

LETTERKENNY & ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2009-2015



VOLUME 2

Containing: - Childcare Strategy
Retail Strategy
Housing Strategy
Development Guidelines & Technical Standards

OCTOBER 2009



Note: -

This Volume contains (in this order): -

- 1. Childcare Strategy**
- 2. Retail Strategy**
- 3. Housing Strategy**
- 4. Development Guidelines and Technical Standards**

LETTERKENNY & ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2009-2015



VOLUME 2

CHILDCARE STRATEGY

OCTOBER 2009

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1.0 Background and Introduction

1.1 Childcare - Government Policy and Initiatives

The Planning and Development Act, 2000-2006 (Section 10 (2) (l)) makes it a mandatory requirement on Planning Authorities to include objectives pertaining to the provision or facilitation of crèches and other childcare facilities in their development plans.

The Department of the Environment & Local Government issued Ministerial guidelines entitled 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities' in June 2001, under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000. **These Guidelines relate solely to the land use planning aspects of childcare provision** and set out policies and objectives that should be considered for inclusion in development plans.

The Department of Health and Children through the Minister for Children holds responsibility for the formulation of childcare policy. The department's brief includes the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) 2006-2010 (previously the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000-2006), which is a sub-programme of the National Development Plan 2007-2013.

The National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010 aims to develop and support childcare provision and services at a local level (as a successor to the EOCP 2000-2006) providing capital funding and the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme in place of staffing grants in order to facilitate parents to participate in employment, training and education through the provision of quality childcare supports. The National Development Plan 2007-2013 has invested €1.3 billion under the NCIP over the six year period of the National Development Plan.

The NCIP heralds a changing focus in the government's childcare policy, enveloping the National Childcare Strategy 2000, the National Anti Poverty Strategy and recommendations laid down in the Barcelona Summit 2002. The NCIP targets the creation of an additional 50,000 childcare places nationally with the creation of an additional, associated 9,200 jobs. Nationally the European Union set targets at the Barcelona Summit, which require Member States to put in place specific ratios of childcare places by the end of 2010 (one place in three (33.3%) by 2010, and early education places must be provided for nine in 10 (90%) of children between 3yrs and 6yrs).¹

Donegal County Childcare Committee (DCCC) was established in 2001 under the National Development Plan's Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000-2006. It is the Committee's role to oversee the development and provision of adequate and appropriate childcare services throughout the County. It is also their role to administer and endorse grants to community and private childcare services under the new National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010 (sub-programme of the NDP 2006-2013). In June 2007 the Donegal County Childcare Committee published 'Na Páistí Uilig', a four-year strategic plan specifically focussed on improving the quality and quantity of childcare facilities, programmes and the availability of educational opportunities within Donegal. The Councils shall work in tandem with Donegal County Childcare Committee to facilitate the provision of the best possible childcare facilities within the plan area.

¹ The Higher Education Authority European Report: Education/Labour Market Policy. February 2003

The Department of Health and Children, through the Minister for Children have also published 'We Like This Place - Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities'² (2005). This document further supplements the 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities'. From the Foreword of this document, 'These guidelines offer practical information and guidance on best practice in the planning, design and adaptation of childcare facilities. They are intended for use by childcare providers, architects, building contractors and all who are interested in the quality care of children and best practice in the design of childcare facilities.' This document along with aiding in the overall development issues also highlights key funding for childcare facilities including grants from the NCIP, the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme and Tax Relief available to developers of childcare facilities.

The need to create a Childcare Strategy aims to draw upon all relevant policies and initiatives in order to facilitate the future development of childcare facilities within a National and International Context having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of Letterkenny and its strategic role as a gateway within the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020.

This Childcare Strategy promotes the adequate provision of qualitative childcare throughout the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan area, via objectives and policies as set out in sections 4.0 and 5.0 of this document. Letterkenny Town Council and Donegal County Council will facilitate and promote the development of childcare facilities; it shall not physically provide these facilities.

² <http://www.dohc.ie/publications/welikethisplace.html>

1.2. Interpretation

1.2.1 Childcare

The definition of childcare, outlined by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is that: -

“Childcare” refers to day care facilities and services for pre-school children and school going children out of school hours. It includes services offering care, education and socialisation opportunities for children to the benefit of children, parents, employers and the wider community. Thus services such as naíonraí, day care services, crèches, play groups, childminding and after-school groups are included, but schools (primary, secondary and special) and residential centres for children are excluded.

1.2.2 Childminding

The Guidelines for Local Authorities do not cover ‘child minding’, defined as the provision of childcare for no more than 5 children³ (including the child minders own children) in the child minders own home, as they relate solely to the land use planning aspects of childcare provision. However as childminders play an important role in the childcare provision in a local area, they should be considered in the context of ‘need’ for future childcare developments.

³ Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006

2.0 Analysis

2.1 Existing Childcare Facilities

Donegal County Childcare Committee Limited collates the list of childcare facilities across County Donegal, including the Letterkenny Town Council area. According to data supplied by Donegal County Childcare Committee and follow-up work carried out by the Central Planning Unit, it has been ascertained that there are twenty childcare facilities with a total capacity of 567 childcare places.

Although the capacity only allows for 567 places, the actual number of children within the childcare system is 639 children. This is as a result of the sessional nature of some childcare facilities and the part-time participation of some children within the system.

There are also a total of three Parent & Toddler facilities in Letterkenny (see Appendix 1, Table 5). These facilities provide an invaluable service to many parent/guardians; they serve to enable both the parent/guardian and child to have access to a social environment. They differ from other childcare facilities in that they are aimed at having both parent & toddler present at once.

Within the broader Letterkenny Electoral Area, there is a substantial capacity within existing childcare facilities. Table 6 contained in Appendix 1, indicates the capacities of five additional childcare facilities, which exist in the Letterkenny Electoral Area. These facilities combined can cater for a total capacity of 241 children at any one time and have 330 children registered between them. Although these facilities are not within the area covered by the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2003-2009, it is highly probable that they service the occupants of the plan to some degree.

Childminding is not included in the National Childcare Guidelines, but childminders play an important role in the provision of childcare within the plan area. Although it is not possible to quantify the actual numbers of childminders within the Plan boundary and the populations that they cater for, Na Páistí Uilig (DCCC, 2007) highlights that there were 42 childminders known to them within the Letterkenny Electoral Area, catering for 121 children.

2.2 Demography/Population

As detailed in Chapter 1.2 Population & socio-economic context, the 'Background Population Paper', February 2008, highlights the key demographic breakdowns and projections for the geographic area covered by the forthcoming Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015 and beyond towards the year 2020. Within this paper, the breakdowns of the projected populations for Letterkenny are provided and a detailed explanation of the methodology applied is also illustrated. The 'Background Population Paper' calculates a population based on a household size of 2.92 persons per dwelling and the number of dwellings within the Plan boundary. Table 9 in the 'Background Population Paper', indicates that the 2006 population for the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan area was 19,021 persons.

Table 9 also sets out estimated projected populations for each 4 year period up to 2020, allowing for continued growth of 21.6% each period (as experienced in the period between 2002-2006) in order to attain a target population of 38,573 by 2020. Based on the estimated projected populations provided, the age cohorts relative to childcare have been broken down into the following categories and requirements: -

- 0-2 predominantly child minding, parent and toddler facilities, crèche facilities, sessional and drop in facilities.
- 3-5 predominantly crèche, preschool, playgroup, Montessori, sessional and drop-in facilities.
- 6-12 predominantly Primary school, After-School, Child minding and drop in facilities.

In order to project the populations and the need for facilities within the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan, the aforementioned age cohort's percentages in terms of the total population in 2006 were calculated using the 2006 CSO census data. This enabled the Central Planning Unit to calculate the derived percentages as shown in Appendix 1, Table 7, which was then applied to the projected populations highlighted in Appendix 1, Table 8 in order to ascertain the future populations of the age cohorts within the area under the remit of the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan.

Year	Age 0-2 Population Growth	Periodical Increase	Cumulative Increases
2008	1,137	0	0
2010	1,248	111	111
2012	1,383	135	246
2014	1,517	135	380
2015	1,599	82	462
Plan Total	1,599		462

Table 1: Projected 0-2 Population and Incremental Increase required for the LEDP 2009-2015 - 5.3% of Total population

Year	Age 3-5 Population Growth	Periodical Increase	Cumulative Increases
2008	1,094	0	0
2010	1,201	107	107
2012	1,330	129	236
2014	1,460	130	366
2015	1,539	79	445
Plan Total	1,539		445

Table 2: Projected 3-5 Population and Incremental Increase required for the LEDP 2009-2015 - 5.1% of Total population

Year	Age 6-12 Population Growth	Periodical Increase	Cumulative Increases
2008	2,360	0	0
2010	2,590	230	230
2012	2,870	280	510
2014	3,149	279	789
2015	3,319	170	959
Plan Total	3,319		959

Table 3: Projected 6-12 Population and Incremental Increase required for the LEDP 2009-2015 - 11% of Total population

Over the lifetime of the plan, Letterkenny is facing a substantial growth in the need for childcare facilities. Tables 1, 2 and 3 above highlight the increase in each significant childcare age group if the population of Letterkenny reaches the projected total of 30,176 by 2015. The total childcare population will be 6457 within the Letterkenny Plan boundary by the year 2015. At the beginning of the life of this Plan, the 2008 statistics show that there are currently 4,591 children in the childcare age bracket in Letterkenny; this represents an increase of 1866 children between the ages 0-12 in the lifetime of the Plan.

2.3 Need for Childcare Facilities

Reflective of the government policies, the need for childcare continues to increase, not just to assist parents to avail of work, training and educational opportunities but to provide early learning opportunities for children. The Donegal County Childcare Committee works with groups to determine need for facilities and to assist groups in ways to gather information on need (e.g. surveys, open meetings for parents).

Having consulted with the Donegal County Childcare Committee the Councils recognise that there is a particular lack of community childcare facilities within the LEDP area. When considering the provision of childcare facilities, it is necessary to examine the needs of the entire plan population. Within the plan area, there is a multitude of private childcare facilities, however in the interest of promoting social inclusion, the encouragement and facilitation of community based childcare facilities is paramount as these facilities improve access to childcare, particularly for persons who are disadvantaged. This is due to the not for profit nature of many community facilities and the large amount of voluntary labour provided, they are able to offer a more flexible and cost effective service. The boards of community childcare facilities are usually occupied by the parents of the children in attendance, this means that there is a direct link in terms of knowledge of the requirement, need and demand for services in the particular neighbourhood.

Under the National Childcare Investment Programme, the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) (2008-2010) was introduced. This scheme replaced the EOCP staffing grant scheme. The CCSS has a strong focus on disadvantage and is available to a limited group of parents including those: -

- In receipt of social welfare, or
- Engaged in education, training or work experience programmes, or
- Parents in receipt of FIS, or
- Parents in receipt of a medical card.

This scheme is designed to make childcare facilities more affordable, for those with the most need. At present due to the high degree of private childcare facilities, this subvention scheme does not adequately alleviate the pressure from those families with the greatest need in Letterkenny.

Childminding is still the preferred option for many children in Ireland and in some instances this is provided without charge by family or friends.⁴ In the general area of childcare the role of childminding is likely to remain a key sector and although not part of this strategy the high percentage share of children being cared for by childminders is a factor in estimating need for other childcare facilities. Whilst small scale childminders are specifically excluded from the notification process required

⁴ Development Childcare in Ireland: A Review of the progress to the end of 2003 on the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000-2006.

under the Childcare Act 1991, the Childcare Regulations 2006 make provision for the voluntary notification by childminders of their childcare service to their Health Board.

The Councils must look to the National targets set at the EU Barcelona Summit to achieve childcare places for 1 in 3 (33.3%) of the child population by 2010, and early education places for 9 out of 10 (90%) of children between 3 and school going age (approximately 5 yrs of age). Therefore it must be an objective of this Childcare Strategy to facilitate and plan for the provision of physical structures necessary to accommodate these places in line with these set targets. In doing this the implementation of all government policies and initiatives will be vital in shaping policies within the LEDP boundary.

2.4 Breakdown of Need for Childcare Facilities

With the announcement of the National Childcare Investment Programme 2006 - 2010, it continues to be government policy to increase the quantity and improve the quality of childcare facilities. This new programme and the completion of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000 - 2006 under the Office for the Minister for Children (Department of Health & Children) is working towards increasing childcare spaces nationally and is supported by POBAL and locally by the Donegal County Childcare Committee Ltd. As detailed in section 1.1 of this strategy, the EU targets set at the Barcelona Summit require childcare for 1 in 3 (33.33%) children between the ages of 0-2 by 2010 and 9 in 10 (90%) between age of 3 and school going age i.e. five years old.

Within the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan area the current estimated total number of children aged 0-12 is 4,591 or 21.3% of the total population as highlighted in Appendix 1, Table 7. The following sections show a breakdown of how the Barcelona targets will affect childcare provision in Letterkenny over the lifetime of the Plan.

- **0-2 Age Group**

According to data collected by the Planning Office and illustrated in Appendix 1, Table 4, there is currently a capacity to cater for 125 children in the 0-2 age group, which will be required to grow to 416 spaces (33% of 1248), to cater for the 0-2 age group by 2010. The current percentage of children aged 0-2, set against places capable of catering for this age group is only 11.1% well below the targeted 33% set out within the Barcelona Protocol. We must also note that this does not account for any children who may be in the care of a childminder; this is likely to bring the figure closer to 33%. If we apply the one in three requirement to the projected 2015 population figure, then the plan area would require facilities to cater for approximately 530 children aged 0-2, requiring 405 extra childcare places to be provide over the lifetime of the plan.

- **3-5 Age Group**

In the Plan area, there are currently 370 available childcare places for children aged 3-5, which occur in the form of Montessori, Preschools and Playschools. When we analyse this in conjunction with the Barcelona Summit 2002 target of having 90% of children within this age group catered for by 2010, then we can see that only 33.8% of children in this age group are actually catered for. When we project this data towards 2010, the Plan area will require 1080 spaces approx. This represents an increased requirement in provision of 710 extra spaces within childcare facilities in Letterkenny. As with the 0-2 age category, it is impossible to tell from the available

data what percentage are benefitting from the availability of childminding services, however it is extremely likely that a significant percentage of this age group avail of this type of service. Again projecting the available statistics towards the end of the plan there would be a requirement to ensure that facilities exist to cater for an approximate total of 1400 children within this age group.

- **6-12 Age group**

Within this age group there are no EU protocols or national standards to take account of, however this does not mean that facilities to cater for this age group are not required. It is prudent planning to support the development of facilities to cater for the specific requirements of this age group. These requirements are likely to overlap with some of the younger age groups, but also have their own dynamic in terms of the requirement for afterschool facilities and breakfast clubs in particular. The provision of childcare facilities for this age group is paramount in enabling parents/guardians of children to maintain their position in the workplace. To a certain extent the childminding/housekeeping industry will cater for a proportion of the afterschool market. Table 3 above highlights that there will be an increase of 959 children in this age group during the life of the plan. If we observe the current provision of afterschool facilities in Table 4, appendix 1, we can see that there are only 145 afterschool places available. The afterschool sector should be integrated with sessional facilities in order to cater for this dramatic increase in numbers. The Councils will endeavour to take account of the needs of this age bracket and strive to facilitate the provision of both purpose built facilities and encourage the multiple use of existing appropriate facilities with particular emphasis on the multiple use of existing facilities including education site, community facilities and neighbourhood nodes.



3.0 Goals

The goals of this Childcare Strategy are as follows: -

1. To provide a Land Use Planning Policy framework that will facilitate, encourage and increase the provision of the best possible childcare facilities in a safe and friendly environment to primarily meet the development needs of children, but also the social and economic requirements of the wider population and to ensure the improvement of the quality of childcare services for the community.
2. To provide a Land Use Planning Policy that strategically considers the need for childcare and amenities for children, especially with job creation initiatives, economic-based developments and residential/housing developments in the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan area.
3. To acknowledge and enhance the role of Letterkenny in the NSS as a Linked Gateway town and its role as a key node and catalyst for the strategic development and growth of the northwest area, through the development of a strong supportive social infrastructure, especially concerned with provision of childcare facilities.
4. To improve the accessibility of childcare provision, through the consolidation of community based services in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Strategy. The Councils will have special regard to the provision of childcare facilities in sites shared or adjacent to educational facilities and will also place an emphasis on the location of childcare facilities which should be at the most accessible point in any new development.



4.0 Objectives

The objectives of this Childcare Strategy are as follows: -

1. To enable the provision of quality sustainable and adaptable childcare facilities in a variety of locations within reasonable proximity of the population to be served and taking account of the spatial distribution of the population within the Letterkenny and Environs Plan area.
2. To identify appropriate locations for the provision of childcare facilities.
3. To promote equality and address disadvantage/social exclusion in the provision of childcare facilities.
4. To promote and support the provision of both community and private operated childcare facilities.
5. To aim to meet the national standards set out for the provision of childcare facilities by 2010.
6. To promote consideration of alternative/shared transport, sharing or re-use of existing facilities and mobile facilities to meet the needs of remote areas.
7. To consult and work with Donegal County Childcare Committee, local development partnerships/groups, Health Service Executive and the County Development Board in the provision and monitoring of childcare facilities and in establishing baseline information systems.
8. To support the provision of childcare facilities through the Irish language.
9. To recognise childcare as an area of local employment creation and of importance to the social and economic progress of an area.
10. To consider establishing a Childcare Development Fund as part of the review of the Development Contributions Scheme.



5.0 Policies

The policies of this Childcare Strategy are as follows:

1. The Councils will consider all applications for Childcare Facilities and in particular will support the proposal of Childcare facilities within the Community Facilities and Neighbourhood Node zonings. In certain instances the Councils may permit the development of childcare facilities in other areas, where the proposer can illustrate that there is a demonstrated need for the facility. The Councils will require all childcare proposers to conduct a survey of the childcare facilities currently available within the neighbourhood (see neighbourhood strategy map) that the development is proposed. This survey will take account of the capacity per age cohort and type of facilities currently on offer to the residents of the area, including: crèche facilities (both sessional and full-time), nursery, drop-in facilities, playschools, pre-schools, Montessori facilities, Naíonraí and afterschool facilities. On receipt of this data, the Councils will correlate this with the population projections for the area and deem whether or not a childcare facility is required within the immediate area.
2. It is the policy of the Councils to facilitate the creation of sustainable working childcare facilities which will best benefit the plan occupants, this will usually mean that the Councils will prefer that childcare developments are of a suitably large scale as to cater for a variety of childcare needs within the one facility.
3. It is the policy of the Councils that all childcare facilities, existing or proposed should meet the design and technical standards as set out in section 6.0 of this Childcare Strategy and should also employ the design standards set out in 'We like this Place', (DOHC, 2005).
4. Location of childcare facilities:
 - a). The Councils will promote and support, where the need is identified, the provision of childcare facilities in accordance with the development standards as set out in Policy 3. of this strategy.
 - b). Childcare facilities shall also be considered in the use/refurbishment of derelict/rundown/dilapidated buildings or new buildings/extensions to existing buildings/building clusters where the development can be integrated satisfactorily in the landscape and can satisfy Policy 3.
 - c). In all areas, the provision of facilities within, adjacent to or in close proximity to schools, health centres and other community facilities will be preferred in order to facilitate localised provision, accessibility and sustainable development.
 - d). In newer residential areas, district or neighbourhood centres may be identified and the location of childcare and other community facilities will be promoted in these areas. If a district or neighbourhood centre is unavailable to facilitate a childcare development in a new residential area, then any childcare development located within a Residential development should be at the most accessible point within the development boundary.
 - e). All provisions of this Childcare Strategy shall also apply to housing proposals for social and affordable housing.
5. New Housing Development and Childcare facilities:
 - a). Each application for multiple housing developments shall consider provision of childcare facilities as follows: -
 - Where the application is for 75 units or more, a purpose built childcare facility that is equipped with appropriate fittings and fixtures and satisfying

Policy 3., providing for a minimum of 20 childcare places per 75 units shall be provided. If the developments are of a phased nature, then the Councils will consider the childcare facilities in the context of the entire development.

- Where the application is for less than 75 houses, childcare provision shall be considered on aggregate. The onus shall be on the applicant in conjunction with Policy 1 to indicate how the proposed development shall be served by an appropriate childcare facility, either by an existing childcare facility or via provision of a new facility, e.g. in an area that has three 25 house developments, the developer would be liable to build and/or support the development of a childcare facility.
 - b). In conjunction with policy 5a), the Councils will consider the provision of childcare facilities on alternative sites available to the developer which are zoned for Community Facilities or Neighbourhood Nodes in lieu of building the facility within the proposed development. If a developer has access to a site of this nature and seeks to propose a childcare facility thereon, then a concurrent application should be submitted and approved in conjunction with the proposed residential development. If the childcare facility receives at minimum conditional permission to develop, then the developer will not be required to provide an on site facility. The permitted childcare facility should be constructed in conjunction with the residential and completed prior to the occupation of the first dwelling within the development.
 - c). The Councils in conjunction with Policy 4. will support the cooperation of multiple developers in building a joint facility to cater for new and existing residential developments. Any joint submissions should have consideration of the neighbourhood strategy with regard to policy 1a).
 - d). All community/private potential providers and developers wishing to open childcare facilities shall liaise directly with the Donegal County Childcare Committee to match potential childcare need (i.e. community groups, individuals) with potential childcare space (i.e. a facility provided by a developer).
 - e). The requirement to provide childcare facilities as detailed in Policy 5a) above shall be assessed having regard to the make up of the proposed residential area, i.e. an estimate of the mix of community the housing area seeks to accommodate and the result of any recognized childcare needs analysis. As a result of this assessment and collaboration with Donegal County Childcare Committee, the Councils will consider whether specific childcare facilities are required as part of that development. Developers may be required to make another more appropriately located site available. The Councils will also consider short-term arrangements (max. 18 months) within existing housing areas where longer-term facilities have not yet been provided, on the basis that a suitable purpose built facility is either proposed or the operator of the facility has an agreement in place to occupy a suitable building within one year of taking up short term accommodation.
6. Support for community sponsored childcare facilities: -
Letterkenny Town Council and Donegal County Council will continue to support community initiated childcare facilities in partnership with Donegal County Childcare Committee. The Councils recognise the need to support Community developments as a means of achieving affordable childcare within the Plan area. Proposers of community childcare facilities are encouraged to liaise with DCCC in order to provide the best possible facilities for the greater plan area.
7. The Capacity of Childcare Facilities: -
The Councils will consider permission for childcare facilities, which will have capacity for up to 100 children; However the Councils will not look favourably

upon childcare developments that exceed 100 childcare spaces. This is to prevent the clustering of childcare facilities into any particular area and to continue to promote the strategic development of childcare facilities.

8. The Councils will support the handover of childcare facilities from developer to childcare operator.
9. The Councils will not look favourably upon applications, which seek a change of use of an entire childcare facility, which would leave the neighbourhood in question with inadequate facilities to cater for the occupants. In order to achieve a partial or full change of use from a childcare facility to any other use, the developer must conduct a survey of existing childcare facilities as set out in Policy 1 so as to identify that need is adequately cater for.
10. The Councils will establish appropriate development contributions within the context of the next review of the Development Contribution Scheme, with a view to providing for the planned and strategic delivery of integrated childcare facilities.



6.0 Development Management Standards, Advice and Guidance

6.1 Donegal County Council will work with Donegal County Childcare Committee to develop a detailed development management guidance/PPG note (Planning Policy Guidance Note) on 'Childcare Facilities and Planning Permission.' This would assist those considering the development of childcare provision.

6.2 The following criteria will be applied in the assessment of the suitability of childcare facilities:

- Have regard to the Child Care (pre-school Services) Regulations, 2006, in relation to the planning implications of these regulations.
- Suitability of the site for the type and size of facility proposed.
- Appropriateness of the scale of the operation relative to the area within which it is proposed.
- Potential noise and nuisance generated by traffic or by outdoor play.
- Availability of outdoor play areas and details of management of same.
- Safe access and convenient parking for customers and staff. (The standards to be applied will be considered on the merits of each case. 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).
- Local traffic conditions.
- Number of such facilities in the area and the effect of a proliferation of such uses on the overall character of an area.
- Intended hours of operation (in certain areas, 24 hour operations could be problematic).
- Visual Impact: The effect on the visual amenity and character of an area.
- Demonstrated need for the childcare provision in the area (e.g. through a survey, detailed business plan), regard/ awareness of other local childcare facilities.
- Training in the Early Years/Childcare – this is for the applicant to demonstrate a knowledge of the sector and the issues emerging in the sector, including those that impact quality.
- Consultation with the Pre-school Inspection team to ensure the plans meet the Pre-School Services Regulations 2006 (if applicable).
- Contact with the Donegal County Childcare Committee to ensure the proper steps to starting a childcare service are taken.
- Have appropriate disabled access in accordance with the Disability Act 2005.

6.3 Childminding

Development consisting of a house for childminding would be exempted development subject to Article 10(5) Planning and Development Regulations 2000-2006. 'Childminding' is defined as '...the activity of minding no more than 6 children, including the children, if any, of the person minding, in the house of that person, for profit or gain.'

6.4 Specific Locations

The following paragraphs set out guidance in relation to appropriate childcare provision within specific locations.



In **primarily residential** areas the provision of childcare facilities can prove convenient for users but this must be balanced against retaining the essential residential character.

In **established residential areas** detached houses/sites or substantial semi-detached properties with space for off-street car parking and/or suitable drop-off and collection points for customers and also space for an outdoor play area are likely to be more acceptable for the provision of child care facilities. This is especially the case if this involves use of only part of the house and the residential use remains.

The use of terraced properties or semi-detached properties on small plots is less likely to be acceptable for full day care facilities and will be assessed on their merits with regard to the development management principals outlined above. Sessional or after-school care, which is ancillary to the main residential use, may be more appropriate in this regard.

In **new housing areas** developers will be expected to plan for and include provision for childcare facilities. The level of this will depend on the particular circumstances but as a guide one childcare facility for a minimum of 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings may be appropriate. All new residential developments when providing childcare facilities should have regard to Policy 1 (d), location within newer residential development.

Neighbourhood centres within residential areas would normally be suitable for childcare facilities provided there is adequate open space either contained within the facility or a safe outdoor play area nearby that is easily accessible. In the latter case, if the play area is not in the applicant's control, details of the owner's approval for use will be required. Applicants will also need to provide access and parking which may be in the form of shared parking/drop-off points with other users and must demonstrate that this right exists. Planning permission may be conditional on these matters.

Premises or sites at the edge or interface of residential and other areas **adjacent to primary traffic routes** may be acceptable for the provision of childcare facilities where there is safe pull-in and parking areas for customers and staff.

Childcare facilities may be suitable in **light industrial areas/general employment areas** especially if they are ancillary to an existing industrial use. They are not suitable in general industrial estates/mining areas where the hazards and potential dangers of the process carried on or plant and machinery could be injurious to the health and safety of children.

In industrial areas satisfactory access and parking will be required and the provision of or access to a safe outdoor play area.

In **commercial areas/premises** in the core of the town centre which are heavily trafficked, are unlikely to be suitable for childcare facilities due to the potential creation of a traffic obstruction and hazard. In locations where convenient parking and outdoor play space are available, they will be more acceptable.

Childcare facilities are normally appropriate in **educational establishments** such as colleges and national and secondary level schools, which in particular can provide for after school care.



In all cases, childcare facilities must be located at the appropriate distances from establishments with hazardous substances in accordance with Schedule 8 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006.

6.5 Standards for Full and Part-time Day Care

The following standards will be applied in the consideration of all planning applications for full and part-time day-care facilities:

1. Minimum floor space per child: 2.34m², exclusive of kitchen, bathroom and hall, furniture or permanent fixtures. The Explanatory Guide to Childcare (Pre-school services) Regulations, 2006, recommends as follows:
 - Children aged 0-1 requires 3.70m² per child
 - Children aged 1-2 requires 2.80m² per child
 - Children aged 2-3 requires 2.35m² per child
 - Children aged 3-6 requires 2.3m² per child

These recommendations relate to clear floor space per child. Extraneous areas such as kitchens, toilets, sleeping and other ancillary areas are deemed to be separate.

2. Adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to play indoors and outdoors during the day are provided, having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their age and the amount of time they spend in the premises.
3. The care of babies should be confined to the ground floor only.
4. In relation to drop-in and Sessional services, for pre-school children, the Explanatory Guide to Childcare (Pre-school services) Regulations, 2006, recommends as follows: Clear floor space per child, 2m², exclusive of kitchen, bathroom and hall, furniture or permanent fixtures.
5. In relation to drop-in services for children and after school care, the following indicative standard is suggested (but should be considered having regard to all relevant circumstances of the application, including the need for such services in the area and the likely number of hours each child will spend in the facility on and average day): Clear floor space per child, 2m², exclusive of kitchen, bathroom and hall, furniture or permanent fixtures.

6.6 Pre-School Inspection Team

An initial assessment by the Pre-School Inspection Team on the proposed plans/premises is recommended to ensure that the ratios and quality of the environment (e.g. proper ventilation, windows) are met.

6.7 Consultation/Information required for Applications

Consultation/Information required for applications will be as follows: -

It is advisable for an applicant to consult with Planning Section, the Building Control and Fire Officer of Donegal County Council, and the Health Board for the area, prior to submitting an application for a childcare facility. Applicants should also consult with the Donegal County Childcare Committee for support and guidance on the



process and especially on strategically understanding the need for childcare in the area applied.

Donegal County Childcare Committee, in working with prospective childcare facilities, encourage applicants to create a Business Plan, as with any other business, in order to fully understand the viability of the business. Therefore, it is recommended the applicants submit the information as follows:

- a) Nature of the Facility
 - Full day care
 - Sessional
 - Drop In
 - After School Care
- b) Numbers of children being catered for.
- c) Parking provision for both customers and staff.
- d) Proposed houses of operation.
- e) Open space provision and measures for management of same.

The applicant should also be able to demonstrate need (through a survey or by outlining how the facility meets the planning criteria of one facility for 75 new homes).

The applicant, in research before applying for planning permission should outline any other childcare facilities in the locality and should consult the DCCC if they are not aware of any other childcare facilities in the area in which they plan to submit an application. This is to ensure there is a strategic development of childcare throughout the County and to avoid duplication.

The quality of facilities must meet Childcare (Pre-school Services) Regulations, 2006.



7.0 Childcare Facilities: Definitions

- **Crèche/Nursery/Full day care**

A **full day** childcare service for babies, toddlers and pre-school children (more than 3.5 hours per day). Many crèche and full daycare facilities provide an afterschool service for school-age children (6 to 14 years of age). Drop-in centres may also provide care for babies, toddlers and pre-school children for a full day but on an ad hoc basis (e.g. available in a shopping centre)

- **Sessional Childcare**

A structured service of 3.5 hours or less for pre-school age children (2 years 9 months to five years) to develop a child's transition to school. Sessional childcare includes pre-schools, playgroups and playschools. Pre-school services that use a specific educational philosophy, such as Montessori or High/Scope are also forms of sessional care.

- **Naíonra**

A sessional preschool service provided through the medium of the Irish Language. There are a number of naíonra in Co. Donegal in the Gaeltacht areas and throughout the County.

- **Parent and Toddler Groups**

A support service for both parent and toddler providing an opportunity for children to play and socialise while parents meet. Children attending a parent and toddler session tend to be under three years of age, accompanied by their parent or childminder.

- **School age Childcare/After School Care/Out of School care.**

A childcare service for school-age children (aged 6 to 14), with a children-led structure that may include study, play, social activities, usually the two to three hours immediately following school.

Child minding/Home-based childcare

Individuals that provide childcare in their own home, or in some cases in the children's home. A childminder should look after no more than 5 pre-school children including their own pre-school children. No more than 2 children should be less than 15 months. Many child minders also provide, and are classified as full daycare service.

- **Childcare is also divided into community and private provision.**

Community provision is run by a community group of volunteers (usually parents) on a non-for-profit basis. This can be full daycare, crèche, naíonra, afterschool provision, parent and toddler group. Community childcare tends to be more affordable, although in many areas childcare is one going rate.

- **Private provision**

Private provision is a childcare business that works on a for-profit basis.

8.0 Appendix 1: Tables

	Name	Type/ Service	Capacity	Actual Registered Numbers	Creche, P&T, Sessional & Drop-In, Age 0-2	Montessori, Preschool, Playschool Age 3-5	Afterschool Age 6-12
1	An Naionra Leitir Ceanainn	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	Child's Play Montessori & Playschool	P	10			10	
3	Donegal Travellers Project Community Creche	FDC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	Doorway Community Playgroup	P	14	35			35
5	Errigal Montessori School & Creche	FDC	87	95	19	52	16
6	First Steps Playgroup	P	15	15	15		
7	Glebe Creche	P	25	25		25	
8	Letterkenny Community Childcare Centre	FDC	73	84	24	40	20
9	Letterkenny Community Development Project Ltd	P	20	31		31	15
10	Letterkenny Shopping Centre Drop-In Creche	D	19	19		19	
11	Little Dreamers Creche, Pre- School and Afterschool	FDC	57	70	20	30	7
12	Magic Roundabout Playgroup	P	20	36		36	
13	Meadow Hill Montessori & Afterschool Sep - June	PA	20	10			10
14	Model Creche, The	FDC	70	82	16	50	16
15	Park School of Early Learning, The	FDC	77	77	21	29	6
16	Rosemount Playschool & Montessori	P	20	20		20	
17	Santa Maria Playgroup (Living Support)	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
18	St. Gabriel's Pre-School for Travelling Children	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
19	VTOTS Creche	FDC	20	20	10	10	
20	Willowbrook Playgroup & Afterschool	AS	20	20		18	20
Total			567	639	125	370	145

Table 4: The available Childcare Facilities in the remit of the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan and the associated capacities for the separate cohorts

No.	Name	Type/ Service	Capacity	Actual Registered Numbers	Creche, P&T, Sessional & Drop-In, Age 0-2	Montessori, Preschool, Playschool Age 3-5	Afterschool Age 6-12
1	Conwal P&T Group	P&T	35	35	16	19	
2	Letterkenny Baby & Toddler Group	P&T	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	Trinity Tots	P&T	23	23	14	9	
Total			58	58	30	28	0

Table 5: The available Parent & Toddler Childcare Facilities in the remit of the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan and the associated capacities for the separate cohorts

No.	Name	Type/ Service	Capacity	Actual Registered Numbers	Creche, P&T, Sessional & Drop-In, Age 0-2	Montessori, Preschool, Playschool Age 3-5	Afterschool Age 6-12
1	Ballaghderg Pre-school - Learning Disability	FDC	15	10		10	
2	Bee Kool Kidz	FDC	32	45	15	16	14
3	Bomany Nursery & Montessori School	FDC	44	54	25	23	6
4	The House of Fun	FDC	65	86	6	50	30
5	Wonder Years Childcare Centre	FDC	85	120	20	80	20
Total			241	330	59	174	68

Table 6: The available Childcare Facilities in the wider Letterkenny Electoral Area, not within the remit of the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan and the associated capacities for the separate cohorts

	Age 0-2	Age 3-5	Age 6-12	Total
Population - Plan Area	1,001	965.8	2,087.20	4,054
Total Population 2006	19,021	19,021	19,021	19,021
Percentage %	5.3	5.1	11.0	21.3

Table 7: Derived Percentages for Children numbers per age bracket within LEDP as taken from the 'Background Population Paper' (CPU, 2008)

Year	Projected Population Growth	Age 0-2 Population Growth	Age 3-5 Population Growth	Age 6-12 Population Growth	Total Childcare/ Age Group
2006	19,021	1,008	970	2092	4,070
2008	21,454	1,137	1,094	2360	4,591
2010	23,545	1,248	1,201	2590	5,039
2012	26,087	1,383	1,330	2870	5,583
2014	28,630	1,517	1,460	3149	6,127
2015	30,176	1,599	1,539	3319	6,458
2016	31,722	1,681	1,618	3489	6,789
2018	34,814	1,845	1,776	3830	7,450
2020	38,573	2,044	1,967	4243	8,255
Total	38,573	2,044	1,967	4,243	8,255

Table 8: Estimated Child Population per Age Group, Calculated by Applying the Existing Percentage (as Detailed in Table 7 above) to the Estimated Population Projections.



LETTERKENNY & ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2009-2015



VOLUME 2

RETAIL STRATEGY

OCTOBER 2009

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1.0 Introduction

The 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities' RPG (Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, 2000) specifically required Local Authorities to prepare retail policies for their administrative areas. In particular the guidelines stated that the following matters should be included in all future Development Plans.

- Confirmation of the retail hierarchy, the role of centres and size of the main town centres.
- Definition of the boundaries of the core shopping area of the town centre.
- A broad assessment of the requirement for additional retail floorspace.
- Strategic guidance on the location and scale of development.
- Preparation of policies and action initiatives to encourage the improvement of town centres.
- Identification of the criteria for the assessment of retail developments.

The guidelines require a broad assessment of requirement for additional development reflecting local evidence of market interest and the need to provide good opportunities for retail provision to serve the main population centres in the County. The guidelines further state that this assessment should enable the formulation of appropriate policies and criteria for dealing with new developments.

In 2006, the Donegal County Council adapted the County Donegal Retail Strategy 2006 - 2012 to complement the policies of the County Development Plan 2006-2012. The County Retail Strategy: -

- Details a retail hierarchy for the County, including the Gateway of Letterkenny.
- Undertakes a broad assessment of additional retail floorspace.
- Provides strategic guidance on the location and scale of development.
- Details Policies and identifies criteria for the assessment of retail development.

This document entitled ' The Retail Strategy' has been prepared on foot of the County Development Retail Strategy continuing Letterkenny's role in the retail hierarchy, and amending policies so as to reflect the strategy for the town centre.

2.0 Review of Retail Policy & Trends

2.1 National Policy

Retail Planning Guidelines (Revised)

The Retail Planning Guidelines (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government), came into effect in January 2001 is so far as they relate to retail warehousing:

The 2005 guidelines note that: -

'There is evidence of consumer demand in Ireland for innovative types of large-scale retail warehouses which are capable of displaying a wide range of goods under one roof, together with a range of customer facilities.'

The guidelines identify Letterkenny as a town in the third tier of the National retail hierarchy where the Guidelines indicate that the vibrancy of centres in the third tier is such that they are allowing functions previously only found in higher order centres. The Guidelines also set out the matters that should be included in the strategy.

2.2 Regional Policy Context

Regional Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region, 2004

The Border Regional Authority published their Regional Planning Guidelines in 2004. The objective of the Regional Planning Guidelines is to provide a long-term strategic planning framework, for the development of the Border Region in the next 20-year period. This planning framework sets the scene for the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy at a regional level.

In terms of retail it is the objective of the Regional Authority to support the retail sector in the Region and address any inter-county or regional dimension of retail both in the context of this Region and other adjoining regions, including Northern Ireland.

It is noted that the key retail locations in the Border Region are subject to cross border competition, where retail centres in Northern Ireland may provide more comparative and cost effective shopping. This is particularly relevant in the case of Letterkenny where the shopping catchments of Letterkenny and Derry are in the Border Region.

2.3 County and Letterkenny Development Plans

• County Development Plan 2006 - 2012

The County Donegal Development Plan 2006-2012 sought to address the following main issue areas:

- The decline of traditional industries and the need for rural diversification and indigenous business development;
- Tackling continual high unemployment rate and the need to compete for employment on a national and international scale;
- Infrastructural deficiencies and linking centres within the County and to regional centres outside the County and within Northern Ireland,
- Improving the weak urban structure and strengthening the role of centres with extensive rural populations,
- Tackling rural depopulation and supporting the Gaeltacht.

- **Spatial Structure**

The Spatial Structure of the County Development Plan 2006-2012 was devised to correspond with the provision of the NSS and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region. Analysis indicates that the prime area of urban growth in the county has continued to centre on the Letterkenny-Derry catchment in the northeast of the county. The second tier of urban growth is based on the N15 transport axis that runs down the east of the county and includes Bundoran, Ballyshannon, Ballybofey-Stranorlar, and Donegal Town. The rest of the County to the west have much smaller sized peripherally located urban centres serving extensive rural hinterlands.

The Spatial Strategy in the County Donegal Development Plan 2006-2012 tiers the urban centres as follows:

- Promotion of Letterkenny-Derry Linked Gateway.
 - A well developed retail environment (local to regional focus).
 - Co-ordinated development of the town centre expansion.
- Urban Strengthening of Urban Structure at Sub-Gateway Level (Ardara, Ballybofey-Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Bridgend, Bunrana, Bundoran, Carndonagh, Castlefinn, Convoy, Donegal Town, Dungloe/Bunbeg/Derrybeg, Falcarragh, Glenties, Killybegs, Kilmacrennan, Milford, Newtowncunningham, Ramelton, Raphoe)
 - Provide important retail functions at the sub-gateway level
 - Support the County Retail Strategy
- Urban Support for Towns and Villages Within Close Proximity to the Gateways (Burnfoot, Fahan, Killea, Manorcunningham, Muff)
 - Limited nodal growth at predefined centres, contribute to Gateway critical mass through guiding development within these predefined centres
 - Bunrana, Newtowncunningham and Bridgend as main urban strengthening centres that will include important retail functions for Gateway in general
 - Improve retail functionality of these centres
- Support for Rural Villages and Communities
 - Improving retail functions
- Support for Gaeltacht Areas
- Centres With Special Functions (Lifford, Downings, Rathmullan, Rossnowlagh, Glencolumcille, Gortahork, Greencastle, Merville, Killybegs, Burtonport, Gweedore)

The Retail Strategy contained in the County Donegal Development Plan 2006-2012 identifies the retail hierarchy for the County and this Retail Strategy in respect of Letterkenny is consistent with the County retail hierarchy indicating Letterkenny at the top tier as the Gateway.

- **Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015**

Letterkenny is the principal town of Donegal and is identified in the National Spatial Strategy as a linked Gateway with Derry. The Donegal County Development Plan 2006-2012 responds to the Gateway status by designating Letterkenny-Derry as the primary urban centre within the plan's spatial strategy and views the development of the Gateway as crucial in creating the momentum to drive the development of the entire county.

In common with the rest of the state Letterkenny has enjoyed of period of sustained economic boom in the years prior to and during the period of the Letterkenny and Environs Plan 2003-2009 and is now experiencing the same economic slowdown that is evident at national level. The town has experienced rapid development and

considerable population growth. However, much of this development, both residential and retail, has taken place in a dispersed manner. In addition the town has significant amounts of undeveloped lands zoned and available for both retail and residential development.

This favourable macroeconomic climate has undoubtedly contributed to the expansion and strengthening of Letterkenny's retail offering. During the previous plan period Letterkenny has not only retained but enhanced its position as the primary retail centre within the County. In particular the newly developed area to the east of Pearse Road now boasts a range of branded comparison retailing formats including interalia: Tempest, Next, TX Maxx, Argus, Atlantic Homecare, Marks and Spencer's, Halfords, Homebase and Dunnes and has significant unused capacity to attract additional stores of a similar format. The growth of the discount food store sector has also been evident with both Lidl and Aldi now operating in the town. In addition the traditional town centre continues to display a strong and diverse independent retailing sector.

- **Retail Development and the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015**

The Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan identifies a number of significant challenges in the development of Letterkenny as a regionally important retail destination including; improving the attractiveness of the town centre, promoting pedestrian accessibility, and providing new public spaces. The plan also notes other weaknesses in its retail offering including the dispersal of retail activity across the town centre.

Letterkenny Development Plan policy seeks to create a, vibrant accessible, multifunctional and attractive town centre environment. Specifically the plan aims to maintain town centre vitality, improve pedestrian permeability, provide a better mix of uses within the town centre, protect and enhance its built heritage and townscape and create a high quality public realm (Volume 1, Part B, Section 7.0 refers).

In order to ensure town centre vitality and viability, the plan utilises the sequential approach to guide the location of retail development. Under this policy the town centre is the preferred location for retail development. Retail Development outside of the town centre will only be permitted where there is no reasonable opportunity within the town centre. Furthermore retail developments will only be permitted outside the identified town centre provided that they: would not detract from the vitality of the town centre, and adhere to range of other planning criteria. The plan does however provide for the development of neighbourhood retail outlets, intended to serve a primarily neighbourhood need, outside of the defined town centre.

The plan also sets out policies which, detail the general criteria for retail development, place restrictions on the scale of ancillary retailing outside of the town centre and restrict the development of certain low density/inappropriate retail uses (e.g. car showroom/lots) within the town centre.

In addition the plan sets out a number of important town centre policies, directly related to retail development, which seek to:

- Guide future expansion of the town centre in accordance with the Urban Design Framework.
- Ensure that new development provide for a mix of town centre uses.
- Achieve a higher design standard in new developments.
- Develop key sections of active street frontage within the town centre.
- Protect the Built Heritage and Historic Streetscape area within the town centre.



- Improve pedestrian permeability.

2.4 Retail Trends

Ireland has for most of the last decade witnessed unprecedented rates of economic growth. This growth has manifested itself in the retail sector through increased floorspace and increased volume rates of growth. The retail sector now contributes 6% of Ireland's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) compared with just under 5% a decade ago. Along with these growths have emerged new forms of retailing not previously present in Ireland's retail market. The main trends are discussed below.

Growth in Retail Sales and Floorspace

Retail floorspace in Ireland grew a staggering 22.4% from 1988-1996. According to the 1988 CSO figures the retail floorspace requirements for convenience and comparison retail was 1,896,636sq m. According to the Retail Planning Guidelines the retail floorspace requirements in 1996 were 2,320,810sq m. These figures show a rise of 424,174sq m (22.4%). Total retail floorspace is estimated to have grown by 35.2% from 1996 to 2003, an annual average rate of 4.4%. According to Forfas and Goodbody Report retail sales grew by 60% during the period 1990-1996 and by a further 42% from 1996-2000.

Structural Changes

The Irish national policy and advisory board for enterprise, trade, science and technology (FORFAS) has identified four key trends in international retailing that are now affecting Ireland:

A trend towards large sized units, particularly in food retailing.

Diversification, particularly by food retailers, into new product areas (e.g. DIY, clothing and household products), new geographic markets, and into new businesses (e.g. Marks and Spencer's move into retail financial services).

Provision of improved services to customers, such as scanning at checkouts, home shopping, and home deliveries and centralised supply chain network.

International Trends

Below are some of the key trends, which are likely to affect retailing in Ireland.

- **Entry of US Retailers**

Many of the large-scale retailers in the US have now entered the European retail market (e.g. Wal-Mart, Toys 'R' Us), usually via one of the larger retail markets such as France, the UK or Germany. The average size of a US supermarket is 2,600m². Wal-Mart is the US market leader, and in 1999 it entered the UK market when it acquired the ASDA supermarket chain. The company is highly aggressive and often undercuts its rivals. TK Maxx, the clothing discount store, has already expanded into Britain and Ireland.

- **Non-Store Retailing**

A market that was once seen as relatively mature (e.g. mail order catalogue shopping) is now witnessing substantial change due to the growth in Internet and television shopping. The growth in this market has been marked, but also somewhat fragmented, with many new entrants losing out and a number of traditional retailers finding a foothold. This market is currently seeing intense change, and it is difficult at this state to estimate the growth potential in the market. However, it is likely to be substantial on a long-term basis, particularly for non-bulky comparison items such as books, CDs, and computer software. One area likely to see substantial growth is 'super-specialized' shopping, where the size of overall market allows traders,

particularly new entrants into the market, to specialise in a much narrower range of products than a high street store but with far greater depth. It would, however, require a large volume of these retailers to impact upon traditional town centre and out of town retailing.

- **IT**

Developments in information and communications technologies (ICTs) are enabling improvements in market research and analysis, and supply chain management. This is driving significant change in international retail supply chains as retailers seek out increasing efficiencies and seek to reduce inventories.

- **Growth in Hypermarkets**

There are currently no hypermarkets in Ireland, but the current population and economic conditions suggest that there will undoubtedly be demand for these types of units. However, current floorspace caps are likely to restrict the growth of this type of retailing.

- **Emergence of Category Killers**

The trend to larger sizes in the retail sector, already identified, has been a factor in the European emergence of what is known as 'category killers'. These are usually very large outlets, which offer a specialized product range. Examples include Toys 'R' Us and the Swedish retailer IKEA. They are often 'destination' retailers and their catchment is often much larger than traditional town centre.

- **Diversification**

With the increasing sophistication of consumer demand, recent years have seen a substantial increase in the product ranges that are provided by many larger stores. This includes expansion into alternative areas in addition to the expansion of existing product ranges. It has largely been the result of increasing sophistication of consumer demand. Stores have tried to keep pace with this demand with the emphasis very much on facilitating the consumer and ease of shopping.

- **Irish Retail Trends**

The number of retail outlets in Ireland has increased dramatically since the late 1970's (39,697 in 1977 to 52,764 in 1998). While the number of grocery and clothing outlets has declined this has been more than offset by the increase in the number of other outlets. Mainly specialised outlets, such as DIY, jewellers and hairdressing salons, have driven the growth in outlets. The fall in the number of grocery retailers reflects the low growth in consumer expenditure, coupled with the competition between retailers.

Food retailing within Ireland has experienced concentration. Dunnes Stores has approximately 22% of the market followed by Tesco with approximately 16%. The growth of symbol shops such as SuperValu, Spar, and Centra has also been a feature of the past decade. Independent shops have a 15% market share, which represents almost 87% of the retail outlets.

There has been a decline in the number of clothing outlets in Ireland since the late 1980's (4766 in 1988 to 4259 in 1998). The leading organisations in clothing are Dunes Store and Penney's who between them have 40% of the market.

The major retail trends in Ireland, of relevance to this Study are set out below.

- Further concentration of ownership in the food sector is likely, particularly through the entry of further UK supermarkets. Tesco has already entered the market; other retailers such as Sainsbury, Safeway or US retailer Wal-Mart/Asda may enter the market. The planning limits introduced in 2000 are likely to be a significant deterrent to UK retailers in the food sector, as they prevent them from operating in their preferred formats.
- Independent retailers are likely to have more of a future in Ireland than they have elsewhere in Europe. Many smaller stores have managed to maintain a role in the market as “top up” outlets located close to residential areas selling a variety of items, from bread and milk, newspaper, and with many also including small delicatessens to sell breakfast and lunch foods. Cultural differences, population densities, and deterrents to market entry from UK and other European multiples should ensure a strong future for Irish independents. However, a major problem has been the growth in garage forecourt shopping and the numbers of independent retailers is, however, predicted to continue falling. An alternative for some has been to join the symbol groups (Spar, Centra, Super Valu, Costcutter etc) as a way of maintaining competitiveness.
- Experience elsewhere in Europe suggests that supermarket retailers will attempt to launch new formats to increase market share: top-up shops in town centre or convenience sites; compact stores in edge of town or market town locations; and stand-alone petrol station stores with wider than usual products.
- Discount retailers Aldi and Lidl have been active in the Irish market since the late 1990s. While there was some scepticism initially from industry insiders over the likely success of this retail format, recent figures show that they are maintaining a 5% of the market. Discount foodstores tend to specialise in certain goods such as dry goods, pet food, confectionery, and cleaning products with many customers frequenting these stores specifically to bulk buy these types of products. While originally envisaged as being complementary to larger retail outlets there have been a few recent examples where discount foodstores have been accepted as providing a local retail service as part of a mixed-use development.
- Forecourt retailing is a rapidly developing concept in Ireland, particularly through the link-up between petrol companies and symbol groups (such as Maxoll or Maces). Many Local Authorities have initiated policy in recent years to regulate the size of such outlets which are increasingly seen as a threat to the vitality and viability of town centres.
- There has also been an increase in the popularity of farmers markets selling fresh produce such as fruit and vegetables, meat and dairy products. This trend has been particularly noticeable in Dublin and the larger urban areas. Letterkenny has a Farmer’s Market that operates the 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month.
- Concentration in the clothing sector is expected. Dunnes Stores and Penneys currently dominate this market. Concentration is likely to occur through the entry of UK and other European retailers into the Irish clothing sector. The easiest way for these retailers, such as Next, Monsoon, and Oasis, to gain a foothold is through the opening of new shopping centres, which is the easiest and cheapest way for these retailers to get suitably sized units. This trend is already growing, as international retailers are taking up units in new shopping centres. This division of the two dominant players should enable the existing independent retailers to remain strong, but it is necessary that these new shopping centres do not have advantages (such as accessibility by car) or the traditional town centre shopping would be threatened in Ireland the same way as it has been in the UK.
- Outside of the new shopping centres, this influx of UK retailers is likely to be most marked in the larger Irish towns and cities, where the uniformity of high streets in Britain is expected to spread to these Irish locations.

- The pressures for factory outlet retailing are likely to continue in Ireland, following the huge growth in this sector in the UK, and recent applications and permissions within Ireland. These centres comprise groups of manufacturers who trade from individual units on a common site, selling mainly end of lines or seconds, at significantly reduced prices. These outlet centres are part retail, part tourist attraction, but manufacturers prefer them to be located in out-of-town locations so that they are not competing with stores selling full-price products on the high street. Forfas estimates a capacity for only three or four factory outlets in Ireland, and they are likely to remain a very difficult planning issue.
- Retail warehouse parks saw huge growth in the UK in the 1980s and into the 1990s. More recently, they have started to be developed in Ireland, and demand for these parks is likely to remain high for the foreseeable future. Typically, they are locations for bulky items not easily bought on the high street (DIY, white electrical goods and carpets), but many UK retail parks include clothing retailers.
- Consumer shopping habits and meal preparation habits are changing. This is driving the food retail structure to one of large stores for once-weekly shopping trips and smaller convenience stores for top-up purchases.
- It is very evident that changes have taken place in the ownership of high street shops. The number of small independent retailer has substantially decreased and in its place are the larger retail shopping centres. According to AC Nielsen there were 9,387 independent shops in Ireland in 1988. Ten years later this fell to 7,872. The number of independent retailers is predicted to continue falling. Some may join the symbol groups as way of maintaining competitiveness.

The Emergence of New Forms of Retailing

There are a number of new forms of retailing breaking into the Irish market and include among others, retail warehousing, retail parks, factory outlet centres and e-retailing. The potential implications of each are examined below.

Retail Warehouse and Retail Parks

Retail parks are a single development of at least three retail warehouses grouped around a common car park. Retail warehousing is a form of retailing that specialises in the sale of mainly bulky goods. It operates on the basis of scrambled merchandising, which means that they sell everything from car tyres to baked beans. Stock is sold in bulk and at significantly lower prices than in traditional retail outlets. They are characterised by large display areas with the public usually travelling to them by car and taking away their purchases by said transport.

Due to the scale of this form of retailing, the Retail Planning Guidelines acknowledges that town centre sites are not always the best location for this form of retailing. In practice they are best suited to edge of centre or out of centre locations where ease of access is provided.

According to the Retail Planning Guidelines 'It is beneficial to group retail warehouses on planned retail parks so that the number of trips by car are minimised and outside the town centre so that there is relief for additional traffic within a congested town centre'.

Factory Outlet Centres

These centres comprise groups of manufacturers who trade from individual units on a common site, selling mainly end of lines or seconds, at significantly reduced prices. These outlet centres are part retail, part tourist attraction. The Retail Planning Guidelines state that town centre locations are not the best location for such developments and instead indicate that edge of town centres where public transport systems are provided may be more appropriate. Manufacturers also prefer them to be

located in out-of-town locations so that they are not competition to stores selling full-price products.

Forfas estimates a capacity for only 3-4 factory outlets in Ireland and believe that they are likely to remain a difficult planning issue. International experience suggests that there is a need for a large catchments population in order for such retail centres to be a success.

E-Retailing

This is one of the most recent developments of retailing on the Irish retail market. E-retailing takes place where items are purchased over the Internet without the need to visit a retail outlet. According to the Centre for Retail Studies, UCD, rates of home computer ownership and internet usage are rapidly increasing in Ireland and the centre estimates that 30% of the population have already made at least one purchase on the Internet.

Distribution lies at the heart of the expansion of this sector and the more efficiently this can be achieved, the greater the potential scope. In the food retail sector, because the product is high bulk/low value, efficient distribution has to be linked to relatively high-density population and high market share by participating retailers. The conditions are not in our opinion ideal in Ireland outside the Dublin conurbation and combined with the absence of trading in retailing by 'other' means, the impact may not be nearly as significant as is being predicted in other retail economies. These other means include mail order. Moreover, if relatively low levels emerge, the probability is that the form of retailing will be based on the larger foodstores rather than new distribution warehouses. In that case it will simply contribute towards normal retail expenditure.

3.0 Review of Demographics & Existing Floorspace

3.1 Existing Floorspace

Table 1 below details the amount of existing retail floorspace in the County as a whole based on the floorspace survey conducted by DTZ PIEDA Consulting in 2002 and updated to 2005 based on figures gathered from a planning file search of granted retail applications at Donegal County Council, Letterkenny Town Council, Buncrana Town Council and Bundoran Town Council⁵. Furthermore, the additional new draft floorspace permitted within the Letterkenny plan area between 2005 and present is 36,654m² resulting in current existing and permitted retail floorspace of 102,344m².

Floorspace (m ²) in County Donegal, 2005				
Location	Convenience	Comparison	Bulky Goods	Total
Letterkenny	12,279	41,249	12,162	65,690
Donegal Town	4,210	7,619	1,060	12,889
Ballybofey-Stranorlar	1,934	10,324	380	12,638
Buncrana	2,916	7,252	4,024	14,192
Ballyshannon	2,542	3,657		6,199
Dungloe-Bunbeg-Derrybeg	5,795	4,075	1,500	11,370
Bundoran	3,014	4,977		7,991
Carndonagh	1,735	3,130		4,865
Falcarragh	1,164	2,024		3,188
Raphoe	801	1,764		2,565
Ardara	688	1,965		2,653
Moville	1,136	1,246		2,382
Killybegs	1,332	1,202		2,534
Glenties	762	779		1,541
Milford	279	1,331		1,610
Lifford	323	576		899
Ramelton	370	297		667
Castlefinn	280	207		487
Convoy	418	270		688
Other Areas	745	2,010	160	2,915
Total	42,723	95,954	19,286	157,963

Table 1: Floorspace (m²) in County Donegal as existed in 2005

3.2 Population Predictions

Volume 1, Part A, Section 2.0 outlines the analysis of existing and projected population for the plan area. The analysis shows that the population in 2006 (within the plan area) was 19,363 persons and taking continuing trends projects the population at 2020 to be between 36,000-39,000. The population of County Donegal was 137,575 in 2002, increasing to 147,264 in 2006.

⁵ These figures included a small number of approved applications that are not yet built/operational

4.0 Health Check Review

4.1 Letterkenny Town Centre Health Checks

In the course of preparing the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015, the Planning Authority conducted a comprehensive Town Centre Health Check. This health check included a variety of indicators including: retailer profile, the quantity of retail floorspace, vacancy rates, accessibility, car parking, pedestrian flow and environmental quality. The key findings of this health check vis-à-vis retail development are summarised below:

There has been an overall increase in retail space of 36% in the period 2005-2008 resulting in a total existing and permitted retail space of 102,344m² within the town. This included a considerable increase (63%) in permitted bulky retail space alone.

The main street area remains the retailing, service, entertainment, cultural and social heart of the town and demonstrates a vitality and displays a vibrancy and diversity not evident elsewhere in the town centre. In particular the pedestrian survey found that the highest footfall continues to occur along the main street.

The town possesses a relatively strong comparison-retailing sector occupying 32% of the total number of business premises. In particular Letterkenny now boasts a range of branded high street comparison retailers including inter alia: Tempest, Next, TX Maxx, Argus, Atlantic Homecare, Marks and Spencers, New Look, Halfords, Homebase and Dunnes and has significant unused capacity to attract additional stores of a similar format.

The town boasts a relatively strong independent retail sector with a 3:1 split between independent retailers and national/multinational retailers. However it was noted that this Independent sector was significantly dominated by service activities (38%).

The town centre has a considerable supply of car parking spaces - 7828, of which 4044 are public and 3784 are private. However the health check noted that the majority of this parking was located in the newly developing area East of Pearse Road.

In addition to the above the Planning Authority has noted a number of other significant development trends. In particular it has been noted that the favourable economic climate in combination with a preference by retailers for large format retail units with car parking frontage, has resulted in the majority of multinational 'branded' higher order comparison retailers establishing themselves in large format retail warehouses dispersed throughout the eastern portion of the town centre. The overall design quality and general layout of development in this area is generally poor and the area suffers from limited internal and external pedestrian permeability. In tandem with this trend the town centre struggles to attract and retain higher order retail activities and is increasingly dominated by lower order retailing activities.

Taken in conjunction with the location of existing retail developments within the town this trend has resulted in the creation of a low density, multimodal retail environment of limited character. In turn this situation undoubtedly detracts from Letterkenny's attractiveness as a retail location.

5.0 Available Expenditure (Floorspace Growth Assessment)

5.1 National Retail Expenditure for 2002 (Annual Services Inquiry)

Initially, an estimate for current levels of convenience and comparison retail expenditure in County Donegal is obtained based on estimates derived from the following CSO and ESRI data:

- *2002 Annual Services Inquiry*, published December 2004
- *Retail Sales Index Figures*, published monthly
- *2002 County Incomes and Regional GDP*, published March 2005
- *ESRI Medium Term Review*, published May 2003
- *Quarterly Economic Commentary (Summer 2005)*, published May 2005

National Retail Expenditure, 2002 (Annual Services Inquiry) (€'000)			
Expenditure category	Expenditure excluding VAT (€ '000)	VAT (€ '000)	Total (€ '000)
Convenience in non specialised stores	9,908,127	967,889	10,876,016
Food, beverage, tobacco in specialised shops	1,093,048	62,974	1,156,022
Pharmaceuticals	1,008,409	74,065	1,082,474
Total Convenience	12,009,584	1,104,928	13,114,512
Comparison goods in non-specialised states	521,480	90,529	612,009
Other Retail sale of new goods in specialised stores	7,397,006	1,283,837	8,680,843
Pharmaceuticals	372,973	27,394	400,367
Total Comparison	8,291,459	1,401,760	9,693,219

Table 2: National Retail Expenditure as existed in 2002

Source: CSO

Assumptions:

5% of non-specialised stores are comparison (and with same rate of VAT as Other Retail).

Pharmaceuticals are split 73% convenience and 27% comparison (As in Cork Strategic Retail Study, 2002)

5.2 National Retail Expenditure updated to 2005 (Annual Services Inquiry and Retail Services Inquiry)

Then projected annual growth rates for convenience and comparison retailing are based on the most recent Retail Sales Index results for the 2nd quarter of 2005. The growth rates are applied based on a combination of both price and volume growth rates, so that these years are presented in current prices (As in the 2002 Retail Strategy). 2005 will therefore be the price base year for future projection.



National Retail Expenditure Growth 2002-2005 (Retail Sales Index) (€'000)		
Expenditure category	2002	Q2 2005
Convenience in non specialised stores	10,876,016	14,971,799
Food, beverage, tobacco in specialised shops	1,156,022	1,242,664
Pharmaceuticals	1,082,474	1,483,853
Total Convenience	13,114,512	17,698,316
Comparison goods in non-specialised states	612,009	842,485
Other Retail sale of new goods in specialised stores	8,680,843	10,444,776
Pharmaceuticals	400,367	481,721
Total Comparison	9,693,219	11,768,982

Table 3: National Retail Expenditure Growth between 2002 and 2005 in € '000

Note:

- Projections based on annual percentage growth rates for value and volume sales combined.
- The % growth rates indicated for "Other Retail sale of new goods in specialised stores" is taken as an average of the growth rates indicated in the Specialised Stores (NACE 52) category of the RSI excluding "Pharmaceuticals" and "Food, Beverages and Tobacco".

The CSO Population and Migration Estimates for April 2005 estimates the national population as 4,130,700. This gives estimated national per capita expenditure rates of **€4,285** for convenience and **€2,849** for comparison.

5.3 Non Household Expenditure

Calculations of the non-household (or business to business) expenditure is omitted from this calculation as on the one hand business expenditure is relatively small and also because a reasonably stable relationship between household and business expenditure can be assumed and carried through.

5.4 Differential Between State and County Expenditure Per Head

The *County Incomes and Regional GDP 2002* data is used to obtain a more accurate figure for expenditure at county level. This data indicates that the disposable income per person in County Donegal (€13,928) is 83.8% of the state average (€16,625). This results in convenience expenditure for Donegal of €3,591 and €2,387 for comparison.

Per Capita Retail Expenditure, County Donegal 2005 (€)		
	National per capita expenditure 2005	Donegal County per capita expenditure 2005 (base year)
Convenience	4,285	3,591
Comparison	2,849	2,387

Table 4: Per Capita Retail Expenditure in Co. Donegal as of 2005

Source: CSO Annual Services Inquiry, 2002 and County Incomes and Regional GDP, 2002



5.5 Expenditure Per Head - Projections to 2015 (ESRI Projections)

Overall consumption rates are then transformed into expected increases in expenditure for convenience and comparison goods. Evidence from mature EU retail economies of the EU indicates that comparison retailing will eventually outgrow convenience to become the main source of retail expenditure. However, convenience expenditure sales have continued to grow steadily contrary to predictions in the early 2000s and are unlikely to experience a major decline in the short term. The 2002 Annual Services Inquiry and subsequent Retail Sales Index figures indicate that convenience expenditure grew by an average of 3.8% annually between 2002 and the first quarter of 2005 while comparison grew by 4.3% over the same period.

The general ESRI growth figures have been used in projecting annual growth rates going forward. The ESRI *Medium Term Review 2003-2010* published in July 2003 projected a cautious rise in personal consumption, from an average of 3.1% per annum in the period 2006-2010, down to 2.5% in the period 2011 to 2016. However, since the recent upturn in the Irish economy the more recent *Quarterly Economic Commentary (Summer 2005)* has forecast growths in consumer expenditure of 5.3% for 2005 and 5.6% for 2006.

The “High Growth” scenario used is based on a substantial increase in personal consumption as indicated in more recent ESRI reports further refined to indicate an increase in the comparison share of overall expenditure, while convenience growth begins to decline. The “Low Growth” scenario is more reflective of the ESRI growth projections of the early 2000s and is based on a levelling off of the economy in general towards growth rates similar to the average for mature EU member state economies.

Annual % Growth For Convenience & Comparison Retail Expenditure, County Donegal		
	Convenience	Comparison
2005-2010 High	2.3%	5.5%
2005-2010 Low	1.8%	4.4%
2010-2015 High	1.8%	4.1%
2010-2015 Low	1.3%	3.3%

Table 5: Annual % Growth For Convenience & Comparison Retail Expenditure, Co. Donegal

Summary of Estimates of Expenditure by Residents of County Donegal 2005, 2010 and 2015 (€m 2005 prices)					
	Total Expenditure (€m)		Population	Per Capita Expenditure (€m)	
	Convenience	Comparison		Convenience	Comparison
2005	512.0	340.3	142,587	3,591	2,387
2010 High	608.9	472.0	151,350	4,023	3,119
2010 Low	594.2	448.0		3,926	2,960
2015 High	706.7	612.6	160,652	4,399	3,813
2015 Low	672.6	559.4		4,187	3,482

Table 6: Summary of Estimates of Expenditure by Residents of County Donegal 2005, 2010 and 2015 in millions of Euro (2005 prices)

As with all forecasting, there is an element of uncertainty with these projection figures, particularly with personal consumption growth, which from year to year is heavily influenced by factors such as inflation, and overall economic growth nationally and globally.

5.6 Turnover Estimates

The comparison and convenience retail turnover estimates for the County are then calculated by calculating the total amount spent by the resident population and those living outside the County on retail goods sold within the County and relating this back to turnover.

The DTZ PIEDA Consulting Household Survey conducted as part of the 2002 Retail Strategy indicated that 5.5% of convenience expenditure and 18% of comparison expenditure by the resident population is spent outside of the County. For 2005 it is assumed that the level of convenience and comparison expenditure leakage will remain constant.

Expenditure by the Resident Population on Retail Goods in County Donegal 2005		
	Convenience	Comparison
Total Expenditure by Resident Population on Retail Goods in and outside the County	€512.0	€340.3m
Proportion of Total Expenditure by residents on Retail Goods outside the County	5.5%	18%
Expenditure by Resident Population on retail Goods in the County (€m)	€483.8m	€260.7m

Table 7: Expenditure by the Resident Population on Retail Goods in County Donegal 2005

Expenditure by the Resident Population on Retail Goods in County Donegal 2005, 2010 and 2015 (€m)		
	Convenience	Comparison
2005	483.8	279.0
2010 High	575.4	387.0
2010 Low	561.5	367.4
2015 High	667.8	502.3
2015 Low	635.6	458.7

Table 8: Expenditure by the Resident Population on Retail Goods in County Donegal 2005, 2010 and 2015 (€m)

The Household Survey also estimated that 7.6% of convenience expenditure and 16.6% of comparison expenditure in the County could be attributed to non-residents. The surveys that indicated this estimate were conducted in January and were considered an underestimation of this type of spend.

Factored in also is an assumed decrease in the level of convenience and comparison expenditure trade draw from across the border due to the depreciation of Sterling against the Euro since late 2002. It is also estimated that foreign and domestic tourism expenditure in Donegal accounts for 0.5% of convenience and 3.5% of comparison retail expenditure in the County annually.

Based on a combination of the above factors, it is assumed that the percentage expenditure attributable to non-residents is 10% for convenience and 20% for comparison.

Combining resident and non-resident expenditure estimates gives total retail expenditure by all persons on goods in retail outlets throughout the County. The assumption is made, therefore, that the total amount of expenditure on goods in retail outlets in Donegal will be approximately equivalent to the level of turnover in these outlets.

Total Turnover (Resident and Non- Resident) in County Donegal 2005 (€M 2005 Prices)				
	Convenience		Comparison	
2005 Expenditure by Resident Population	483.8	90%	279.0	80%
2005 Expenditure by Non-resident Population on retail Goods in the County	48.38	10%	69.75	20%
2005 Total Expenditure/ Turnover on Retail Goods in the County	532.2	100%	348.7	100%
2010 High Expenditure by Resident Population	575.4	90%	387.0	80%
2010 High Expenditure by Non-resident Population on retail Goods in the County	57.54	10%	96.7	20%
2010 High Total Expenditure/Turnover on Retail Goods in the County	632.9	100%	483.7	100%
2010 Low Expenditure by Resident Population	561.5	90%	367.4	80%
2010 Low Expenditure by Non-resident Population on retail Goods in the County	56.1	10%	91.9	20%
2010 Low Total Expenditure/Turnover on Retail Goods in the County	617.6	100%	459.2	100%
2015 High Expenditure by Resident Population	667.8	90%	502.3	80%
2015 High Expenditure by Non-resident Population on retail Goods in the County	66.8	10%	125.6	20%
2015 High Total Expenditure/Turnover on Retail Goods in the County	734.6	100%	628.4	100%
2015 Low Expenditure by Resident Population	635.6	90%	458.7	80%
2015 Low Expenditure by Non-resident Population on retail Goods in the County	63.6	10%	114.7	20%
2015 Low Total Expenditure/Turnover on Retail Goods in the County	699.2	100%	573.4	100%

Table 9: Total Turnover (Resident and Non- Resident) in County Donegal 2005

Summary of Estimates of Expenditure by Non-Residents on Retail Goods in County Donegal 2005, 2010 and 2015 (€m 2005 prices)		
	Convenience	Comparison
2005	48.38	69.7
2010 High	57.54	96.7
2010 Low	56.1	91.9
2015 High	66.8	125.6
2015 Low	63.6	114.7

Table 10: Summary of Estimates of Expenditure by Non-Residents on Retail Goods in County Donegal 2005, 2010 and 2015

5.7 Turnover Ratios (Sales per Square Metre)

Turnover ratios (Sales per M²) are estimated based on turnover of retail outlets and the retail floorspace survey results, which indicated a net convenience floorspace of 42,723 m², 95,954 m² of comparison and 19,286 m² of bulky goods/retail warehousing.

This gives a turnover ratio of **€11,305** for convenience and **€2,421** for comparison, which includes retail-warehousing formats that generally have lower per square metre turnover than other retail formats.

5.8 Gross Additional Expenditure Potential

To project the additional retail expenditure from non-residents, the same high and low scenario as above is applied. These estimates are then added to the additional expenditure calculated for residents over the same period.

Total Available Expenditure from Residents and Non Residents 2005-2015 (€ 2005 prices)								
	Convenience				Comparison			
	2006-2010		2011-2015		2006-2010		2011-2015	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Resident Population	85.4	100.7	81.6	101.7	110.5	135.0	114.2	144.7
Non-Resident Population	7.7	9.2	7.5	9.3	22.2	27.0	22.8	28.9
Additional Expenditure Potential	93.1	109.9	89.1	111.0	132.7	163.0	137.0	173.6

Table 11: Total Available Expenditure from Residents and Non Residents 2005-2015

5.9 Future Sources of Retail Sales

There were a number of extant planning permissions (August 2005) at Further Information or appeal stage, which if granted, would add an additional 3013 m² of convenience retail floorspace and 10,658 m² of comparison. Using our estimated turnover ratios, this additional floorspace, if granted will capture approximately €33.1m of convenience expenditure and €25.8m of comparison expenditure.

5.10 Turnover Efficiency Growth

As in the 2002 Retail Strategy turnover efficiency growth rates are not factored into the convenience calculations as it is felt that the main retail multiples, which account for the majority of the convenience retail space in the County are already operating at high efficiency rates.

However it is felt that comparison efficiency growth is relevant particularly since the large chain multiples such as TK Maxx and Next have entered the Donegal market in recent years. Research suggests that turnover efficiency in comparison retailing is about 1% per annum.

Going on the basis that the 2005 comparison turnover total is €317.0m this would give an additional €16.2m between 2006 and 2010 and €17.0m between 2011 and 2015 as a result of efficiency growth in turnover.

Turnover efficiency growth is also factored in the new comparison outlets were current extant permission. On the basis that these would be fully operational by 2008, it is estimated that the turnover efficiency from these stores will result in an additional €1.32m up to 2010 and €1.38m between 2011 and 2015.

5.11 Other Retail Sales

It is contended that there has been minimal growth in other forms of retailing such as mail ordering, market stalls and Internet retailing. While it is noted that Tesco has introduced a successful Internet retailing service in recent years any expected growth in convenience will be coming from already established stores and will contribute towards normal retail expenditure in these stores.

The market for comparison retailing over the Internet is strong particularly considering the peripherality of many areas of Donegal from large comparison retail centres both within and outside the County.

It is assumed that growth rates for Internet comparison retailing based on the 2002 Retail Strategy: 4% of total comparison expenditure up to 2010 and 6% between 2011 and 2015. There are four Country Markets operating in the County at Buncrana, Carndonagh, Dunfanaghy, and Ramelton. It is assumed that mail order sales and market stall sales for comparison goods will decline over this period, from 0.5% up to 2010 to 0.25% between 2011 and 2015.

5.12 Total Retail Sales From New Source of Supply

Total Retail Sales from New Sources of Supply in County Donegal, 2005 (€m 2005 prices)								
	Convenience				Comparison			
	2006-2010		2011-2015		2005-2010		2010-2015	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
New Retail Outlets	33.1	33.1			25.8	25.8		
Turnover Efficiency	0	0	0	0	16.8 1.32	16.8 1.32	17.65 1.38	17.65 1.38
“Other” Retail Sales	0	0	0	0	16.5	17.4	28.7	31.4
Retail Sales from New Sources of Supply	33.1	33.1	0.0	0.0	60.4	61.3	47.7	50.43

Table 12: Total Retail Sales from New Sources of Supply in County Donegal, 2005



5.13 Retail Floorspace Capacity

The additional expenditure potential for retail goods for the County is calculated by subtracting the retail sales figures for new sources from the estimated additional expenditure.

Net Additional Expenditure Potential for Retail Goods in County Donegal, 2005-2015 (€m 2005 prices)								
	Convenience				Comparison			
	2005-2010		2011-2015		2005-2010		2011-2015	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Additional Expenditure Potential	93.1	109.9	89.1	111.0	132.7	163.0	137.0	173.6
Retail Sales from New Sources of Supply	33.1	33.1	0.0	0.0	60.4	61.3	47.7	50.4
Net Additional Expenditure Potential	60.0	76.8	89.1	111.0	72.3	101.7	89.3	123.2

Table 13: Net Additional Expenditure Potential for Retail Goods in County Donegal, 2005-2015

Estimates for additional floorspace required in the County up to 2015 are then derived from the net additional expenditure potential divided by the estimated turnover ratios for retail outlets in the County currently (€11,305 for convenience and €2,421 for comparison).

Net Indicative Floorspace Potential in County Donegal 2005-2015				
	Convenience		Comparison	
	Low	High	Low	High
2006-2010	5307	6793	29864	42007
2011-2015	7881	9818	36886	50888

Table 14: Net Indicative Floorspace Potential in County Donegal 2005-2015

The estimates increase the potential significantly for comparison retailing, but it is noticeable even in the short term there is capacity to accommodate over 5,000 m² of additional convenience floorspace.

Note: It is not proposed to break this floorspace assessment down to individual towns, as this would be too prescriptive, and of no real benefit. The additional floorspace identified above is to be taken as a guideline only.

6.0 Development Strategy

6.1 Objectives

The objectives below are derived from the County Retail Strategy and are herein repeated having regard to the need to ensure consistency within the retail hierarchy.

Objective 1

To improve the retail profile and competitiveness of County Donegal within the retail economy.

Objective 2

To address leakage of retail expenditure from the County by providing the means to strengthen the range and quality of its retail offer.

Objective 3

To ensure an equitable, efficient and sustainable spatial distribution of main centres across the County.

Objective 4

To establish a hierarchy which assists the definition of the County's spatial strategy and provides clear guidance on where major new retail floorspace would be acceptable.

Objective 5

To promote retail centres in the Donegal Gaeltacht to ensure achievement of objectives 3 and 4 and the continued preservation and extension of the Irish Language in this area of the County.

Objective 6

To encourage and facilitate innovation and diversification in the County's retail profile and offer.

Objective 7

To encourage and facilitate and re-use the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail uses, with due cognisance to the Sequential Test.

Objective 8

To promote and sustain the importance of retailing in the County's tourism economy particularly in small and rural centres.

Objective 9

To encourage and facilitate the preservation and enhancement of the retail role of small villages around the County.

Objective 10

To provide the criteria for the assessment of retail development proposals.

Objective 11

To locate regionally focussed comparison and retail warehousing primarily in appropriate locations within the Letterkenny - Derry Gateway, Gateway Corridor, and Inter - Gateway Centres.

Objective 12

To encourage increased convenience provision in appropriate locations to reduce overtrading and aid a better shopping environment.



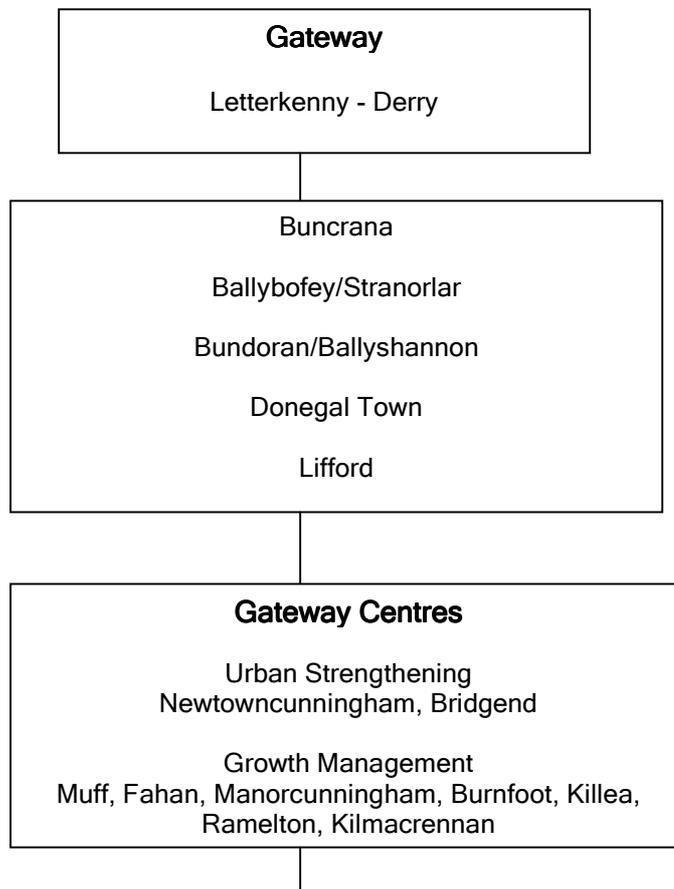
6.2 Retail Hierarchy

As indicated earlier in this document, the Letterkenny Retail Strategy is framed within the Retail Hierarchy of the County Retail Strategy. The Retail Hierarchy for the County consists of a number of different retail centre types and is based on a fusion of the following:

- The 2002 DTZ Pinda Retail Strategy Hierarchy, including the review of key settlements, Household Survey, Shoppers Survey, Health Checks
- Retail Strategy updates (2005) conducted by RPS Planning & Environment, including updates Health Checks, demographic and floorspace figures, retail expenditure and floorspace requirements,
- Review of national and regional policy development including the National Spatial Strategy, the updated Retail Planning Guidelines and the Border Authority Regional Planning Guidelines,
- Review of local policy development including the County Donegal Development Plan 2006-2012 (particularly the County Spatial Strategy, Transportation, Employment and Housing policies and objectives) and various Local Area Plans,
- Updated information on retail trends, economic growth, and currency fluctuations.

In addition, the County Retail Strategy demonstrates the correlation of the Retail Hierarchy against County Development Plans Spatial Strategy.

6.3 Retail Hierarchy for County Donegal



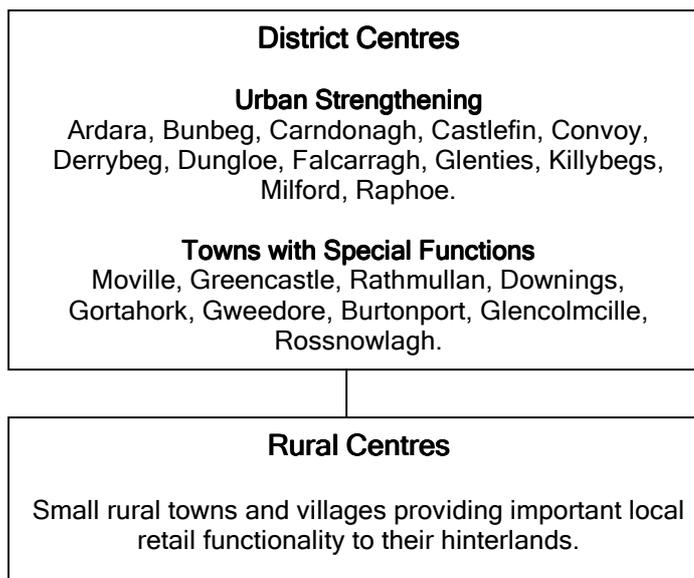


Figure 1: Retail Hierarchy for County Donegal

6.4 The County Retail Strategy sets out the preferred retail use for various centres with the Retail Hierarchy and is repeated below:

Preferred Retail Use for Various Centres			
Retail Centre Type	Convenience	Comparison	Bulky Goods
Gateway	Regional Shopping Centres	Regional Shopping Centres	Retail Outlets selling bulky goods.
	Large Superstores	Large higher order Clothing, Household Goods, Personal Goods Stores	Retail Outlets ancillary to industrial light manufacturing, and service activities.
	Discount Foodstores	Large Department stores	
Gateway Centres - Urban Strengthening	Supermarkets ⁶	Local Small Floorspace Shops	Limited Retail Warehousing and Factory Outlet
Gateway Centres - Growth Management	Supermarkets	Local Small Floorspace Shops	
Inter-Gateway/Strategic Transport Corridor Centres	Shopping Centres	Shopping Centres	Retail Warehousing
	Superstores	Stand Alone Higher-Order Comparison Stores	Retail Parks
	Discount Foodstore		Factory Outlets
District Centres- Urban Strengthening	Supermarkets	Local Small Floorspace Shops	Limited Retail Warehousing and Factory Outlet
District Centres - Towns with Special Functions	Supermarkets	Local Small Floorspace Shops	
Rural Centres	Local Shop	Local Shop	N/A

Table 15: Preferred Retail Use for Various Centres

⁶ The eventual size of any supermarket be appropriate to the level of growth projected for each centre.

The Sequential Approach

At specific site level the Sequential Approach developed in the Retail Planning Guidelines should remain the chief guide for deciding where new retail development should be located and distributed.

The Sequential Approach identifies the following preferred locations for new retail development in descending order:

1. Zoned **town centre** areas
2. If a town centre is inappropriate, unsuitable or unavailable then **edge of centre** areas within 300-400 metres of the town centre
3. **Out of centre** sites should be considered only after town centre and then edge of centre sites can be conclusively discounted in terms of size, availability, accessibility and feasibility.

6.6 Site Specific Retail Locations set out in the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2009-2015.

The following table sets out the preferred retail locations for the town as set out in Volume 1 of the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015.

6.7 Preferred Retail Locations

Preferred Retail Locations in Letterkenny within Volume 1 of the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2009-2015				
Retail Centre Type	Location	Plan Objectives	Retail Location	Recommended Retail Development
Letterkenny	Gateway			
	Town Centre	To create a vibrant, multifunctional, and accessible urban environment, with a high architectural character, and a quality public realm.	Defined Town Centre.	<p>Regional, County, District and Local Scale Comparison, Convenience and Bulky goods.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Shopping Centres. • Large Superstores. • Discount Foodstores. • Large higher order clothing, household and personal good stores. • Large Department Stores. • Retail outlets selling bulky goods. • Retail Outlets ancillary to industrial light manufacturing, and service activities. <p>This excludes certain retail developments not suited to town centre locations (e.g. Car Showrooms).</p>
	Outside the Town Centre	To provide a sufficient quantum and range of neighbourhood retail floorspace.	Outside the Town Centre	Limited and Local scale convenience and comparison (e.g. Local Grocery Store, Pharmacy, Hairdressers etc) intended primarily to serve a Neighbourhood need.

Table 16: Preferred Retail Locations in Letterkenny within Volume 1 of the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2009-2015

7.0 Specific Retail Policies and Proposals

This section details a number of specific policies in order to further realise the objectives of the Retail Strategy.

7.1 Retail Strategy Policies

Retail Strategy Policies		
Policy Reference	Policy/Objective	Actions
Policy RS1: Letterkenny Linked Gateway	<p>It is an objective of the plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve a critical mass of retailers within the defined town centre. • Provide a diversity of different retailing types (comparison and convenience) and sizes throughout the town centre. • Establish a strong and competitive retailing environment including a strong independent retailing sector. • Develop an integrated retail environment accessible by a range of transportation modes. • Create an attractive retail environment in terms of overall design and the quality of the public realm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all future retail applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Adhere to the sequential test in terms of their location. → Form part of a mixed-use development proposal, which provides for a mix of unit sizes located along active and visually pleasing frontages. → Are readily accessible by sustainable modes of transportation from other areas of the town centre. → Provide for the highest quality in terms of overall design, contributes to the public realm and satisfactorily integrates with the surrounding townscape. • Promote retail development at key back land locations adjacent to the Main Street and at strategic locations on lands East of Pearse Road. • Safeguard and enhance key pedestrian linkages (and develop new linkages) between the lands East of Pearse Road.
Policy RS8: Innovation in the County's Retail Offer	<p>It is the policy of the Councils to encourage and facilitate innovation in the County's retail offer and attraction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise Letterkenny's Linked Gateway status to encourage a wider range of higher order retail functions comparable to a Retail Planning Guidelines Tier 2 Centre (e.g. Limerick, Waterford, Galway). One of the main areas for development should be in retail warehousing of higher-order bulky goods to attract shoppers from throughout the Northwest region and from

		<p>Northern Ireland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor emerging trends and innovations in the EU and US retail sectors. The nature of the different innovations normally demands certain thresholds and characteristics to prevail. The baseline for the Strategy provides this information but it is essential that this is kept up to date in order that the County can sell itself when the opportunities arise.
<p>Policy RS9: Re-Use and Regeneration of Derelict Land and Buildings</p>	<p>It is the policy of the Councils to encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings in both main and smaller centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the constraints pertaining to the Town Renewal/IAP designated programme areas across the County to date and communicate issues to Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government in which achievement of objectives has been limited. • Review of the scope and area of these initiatives in the context of the County Retail Strategy with a greater focus on how these key buildings are areas can contribute to realising the retail potential within or on the edge of the main centres.
<p>Policy RS10: Retailing in Tourism</p>	<p>It is the policy of the Councils to encourage and facilitate the development of retailing within the tourism sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger scale tourism related retailing projects, overall, tend to be unique and driven by entrepreneurs that have a commitment and vision. The feasibility of such ventures will be the promoters' risk. However, given the importance of these niche areas in the County's retail offer then the Councils should do all in its power to assist in making such schemes happen. However, assistance must be guided by consideration of the sequential approach and the capacity of different centres to integrate and benefit from such schemes. These factors acknowledged, such schemes should, overall be considered outside the broad assessment of capacity potential.

<p>Policy RS11: Enhancement of Towns and Villages</p>	<p>It is the policy of the Councils to encourage and facilitate enhancement and environmental improvement of the Urban form.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a mechanism to assure the highest quality of design in retail/town centres developments, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Undertaking a Character Appraisal. → Preparing a design guide. → Setting up a Design Panel which could have local or national professional, business or public agency representatives.
<p>Policy RS12: Discount Foodstore Development</p>	<p>It is the policy of the Councils to accommodate discount food stores as appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discount foodstores (approximately 1,000-1,500 m² gross floorspace) should be accommodated in the County's main retail centres in order to diversify the retail offer. • The re-use of existing non-retail or vacant premises should be promoted for these uses, subject to normal planning considerations and the sequential approach.
<p>Policy RS13: Redevelopment of Redundant Brownfield Sites for Retailing Purposes</p>	<p>It is the policy of the Councils to consider the redevelopment of redundant brownfield sites for retail purposes subject to the sequential approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals for the redevelopment of brownfield sites for uses including retailing should be considered on their individual merits, and should be focused on securing economic and/or infrastructural benefits. In considering such proposals the Councils will take into account the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The sequential approach; → Design, scale, massing and materials; → Landscaping; → Servicing and parking arrangements; → Accessibility by public transport; → Facilities for pedestrians and cyclists; → Employment opportunities; → Access for people with impaired mobility; and → Effect on the scale and character of the area.

Table 17: Retail Strategy Policies

7.2 Framework for the Assessment of Retail Developments - Planning Criteria

All retail developments will be considered against the following general Planning Criteria:

- The sequential test as identified in the Retail Planning Guidelines.
- The impact of the retail development on the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- Accessibility to/from the development by sustainable modes of transportation such as walking, cycling and public transport.
- The impact of the development upon the flow of vehicular traffic, both in the immediate vicinity of the development and in the wider area.
- Provision for car and bicycle parking in accordance with relevant technical standards.
- Achievement of the highest quality in the design of buildings and ancillary spaces.
- Compatibility with relevant Urban Design and Built Environment policies.
- The impact of the development on Historic Streetscapes, Protected Structures and Views and Prospects of special amenity value.
- The impact of the development on the flow of surface water.
- The impact of the development on residential and environmental amenities.

The above planning criteria is further expanded upon within the policies, zonings and spatial frameworks of the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan.

7.3 Monitoring and Review

The County Retail Strategy has been founded on a sound basis of research, survey analysis, and published statistics and the Letterkenny Retail Strategy updates the County Strategy and extracts relevant information and policies in respect of Letterkenny. The strategies have been prepared during one of the most dynamic periods in the retail sector, as evidenced by the market interest in major scheme at key centres in the County. Having regard for the changing dynamics, there is a need therefore to ensure that:

- The Retail Strategy and its baseline are kept as up to date as possible.
- There is a means of monitoring progress with the implementation of policies.
- There is a mechanism that can enable change that is responsive to emerging trends and opportunities.

The above will be achieved by setting up a framework for regular monitoring and review. This will include:

- Monitoring of expenditure and population forecasts;
- The floorspace data to be kept up to date through planning consent monitoring of both new retail and change of use.
- House and shopper survey data to be updated every five years.

LETTERKENNY & ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2009-2015



VOLUME 2

HOUSING STRATEGY

OCTOBER 2009

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1.0 Introduction

This housing strategy shall be implemented within the area of the plan described as the area of the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015. This strategy is intended to be read in conjunction with the County Development Plan 2006 housing strategy which is set out in Appendix C and it will supersede the implementation of the Letterkenny Town Council Housing Strategy which was adopted in 2002 as a variation of the Letterkenny Urban District Development Plan 1993 and carried over to the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2003-2009 as varied.

2.0 Current Housing Market Trends and Demographic Changes

The Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2003-2009 as varied oversaw a period of economic growth and major demographic changes in the County and Ireland as a whole which in turn seen unprecedented levels of demands for housing. This subsequently put pressure on house prices which rose significantly during this time. However, there has been a marked slow down in the Irish housing market over the last year, with a sharp decline in buyer confidence, tighter credit control arrangements and as such house prices have fallen. There has also been a strong pull back in house building with completions expected to sharply fall this year. There is no idea as to how much longer this down fall may last but a quick turn around is reported to be unlikely. There is also expected to be a sharp increase in the net outward migration. These market trends and migration forecasts will need to be taken into consideration in this housing strategy for the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2009-2015.

3.0 Legislative Background

The Housing Strategy is prepared under Part V of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended by the Planning & Development (Amendment) Act 2002. The purpose of the Strategy is to ensure that the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the Development Plan provides for the housing of the existing and future population of the area. The Strategy shall take into account the likely future need for housing, the need to ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income, the need to ensure an appropriate mixture of house types and sizes and the need to counteract undue segregation in housing between different persons or different social backgrounds. In particular, a housing strategy shall provide that as a general policy a specified percentage, not being more than 20%, of land zoned residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be reserved under Part V.

4.0 Policy Context

The Housing Strategy, as part of the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015, is prepared within the context of the following policy frameworks set out at a national and regional level:

- National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines: Letterkenny is a significant town, which has substantial capacity for development. It is identified as a large sized gateway linking with both Derry and Sligo and is envisaged as a nationally significant centre, whose location and scale support the achievement of the type of critical mass necessary to sustain strong levels of job growth in the region.
- Delivering Homes, Sustainable Communities 2007: ten-year key objective to build sustainable communities which are integrated and meet an individual's accommodation needs.

- The Social Partnership Agreement Towards 2016: ten-year framework to provide more people with access to home ownership.
- Both these policies underpin the approach to increased housing investment set out in the National Development Plan 2007-2013.
- Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities September 2007 aims to ensure that the design and layout of new apartments will provide satisfactory accommodation for a variety of household types.
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities May 2009. Aims to provide and support sustainable communities and improving quality of life by consolidating new growth, providing for high density residential development in the right locations, ensuring that they are well serviced in terms of public transport and community facilities and built to the highest possible standards.
- The above Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities May 2009 is accompanied by a companion document the Urban Design Manual, A Best practice Guide May 2009: this sets out and illustrates essential criteria for sustainable urban residential development and demonstrates how new development can be integrated and facilitated across a range of scale and locations.
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Residential Density 1999 is currently under review and will address specific issues and considerations for residential development not only in the larger urban areas but also in small towns and villages.
- County Development Plan 2006-2012: Promotes the Letterkenny-Derry linked gateway to channel investment into the area and create benefits for the entire County.
- Five year Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing 2004-2008: Sets out the overall aims of social and affordable housing in County Donegal.
- The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2004-2008.
- Housing Needs Assessment 2005-2008 quantifies the social housing need for Donegal County Council as provided for in section 9 of the Housing Act 1988.

Since the last Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan has been published there has been a significant Government policy response in relation to the demand for housing and the subsequent effect on the environment. The above policy framework has introduced a strong Government emphasis towards delivering a high quality built environment, developing sustainable communities and contributing to increased quality of life which in turn should be a key consideration of this housing strategy. This National emphasis on delivering high quality housing and sustainable communities will directly inform the housing policies of this Plan and as such will focus on:

- Delivering sustainable, vibrant and socially inclusive communities where people want to live and,
- Developing residential neighbourhoods environments with an emphasis on high quality urban design.

5.0 Statistical Analysis

A statistical analysis was undertaken to interpret the housing supply and demand during the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2003-2009 to inform the housing strategy for the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015. In doing so, the comprehensiveness of the statistical analysis by the extent of the area to which statistics relate may change throughout the report in accordance with whether it

was the Letterkenny Town Council or Donegal County Council that correlated the data i.e. some statistics were available at the Town Council Area level and other statistics relate to the wider Letterkenny Electoral Area. The Housing strategy then informs housing objectives and policies arising from the key statistics that will be implemented within the lifetime of the plan.

5.1 Housing Construction

During the period of the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2003-2009 as varied the housing construction rate in County Donegal has been consistently strong. The table below shows the total house completions in the County over the last 6 years has generally risen year on year.

Year	Total House Completions in Donegal
2002	2765
2003	3120
2004	2812
2005	3667
2006	4387
2007	4164

Table 1: Total house completions in Donegal County Council 2002-2007

Although the figures for 2007 are down slightly from the 2006 peak of house construction, figures for 2008 are predicted to significantly drop and experts envisage a further decline in 2009.

Data collected from the Letterkenny Urban Residential Commencement Notices in the table below received by the Building Control Authority correlate with the strong housing construction trend through the last Letterkenny Plan period.

Year	No. Residential Units Subject to Commencement Notices in Letterkenny Town Council Area
2003	19
2004	175
2005	245
2006	316
2007	144
Jan-July 2008	40

Table 2: Residential Commencement Notices in Letterkenny Town Council 2003-July 2008

The significant reduction in commencement notices in the figures for 2007 and for the first seven months in 2008 give an apparent indication that there is a house building slow down, in accordance with National predictions, which will in turn affect the completion rates in the County in the coming years.

This down turn in commencement of housing construction can also be seen on a County level with Government figures showing that the total amount of residential Units commenced in the County in 2007 was down 20% from 2006.

During the period 2002-2006 the percentage of public house completions in relation to all the houses constructed in County Donegal are as follows:



Year	% of Public House Completions
2002	22% (608 units)
2003	8% (250 units)
2004	10% (281 units)
2005	10% (367 units)
2006	5% (217 units)
2007	N/A

Table 3: Percentage of Public House Completions in County Donegal 2003-2007

After a large social housing provision in 2002 the number of units then reduced and marginally fluctuated thereafter on an annual basis.

5.2 Housing Units Grants

During the period August 2003 - July 2008 the combined total number of residential units granted planning permission within the Letterkenny Town Council area was 4743.

In terms of the types of houses built in the County, in 2006, Government statistics showed that just over half the houses built were scheme houses, a high percentage were individual houses and only a small percentage were apartments.

When analysing types of houses granted within the Letterkenny Town Council area in 2003-2008, only 2% of individual one off houses were built, which on an annual basis remained quite constant, with a slight reduction in 2007 (please see table below).

Multiple residential scheme applications (incorporating apartments) accounted for the remaining 98% of residential planning applications. The number of scheme units varied considerably on an annual basis. 2003 witnessed a low level of permissions for residential units preceded by a sharp rise in the following 4 years. 2004 and 2006 had a few exceptionally large residential scheme applications.

The high number of residential schemes would indicate a strengthening of the urban form in relation to densities and services within the Town Council area.

Year	No. of Multiple Residential Units	No. of Individual Residential Planning Units Granted
2003	139	18
2004	1108	19
2005	652	23
2006	1507	22
2007	1230	14
Jan-July 2008	7	4

Table 4: Number of Residential Planning Units Granted within Letterkenny Town Council

A substantial amount of residential units that have been granted within the plan area during the plan period have not yet been constructed. Comprehensive information at a plan level in relation to the total number of houses constructed is not available. However using a rate of 36% of all units granted are not yet constructed, in line with the methodology used in the County Development Plan 2006-2012, there could be approximately 1715 residential units that have been granted permission within the plan area during 2003-2008 that have not yet been constructed. This provides a substantial surplus of planning permissions for residential units that have not yet been implemented. These figures are presented as crude figures that provide a picture only of the level of supply within the plan area and are not presented as comprehensive and fully accurate statistics.

It can however be ascertained from calculating the amount of zoned residential land in the last Letterkenny Plan, that has planning permission or has since been developed, that there has been a 45% take-up of zoned 'residential' land within the plan area and therefore there is at least a surplus of 55% of 'residential' land that remains available for uptake.

In order to comprehensively monitor the amount of permitted residential units that have been completed, started and not yet commenced, an annual housing monitor system will be implemented during this plan period (as referred to in Policy H4). This will be conducted by a housing monitor whose responsibility will be to monitor the amount of residential units started, completed and not yet commenced on an annual basis.

5.3 Spatial Distribution of Housing Units Granted

The environs of Letterkenny have experienced significant pressure for residential development that is exemplified by available census figures that show a surge in the population of the environs. An analysis of the spatial distribution of planning permissions granted for residential units within the environs area shows a wide spread of planning applications throughout the plan area. It is apparent that over the last plan period that only a small amount of residential planning applications granted were located within the town centre area (as defined in the Land Use Map) and that the concentration of applications were outside the town centre on greenfield sites. The main concentrations of multiple residential applications granted were represented along the key arterial routes that serve the town, which has resulted in long spreads of housing developments. In particular major growth has taken place to the north of Letterkenny Town Council area namely along the:

- N56 towards Mountaintop
- L-1174-1 in Glencar Scotch and Windyhall areas
- L1144-1 in the Lisnennan area.
- Ballymacool area.
- Lismonaghan and Creeve areas to the south of old town.

The concentration of new housing development along these roads, at some distance from the town centre, with large areas of green space between the areas of built forms, have created large pockets of distinguishable residential developments that can be classed as neighbourhoods in their own right.

These apparent new neighbourhoods within Letterkenny Town Council should be identified in order to strengthen, consolidate and manage them in accordance with proper planning as advocated by National and Regional guidelines and also preventing further unsustainable sporadic development during this plan period.

Policies will focus on accessing each neighbourhood as to what services, amenities and infrastructure they each require to make them sustainable and attractive communities to live in, as well as an overall vision for the neighbourhood.

5.4 Projected Housing Need Over the Plan Period

Population projections outlined in the volume 1 of this plan in Part A, Section 1.0, predict that the population of the plan area, could on the highest growth scenario, reach 38,578 by 2020. Based on an average household size of 2.92 persons per household, this could give rise to a housing need of 3700 new housing units over this plan period while, on a longer time frame to 2020, there will be an additional need for a further 2875 new housing units.

In reviewing the land mass requirements in hectares within the existing plan, data showed that the land zoned as residential that is neither developed nor has planning permission amounts to a total of 343ha whereas need of land mass to 2015 is projected at only 106ha. Therefore, over the life of the plan, there is a surplus of residential land (238ha), which is sufficient to provide for the projected need for new housing to 2020 to meet the population projections of 38,578 persons.

Although a highest housing need scenario has been used, given the Gateway status of Letterkenny, the economic down turn and subsequent demographic implications are likely to produce a lower housing need. It is envisaged that when the new census data is collected in 2010, two years into the plan period, the demographics and population projections for the Letterkenny Town Council Area will be reviewed. If there are significant changes to the population projections and demographics predicted over the remainder of the Plan period, resulting in a causal affect to the housing need, policies will be amended where necessary.

5.5 Social & Affordable Housing

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that the housing strategy must make provision for both social and affordable housing. In this regards, this strategy defines social housing as rented housing provided either by the local authority or by a voluntary or co-operative housing body. Affordable housing is defined as owner-occupied, or shared ownership housing provided at a price below market value.

5.6 Existing Need for Social & Affordable Housing Within the Plan Area

The table below shows the social housing applications that the Letterkenny Town Council has received over the last plan period.

Year	No. of Social Housing Applications
2002	123
2003	205
2004	274
2005	406
2006	590
2007	271
Jan-July 2008	151

Table 5: No. of Social Housing Applications from 2002-Jul 2008 in Letterkenny Town Council

The figures show that there has been a steady annual growth in social housing applications with a reduction in 2007.

The total number of applications on the Social Housing List as of the 14.07.08 was 1021.

The table below shows the number of the 202 new social units that have been provided in the Letterkenny Town Council Area over the last 7 years on an annual basis. The figures show that there was a slow down in social house building when the private house building was at its peak in the County.

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Jan-July 2008
Number of Social units	35	56	14	14	14	64	5

Table 6: No. of New Social Units Provided from 2002-Jul 2008 in Letterkenny Town Council



There are exactly 408 properties belonging to the Town Council in Letterkenny as of 14.07.08. The properties are spread over 61 streets and housing estates. Only 11 of these streets and estates contain 10 or more social properties and only 3 of these would be classed as large estates containing between 56-60 units. It would appear that the properties are on the whole well spread and integrated throughout the Town Council Area.

5.7 Social Housing Need

The social housing need in Letterkenny Town Council as of 14th July 2008 is 1021.

5.8 Affordable Housing Need

Applications for affordable housing are generally not received until such time as the affordable housing is constructed and then advertised in the local newspapers. The table below shows the amount of affordable housing units that have been provided on an annual basis within the Letterkenny Town Council Area.

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
No. of Affordable Units	20	5	-	-	-	4	40

Table 7: Number of Affordable Housing Units Provided from 2002-Jul 2008 in Letterkenny Town Council

The table below shows that that affordable housing units are mainly designed as 3 bed properties.

Year	2 bed house	3 bed house	4+ bed house	2 bed apartment	3+ bed apartment
2002		20			
2003			5		
2004					
2005					
2006					
2007		4			
Jan-July 2008		40			

Table 8: Type of Affordable Units Provided From 2002-July 2008 in Letterkenny Town Council

5.9 Rental Accommodation Scheme Housing Need

The Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) dates back to 2004 and was designed to assist approved voluntary bodies to provide accommodation for persons in need of housing. It aims to transfer responsibility for housing SWA Rent Supplement Recipients (of 18 months plus) through the sourcing by housing authorities of accommodation from the private rented market or through other social housing measures over a four year period. Administered by Local Authorities the scheme is intended to provide an additional source of good quality rented accommodation for eligible persons.

Donegal County Council are currently in the process of implementing the new arrangements for RAS. The Rent Supplement clients of 18 months or longer which are to be moved to RAS will significantly increase the actual demand for social rented accommodation over the plan period. The figures in 2006 indicated that RAS could add on 20% to the social housing list when it is fully implemented.



Donegal County Council will be prioritising the long term housing needs of those who have not been given priority in the social housing schemes in the past namely single persons under sixty. Approximately 75% of all those on the RAS scheme require one or two bed roomed accommodation.

5.10 Delivery of Housing Under Part V

Within the Letterkenny Electoral Area 202 social units have been delivered under the Part V and 69 affordable units have been delivered under Part V during the last plan period.

5.11 House Types

The breakdown of house types in terms of social housing on the existing list are laid out in the table below.

No. of Bedrooms Required	No. Applicants on Current Social Housing List
1 bed property	484
2 bed property	274
3 bed property	169
4 bed property	94

Table 9: House Types Required for Applicants on Letterkenny Town Council Social Housing List as of 14th July 2008.

The table shows that 74 % of the applicants on the current social housing list need a 1 or 2 bed residential unit with 16% of applicants requiring a 3 bed property. This would indicate that a high percentage of smaller residential units are required to meet the needs of the social housing list.

The table below shows the number of bedrooms provided in the social properties that have been developed over the last plan period. 2002 and 2003 provided a mix of 2 and 3 bed units facilitating a range of housing needs. Over the following years only 3 bed units were provided together with a smaller proportion of 4 bed units.

Year	2 bed house	3 bed house	4+ bed house	2 bed apartment	3+ bed apartment
2002	12	17		6	
2003	24	27	5		
2004		12	2		
2005		12	2		
2006		12	2		
2007		61		3	
Jan-July 2008		3	2		

Table 10: House Types of Social Housing Provided from 2002-July 2008 in Letterkenny Town Council

There has been a significant change in demographics in Letterkenny and indeed the County as a whole which has mainly resulted in the shift in need away from larger family homes to the need for smaller units to accommodate single persons and single parents. As a result, targets need to be set at providing a larger percentage of 1 and 2 bed properties.

Smaller units are also required for applicants in the Rental Accommodation Scheme which targets single adults who have not been given priority on the housing list in the

past. Figures show that 75% of applicants are single people and single parents with one child.

In relation to affordable housing in the Letterkenny area, provision is intended to be in the main for 3 bed starter homes for young first time buyers.

5.12 Voluntary Housing

The number of voluntary housing provided in the Letterkenny Electoral Area over the last plan period totalled 153. The table below shows the amount of voluntary residential units that were provided on an annual basis. There is no specific waiting list for voluntary housing over the next plan period as applicants are taken off the social housing list.

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Jan-July 2008
Number of Units	6	57	-	-	6	84

Table 11: Number of Voluntary Units Provided from 2003-July 2008 in Letterkenny Electoral Area

The table below shows the type of voluntary houses that have been provided over the same time period.

Year	Number of Family Units	Number of Sheltered Units	Number of Disabled Units
2003		6	
2004	34	7	16
2005			
2006			
2007			6
Jan-July 2008	29	39	16

Table 12: Type of Voluntary Units Provided from 2003-July 2008 In Letterkenny Electoral Area

5.13 Principle Reason for Housing Need

Both the Letterkenny Town Council and the Donegal County Council housing need information indicates that there is a change occurring in relation to the reason for housing need as indicated on applications for social and affordable housing. The table below highlights the category of need of applicants on the current Letterkenny Town Council social housing list:

Category of Need for Social Housing Applications	Share
Not Reasonably Able to Meet Cost of Accommodation	78%
Unfit Accommodation	1%
Medical or Compassionate Reasons	13%
Overcrowded Accommodation	3%
Involuntary Sharing	1.5%
Elderly	3.5%
Travellers	0%
Disabled	0%
Leaving Institutional Care	0%
Homeless	0%
Total	100%

Table 13: Principle Reason for Social Housing Need on Letterkenny Town Council Social Housing List as of 14th July 2008



The above table shows that unfit accommodation is at 1% and overcrowding is at 3% but that the main category of need is not reasonably able to meet the cost of accommodation. This demonstrates that the category of housing need has changed considerably over the last plan period wherein 66% of the demand for social housing arose from households who were living in unfit or unsuitable accommodation or in crowded conditions.

The category of need of those seeking voluntary housing is more specialised as shown in the table below. With 29% being elderly and requiring sheltered accommodation and 30% needing specialised disabled residential units.

Category of Need of Applicants that Received Affordable Housing During Last Plan Period	Share %
Not Reasonably Able to Meet Cost of Accommodation	37
Unfit accommodation	
Medical or Compassionate Reasons	
Overcrowded Accommodation	
Involuntary Sharing	
Elderly	29
Travellers	
Disabled	30
Leaving Institutional Care	
Homeless	4
Total	100%

Table 14: Principle Reason for Voluntary Housing Need of Applicants Who Received Voluntary Housing Units from 2003-July 2008 in Letterkenny Electoral Area

The statistics show that in Letterkenny, the principle reason for housing need is 'not reasonably able to meet the cost of accommodation'. The main reason indicated for why housing need is changing is due at least in part to rising house prices and changing economics. Although the average house price has fallen over this last year it is difficult to say whether this will increase affordability of buying a home given Donegal's reliance on employment in the construction sector, the lower industrial wages and the highest poverty index in the State.

5.14 Traveller Accommodation Need

The current Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005-2008 identified 47 families in need of permanent accommodation throughout County Donegal. Over the course of the programme 42 families have been allocated permanent accommodation. The table below shows the amount of traveller accommodation that was provided within the Letterkenny Electoral area.

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008
No. of Traveller Units/Accommodation Provided	2	4	6	6

Table 15: Amount of Traveller Accommodation Provided from 2005-July 2008 in Letterkenny Town Council

A new traveller programme will be set up in the coming year. In the absence of current traveller need statistics the 2007 census information provides information on families who are living in temporary accommodation in the Letterkenny Electoral Area



The annual census of Travellers in County Donegal completed in November 2007 identified 209 traveller families in the County. Of these 209 families 134 are located in the Letterkenny Electoral Area. Their current type of accommodation is set out in the table below.

Type of Accommodation	No. of Traveller Families
Group Housing	10
Housed	70
Permanent Halt	5
Private Rented	38
Sharing with Relatives	7
Temporary Halt	4

Table 16: 2007 Census Figures Showing Type of Accommodation Traveller Families are Residing in the Letterkenny Electoral Area

These statistics would suggest that there will be a need for permanent accommodation for Travellers in this plan period as there are families sharing with relatives and who are using temporary halts. At this stage it is envisaged that group housing and scheme housing can be provided under social and voluntary residential units. Although a transient halting site is required within the Letterkenny Electoral Area there is not a need within the Town Council Area at present therefore specific zoning is not required through this plan.

5.15 Meeting Needs

Meeting the housing need for social and affordable housing shall involve a range of allocation of tenancies under the Council's own social housing programme and the County Council's voluntary housing programme, the provision of assistance in the form of Loans Scheme, an Affordable Housing Scheme, the Traveller Accommodation Programme, and the Rental Accommodation Scheme.

The implementation of Part V is essential in order for the Councils to ensure the greatest output of social and affordable housing that can be achieved in the context of the legislative framework that is set out for delivery of such housing. In particular, having regard to the changing need for applicants on the housing list, the elements of Part V relating to affordable housing will be of critical importance and the delivery of adequate levels of affordable housing shall be an important challenge throughout the life of the plan.

6.0 Housing Strategy Goals and Objectives

6.1 Goal

To facilitate and support the provision of a high standard of accommodation to meet the needs of people of the area of the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015 in a manner so as to ensure the proper planning and sustainable development of the plan area.

6.2 Objectives, Policies and Proposals:

1. To reserve 15% of land zoned for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses for the provision of social and affordable housing. Exact percentages shall be subject to negotiation to meet the needs as determined.

Letterkenny Town Council and Donegal County Council shall continue to impose the following condition on all planning applications for housing on the relevant zoned lands: -

Prior to commencement of development, the applicant/ developer shall enter into an agreement with the Council under Section 92(2) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended by Section 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2002 for: -

- a. Transfer of part of lands within application site; or*
- b. The building and transfer of houses within application site; or*
- c. The transfer of fully or partially serviced site with 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; or*
- g. The payment of an agreed sum of money; or*
- h. A combination of (a) and any one or more of other options (i.e. (b) - (g))*
Reason: To comply with the Council housing strategy.

2. Letterkenny Town Council and Donegal County Council will work in tandem so as to coordinate the delivery of social and affordable housing through Part V mechanism within the plan area that will meet identified needs.
3. The adoption of the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2009-2015 shall provide a new policy framework for the delivery of social and affordable housing in Letterkenny.
4. The Councils will jointly identify social and affordable housing needs that are best facilitated by accommodation within town centres in lieu of greenfield sites. In doing so the Councils shall subsequently target the appropriate fulfilment of these needs by means of active consultation with landowners and developers.
5. To provide, through Letterkenny Town Council Civic Offices, advice to applicants in relation to the range of housing assistance available in accordance with all current schemes.
6. The purpose of this service is to ensure the availability of guidance to the public in relation to the range of options available and to assist in advising applicants of the most appropriate scheme to suit individual circumstances. In particular, this service is critical in terms of increasing delivery and participation in affordable

housing schemes in light of the changing categories of need that have been evidenced in the statistical analysis contained in this strategy.

7. Letterkenny Town Council and Donegal County Council will consult with the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government and the relevant groups representing the range of disabled people to promote and develop the concept of lifetime adaptable housing to meet the needs of people with disabilities, the elderly, single persons and changing family situations.
8. Experience shall be taken from the construction of a lifetime adaptable house in Bruckless and Ballyshannon.
9. Priority will be placed on the early identification of needs in terms of lifetime adaptable housing together with appropriate tailoring of mix of house types to meet the identified needs.
10. Letterkenny Town Council and Donegal County Council propose to further
11. Bridge the gap between the housing waiting list and the various supply mechanisms through the continued active promotion of voluntary housing. Additional housing units supplied through the voluntary agencies to be also secured by way of turnkey and direct construction methods.
12. The Councils will continue their efforts to promote the activity of the voluntary housing bodies including implementation of guidelines for voluntary organisations in relation to how schemes are to be evaluated, so as to target schemes in areas of need as opposed to a development driven approach.
13. The Councils shall ensure a mix of social, affordable and private housing in all housing areas and the development of neighbourhood centres where appropriate by engaging in wide consultation with various agencies including the Housing/Building Strategic Policy Committee of Donegal County Council. Standards to be set and achieved in this activity to meet the accepted practice as set out in all relevant guidelines as issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Volume 1 of the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2009-2015 and the Childcare Strategy appended to this plan.
14. The requirement under objective 1 that 15% of all zoned lands be reserved for social and affordable housing in order to offset social segregation. The Councils will also take into consideration the size and location of individual turnkey, voluntary and purchase schemes to prevent over concentration of any one social group and to avoid over concentration of social and affordable housing in larger settlements.
15. The Councils will seek to develop a model concept of neighbourhood centre with a range of play and other facilities derived from experience of implementation of the Letterkenny Development Plan 2002 Housing Strategy and the first Housing Strategy adopted in 2002 as a variation to the County Donegal Development Plan 2000 in relation to the environs area of the plan. Experience shall also be drawn from implementation of policies and zonings set out in adopted Development Plans and Local Area Plans (e.g. Buncrana & Environs Development Plan, Ballybofey/Stranorlar Local Area Plan).
16. The Councils will further develop systematic monitoring and review systems to monitor the delivery of housing relative to demand and to avoid undue segregation in light of changing patterns of demand.

17. Annual reports will be prepared to monitor the procurement of housing and to review the need for agreements under Section 96(2). The monitoring system will ensure the update of a statistical analysis prepared as part of the County Donegal Development Plan 2006-2012 together with an update of the statistical analysis contained in this Housing Strategy as part of the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2009-2015. The monitoring system will ensure the appropriate review of policy.
18. The Councils will strive to acquire and maintain a reasonable housing landbank for both general and specialised housing needs as part of its overall housing procurement policy with input of the Planning Section, the Housing Section and the support of Services supplying critical environment in maintaining a landbank consistent with the need for housing and the sustainable development of the County.
19. The Councils will acquire and maintain a housing landbank as part of its overall procurement policy. A more detailed landbank acquisition and utilisation policy will be prepared to guide location, scale and use of lands to be acquired.
20. The Councils will seek to allocate an adequate measure of funding through the annual Budget process and otherwise to maintain all of their rented stock to an acceptable standard and specifically to upgrade older stock using all available funding sources. Upgrading and maintenance of stock will be carried out in full consultation with tenants and residents associations with input from the Council's tenant liaison facility. Where relevant, linking of these proposals with private management agreements will be ensured.
21. The Councils will implement the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2004-2008 as adopted and prepare a new Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013.
22. The Councils will strive to achieve appropriate house type mixes within developments that respond to the changing demographics of persons on the housing list and in doing so, shall consider the experiences drawn from the document entitled, "Mixed Tenure Housing Estates: Development, Design, Management and Outcomes", published by the Housing Unit.

LETTERKENNY & ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2009-2015



VOLUME 2

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES & TECHNICAL STANDARDS

OCTOBER 2009

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1.0 Introduction

This section of the Plan sets out development guidelines and standards that will be required by new development in the Plan area, and indicates the criteria, which will be taken into account in considering applications for planning permission for new developments and where the Councils themselves undertakes development under Part XI of the 'Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2006'.

The various standards are gathered under the headings of particular types of development. If any particular proposal does not fit into one of the set out categories below, the Councils will use their discretion and adopt the standards most suitable for the particular case.

These standards are provided to give a general guideline as to the Councils' requirements regarding particular detailed aspects of the design of developments, and are not intended to be, nor will they be applied in an inflexible way. Neither is it to be assumed that conformity with the standards set out hereunder will automatically entitle an applicant to receive planning permission. Good design is the paramount requirement, and all developments will be assessed in the light of the quality of their design and infrastructure.

Where reference is made to particular Guidelines by other bodies, their latest revision will be the guiding standard used.

2.0 Site Details

Applications for development will be required to be accompanied by sufficient details concerning the existing condition of the site, its environment and the character and condition of the surrounding area, so as to allow full and proper consideration of the development proposed.

The following details should be included where deemed appropriate by the Councils:

- a. A plan of the site at a scale appropriate to the size of the development showing:
 - i. The contours of the land;
 - ii. Existing vegetation;
 - iii. The location and material composition of boundaries;
 - iv. Existing buildings, structures and historical or archaeological features;
 - v. All existing and proposed pipes, culverts, septic tanks, wells, storage tanks and percolation areas;
 - vi. Existing roads, rights of way, footpaths and access tracks;
 - vii. Water courses, wetlands and water features;
 - viii. Land drainage;
 - ix. Lighting; and
 - x. Open space
- b. A description of the landscape character of the site and important views into and out of the site.

This does not preclude any standards set out in the '*Planning and Development Regulations 2001 - 2007*'.



3.0 General Employment

3.1 Development Guidelines & Technical Standards in respect of 'General Employment' Developments

1. A Traffic Transport Statement (TTS) shall accompany all planning applications.
2. Where Traffic Transport Assessments (TTA's) are required, they shall be carried out in accordance with the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines as published by the NRA and DoEHLG.
3. Landscaping and in appropriate cases, buffer zones between different uses will be required to be provided.
4. Developers shall provide effective screening from the public road or residential areas.
5. A minimum of one third of the site shall be kept free from development, which shall be subject to a detailed landscaping scheme (development is defined as all buildings outside storage areas and site development works / service roads etc).
6. All external finishes of any development, including colour, shall integrate with existing development.
7. Car parking, commensurate with usage will be required to be provided in accordance with the Car Parking Standards in this Technical Appendix and policy provision of the Plan.
8. All car parking to serve employees and visitors shall be provided within the curtilage of the site.
9. Car parking areas shall be landscaped and planted with trees to minimise their visual impact.
10. All car-parking bays shall be a minimum size of 5m by 2.5m, clearly marked and maintained so as to remain visible.
11. All car parking and service areas shall be drained, graded and surfaced with tarmac or similar.
12. Covered bicycle parking provision will be required to facilitate visitors and workers.
13. All loading and unloading bays shall be a minimum size of 6m by 3m
14. 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.
15. Access shall be provided, and kept clear at all times, for emergency service vehicles.
16. All developments shall comply with guidelines for the control of noise. During the hours of operation, noise levels as measured at the boundary of the site, shall not exceed 5dBA above the ambient.
17. For National Roads all developments shall comply with the National Road Authorities' Guidelines for Noise and Vibration.
18. Developers shall indicate as part of the planning application, the proposed location of all extractor points.
19. All waste materials shall be stored to the rear of buildings in environmentally safe conditions to ensure runoff shall not seep into surface water drainage system.
20. All dangerous waste shall be stored in bunded areas.
21. All fuel connection points or similar discharge points shall be rollover bunded.
22. All runoff from bunded areas shall be collected and disposed of separately from surface water drainage.
23. All emission points from industrial or commercial buildings shall be minimum 3m above the apex of the roof, or as agreed with the Planning Authority.
24. No more than two vehicular accesses shall be permitted to any industrial or commercial developments, unless in exceptional circumstances.

25. The minimum radius of any entrance used by articulated vehicles shall be in accordance with the NRA DMRB with a minimum setback of any permanent barrier from the road kerb line/ edge line to be 20m. Turning movement (Autotrack) Analysis to be supplied with application.
26. Access roads including cul-de-sacs in industrial areas shall generally have a minimum width of 7.3m carriageway, two 2.0m footpaths and two 1.0m grass verges.
27. Planning Applicants will provide details of the nature of the proposed activities and of the means of controlling effluents, noise, solid waste and gaseous emissions from these activities together with ameliorative measures.
28. An Environmental Impact Assessment or Strategic Environmental Assessment may be required to accompany certain planning applications for industrial development in accordance with the provisions of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 - 2007, and an Integrated Pollution Control Licence may also be required from the Environmental Protection Agency.

4.0 Residential Development

4.1 Development Guidelines & Technical Standards in respect of 'Residential' Developments.

1. The Councils will use the 12 criteria set out in the DoEHLG publication, 'Urban Design Manual, A Best Practise Guide - February 2008', during both pre-application consultations and at planning application stage for housing schemes (See Policy H10 Core Document).
2. Proposals for all new housing estate development shall comply with these Development Guidelines & Technical Standards and to the DoEHLG publication, 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities', 'Best Practise Guidelines for Delivering Sustainable Communities, 2007' and with standards for construction set out in the document entitled 'Recommendations for Housing Areas in County Donegal' or any such revised version as agreed by the Councils.
3. In brown field and town centre locations, housing developments other than flats/apartments, will normally be required to provide a private outdoor space for each unit of approximately 30 sq. metres. Privacy is to be achieved by design, or by construction of rear boundary walls/fences.
4. Private back garden space of 48 sq. metres per unit for smaller houses (2 bedroom) and 60-75 sq. metres for 3/4/5 bedroom units as a minimum guideline should be provided with each unit. Smaller areas of private open space will be considered where the developer proposes semi-private enclosed landscaped space for use of the immediately adjoining residents.
5. Provision shall be made for the location of services underground.
6. As a guide two parking spaces per house shall be provided, located off the access road adjacent to the house. Grouped car parking will be considered having regard to housing size and mix.
7. As a guide rear boundaries shall ensure a minimum height of 2 metres, whether by wall construction or by retention of existing hedgerows.
8. Lateral or side building lines will be applied in low-density developments.
9. No maximum density for flats/apartments will apply in town centre locations. Proposals for flats/apartments shall be required to comply with the DOEHLG Guidelines to Planning Authorities, entitled 'Design Standards for New Apartments', published September 2007.
10. Prior to the commencement of development, housing developments shall be named and numbered by the developer in accordance with the Donegal Place names Committee. This should be done in a logical and sequential manner so as to facilitate ease of access by emergency services and the public. It will also be a requirement that developers install appropriate ramps, signage and lineage within housing developments prior to first occupation. In order to provide assistance with the naming of new residential areas, the Councils shall provide the Place names Committee with a list of planning applications.
11. In general, multiple residential developments shall include a minimum of 15% of the overall area reserved as public amenity open space.
12. Bonds to secure the satisfactory completion of site development works shall be provided by developers
13. Bonds are subject to review and bonds secured through banking institutions will generally be for a limited period. In the event that the development works have not been completed, a further bond will be required to be deposited with the Planning Authority and subject to approval of the authority may be set at levels commensurate with specified phasing.
14. In multiple housing developments, the current process of rolling over of existing cash deposits to subsequent phases shall be reviewed.

15. Development charges in respect of the provision of public services, roads, parking, storm drainage, open space, etc. shall be levied on housing developments in accordance with the respective Development Contribution Scheme of the Councils.
16. Regard must be had to the needs of the disabled and the elderly in the design of housing estates.
17. Bonds to ensure the satisfactory completion of site development works shall be provided by developers as follows: -

Development Type	Amount
Multiple Development	€2,539 per dwelling & €3,000 in respect of open space.

Bonds are subject to review and bonds secured through banking institutions will generally be for a limited period. In the event that the developments works have not been completed (in accordance with the terms of permission granted and to the satisfaction of the Authority), a further bond will be required to be deposited with the Planning Authority and subject to approval of the Authority may be set at levels commensurate specified phasing.

In multiple housing developments, the current process of rolling over existing cash deposits to subsequent phases shall be reviewed. In the interim period prior to the review of this process, rolling over of existing cash deposits will only be permitted following confirmation by the Planning Authority that the previous phase has been satisfactory completed (in accordance with the terms of the permission granted and to the satisfaction of the Authority).

4.2 The Procedures for Monitoring New Estates when Under Construction and the Take Over of Existing Estates.

4.2.1 New Estates (including under construction)

In order to facilitate the handover of New Residential Estates to the relevant authority, the Councils will offer developers the following options 1A or 1B at the commencement of the construction of the development.

Option 1A -Self Regulation

Self-regulation of construction standards will be allowed. Developers will have to satisfy the Councils that the qualified inspector, who will inspect and certify the works of the developer and the compliance with planning conditions, has professional indemnity insurance. Prior to take over the Councils will carry out inspections and satisfy themselves that the developer has satisfied the planning conditions. In such cases developers shall pay the costs of the inspections.

Option 1B - Continuous Council Involvement

The Councils at the invite of the developer will be involved in the building control of all new estates and work **alongside** the developer during the construction of the development. The Councils will become involved in these processes from the very beginning of the development to monitor all the work being carried out. The advantage of being involved from the beginning is that all underground works such as the laying of foul sewer or storm water drainage pipe can be monitored. Any problem that arises with these works can then be dealt with at that stage, alleviating any knock on effects

from that problem. The Councils personnel will monitor quality control during construction by the sampling and testing of materials to ensure that they satisfy the recommended specifications. The cost of carrying out such tests will be borne by the contractor. This process of testing will benefit both the developer and the contractor in ensuring a high standard of workmanship and material, therefore leading to improved quality within the development.

4.2. Take Over of Existing Estates

In order to facilitate the handover of Existing or Established Residential Estates to the relevant authority, the Councils will offer developers the following options 2A or 2B at the commencement of the construction of the development.

Option 2A - Resident Led Handover

Where the Councils cannot identify the developer or where the developer has ceased to trade, the primary responsibility for bringing the estate up to standard will rest with the residents. When such an estate is to be taken over, the Councils shall seek to ensure:

- A partnership be established between the Councils and the residents in the estate.
- An agreement programme of work be drawn up between residents in the estate.
- Funding scheme shall be agreed whereby; the Councils, and the residents shall contribute towards the cost of the works.
- Schemes whereby residents can carry out the works involved will be promoted and supported by the Councils.
- On completion of the works, agreed the Councils will take over the agreed services. In some cases roads, sanitary services, public lighting or amenity areas will be separately taken over.

Option 2B - Developer Led Handover

Where a developer exists and can be clearly identified by the Councils, the Councils shall seek to ensure:

- A partnership be established between the residents, the developer, and the Councils.
- An agreed programme of work be drawn up between the residents, the developer and the Councils.
- Funding scheme shall be agreed whereby the developer, the Councils, and the residents shall contribute towards the cost of the works.
- Schemes whereby residents can carry out the works involved will be promoted and supported by the Councils.
- On completion of the works, agreed the Councils will take over the agreed services. In some cases roads, sanitary services, public lighting or amenity areas will be separately taken over.

5.0 Transport and Communications

5.1 Development Guidelines & Technical Standards in respect of 'Transport and Communications'

1. Requirement for Traffic and Transport Statement

All planning applications requiring an access on to a public road must be accompanied by a completed Transport and Traffic Statement, i.e. TTS 1 and a TTS.

2. Urban/Suburban Roadside Boundaries

Within urban/suburban context all roadside boundaries are to be maintained by the landowners to ensure vision line requirements are preserved. The Planning Authority shall encourage broadleaf planting along road fronting boundaries.

Where setbacks are required the following minimum standards as set out in Table 1 shall be complied with.

Road Type	Minimum Setback from Centre Line of Road
County Road	5.0m
Main/Regional	6.5m
National Secondary Road	10m
National Primary Road	12m

Table 1: Minimum Setback Distances for Boundaries from the Centre line of Road, Dependant on Road Type

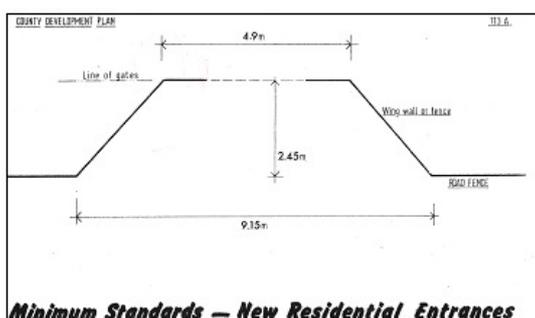
Should the existing roadside ownership boundary be further back than the setback identified in the table above, then that boundary shall be retained.

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

3. Entrance Details

- Entrance details for residential properties shall be laid out in accordance with Figure 1 below and Table 1 above.
- For non-residential entrances the setback of entrance gates/barrier from road kerb shall be a minimum of 20 metres.
- Entrance radii for all developments other than single dwellings, shall provide public road/development junction radii in accordance with the National Road Authorities, Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

Figure 1: Entrance details for residential properties



4. Surface Water and Roadside Drainage

Existing roadside drainage shall be maintained and surface water road gullies or equivalent system shall be provided to cater for run-off from the public road. Suitable drainage systems shall be provided to prevent discharge of water from site onto public road or footpath (e.g. cattle grid system or slotted drainage block). Surface water systems shall preferably be routed to discharge to a watercourse, which is suitable to cater for the anticipated volume of water (soakpits shall not normally be encouraged). All proposed road works should include fully designed drainage systems to the final outfall.

5. County Road Junctions

It is an objective of the Councils to provide visibility splays at County road junctions.

6. Road Re-instatement

Any damage to public roads occurring as a result of a development shall be re-instated to the satisfaction of the Councils, where deemed necessary, a bond shall be imposed in this regard.

7. Building Setback on National and Regional Roads

A 50m building set back from the edge of the traffic lane on National Primary and National Secondary Roads shall be required. A minimum of 25m setback from outside edge of running carriageway on Regional Roads shall be required. 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.

5.2. National Roads (Primary and Secondary)

1. New Accesses

New accesses, developments requiring new accesses or which would result in the significant intensification of existing access points onto National Roads or roads treated to National Roads Standards (as identified in Guiding Development on Roads - County Donegal Development Plan - Core Document, Section 3.3) outside 60kph speed limit, shall not be permitted.

Intensification of an existing private road access onto a National Primary road shall be considered having regard to the length of that private road, the number of dwellings exiting onto the private road, and the design of the junction of the private road onto the National Primary Road.

2. Potential Permissible Development Accesses

Notwithstanding the above policy, the following categories of new development (detailed on Table 2) may be considered on National Roads and or roads treated to National Roads Standards (as identified in Guiding Development on Roads - County Donegal Development Plan - Core Document, Section 3.3) outside 60kph speed limit, where all of the four following criteria are met: -

- a. No other Non-National Roads access is available.
- b. Required visibility standards can be met.
- c. They do not conflict with other policy objectives in the Plan.
- d. The proposed access has been designed in accordance with the NRA DMRB.

Category 1	Residential Development by Replacement Dwellings
	Provision of a replacement dwelling where the existing occupied dwelling will no longer be occupied.
Category 2	New Industrial Development
	Industrial development tied to a fixed resource. Industrial development that has a large employment content (at least 30 employed) and with a properly designed and constructed junction in accordance with the DMRB.
Category 3	Replacement Access
	The creation of a new access point, which eliminates a traffic hazard from an existing, authorised use (Existing access to be closed). Extensions to existing Industrial/Commercial/Agricultural Premises. Extensions, which do not materially alter or intensify the character of the business and associated traffic intensification.
Category 4	Change of use of an Existing Structure
	Change within existing use categories. Change to a use with the same or lesser intensity of traffic usage.
Category 5	Others
	An access to facilitate a single dwelling for a person(s) who owned the site that is proposed for development, prior to 24 th March 2000, or for their immediate family member (This applies to National Secondary and excludes National Primary).

Table 2: Potential Accesses considered from National Primary Roads

3. For planning purposes in terms of development management, National Roads Standards will be applied to the Ramelton Road R245 to the Golf Course Road Junction from the Port Bridge Roundabout to the Ballyrairie Creamery Roundabout and up to the (previously known as) UNIFI Site Junction.
4. All new development accesses affecting National roads or roads treated to National Roads standards (as identified in 'Guiding Development on Roads - County Donegal Development Plan, Core Document, Section 3.3') shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the National Road Authorities (NRA) Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The applicant shall submit a document demonstrating compliance with the NRA DMRB as part of the planning application.
5. Building Setback National Roads: 50m building set back from outside edge of running carriageway National 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. Any derogation will require the approval of the NRA.
6. Right Turning Lanes, Design Speeds and Visibility: With regard to such issues such as right turning lanes, design speeds and visibility on National Roads, the Councils will have regard to the relevant DMRB standards.

5.3 Non National Roads

5.3.1 Maximum Acceptable Gradients on Approach to Public Road

Table 3 below is indicative of maximum gradients permissible on access roads from developments onto public roads - refer to NRA DMRB for more detail:

Access Point	Section adjacent to Public Road	Maximum internal road gradient
Three Single (House) Dwelling Accesses or less	7m @ 4% gradient	10% gradient
Multiple Access with less than 500 AADT	15m @ 4% gradient	10% gradient
Multiple Access with greater than 500 AADT	15m @ 2% gradient	6% gradient

Table 3: Max. Permissible Gradient of Access Roads Entering or Exiting Public Roads

5.3.2 Vision Lines at Junctions with Non-National 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 without influencing the major road traffic speed. Vision Lines at junctions with the Non-National Public Road shall be in accordance with Table 4, below. Deviation from the requirements in Table 4 may be considered upon certification by the Applicant's Designer to be designed and constructed in accordance with the NRA DMRB. The following diagram details the method by which the site envelope shall be calculated and presented for all planning applications.

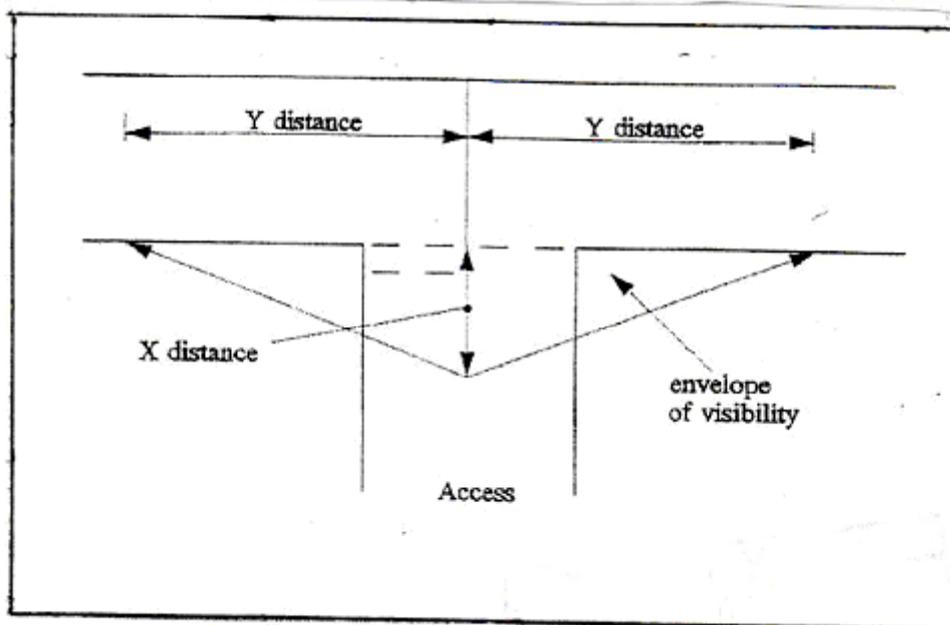


Figure 2: Illustrative Example of the Site Envelope

5.3.3 Definition of 'X' and 'Y' distances in Figure 2

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 (not from the continuation of the main road hard strip if this is present) 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.

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.

The following minimum vision lines shall be required at junction with public roads:

Vision Lines at accesses to Non-National Roads		
Type of Road	Regional Road	Local Road
Domestic Dwelling Single Access Point (Y * X)	90m-120m x 2.4m	70m-90m x 2.4m
Cul de Sac up to 6 dwellings (Y * X)	90m-120m x 2.4m	70m-90m x 2.4m
Direct Access/ Junction Point with design year* AADT<500 (Y * X)	120m-160m x 4.5m	90m-120m x 4.5m
Direct Access/ Junction Point with design year* AADT>500 (Y * X)	160m-215m x 9.0m	120m-160m x 9.0m

Note * Design year is 20 years after date of Planning Application

Table 4: Minimum Vision Lines that shall be required at Junctions with Public Roads

Within speed limits minimum vision lines shall be determined by the Councils' Roads Department and will be based on the merits of each case.

5.3.4 Stopping Sight Distance

Minimum stopping sight distances on Non-National Roads shall be in accordance with Table 5 below. Deviation from the requirements in Table 5 may be considered upon certification by the applicant's designer to be designed and constructed in accordance with NRA DMRB.

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

Table 5: Minimum Stopping Sight Distances

5.4 Pavement Improvements

The Councils will safeguard investment in road pavement improvements by encouraging pre-consultation with utility companies to ensure that underground utility lines are installed prior to pavement improvement where possible. In addition, the Councils will consult with utility companies with a view to developing an agreement on the procedures to be followed when installing utilities within public roads. It is anticipated that this will result in the formulation of a policy that will ultimately be adopted by the Councils.

5.5 Road Network Priorities

Tables 6 and 7 below highlights the strategic and key roads throughout the County that form both the strategic road network in the County and serve to make Letterkenny more accessible to other regions in the country and areas of the County. These roads and the key developmental priorities of the Councils.

Route Number	Route
M2/M3	Motorway/Dual Carriageway to serve the Northwest of Ireland
N14/N56	Letterkenny Outer Relief Road
N56	Mountain Top to Illistrin
N56	Pavement Strengthening + Minor Re-alignment and widening
N56	Port Bridge Roundabout - Ramelton Road - IDA Business Park Road - Pramerica Roundabout
N13	Ballyshannon to Beleek
N12 / N15	Pavement Strengthening and Localised Widening
N14 / A5	Manorcunningham to Strabane
N15 / N13	Ballybofey / Stranorlar Bypass
N56	Mountcharles to Killybegs
N56	Coolboy to Termon

Table 6: County Wide National Road List

Road Number	Route
R229	Port Bridge Roundabout - Station Roundabout - IDA Business Park Road - Pramerica Roundabout
R245	Letterkenny - Ramelton - Creeslough
R250	Letterkenny - Glenties

Table 7: County Wide Regional Road List

NB: - This table only lists the roads related to Letterkenny. Full countywide list contained in the County Development Plan 2006-2012.

Table 10 also highlights key significant roads and routes throughout the remit of the LEDP, the development of which in line with the Plan goals and objectives are essential in ensuring the continued strategic and sustainable growth of Letterkenny.

Other non-National Strategic roads (listed alphabetically)
Bonagee Link Road, Letterkenny
Fintown - Glencar Access Improvement Road, Letterkenny
Leck Road Eastern Link, Letterkenny
Leck Road Western Link, Letterkenny
Sallaghane Link Road, Letterkenny
Swilly Access Road, Letterkenny
Swilly Diversion, Letterkenny

Table 8: Other Non-National Strategic Roads relevant to the Strategic Growth of Letterkenny

NB: - This table only lists the roads related to Letterkenny. Full countywide list contained in the County Development Plan 2006-2012.

5.6 Developments - Required Infrastructure

Where the existing roads infrastructure is not adequate to support a proposed development in respect of road capacity, sight distances, footpaths, drainage and public lighting, the development shall not commence until the required infrastructure is fully in place.

Design and provision of the required infrastructure will be by agreement between the Councils and the developer(s).

Methods of improving or creating necessary infrastructure may include:

- The developer paying a development charge to the Councils to meet all of the estimated cost of upgrading the public roads infrastructure to meet the needs of the proposed development.
- The developer agreeing to carry out the upgrading of the roads infrastructure as determined by the councils

6.0 Car Parking

Car parking shall be required to be provided within the site of proposed developments or in exceptional circumstances at a location close to proposed development in accordance with Table 6 below. Development types not specified in Table 6 shall also be required to provide off street parking at a ratio reflective of anticipated demand as determined by the relevant-Planning Authority.

Land Use	Requirement	Cycle parking
Dwelling house	2 per house	With garage none. Without garage 1 secured space per unit.
Flats	1.25 per flat	1 secured space per flat or apartment
Shops	4 per 90 sq.m within speed limit 6 per 90 sq.m outside speed limit	1 space per 8 staff; 1 space per 90sq.m.
Offices	3 per 90 sq.m within speed limit 6 per 90 sq.m outside speed limit	1 space per 8 members of staff; 1 space per 90sq.m.
Banks	5 per 90 sq.m	1 space per 8 staff; 1 space per consulting room
Library	5 per 90 sq.m	1 space per 8 staff; 4 spaces per 90 sq.m
Hotel, Motel (excluding bars, function rooms to be calculated separately)	1 per 2 bedrooms within speed limit 1 per 1 b/room outside speed limit	1 secured space per 10 bedrooms; or 2.5 spaces per 90 sq.m of dining area; 4 spaces per 90 sq.m. of bar/dance floor
Pubs/Lounges without dancing areas	1 per 9.0 sq.m within speed limit 2 per 9.0 sq.m outside speed limit	1 space per 8 staff; 1 space per 90 sq.m.
Pubs/Lounges with dance areas, dance halls, function rooms	1.5 per 9.0 sq.m outside speed limit 3.0 per 9.0 sq.m outside speed limit	1 space per 8 staff
Restaurant	1 per 9.0 sq.m within speed limit 2 per 9.0 sq.m outside speed limit	1 space per 8 staff; 5 spaces per 90 sq.m
Schools	1 per classroom & bus & circulation/parking area adequate to service school population.	1 space per 8 staff; 1 space per 10 students (primary). 1 space per 8 staff; 1 space per 5 students (secondary).
Third level colleges	1 per classroom plus 1 per 6 students together with adequate bus circulation/parking area to serve school	1 space per 8 staff; 1 space per 5 students (third level).
Cinema	1 per 5 no. seats	1 space per 20 fixed seats
Theatre	1 per 5 no. seats	1 space per 20 fixed seats
Church	1 per 5 no. seats	1 space per 20 fixed seats
Manufacturing	3 per 90 sq.m or 1 per 4 no. employees whichever the greater.	1 space per 90 sq.m.

Warehousing	1.5 per 90 sq.m or 1 per 4 no. employees whichever the greater.	1 space per 90 sq.m.
Golf, pitch and putt	2 spaces per hole	
Golf driving range	1 per bay	
Bowling alley	1 per lane	1 space per 8 staff; .5 space per lane
Hospital	1.5 per bed	1 space per 8 staff; 1 space per 90 sq.m.
Guesthouse/B&B	1 per bedroom	1 secured space per 10 bedrooms
Nursing Home	1 per 3 bedrooms	5 spaces per 100 beds; 1 space per 8 staff
Surgeries	3 per consulting room	1 space per 8 staff; 1 space per consulting room
Takeaway	3 per 9.0m ²	1 space per 8 staff; 1 space per 90 sq.m
Sports hall/club	2 per 90 sq.m plus 2 per cent	2 spaces per 90 sq.m.
Cash & carry outlets	2 per 90 sq.m	1 space per 8 staff; 20 spaces per 1,000 sq.m
Hostel	1 space per bedroom	1 secured space per 10 bed spaces
Caravan/Camping Site	1 space per pitch	1 space per pitch
Medical/Dental/ Bank/ Financial/ Insurance	2 spaces per 90 sq.m.	1 space per 8 staff; 1 space per consulting room
Shopping Centre/Large Retail Store	5 spaces per 90 sq.m.	1 space per 8 staff; 2.4 spaces per 90 sq.m.
Petrol Filling Station	1 space per 90 sq.m.	1 space per 8 staff
Retail Warehousing	4 spaces per 90 sq.m.	1 space per 8 staff; 20 spaces per 1,000 sq.m
Amusement Arcades	1 space per 90 sq.m.	1 space per 90 sq.m.
Athletics/Playing Fields	5 spaces per track/field	2 spaces per track/field
Tennis Courts	1 space per court	2 spaces per court
Community Centre/Sports Centre	2 spaces per 90 sq.m.	1 space per 8 staff; 4 spaces per 90 sq.m

Table 9: Car Parking Standards

Notes:

Where reference is made to floor areas, it shall simply imply gross floor area.

A secured space is a space inside a building or structure where no part of the bicycle is accessible.

Dual use of spaces shall be permitted where it is clear to the Planning Authority that one of the uses are daytime uses and the other are evening use. Where it can be established that members of public visit the site by pre-arranged coach/bus cognisance shall be taken of same in calculating car-parking requirements.

Small extensions, which relieve overcrowding, shall be excluded from requirement to provide car parking, as shall first 28m² of new developments Applications for change of use of property shall be required to provide car-parking equivalent to requirements for proposed new use.

Net public area shall be used in calculating car-parking requirements. Commercial properties shall be required to provide loading bays where appropriate as highlighted in Table 7.

Type	Dimensions
Car parking bay	5m x 2.5m
Loading bay	Designed and sized for appropriate Service Vehicles
Circulation Aisles	6m

Table 10: Dimensions of Car Parking and Loading Bays

The Planning Authority may seek financial contributions in lieu of actual parking spaces when the developer cannot conveniently provide the required spaces and / or the Councils wish to develop a centrally located car park rather than a number of individual car parks. The contribution per space will reflect the actual cost of developing the said alternative space.

6.1 Temporary Car Parks where the Councils Become Caretakers

The Councils will be prepared to enter 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 Councils 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 (backlands) may, by agreement with the parties, be aggregated into one single car park.

7.0 Development Contribution Scheme

The socio-economic development of the area under the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan remit is dependent on the provision of the necessary infrastructural services by the Councils. Large sums have been and will continue to be expended by the Councils on the provision of these services without which many developments could not take place. It is considered reasonable that developers should contribute towards the cost of such service provision.

Section 48 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2004, enables Local Authorities, when granting planning permission, to include conditions requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the Planning Authority and provided by or on behalf of a local authority.

The Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan falls within the governing of two separate Planning Authorities, the Donegal County Council and the Letterkenny Town Council. Both of these Councils operate independent Development Contribution Schemes. Each individual applicant who receives or partakes in development will have to pay the Development Contribution Scheme charges relevant to the area that the development is located. Notwithstanding the above, and recognising their role as a Development Authority, the Councils will contribute to local development through various measures including the imposition of reduced levels of development charges and acceptance of payment of these charges on a phased basis where certain criteria is fulfilled.

The Councils will keep the Development Contribution Scheme under review during the period of this Plan. Charges may be increased to cover increased construction costs, inflation and external policy changes. Both the Donegal County Council and Letterkenny Town Council have recently reviewed their respective Development Contribution Schemes in February 2008.

The current Development Contribution Scheme charges, as adopted by both Letterkenny Town Council and Donegal County Council respectively, will apply to each planning application.

Under the Scheme, the Councils will, when granting planning permission under Section 34 of the Act, include conditions requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in and that is provided, or that it is intended will be provided, by or on behalf of the Councils, (regardless of other sources of funding for the infrastructure and facilities).

Car parking charges, where there is a shortfall, will be charged in accordance with the figures set out in the respective Development Contribution Scheme. Details of the current Donegal County Council and Letterkenny Town Council Development Contribution Schemes can be viewed on the Councils' respective websites at: - www.donegalcoco.ie and www.letterkenny.ie

Note. Some exemptions and reductions within the Development Contributions Scheme apply (See website for details).

8.0 Petrol Stations

The following conditions will apply in respect of new petrol stations:

- Where appropriate a low wall, approximately 0.6m in height, shall be constructed along the road frontage.
- A maximum of 2 road access points shall be provided for, which will be designed and constructed in accordance with the NRA DMRB. The applicant shall submit a document demonstrating compliance with the NRA DMRB as part of the planning application.
- No advertising or commercial signage shall obstruct visibility over the site access points or front boundary/wing walls.

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.

In order to protect the carrying capacity of national routes, new petrol filling stations requiring direct access onto such routes, will not be considered outside the 60kph speed limit. This policy will apply to:

- National Primary Routes.
- National Secondary Routes.
- For planning purposes in terms of development management, National Roads Standards will be applied to the Ramelton Road R245 to the Golf Course Road Junction, from the Port Bridge Roundabout to the Ballyraine Creamery Roundabout and up to the (previously known as) UNIFI Site Junction.

9.0 Signage

This chapter gives detailed guidelines on the usage of signing within the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan and the standards that shall be implemented.

General Purposes Directional Signage

This category relates to signage guiding road users in general and includes traffic signage, scenic/tourist drives and street/place names.

- An integrated network of scenic drives, incorporating existing and additional routes will underlie the Councils' approach and signage for these and existing routes will be based on distinctive logo's/symbols.
- Nameplates will be provided on local roads in rural areas.

Facilities and Attractions - Directional Signage

- This category covers finger post directional sign posting for public facilities i.e. post office, hospitals, health clinics, libraries, public toilets, landfill sites, swimming pools, airport, industrial estates etc.
- Tourist attractions (Heritage Centres, Museums, Interpretative Centres etc). Community Facilities (Community Centres, Sports facilities).
- Public and Community facility fingerpost signs must use an agreed colour (black and white) and tourist attraction fingerpost signs must use the standard brown and white colour. Logo's/symbols must be a dominant element of the sign.
- One fingerpost sign only within the speed limit area for each facility/attraction within that area will be the norm.
- For facilities/attractions outside a speed limit area, fingerpost directional signs (in required colours) will be permitted at appropriate junctions within an 8km radius of the facility/attraction.

B & Bs, Guesthouses, Hotels

- Directional Finger Post Sign (brown and white) at critical road junctions within 8k of premises.
- Within Speed Limit Areas.
- Individual business directional signs will not be permitted within speed limit areas.

Commercial & Business premises

- One finger post sign only, will be considered at a critical junction within the vicinity of the commercial/ business premises, and where a need is established.
- One advertising sign (for business and commercial premises) shall be considered within the curtilage of the business that it advertises.
- Sandwich boards shall not be permitted.

Welcome, Information & Interpretation Signage

- The provision of name/welcome, information and interpretation signage forms a significant part of the Councils' overall signage policy.
- At entry points to the town, the name/crest of the particular place should be the dominant element.
- At town entry points, the name sign should dominate, other signs i.e. Tidy Towns, Town Twinning etc. should be combined or located separately in advance information lay-by.

Information/Interpretative Signs

The Councils will initiate an information signage system, for public private and community business information through;

- Pilot scheme of Entry Point information lay-bys referred to above.
- Advance information lay-bys outside larger towns.
- Information points in public car parks in towns and villages.
- Interpretative Signs at areas of interest and historic significance, views and prospects.

Advertising Signs

Advertising Signs (provide no directional value) will not be permitted in the open countryside or approach roads to the town. This includes large advertising hoardings and advance advertising for commercial facilities in the town. Such signs will be permitted in advance lay-bys only.

Advertising signs on approach roads shall not exceed 2.5 m in height or 3 sq. m in total area. Reflective material should not be used. This includes large advertising hoardings and advance advertising for commercial facilities. The Councils aims to actively promote the sharing of signage structures and the removal of inappropriate signage.

Signs proposed to be erected on public roadside verges (outside private property) require a license under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES & TECHNICAL STANDARDS



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Record of Protected Structures

KEY TO IMPORTANCE: A= Architectural, D= Detail Design, F= Archaeological Feature, G= Group, H= Historical, I= Interior, O = Other, P=Personality/Association, S= Streetscape/Setting, T= Technical, U= Unique//Rarity, V=Vernacular, (where appropriate).

Map Ref.	Dúchas Ref.	Location	Description	Importance	Rating
001	40501170	1. Mount Southwell Place	End-of-terrace, 3 bay, 1865-1870. 2 storey over basement house.	AG	Regional
002	40501171	2. Mount Southwell Place	Terraced 3 bay, 2 storey over basement house. 1865-1870	AGP	Regional
003	40503163	Mount Southwell Mews	End-of-terrace, 3-bay, 1865-1870 2-storey over basement house.	AG	Regional
004	40504072	Rosemount House, Rosemount Lane	Detached 4-bay, 2-storey house. Pre1858 <i>(as directed by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government).</i>	A	Regional
005	40500012	St. Conal's Psychiatric Hospital, Kilmacrennan Road	Mid Victorian. 2-storey. Central section, 1860-1890 3- storey additions.	AGP	Regional
006	40501090	St. Eunan's College, College Road	3-Storey, symmetrically planned school building. 1900-1910.	AIGUD	Regional
007	40504052	Bank of Ireland, Upper Main Street	Detached, 4-bay, 2-storey former house. 1875-1880	AP	Regional
008	40502279	Courthouse, Upper Main Street	Detached, 3-bay, 2-storey over basement, 1825-1830 neo-Classical courthouse	A	Regional
009	40502086	Bank, Upper Main Street	End-of-terrace, 3 bay, 2-storey bank. 1900-1910	G	Regional
010	40501167	Conwal Church, Church Lane	Church of Ireland Parish Church. 1750-1790	AP	Regional
011	40501168	Cathedral of Saints Eunan & Columba, Sentry Hill Road	French neo Gothic cruciform plan Cathedral 1890-1905	APD	Regional
012	40501199	Conwal Church, Church Lane	Conwal Parish Church graveyard. 1650-1940	HD	Regional

013	40504036	Ernest Speer, Lower Main Street	Terraced 3-bay, 1875-1880 2-storey shop retaining period shop front and interior.	AIG	Regional
014	40503214	Oldtown Bridge, Oldtown	Triple-arch road bridge over River Swilly 1700-1740.	D	Regional
015	40503215	Bridge, Oldtown	Disused single-span plated lattice-truss Railway Bridge. 1900-1905	HTD	Regional
016	40501164	Ardenaun, Cathedral Road	Detached six-bay, c. 1900. three storey over basement Bishop's Palace. <i>(as directed by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government).</i>	A	Regional
017	40502222	Donegal County Museum, High Road.	Detached five-bay, c. 1845, two-storey former workhouse and infirmary	A	Regional
018	No ref.	New Line Road	Single storey stone wash cottage with thatch roof.	A	Regional
019	40905303	Ballymacool House	Detached, five-bay three-storey over basement built c.1825	AH	Regional

Appendix B: Recorded Monuments

Reference No.	Townland	Type
DG053-015	Castlebane	Ringfort - Cashel
DG053-017	Lisnennan	Ritual Site- Holy Well
DG053-018	Kiltoy	Bullaun Stone
DG053-019	Kiltoy	Church
DG053-019001	Kiltoy	Graveyard
DG053-021	Carnamogagh Lower	Bullaun Stone
DG053-022	Ballymacool	Cashel
DG053-023001	Ballymacool	Ringfort - Unclassified
DG053-023002	Ballymacool	Souterrain
DG053-024	Ballymacool	Ringfort - Unclassified
DG053-025	Sallaghagrane	Standing Stone
DG053-026	Ballyraine	Ringfort - Unclassified
DG053-030	Ballymacool	Souterrain
DG053-031	Ballymacool	Souterrain
DG053-032	Oldtown	Standing Stone
DG053-033001	Oldtown	Church
DG053-033002	Drumnaoagh	Ritual Site- Holy Well
DG053-033003	Drumnaoagh	Bullaun Stone
DG053-033004	Drumnaoagh	Graveyard
DG053-034	Scribbly	Enclosure
DG053-035	Bunnagee	Bullaun Stone
DG053-045	Lisnennan	Souterrain
DG053-046	Ballymacool	Mass Rock
DG053-047	Sallaghagrane	Enclosure

Reference no. refers to identification in 'County Donegal, Recorded Monuments', published by Archaeological Survey of Ireland, The Office of Public Works. Recorded Monuments can also be viewed via the internet on :

www.archaeology.ie/ArchaeologicalSurveyofIreland/

Note: the above table highlights all acknowledge monuments within the Plan boundary acknowledged by the Councils. It must be noted that the collection of data and the review of the Record of Monuments is a continuous process and may include further additions during the lifetime of the Plan.

Appendix C: Natural Heritage Sites

Site Name	Designation	Site Code
River Swilly Valley Woods	Natural Heritage Area (NHA)	002011
Lough Swilly	Natural Heritage Area (NHA)	000166
	Candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	002287
	Special Protection Area (SPA)	075

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)

Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are legally protected from the date they are formally proposed. Natural Heritage Areas represent the basic designation for wildlife protection. A list of these areas are shown in Section 6.4 and further information and updates are available on-line at:

www.npws.ie/en/Conservationsites/NaturalHeritageAreasNHAs/

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

Under the 1992 European Union Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), Special Areas of Conservation are selected and designated. They are transposed into Irish law under the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997. Special Areas of Conservation are prime wildlife conservation areas considered to be important at Irish and European levels. Under the directive, certain habitats and species must be afforded protection. A list of these areas is shown in Section 6.5 and further information and updates are available on-line at:

www.npws.ie/en/Conservationsites/SpecialAreasofConservationSACs/

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Under the 1979 European Union Birds Directive (79/409/EEC). Special Protection Areas are selected and designated for the protection of birds, especially listed rare and vulnerable species and regularly occurring migratory species. Also protected under the directive are wetlands, especially those of international importance, that attract large numbers of migratory birds. A list of these areas is shown in Section 6.5 and further information and updates are available on-line at:

www.npws.ie/en/Conservationsites/SpecialProtectionAreasSPAs/

Statutory Nature Reserves

State-owned areas (or private lands in agreement with the landowner) that are set aside for the conservation of fauna, flora and their habitats. They are protected under Sections 15 and 16 of the Wildlife Act 1976. A list of these reserves is shown in Section 6.5 and further information and updates are available on-line at:

www.npws.ie/en/NatureReserves/Donegal/