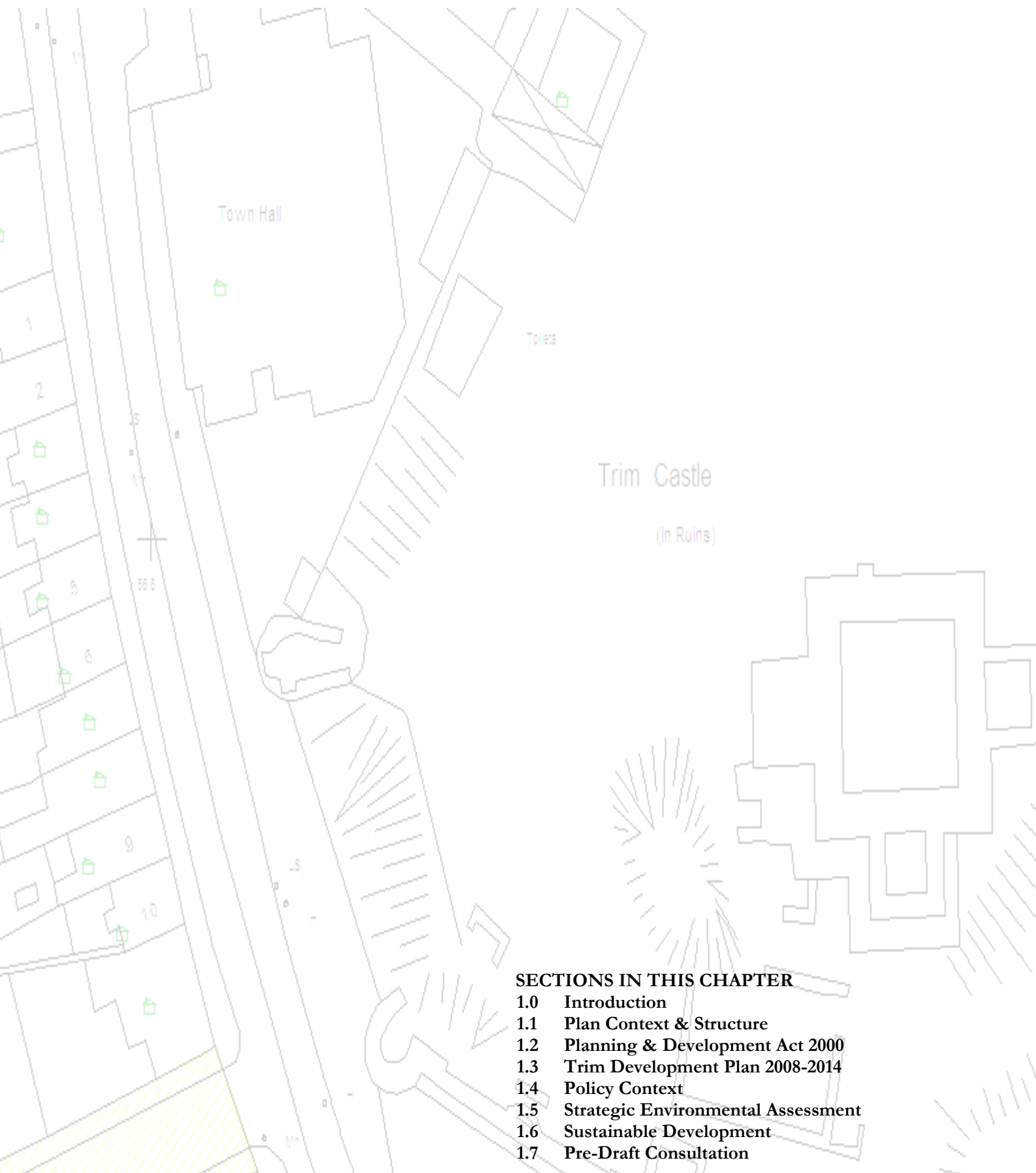


CHAPTER 1: POLICY CONTEXT



SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Plan Context & Structure
- 1.2 Planning & Development Act 2000
- 1.3 Trim Development Plan 2008-2014
- 1.4 Policy Context
- 1.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment
- 1.6 Sustainable Development
- 1.7 Pre-Draft Consultation

1.0 Introduction

The Trim Development Plan 2008-2014 was adopted on the 13th of November 2008 and supersedes the Trim Development Plan 2002-2008. It will remain in force for six years from the date of adoption unless replaced by a new Development Plan for Trim before this date. Development Plans comprise of a written statement and attendant maps that provide a graphic representation of the objectives contained in the Plan. All Development Plans must have regard to national, regional and ministerial policy. The aim of this Plan is to establish a framework for the planned, co-ordinated and sustainable development of Trim and for the conservation and enhancement of its natural and built environment over the Plan period and beyond.

This chapter outlines the statutory and policy context for the preparation of the Trim Development Plan 2008-2014. It also provides details with regard to the socio-economic, land-use, infrastructural, physical and amenity characteristics of Trim based on current circumstances and expected growth. Policies and objectives that form part of this Plan will be based on the requirements and constraints identified in this chapter.

This Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2007. Section 10 (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended by the Water Services Act 2007 outlines the objectives which a Development Plan shall include:

- the zoning of land for the use solely or primarily of particular areas for particular purposes (whether residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, as open space or otherwise, or a mixture of those uses), where and to such extent as the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, in the opinion of the planning authority, requires the uses to be indicated;
- the provision or facilitation of the provision of infrastructure including—
 - (i) transport, energy and communication facilities,
 - (ii) water supplies and waste water services (regard having been had to the water services strategic plan for the area made in accordance with the Water Services Act 2007),
 - (iii) waste recovery and disposal facilities (regard having been had to the waste management plan for the area made in accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996), and
 - (iv) any ancillary facilities or services;
- the conservation and protection of the environment including, in particular, the archaeological and natural heritage and the conservation and protection of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed for the purposes of this paragraph;
- the integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population;
- the preservation of the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the planning authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest;
- the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest;
- the preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas;
- the development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration;

- the provision of accommodation for travellers, and the use of particular areas for that purpose;
- the preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities;
- the control, having regard to the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive and any regulations, under any enactment, giving effect to that Directive, of—
 - (i) siting of new establishments,
 - (ii) modification of existing establishments, and
 - (iii) development in the vicinity of such establishments, for the purposes of reducing the risk, or limiting the consequences, of a major accident;
- the provision, or facilitation of the provision, of services for the community including, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities, and;
- the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht including the promotion of Irish as the community language, where there is a Gaeltacht area in the area of the Development Plan.

1.1 Plan Context & Structure

The Trim Development Plan 2008-2014 sets out the blue print for the future growth and sustainable development of Trim and its immediate environs. The principle aim of the Planning Authorities is to ensure that future development in Trim takes place in a planned, co-ordinated and sustainable manner over the coming years. The principle of sustainable development is therefore central to the preparation of this Plan, whereby an appropriate balance can be forged between future development and conservation. The Development Plan will take the form of a written statement and a series of accompanying maps for the Trim Plan area.

The format of the Plan will take the form of 9 individual chapters and a series of appendices. Chapters 3-7 collectively form the Development Strategy which is being pursued in this Development Plan. Each of these chapters deal with individual land use planning topics and include a written statement in which strategic themes and clear policy objectives for each planning topic are provided. Chapter 8 provides detailed Development Management Guidelines and Standards. Chapter 9 focuses on the implementation and monitoring of the Development Plan. The guidelines and standards prescribed in Chapter 8 give general guidance to applicants on the criteria which will be used by the Planning Authorities to assess planning applications and give particular guidance on the criteria that will be applied in assessing different categories of development proposals. These are supplemented throughout the Plan by Development Assessment Criteria which follow certain policy objectives. A Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is included as an appendix to the Plan.

1.2 Planning and Development Act 2000

The Act, as amended, provides for the preparation of Development Plans. The Development Plan has statutory status and requires formal adoption by the elected members of the respective Councils after a series of public consultations. The policies and control mechanisms of the Trim Development Plan 2008-2014, will apply for a six year period, commencing four weeks from the date of adoption of the Plan. A report will be prepared by the Manager, not more than two years after the commencement of this Plan on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Plan.

1.3 Trim Development Plan 2008-2014

The Development Plan is a statutory document containing guidelines as to how the town and its environs should develop over the Plan period. The written statement contains analysis of statistics, projections and policy objectives. The Plan provides a framework for sustainability, by preserving the quality of the cultural heritage and material assets of Trim, and by protecting the integrity of the built and natural environment from damage caused by insensitive development proposals. The Development Plan maps give a graphic representation of the proposals included in the Plan, indicating land-use, conservation designations and other development management standards together with various specific objectives. They do not purport to be accurate survey maps, and should any conflict arise between the maps and the statement, the statement shall prevail.

1.4 Policy Context

There are a number of national policies, strategic guidelines and county wide strategies which have informed the preparation of this Development Plan. The Trim Development Plan 2008-2014 is consistent with the provisions of the following.

1.4.1 National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland is a long term national planning framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development as well as balanced population growth between the regions. The NSS provides guidance for future development throughout the country by identifying a hierarchy of settlements to accommodate future growth, with the driving objective of achieving balanced regional development. The strategy seeks to renew, consolidate and develop existing urban centres, keeping them as physically compact and transport friendly as possible and minimising urban sprawl whilst achieving a high quality of design in new development. The aim is to utilise urban land sensitively and efficiently, reduce dereliction and encourage refurbishment, with emphasis placed on quality of life through balanced regional development. Trim is one of the smaller towns identified to cater for local growth and is also regarded in the NSS as a town with an Urban Strengthening Opportunity.

1.4.2 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004-2016

The Regional Planning Guidelines outline how the national spatial structure relates to each of the regions. Following on from the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, published in 1999, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (RPG's) were published in July 2004 and apply to two Regional Authority areas – the areas of the Dublin Regional Authority and the Mid-East Regional Authority for the purposes of regional planning. The objective of the Guidelines is to establish a broad planning framework for the Greater Dublin Area providing a strategic context and clear guidance as to the types of policies to be included in Development Plans for each Planning Authority. The Guidelines distinguish between the 'Metropolitan Area' and its immediate environs, the 'Hinterland'. One of the primary aims of the RPG's is to provide for the sustainable development of the overall Greater Dublin Area through the consolidation and concentration of growth in the Metropolitan Area and selected urban centres in the Hinterland Area.

The area covered by the Trim Development Plan 2008-2014 is located in the Hinterland. The aim of the RPG's for the Hinterland Area is to concentrate development into towns. Under the classifications set out in the RPG's Trim is identified as a Moderate Growth Town, having a population in excess of 5,000 persons. It is envisaged that Trim will provide a supporting role to the larger adjacent 'primary growth centre' of Navan. Collectively Trim, Kells and Navan will form a Primary Dynamic Cluster where it is envisaged these centres will form a symbiotic dynamism which will facilitate the development of a self sufficient critical mass of complimentary towns.

The RPG's also encourages the inclusion of policies;

- to protect and preserve the built, natural and cultural heritage;
- to encourage adequate provision of open space and recreation;
- to sustain green belts, and;
- to provide for social, community and cultural infrastructure as well as social inclusion.

1.4.3 Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013

Meath County Council adopted a County Development Plan (CDP) in March 2007 to replace the County Development Plan which was adopted in 2001. The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 sets out the vision, policy framework and specific objectives for future development in County Meath for a 6 year period. Trim is identified as a Moderate Growth Town in the CDP, consistent with the principles of the NSS and RPG's. Trim is located within a Primary Dynamic Cluster with Navan and Kells in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The CDP states that it is critical that such towns should develop in a self sufficient sustainable manner in the longer term and that future growth should ensure that they do not become dormitory towns for the Metropolitan Area. The CDP states as follows, 'To ensure that all of the Large Growth Towns and Moderate Growth Towns will in so far as practical be self sufficient incorporating employment activities, sufficient retail services and social and community facilities. Residential development will only be permitted if sufficient progress is made in providing employment, retail, social and community facilities within the settlement. The Elected Members of the Planning Authority shall resolve to agree a series of monitoring measures in this regard within 6 months of the adoption of this Development Plan. The Council will give consideration to the capacity of existing appropriately zoned and serviceable and undeveloped land to deliver sustainable mixed use communities in advance of zoning previously unzoned Greenfield land for new development.'

Dynamic clusters' have been identified as being of most benefit in delivering local job creation. A key component of job creation is the development of a critical mass of population necessary to supply a work force and/or to support services such as retail, public transport etc. Trim is not currently, and it is not intended as per the RPGs, to grow to a large enough centre to support these services alone. Therefore the idea of placing Trim in a cluster with Kells and Navan will result in development of complimentary uses with Trim and Kells supporting the role of Navan as the Large Growth Town. The CDP includes as a strategic objective to prepare a thematic spatial strategy for industrial development and enterprise to ensure that industrial development occurs in a planned manner. The Planning Authority is committed to the sustainable development of the County and aims to embrace and promote the natural synergy and dynamism which exists between these centres.

It is considered that the main principles set out in the County Development Plan relevant to the future development of Trim include the following:

- to have regard to the natural and built heritage assets to ensure that development will be balanced, with due regard for the protection of the inherent qualities of the area. Trim's status as a Heritage Town is also a key factor with regard to planning and future development. The County Development Plan recognises that this status may in fact limit the amount and scale of development that such heritage towns can incorporate;
- to encourage land-use planning measures which facilitate transportation efficiency, favourable economic returns on transport investment, reduction of environmental impacts and a shift towards the use of public transportation throughout the county;
- encourage the provision of quality employment and residential developments in proximity to each other, to facilitate a reduction in both travel trips and the dependency on private car transport;
- to have regard to natural, archaeological and cultural heritage assets;

- concentration of development into those centres that can be economically provided with high quality transport and other services and to promote high quality, sustainable integrated transport systems and to encourage co-ordination between all agencies involved, and;
- promotion of relatively compact urban form, increasing residential densities where appropriate, and;
- to provide for the supply of zoned serviced land in line with actual needs and the provisions of the RPG's to avoid over-zoning and consequent difficulties in co-ordinating development.

1.4.4 County Meath Housing Strategy

The recently adopted County Development Plan included a Housing Strategy which set out the quantum of housing to be provided in County Meath for a six year period up to the 31st December 2013. The purpose of the Housing Strategy is to;

- ensure that there is sufficient zoned and serviced land available in designated development centres in the county to accommodate the estimated housing requirements of the respective centres during the Plan period;
- provide for social and affordable housing as per the obligations under Part V of the Planning & Development Acts, and;
- provide directly for social and affordable solutions through its, house building programme, assistance to other agencies and individuals, acquisitions of dwellings and other special programmes.

Based on the population and household size projections it is estimated that there will be 29,508 additional housing units constructed in the County over the lifespan of the Plan. One of the main findings of the housing strategy point to the fact that there is at present adequate serviced (or planned to be serviced) and zoned land in the County to satisfy the overall housing requirement for this period, though not necessarily in its distribution. The Strategy states that 'the extent of residentially zoned lands will be revised in the context of the individual Local Area Plan or Development Plan review for each centre and does not preclude additional zoning in specific locations where the Planning Authority is satisfied that a clearly established need for such zoning is required'.

1.4.5 North East Regional Waste Management Plan

County Meath is the lead authority in the North East Waste Management Region, which includes Counties Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan. The original Waste Management Plan (WMP) for the North East Region was adopted in 2001. The replacement WMP for the North East Region was made on 16th May 2006 and covers the period 2005–2010. The replacement WMP outlines the region's objectives which include the core activity of prioritising waste prevention and minimisation and the delivery of an effective system meeting the polluter pays principle that meets high standards of environmental performance and all legislative obligations. The effective management of waste is a key component of sustainable development.

1.4.6 Meath County Tourism Strategy

Meath County Council in association with Meath Tourism commissioned the preparation of the county tourism strategy entitled 'Ireland's Heritage Capital, Marketing Tourism in Meath, 2005-2010' to ensure that County Meath shared in Ireland's future tourism success with the aim of becoming one of the top ten tourism counties in Ireland. The Mission statement of Meath Tourism states 'County Meath will be recognised as a world class region to visit, through the continuous development and promotion of a high quality, sustainable, accessible and distinctive tourism and leisure product'. This Strategy aims to build on the branding of Meath as 'Ireland's Heritage Capital'. This strategy identifies a number of gaps in the tourism product in Trim which include the need to

provide family entertainment venues and weather independent facilities; interpretative facilities; transport links between other heritage attractions i.e. Tara & Newgrange; tourism signage; improvement and maintenance of public playgrounds; and to improve upon the shopping and cultural experience of the town.

1.4.7 Meath County Retail Strategy 2003

In order for the County Retail Strategy 2003, to be incorporated into the preceding Trim Development Plan a variation of the Plan was adopted which provided for the incorporation of the objectives and standards as laid out in the County Retail Strategy. Within the GDA Retail Hierarchy, Trim forms part of the Hinterland Area and is a Level 3: Sub-County Town Centre together with Ashbourne and Kells. Navan is a Level 2: County Town Centre. The Strategy identified the need to greatly increase the convenience floor space within the town as well as enhance the tourism offer and attraction of Trim.

Following on from this policy the actions associated with it include:

- whilst all retail developments shall be subject to sequential testing, as outlined in the County Retail Strategy, in respect of heritage towns such as Trim, 'the historical character/street and land pattern, may be such as would not allow for easy accommodation of certain retail developments (by reason of their scale and other) and consideration of this unique locational factor will be taken into account in the context of 'site selection' with regard to sequential testing.'
- the need to identify edge of centre sites for additional supermarket floor space that will better meet main food shopping needs, and;
- priority should be given on all roads proposals required to untap the potential and attraction of sites within the Trim and Kells town centres.

1.4.8 Le Cheile An Integrated Strategy for Meath to 2012

Le Cheile is the 10 year social, economic and cultural strategy for County Meath prepared by the Planning Authority and the County Development Board (CDB). The purpose of such a Strategy is to 'facilitate the articulation of a vision for the development of the county' and to 'provide the focus for co-operation and co-ordination which in turn will enhance the capacity for maximising the effectiveness of spending programmes' The spatial framework, outlined in 'Le Cheile' is consistent with the Settlement Strategy, as outlined in the County Development Plan. This Development Plan must dovetail with the guidance provided in the County Development Plan. The key objectives of the County Development Board Strategy which are applicable county wide include:

- co-ordinated provision of economic and social/cultural infrastructure to enable the identified primary development corridors to become the primary growth areas for the County;
- enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the productive sectors;
- promote Meath as an attractive location for inward investment in high valued manufacturing sectors and in internationally traded sectors;
- sustain and increase total employment in the productive sectors, and;
- promote diversification of the rural economy.

1.4.9 Local Area Plans

The Trim Development Plan 2002-2008 included an objective to prepare an individual Local Area Plan (LAP) for each of three specifically identified areas within the Trim Development Plan area. These included (1) Blackfriary LAP pertaining to lands north of the Navan Road; (2) Effernock LAP pertaining to lands south of the Dublin Rd; and (3) a Local Area Plan for Trim Town Centre. Two of these Plans were delivered– the Trim Town Centre LAP, which was adopted by Trim Town

Council on the 26th October 2004, and by Meath County Council on 1st Nov 2004; and the Effernock LAP, adopted in May 2003. The preparation of the Blackfriary LAP remained outstanding at the commencement of the Development Plan review process. The development of the Blackfriary LAP lands is now planned to fall under the remit of this Development Plan.

It is proposed to readopt the Trim Town Centre Local Area Plan as part of this plan. As regards the Effernock LAP, it is proposed that this would remain in effect as adopted, unless otherwise amended.

1.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is carried out in response to the requirements of the European Communities, Council Directive of 2001 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, Directive 2001/42/EC, which came into effect on 21st July, 2004. The enabling statutory instruments (S.I's) which transpose this Directives into Irish law are the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I 435 of 2004), and, the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436 of 2004). SEA outlines the environmental effects of implementing a Development Plan prior to its adoption; therefore SEA is carried out in respect of decisions yet to be made. Development Plans are required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment if they meet the set criteria included in Article 13A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as inserted by Article 7 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, S.I. 436 of 2004.

As per the Regional Planning Guidelines 2004-2016 Trim is designated a Moderate Growth Town. Moderate Growth Towns can accommodate an ultimate population of 15,000 persons. The current population of Trim and Environs as per Census 2006 is 6,870 persons. Section 13A of the Planning and Development Regulations applies to Development Plans for any area where the population is less than 10,000 persons and outlines the requirements in respect of determining the need for an environmental assessment. Section 13B of the Regulations applies to Development Plans for an area where the population is more than 10,000 persons or where the Planning Authority determined under the preceding section that the implementation of a new Development Plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects. In these circumstances the Planning Authority shall carry out an environmental assessment as part of the review of the existing Development Plan and preparation of a new Development Plan. Having regard to the outstanding quality of the Built, Natural and Archaeological Heritage of Trim it was considered an SEA would be required to be undertaken to inform the preparation of the Trim Development Plan 2008-2014.

1.6 Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs' (Brundtland Report 1987). At the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Ireland endorsed Agenda 21, a major blueprint for how the nations of the world can work towards a sustainable future. The National Sustainable Development Strategy was published in 1997 and is currently under review. The overall aim of the strategy is 'to ensure that economy and society in Ireland can develop to their full potential within a well protected environment, without compromising the quality of that environment, and with responsibility towards present and future generations and the wider international community'. This process cannot be completed by the Strategy document itself, but requires a continuing adaptation and review of policies, actions and lifestyles. The Strategy highlights, among other things, the unsustainable development of 'Urban Generated one-off houses' and recommends a move towards increasing densities in towns as a way to counter this. The Strategy pays particular attention to the development of rundown or derelict buildings or sites for this purpose. Agenda 21 calls upon Local Authorities worldwide to draw-up 'Local Agenda 21(LA 21)' Plans to promote sustainability at local level. They

are intended to translate sustainable development principals and objectives into practical local action.

Sustainability is a key component to ensuring a high quality of life for the present and future generations of Trim. Land-use policies and land use management are the tools the Planning Authority can use to ensure sustainable developments are achieved. In order to achieve this, a balance must be struck between development and conservation. The Trim Development Plan, as the Planning Authorities' principal policy statement on land-use, will provide the land-use basis for 'Local Agenda 21'. To facilitate this, the following objectives have been identified:

- minimise the consumption of natural, non-renewable resources, including land;
- preserve the quality of the landscape, open space, architectural and cultural heritage, material assets and natural resources;
- protect the integrity of the built environment from damage caused by insensitive development proposals, and;
- promote the involvement of the local community in decision-making on environmental sustainability issues.

1.7 Pre-Draft Consultation

The review of the Trim Development Plan 2002-2008 commenced with the publication of an advertisement in the *Irish Independent* dated 2nd March, 2006, and the *Meath Chronicle* dated 11th March, 2006. In accordance with Section 11 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, the Planning Authority prepared a pre-draft consultation document 'Preparation of a new Trim Development Plan – Strategic Issues Paper' which was placed on public display from the 13th March, 2006, – 12th May, 2006. In addition, letters to Prescribed Bodies and service providers were issued as part of the consultation process.

Preliminary consultations also took place with the main service providers (i.e. providers of energy, telecommunications, transport, education, etc.) to discuss objectives and policies which are likely to have a significant bearing on Development Plan policy. 45 submissions were received at pre-draft stage. The principle issues raised at pre-draft stage in the submissions included land use zoning, employment and economic development, infrastructure, built & natural heritage and community infrastructure. Of the 45 submissions received, 16 consisted of proposals seeking the zoning or rezoning of lands for residential purposes. These issues were summarised and addressed in the Managers Report prepared in respect of the pre draft consultation phase.

Further periods of public consultation took place when the Draft Development Plan and the Amendments to the Draft Development Plan were on public display. Additional submissions were received during this time. The issues raised in the submissions received were summarised and addressed in the relevant Manager's Reports.