Good
56/40815056	Ard Caein, Detached three bay, two storey house on L shaped plan	Cahir O'Doherty Avenue	Regional/A, Ar	Good
57/40815057	The Cinema/St Mary's Hall	St Mary's Road/Castle Avenue	Regional/A, Ar, So	Good
58/40815058	Buncrana Library	St Mary's Road	Regional/A, Ar, So	Regional
59/40815059	St. Columbs (House)	St Mary's Road	Regional/A, Ar	Fair
60/40815060	Detached three bay, two storey house	St Mary's Road	Regional/A	Good
61/40815061	St Mary's Oratory	St Mary's Road	Regional/A, Ar, So	Good
62/40815062	Ardaraven, Detached three bay, two storey house	Church Street	Regional/A	Good
63/40815063	Detached 3 bay, one storey with attic gate lodge	Church Street	Local/A	Good

Ref No. relating to Map 2 /NIAH Ref.	Name	Address	Rating/Category of Interest	Condition
64/40815064	Osbourne House	Aileach Road	Regional/A	Good
65/40815065	End of terrace, two bay, three storey house	Aileach Road	Regional / A	Good
66/40815066	Attached two bay, three storey house	Aileach Road	Local/A	Derelict
67/40815067	End of terrace corner site attached two bay three storey house	Aileach Road	Local/A	Good
68/40815068	Schooners View	Aileach Road	Regional/A, Ar	Good
69/40815069	Attached mid terrace two bay, three storey house	Aileach Road	Regional/A, Ar	Good
70/40815070	Attached mid terrace, two bay, three storey house	Aileach Road	Regional/A, Ar	Good
71/40815071	Bayview. Attached end of terrace, two bay, three storey house	Aileach Road	Regional/A, Ar	Good
72/40815072	Youth Reach, Detached three bay, two storey gable fronted	Church Street	Regional/A	Good
73/40815073	Buncrana Lighthouse	Shorefront Green	Regional/A, So, T	Good
74/40815074	Buncrana Castle. Freestanding well head	Tullyarvan	Regional/A	-
75/40815075	Middle Lodge. Detached single bay, single storey, former gate lodge	Tullyarvan	Local/A	-
76/40815076	Buncrana Castle – Handball Alley	Tullyarvan	Regional/C, So	Fair
77/40815080	Semi detached, two bay, two storey house	St. Oran’s Road	Local/A	?
78/40815081	Rodden’s Bar	Lower Main Street	Local/A, So	Fair
79/40815082	Grants Shoes	Lower Main Street	Local/A, So, T	Good
80/40815083	Detached three bay, two storey house	Church Street	Regional/A	Good
81/40815084	Inishfree, end of terrace, two bay, three storey house	Grianan Park	Regional/A	Fair
82/40815085	Mid terrace attached two bay three storey house	3 Grianan Park	Regional/A	-
83/40815086	Mid terrace attached two bay three storey house	2 Grianan Park	Regional/A	Fair
84/40815087	End of terrace two bay three storey house	Grianan Park	Regional/A	-
85/40815088	Semi-Detached two bay, three storey house	Church Street	Regional/A	-
86/40815089	Scoil Íosagáin, detached two bay single storey convent national school	St. Patrick’s Road	Regional/A, So	Good
87/40815090	Scoil Mhuire Secondary School	Oran’s Road	Local/A, So	Good

Ref No. relating to Map 2 /NIAH Ref.	Name	Address	Rating/Category of Interest	Condition
88/40902922	Ned's Point Fort	Porthaw	Regional/A, H, T	Good
89/40902923	Tullyarvan Mill	Mill Lane	Regional/A, T	Good
90/40902924	St. Mary's Catholic Church	Cockhill	Regional/A, Ar, So	Good
91/40902925	Cockhill Bridge	Cockhill	Regional/A, T	Good
92/40902928	Wilson's Bridge	Westbrook	Regional/A, T	Good
93/40902929	Detached four bay, single storey vernacular house	Luddan, Lisfannon	Regional/A, T	Good
94/40902931	Cast Iron Milepost	Railway Road	Regional/So, T	Fair
95/40902932	Detached four bay, single storey vernacular house	Gransha Lower	Local/A	Poor
96/40902935	The Cottage (Gateway serving the cottage)	Westbrook	Regional/Ar, T	Good
97/40902937	Detached four bay single storey vernacular house	Ballynarry	Regional/A, T	Poor
98/40902940	Single arch hump backed railway bridge	NW Buncrana, near former Ballymagan railway station	Regional/A, T	Poor
99/40902941	Detached three bay, two storey former railway station	Ballymagan	Regional/A, So	Fair
100/40902945	Westbrook House	Westbrook	Regional/So, A	Good
101/40902946	Mass Rock	Cockhill	Regional/So, H	Fair