

## CHAPTER 1: POLICY CONTEXT



### SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Plan Context & Structure
- 1.2 Navan Town Boundary Alteration Order 2009
- 1.3 Planning & Development Act 2000
- 1.4 Navan Development Plan 2009-2015
- 1.5 Policy Context
- 1.6 Strategic Environmental Assessment
- 1.7 Appropriate Assessment
- 1.8 Sustainable Development
- 1.9 Pre-Draft Consultation

## **1.0 Introduction**

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 each Planning Authority is obliged to make a Development Plan every six years. The Navan Development Plan was adopted by Meath County Council and Navan Town Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, 2009 respectively, and remains in force until 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2015, unless superseded by a new Development Plan for Navan before this date.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 Navan 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 Navan Development Plan 2009-2015.

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 Navan Development Plan 2009-2015 sets out the intention of the two Planning Authorities - Navan Town Council and Meath County Council, as to the future growth and sustainable development of Navan and its immediate environs. The principle aim of the Planning Authorities is to ensure that future development in Navan 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 takes the form of a written statement and a series of accompanying maps for the Navan Plan area.

The Plan consists 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 Navan Town Boundary Alteration Order 2009**

On receipt of an application from Navan Town Council, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government signed an Order to extend the boundary of Navan Town on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2009. This order came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009 and resulted in the administrative area of Navan Town Council being significantly extended to reflect the fact that Navan, as one of Ireland's fastest growing towns, had developed significantly beyond the confines of its legal administrative boundary. The Order has affected the planning process in that now the majority of lands within the Navan Development Plan Boundary are administered by Navan Town Council with planning applications consequentially being made to and decided upon by that Planning Authority. Additionally, certain Protected Structures on the Meath County Council record of protected structures are now deemed to be on the Navan Town Council record of protected structures. Certain parts of the area to which this Development Plan relates however remain under the administrative authority of Meath County Council. These areas are delineated on the maps accompanying this Development Plan.

### **1.3 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 Navan Development Plan 2009-2015, will apply for a six year period, commencing four weeks from the date of adoption of the Plan by Navan Town Council and Meath County Council. 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.

### **1.4 Navan Development Plan 2009-2015**

The Development Plan is a statutory document, consistent with the objectives of Navan Town Council and Meath County Council, 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 Navan, 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.

### **1.5 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 Navan Development Plan 2009-2015 is consistent with the provisions of the following documents.

#### **1.5.1 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. Navan 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.

#### **1.5.2 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 Navan Development Plan 2009-2015 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, Navan is identified as a Large Growth Town I along with Wicklow Town and Naas. Collectively Navan, Kells and Trim 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 architectural, 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.

### **1.5.3 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. Navan is identified as a Large Growth Town in the CDP, consistent with the principles of the NSS and RPG's. Navan is located within a Primary Dynamic Cluster with Kells and Trim 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 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. Navan is, as per the RPGs, expected to support a range of these services. This goal is further complimented by Navan's placement in a primary dynamic cluster with Kells and Trim. 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 Navan include the following:

- to have regard to the natural and architectural heritage assets to ensure that development will be balanced, with due regard for the protection of the inherent qualities of the area;
- 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;

- 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.

#### **1.5.4 County Meath Housing Strategy**

The 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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'.

#### **1.5.5 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **1.5.6 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 the county 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 in towns.

### **1.5.7 Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008 - 2016**

Within the Greater Dublin Area Retail Hierarchy, Navan forms part of the Hinterland Area and is a Level 2: County Town Centre. The Strategy states "The scale of retail offered in the county town of Navan has improved, but until the traffic congestion within the town is resolved by the completion of the M3 motorway, improving the attractiveness of the town as a destination will be a considerable challenge. Further retail and town centre improvements alongside reductions in through traffic are necessary to allow Navan serve its natural hinterland. In addition these improvements will provide high quality retail within easy reach of the surrounding rural areas and small towns in conjunction with meeting the needs of a rapidly growing population." It is anticipated that such measures will assist in redressing the high levels of expenditure leakage (i.e. 40%) outwards from the County.

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

- To accord with its role as a major centre within the GDA hierarchy, to continue to support and develop the County Town of Navan as a predominantly comparison shopping based centre with a range of quality convenience forming an important element in the overall role and attraction of the town. This continuing development of Navan as a key destination will require flexibility in bringing forward key sites within the town core area. It will also necessitate encouragement of the provision of high quality retail units to provide for the needs of modern retailers and to facilitate the provision of a good mix of offer to the local and surrounding population.
- The promotion of policies to take advantage of the potential of Navan town centre for greater intensification of development within the existing fabric and on opportunity sites and through the redevelopment of the central car parking areas. This will ensure that retail and other town centre uses are retained within the town centre rather than dissipated to more peripheral areas, thus avoiding the possibility of displacement of the prime shopping focus from the existing core retail area.

### **1.5.8 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:

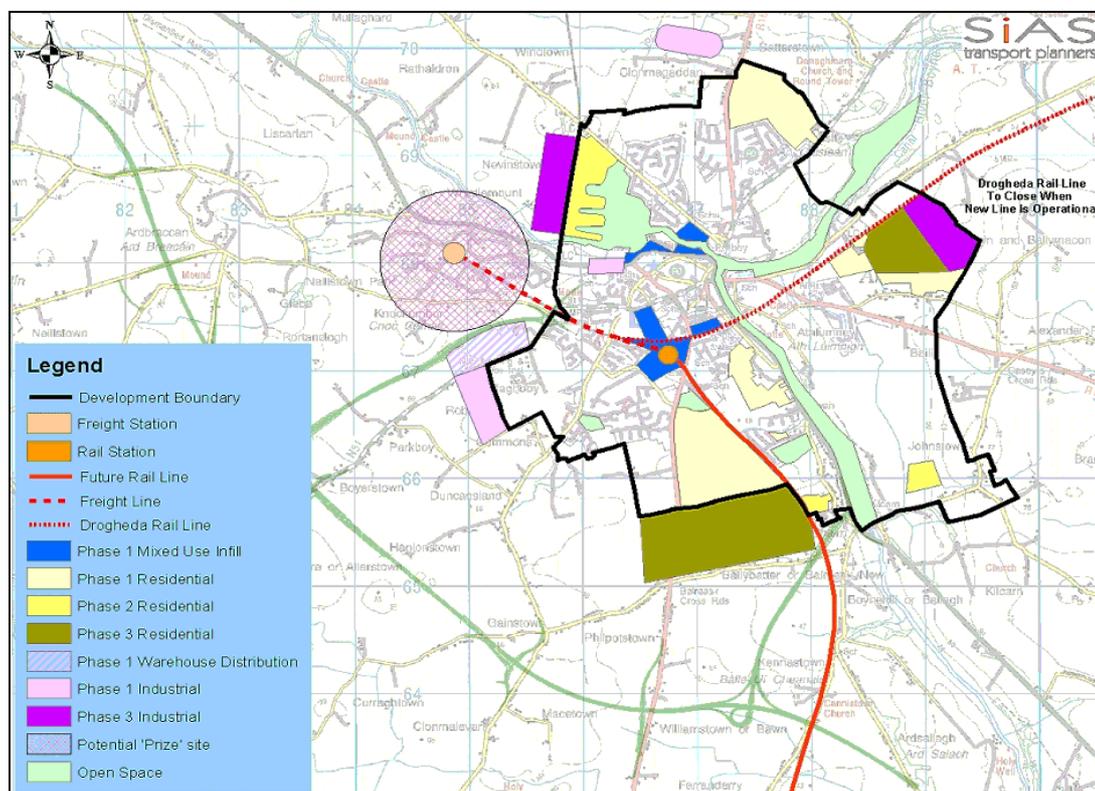
- co-ordinated provision of economic and social/cultural infrastructure to enable the identified primary development corridors to become the primary growth areas for the County;
- enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the productive sectors;
- promote Meath as an attractive location for inward 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.

**1.5.9 Integrated Development Framework Plan**

The Navan Integrated Development Framework Plan was prepared in December 2002 (and updated in 2009) and has a time frame up to 2016 which covers the current Navan Development Plan. The overall Masterplan for Navan seeks to make the town a more accessible and attractive town that could accommodate an ultimate population horizon of 60,000 persons. Central to the overall strategy is the objective of making Navan a self sustaining community in both economic and environmental terms and to provide a quality urban environment for its citizens.

The Masterplan shows the overall consolidation of development largely within the existing zoned lands. The more intensive redevelopment is focused around the proposed new central rail station. The absence of a timeframe in which the delivery of a direct rail link to Dublin can be expected has direct implications in permitting continued development of existing zoned lands without compromising or diminishing the development options which the rail link would facilitate.

In the event of the reinstatement of the rail line to Dublin, the existing Drogheda rail line could be shared with a new bus, cycle and pedestrian corridor connecting the residential areas to the east of the town with the enlarged town centre. The residential development is largely accommodated within the existing zoned lands, with the long term expansion of the town in a southerly direction, dependent on the delivery of the rail infrastructure.



**Figure 1; Masterplan from Navan Integrated Development Framework Plan**

**1.5.10 Local Area Plans/Action Area Plans**

The Navan Development Plan 2003-2009 included an objective to prepare an individual Local Area Plan (LAP) for a number of identified locations within the Navan Development Plan development boundary. These included:

- LAP 1 pertaining to lands adjoining the existing town centre identified primarily for Town Centre Development;
- LAP 2 pertaining to lands in between the Trim Road, the line of the former Navan-Dublin railway and the southern boundary of the Development Plan envelope.
- LAP 3 pertaining to the lands between the Trim Road and the Commons Road, bounded by the Local Distributor Road.
- LAP 4 pertaining to lands at Athlumney, Bailis, Alexanderreid and Ferganstown and Ballymacon.
- LAP 5 pertaining to lands north of the existing Local Distributor Road linking the Proudstown Road and Ratholdren Road and south of Kilsaran Lane.

Two of these plans were delivered namely LAP 3 which was adopted on the 24th of July 2006 and LAP 4 which was adopted on the 1st of October 2007. It is proposed to readopt LAP 3 and LAP 4 as part of this plan. The preparation of LAP 1, LAP 2 and LAP 5 remained outstanding at the commencement of the Development Plan review process. Therefore the development of these lands falls under the remit of this Development Plan. The Navan Development Plan 2003-2009 also included an objective to prepare an individual Action Area Plan (AAP) for a number of identified locations within the Navan Development Plan development boundary. These included:

- AAP 1 pertaining to land east of the Navan Inner Relief Road Phase 2A and including the Rathaldron Road, Lower Flower Hill and the N3 Inner Relief Road.
- AAP 2 pertaining to land west of the Navan Inner Relief Road Phase 2A and including the area south of Silverlawns as far as the proposed Town Park, Balmoral Industrial Estate and the N3 Inner Relief Road.
- AAP 3 pertaining to land within and adjoining the former demesne of Blackcastle House.
- AAP 4 pertaining to an area of land designated for Clonmagadden Strategic Development Zone. (The requirement to prepare and adopt an Action Area Plan for this area was not required in the advent of the Planning Scheme for this area being granted.)
- AAP 5 pertaining to residentially zoned lands between the proposed Navan Town Park and the existing Navan – Kingscourt Rail line.
- AAP 6 pertaining to lands adjoining and including St. Martha's College, Johnstown.

Two of these plans were delivered namely AAP 1 and AAP 2, which were approved in early 2008. It is proposed to readopt AAP 1 and AAP 2 as part of this plan. Furthermore, the 'Clonmagadden SDZ Planning Scheme' was adopted in December 2004. The preparation of AAP 3, AAP 5 and AAP 6 remained outstanding at the commencement of the Development Plan review process. Therefore the development of these lands falls under the remit of this Development Plan.

## **1.6 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 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2004. The enabling statutory instruments (S.I.'s) which transpose this Directive 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 Navan is designated a Large Growth Town. The current population of Navan and Environs as per Census 2006 is 24,851 persons. Article 13B of the Planning and Development Regulations applies to Development Plans for any area where the population is more than 10,000 persons and outlines the requirements in respect of environmental assessment. 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. Given Navan's current population a Strategic Environmental Assessment was required to inform the preparation of the Navan Development Plan 2009-2015.

The main output of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process was the preparation of an Environmental Report which is published as a separate document to this Development Plan. The purpose of the Environmental Report is to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the future growth of Navan. The Environmental Report is composed of a number of sections. A description of these and the key findings from each section is provided in Table 1.

The preparation of the Environmental Report took place in tandem with the preparation of the draft Navan Development Plan. This allowed for issues raised in the SEA process to be addressed in the draft Plan at an early stage. There was ongoing discussion between the Development Plan and SEA teams, with information on, e.g. the preferred development scenario from the SEA perspective, feeding into the selection of the development scenario for the Plan. It also allowed for the incorporation of mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Report into the draft Development Plan (discussed further below).

The draft Navan Development Plan and Environmental Report were both placed on display from 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009 to 27<sup>th</sup> April 2009. During this time submissions were invited from the public and from statutory authorities. A number of submissions were received which referred to environmental issues and the environmental report. These included suggestions on additional policies and objectives which could be incorporated into the Development Plan, modifications to some existing policies and objectives and general issues which could be examined. A number of amendments were proposed to the draft Plan on foot of these submissions. The comments made on the Environmental Report were also taken into account with revisions made to the report as appropriate.

**Table 1: Key findings in Environmental Report**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
Non Technical Summary	This section provides an overall summary of the environmental report using non scientific language.	n/a
Strategic Environmental Context	This section provides the background context to the SEA process including a description of the Development Plan, legislative requirements for the SEA and other relevant plans and policy documents.	SEA legislation has specific requirements on topics to be addressed in the Environmental Report. These were fully considered in the preparation of the Report. The Navan Development Plan and Environmental Report are situated within a hierarchy of plans, including national plans and guidelines, regional planning guidelines and the Meath County Development Plan.
Methodology	This section outlines the methodology used in the preparation of the Environmental Report.	n/a
Baseline Environment	This section describes the current state of the environment with the aim of identifying specific desirable environmental objectives.	Information was gathered and trends examined in the areas of population statistics, land use and housing completions. These noted the significant proportion of the population in the 25-34 age bracket and pattern of lengthy commuting. The physical environment of the Plan area was also studied with key findings in the areas of topography and landscape, water resources, municipal facilities and soils noted. Areas subject to location based protection were identified. These include the River Boyne and River Blackwater cSAC and the Navan Town Architectural Conservation Area. Items subject to point protection (e.g. trees, species, structures) were also listed.
Consideration of Alternatives	This section outlines the process whereby a number of alternative development scenarios were evaluated for their likely significant effects on the environment.	Four scenarios were assessed: compact town; high density development; sprawl development and do-nothing. The outcome was that the 'compact town' scenario was most suitable from an environmental perspective.
Plan Impacts on Protected Places	This section investigates the scale of any of impacts that the Navan DP will have on protected places which include European Sites, Protected Structures, Monuments and Places and Architectural Conservation Areas.	No significant impacts were identified on any protected places.
Plan Impacts on Environmental Assets	This section investigates the scale of any impacts that the Navan Development Plan will have on	Impacts were assessed using 11 categories: biodiversity, flora and fauna; population and human health; soil; water;

	Navan's Environmental Assets.	municipal facilities; private small and medium treatment plants; urban run off; air and climatic factors; material assets; heritage; landscape. No significant positive or negative impacts were identified.
Strategic Environmental Objectives	Within this chapter, a series of higher order strategic environmental objectives are outlined.	A total of 22 objectives are identified. These are distributed between 8 categories: water; cultural heritage; landscape; biodiversity; soil; population and human health; air and climate; and material assets.
Plan and Sustainable Objectives Comparison	This involved a comparison of strategic environmental objectives (DEO) with the development objectives in order to establish where conflicts arise and where mitigation measures are required.	Each Development Plan objective was rated according to whether: it would be likely to improve the status of the SEO objectives; mitigation may be necessary to conform with the SEO; it had uncertain interaction with status of SEO, it had neutral interaction with status of SEO or whether there would be no likely interaction with status of SEO. The most frequently used rating was 'improve the status of the SEO' objectives.
Monitoring Measures	This section outlines measures which can be used to monitor environmental impacts and identify at an early stage any unforeseen adverse effects due to the implementation of the plan enabling rapid remedial action.	Monitoring measures are listed across 7 categories: water; cultural heritage; landscape; biodiversity; soils; population and human health; air and climate. It is anticipated that the monitoring results would be presented to the Council in the context of the 2 year plan progress report.
Impact Reduction and Mitigation Measures	This section identifies measures which either reduce the severity of the damage to the environment or which would mitigate the residual impacts on the environment where conflicts are present between environmental and development plan objectives.	As with the monitoring measures, the mitigation measures are categorised across 7 topics: water; cultural heritage; landscape; biodiversity; soils; population and human health; air and climate. These measures were incorporated into the various policies and objectives of the Development Plan.

As mentioned in Table 1, the SEA report assessed four different development scenarios for Navan: do-nothing, sprawl, high density and compact town. The SEA report considered that the compact town approach was the most appropriate development scenario for Navan partly due to the considerable environmental advantages it offered over the other scenarios, as it represented the most balanced and sustainable means of accommodating the future growth of the town. The compact town scenario would create a town that is walkable and accessible. It would favour the re-use of under utilised and brownfield sites over greenfield development and facilitate service and infrastructure provision in an economically efficient and community friendly manner. The emphasis in the draft Plan is on the consolidation of Navan town with limited additional zonings proposed compared to the existing Development Plan (the 2003-2009 Plan). The chosen development scenario is reflected in the settlement strategy objectives of the draft Plan which specifically include the promotion of a compact urban form (Settlement Strategy OBJ4) and also include related objectives which aim to promote the consolidation of the town centre as the principal shopping area (Settlement Strategy OBJ7); the re-use of urban brownfield land and derelict and vacant buildings

(Settlement Strategy OBJ10); the integration of employment locations with other lands use and the transport network (ECON DEV POL8); the use of walking and cycling and reducing reliance on the private car (Settlement Strategy OBJ11) and the neighbourhood strategy (neighbourhood centre policies 1, 2 and 3).

In addition to influencing the overall development strategy for Navan, the Environmental Report also identified mitigation measures which would assist in achieving the strategic environmental objectives identified in the report. The issues raised in the mitigation measures were taken into account in the formulation of general text in the Development Plan as it related to the topic. For example, the measures relating to cultural heritage, landscape and biodiversity objectives (objectives C1, L1, B1, B2, B3) are comprehensively addressed in Chapter 5 of the Plan and elsewhere where necessary (e.g. policy and objectives SOC POL 23, SOC OBJ 7 and SOC OBJ 8 which include clarifying text to state that particular works cannot have negative impacts on the Natura 2000 site within the Plan area). It was possible to implement some mitigation measures through discrete policies or objectives, such as objective P2 which related to minimising noise and vibration and was addressed through policy ECON DEV POL6 (incorporation of buffer zones around industrial sites) and Section 8.4 which deals with standards for development and includes noise limits. Other, more wide ranging mitigation measures were referenced as necessary in a number of chapters. For example, Strategic Environmental Objective A4 relates to the need to reduce travel. In the Development Plan, this was mitigated through strategic settlement objectives OBJ4, OBJ7 and OBJ10 (which related to promoting a more compact urban form, consolidation of the town centre and re-use of brownfield sites and derelict buildings) and specific objectives addressing neighbourhood centres (Neighbourhood Centre POL1-3), location of commercial development (ECON DEV POL8 and RET DEV OBJ7), heritage (HER POL3) and infrastructure (INF POL9).

### **1.7 Appropriate Assessment**

Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, commonly known as the Habitats Directive, compels competent authorities to undertake an appropriate assessment of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. The assessment examines the implications of proceeding with the plan or project in view of the site's conservation objectives.

The area to which the Navan Development Plan 2009-2015 shall be applicable includes parts of the River Blackwater and River Boyne candidate Special Area of Conservation, a designated Natura 2000 site. The Navan Development Plan 2009-2015 has been screened to ascertain if the Plan should be subject to an appropriate assessment as outlined in the Habitats Directive. The screening has had regard to the European Commission's guidance document entitled "Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites, methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC". In line with the suggested assessment methodology put forward by the Commission, a screening matrix and a finding of no significant effects matrix have been completed. The screening process has found that the Navan Development Plan 2009-2015 does not require an appropriate assessment as the implementation of the Plan would not be likely to have significant effects on the River Blackwater and River Boyne candidate special area of conservation, a Natura 2000 site.

### **1.8 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 Navan. 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 Navan 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.

### 1.9 Pre-Draft Consultation

The review of the Navan Development Plan 2003-2009 commenced with the publication of an advertisement in the *Irish Independent* dated 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2007, and the *Meath Chronicle* dated 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2007. 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 Navan Development Plan 2009-2015 – Strategic Issues' which was placed on public display from the 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2007, – 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2008. 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. 34 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, architectural & natural heritage and community infrastructure. Of the 34 submissions received, 13 consisted of proposals seeking the zoning or rezoning of lands for residential purposes.

Navan Town Council and Meath County Council also placed public notices in the Meath Chronicle and the Meath Post newspapers in June 2008 making known its intention to hold three public meetings in June 2008 to aid the preparation of the Navan Development Plan 2009-2015. The public consultations were held at Simonstown GAA Club, Navan O' Mahoney's GAA Club and Navan Rugby Club from 7 pm to 9 pm on the 16<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of June 2008 respectively. Display boards were erected at each of the three venues which outlined some of the planning issues facing the town. These boards were complimented by a strategic issues booklet (as illustrated below) which was available to the public free of charge at the meetings. Comment forms were also provided to those who attended.



Booklet which was distributed during the public consultation meetings

The submissions and comments received during the pre-draft consultation phase were summarised and addressed in the Pre-Draft Manager's Report which was presented to the elected members of Navan Town Council and Meath County Council on July 16<sup>th</sup> 2008.

The Draft Development Plan was placed on public display from the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009 – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2009. In addition, letters to Prescribed Bodies and service providers were issued as part of the consultation process. A Managers Report was prepared outlining the Managers' response and recommendation to the 69 submissions received. The Managers Report was presented to Meath County Council and Navan Town Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2009. Having considered the Draft Development Plan and the Managers Report, Meath County Council and Navan Town Council resolved to amend the Draft Development Plan on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> July respectively. The proposed amendments were placed on public display from the 17<sup>th</sup> August to the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009 and referred to prescribed bodies, 13 submissions were received. A Managers Report on submissions received as a result of the display of the amendment was presented to both councils on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October and members were given a further six weeks to consider same. After consideration the members resolved to make the Plan as other than as recommended in the Managers report subject to modifications considered appropriate, (and the variation or modification the members of the authority so decide upon shall be the original variation or modification proposed **by them**, subject to such amendment of it as they consider appropriate). The formal making of the Development Plan is done by resolution of the Councils on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2009.

