Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government

An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta
Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Manual for Local Area Plans

A companion document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Local Area Plans

June 2013

Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
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Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

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About the manual

"Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, offer equality of opportunity and good services for all."

EU Ministerial Informal on Sustainable Communities, UK Presidency, Policy Papers, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, March 2006

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About the manual

Purpose of the Manual

This Manual has been prepared as a companion document for the Planning Guidelines, *Local Area Plans: Creating Sustainable Communities - Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (Hereafter referred to as 'The Planning Guidelines').

The aim of the Manual is to reinforce the key aspects of the Planning Guidelines by emphasising better and more consistent processes and highlighting examples of good practice.

This best practice manual has been co-developed with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under Minister Jimmy Deenihan as part of that Department's Implementation Programme for the Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015. The Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015 provides the appropriate framework for architectural policy up to 2015 and beyond and is led centrally by that Department. The policy places an emphasis on sustainable development of the environment and urban design, incorporates architectural heritage in a holistic integrated manner while encouraging and supporting high quality modern architecture. The policy complements and supports the Government's wider economic strategy within the programme for Government in areas such as Built Environment research and qualitative place-making.

Good Local Area Plans

Good local area planning requires good local area plans. The Local Area Plan (Hereafter referred to as the 'LAP') is the principal statutory planning instrument for setting out a balanced understanding, vision and spatial strategies at the local level. It is at this level that 'place' becomes a physical, community and economic reality.

LAPs must provide the frameworks to secure sustainable development that balances social, economic and environmental considerations at the local level while minimising the potential adverse effects of development on the environment. National policy identifies the overarching role of spatial planning in:

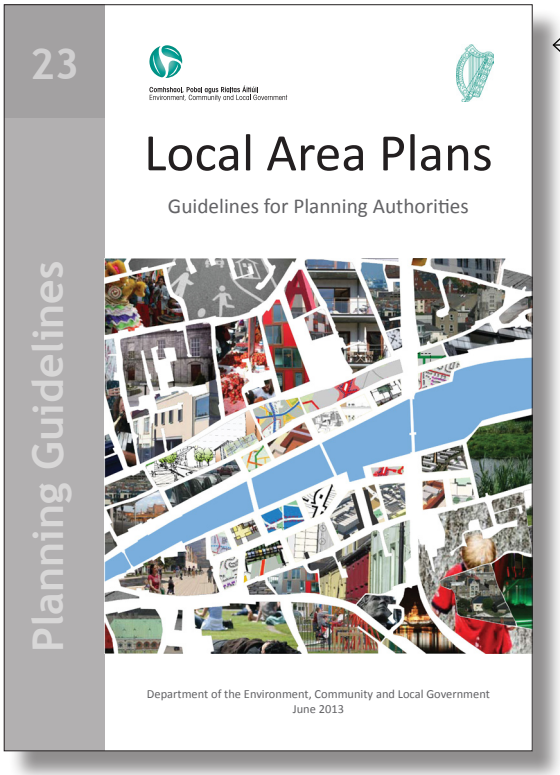
- Securing better use of land as a resource;
- Addressing the needs of society in terms of housing, food and materials, places of work, amenity and recreation;
- Supporting socio-economic policies that seek balanced development; and
- Promoting social integration and strong communities.

A good LAP balances the needs and aspirations of the community with the requirements of the Planning Authority and the expectations of developers and other stakeholders. It provides a framework for delivery that guides quality and facilitates consistency in development management.

Key messages from the Planning Guidelines

The Planning Guidelines set out in detail the policy context, key requirements and qualities for LAPs. They also set out key messages for making LAPs. These include the requirement that they:

- Are prepared in accordance with an agreed, streamlined process to promote greater consistency and better plan quality;



← *The Planning Guidelines*

← *Local planning for living, working and playing*

- Adhere to the core strategies of higher level plans and strategies;
- Provide detailed planning which is responsive to the specific, evidence-based needs of an area;
- Present a clear, consistent and achievable vision and supporting strategies for the future development of an area;
- Contain appropriate frameworks for implementation and monitoring;
- Are informed by effective and meaningful consultation; and
- Are presented in a clear, consistent and easy to understand format, which includes the use of high quality graphics to illustrate the future character and appearance of an area.

The main approach

The approach chosen for this Manual is not intended to be definitive, but to capture the 'essentials' of a quality LAP and a process for preparing one. It seeks to ensure that LAPs:

- Fit within the existing planning and policy hierarchy;
- Are founded on a thorough understanding of the place;
- Strive towards an agreed vision, elaborated by a set of robust principles;
- Set out place-specific strategies for heritage, land use, urban and landscape structure and movement;
- Provide appropriate guidelines for realising the vision;
- Set out realistic and feasible means of delivery; and
- Provide a framework for monitoring progress.

Case examples

The Manual identifies recent examples of good practice in plan-making at local level in Ireland and abroad. Most of the examples are taken from LAPs, however, other, similar local-level plans, such as urban design framework plans and Planning Schemes, are also chosen to provide insight into good practice.

The case examples were chosen using a robust selection process. This involved an initial screening of the Department of the Environment, Communities and Local Government (DECLG) database of LAPs and related plans, and a focused review of examples of good practice abroad. A long-list of plans emerged from this screening. The long-list was then subjected to a more detailed and robust evaluation of the various components of the individual plans. The final group of case examples emerged from this evaluation.

The evaluation found that the structure, content and presentation of plans varied considerably. This is not surprising, given the flexibility allowed in their structure, content and presentation, heretofore. It was decided, therefore, to focus on aspects of good practice within individual plans. In any event, no LAP or other, similar local-level plan, was considered to represent best practice in all aspects of the processes set out in this Manual.

How to use the Manual

The structure of the Manual follows a linear process of plan preparation, corresponding to broad themes that should be addressed at each stage of the process. It is a structured, sequential and flexible process for the preparation of Local Area Plans. The process should be flexible and iterative, that is, it should allow for existing or new themes to be revisited or introduced along the way.

Each section outlines an important aspect or stage of the process, providing an outline of the main steps and elements that should be considered. As stated previously, case examples are selected to highlight aspects of good practice. They are not intended to represent model templates or to represent good practice in its entirety.

Terms used in the Manual

The terms used in the Manual, such as 'vision', 'principles', 'strategies' and 'guidance' essentially describe a hierarchy of plan elements. These should not be considered as fixed terms - they are interchangeable with other terms which plan-makers might consider more appropriate. For example, 'vision' might be replaced with 'overall aim', 'principles' might be replaced by 'aims' or 'goals', 'strategies' might be referred to as 'overall objectives' and 'guidance' might be referred to as 'objectives' or 'specific objectives'.

Each LAP will need to specify which aspects of the plan correlate to which statutory requirements for LAP content, such as specific objectives.

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On preparation and consultation

Making an LAP consists of two distinctive but overlapping processes. The first, which is the main focus of the Manual, is concerned with the process of preparing a quality, evidence-based, draft LAP, and the second is the statutory process, which takes the draft LAP through to adoption.

Meaningful and effective consultation is necessary to deliver quality LAPs. It must be carefully managed and closely integrated with the plan preparation and statutory processes. It will also assist in creating a sense of ownership of the final LAP by the community.

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On preparation and consultation

Processes

Making an LAP consists of two distinctive but overlapping processes. The first, which is the main focus of the Manual, is concerned with the process of preparing a quality, evidence-based, draft LAP, and the second is the statutory process, which takes the draft LAP through to adoption.

The Manual aims to knit these two processes together, with the overall aim of creating better LAPs derived from good practice and a strong, evidence-based understanding of the place and the needs and aspirations of the community.

Preparing the draft LAP

The first process for LAP making is the plan preparation process. This process may vary in scope and detail, depending on the context. For example, the preparation of a new LAP will have different requirements, inputs and approaches, compared to the review of an existing LAP.

The process for preparing the draft LAP is not subject to an explicit statutory timeframe, however, a 12-month period for background work (preparation of the draft LAP) is recommended in the Planning Guidelines. This period should allow for the completion of other significant processes, such as flood risk assessment (FRA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and their integration with the LAP plan preparation process.

While there should be no set process for data gathering, a rational approach has been shown to be the most effective.

In subsequent sections, the Manual sets out a suggested, staged approach, which consists of:

- Establishing the LAP context;
- Understanding the place;
- Setting out a vision and principles for development;
- Generating strategies;
- Preparing detailed guidance; and
- Ensuring delivery.

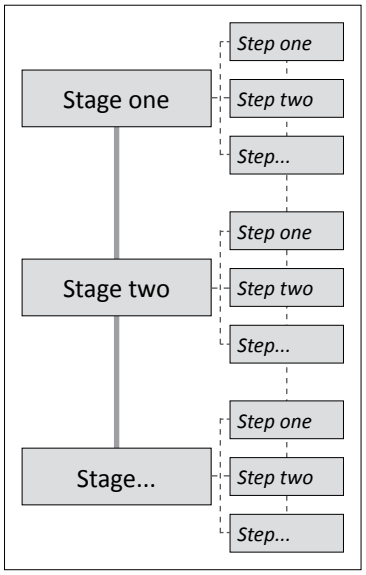
Adopting the LAP: the statutory process

The planning legislation sets out the broad requirements and processes for content, consultation and adoption of LAPs . These processes are dealt with in greater detail in the Planning Guidelines.

In terms of timeframes, the legislation concerns itself essentially with the notification, display and adoption processes for the draft LAP, which can span a period of between 18 and 35 weeks from the date on which the draft LAP is placed on public display.

When preparing a draft LAP, processes and timeframes for other related or higher-level plans and strategies should also be factored in.

The need for consistency between the LAP and other plans, strategies and Planning Guidance, is addressed in Section 1 of the Manual.



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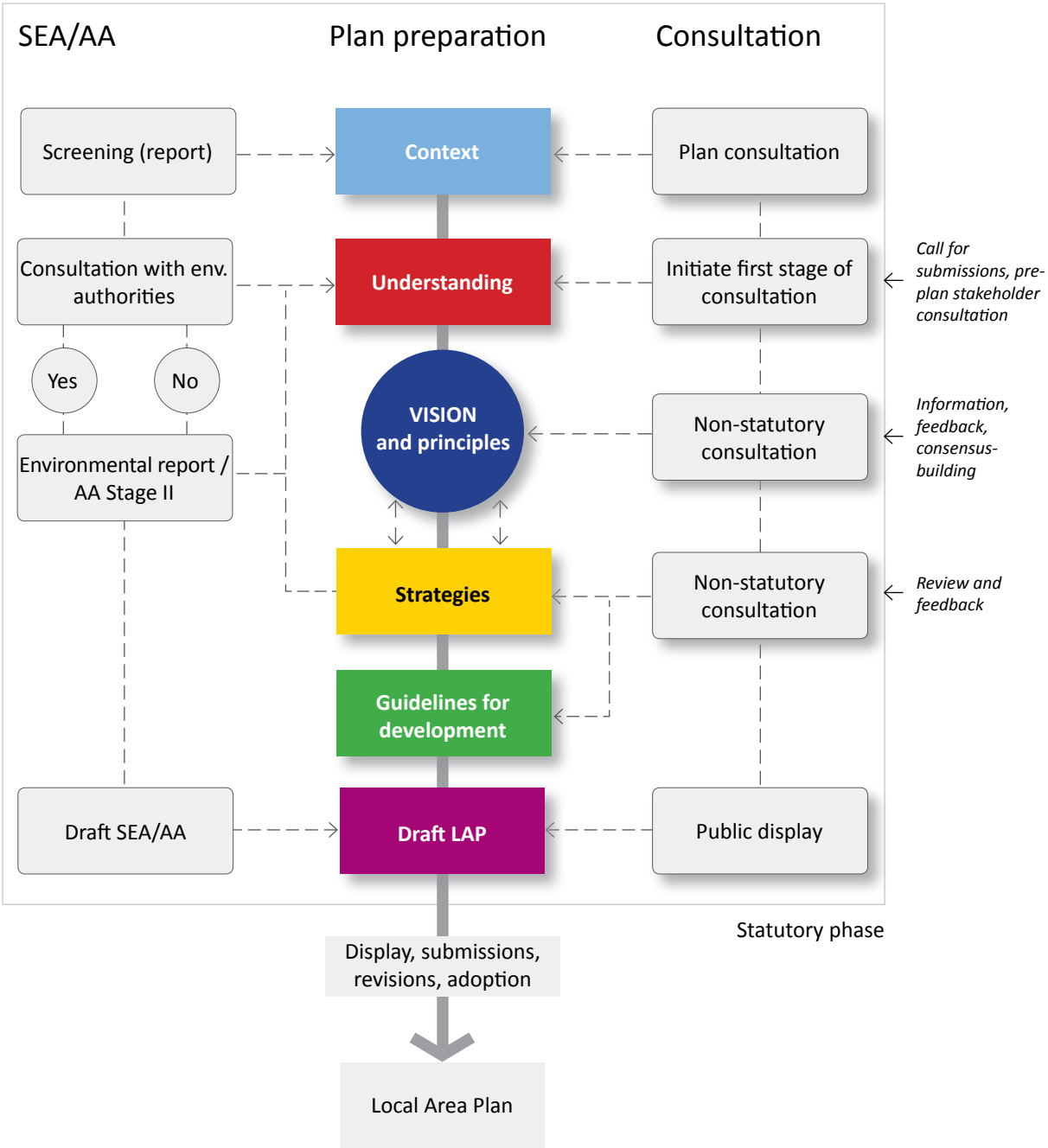
This conceptual diagram shows a typical plan preparation process which consists of stages, with each of these stages consisting of smaller steps or actions.



This conceptual diagram shows the plan preparation process used in this manual. The diagram can also be used to explore relationships with the SEA/AA processes and consultation.

Effective consultation

Meaningful and effective consultation is necessary to deliver quality LAPs. It must be carefully managed and closely integrated with the plan preparation and statutory processes. It will also assist in creating a sense of ownership of the final LAP by the community.

Statutory consultation

The planning legislation sets out the broad requirements for consultation. In summary these are:

- Consultation with, and notification of, prescribed bodies;
- Wider consultation with a range of key stakeholders, including local residents, public sector agencies, non-governmental agencies, local community groups and commercial and business interests, as part of the LAP preparation process; and
- Public display of the draft LAP and subsequent receipt of observations and submissions.

Statutory aspects of consultation are outlined in detail in the Planning Guidelines.

Consultation in the draft LAP preparation process

Achieving meaningful and effective public participation will require a structured approach to consultation during the full LAP process.

It is essential that the community and key stakeholders are engaged at an early stage. Only through consultation can a plan be properly scoped, all relevant information tapped, key issues identified and needs and aspirations highlighted.

Local communities can be an important source of baseline information, such as local social and cultural aspects or historical local flooding, that may not be available from other, conventional sources, such as Local Authority registers and archives.

The community and key stakeholders should be involved in scoping, preparing and delivering the LAP, with effective consultation of particular importance in the 'Understanding of Place', 'Vision and Principles' and 'Ensuring Delivery' stages of the LAP preparation process.

The consultation strategy

Given the discretion and flexibility available to Planning Authorities in carrying out consultation, it is recommended, as a good practice approach, that a comprehensive consultation strategy is prepared at the initial stages of the process to guide the preparation, adoption and delivery of the LAP.
The consultation strategy could incorporate the following elements:

- Establishment of a project steering group. This may include direct community representation on the group or set out arrangements for the input of community representatives into the steering process;
- Consultation with key interests and stakeholder groups;
- Structured means for participation by the local community;
- Notification of the prescribed bodies; and
- Wider community/public consultation.

The consultation strategy should be formulated to include those who frequently have less access to the planning process, such as young people, older people, minority and special interest groups.

The final consultation strategy should identify the following:

- Overall consultation process;
- Key actors and stakeholders;
- Consultation techniques applicable to each project stage;
- Milestones and key deliverables; and
- Integration and relationship with other project management processes.

Suggested techniques

There is a wide range of potential techniques that can be used to deliver effective consultation during the LAP preparation process. Planning Authorities will need to play the role of facilitator, as many people are not familiar with the LAP or associated consultation processes.

← *This conceptual diagram shows a typical consultation pyramid. This is an effective way of identifying and communicating the range and extent of consultation at different levels*

Experience has shown that combining different levels of engagement is most effective. This may include a broad call for submissions, local workshops or clinics, structured meetings and representation on the LAP steering group. Communities may also be represented through local associations and elected representatives. Consideration should also be given to the use of a trained, neutral facilitator, where appropriate. Some best practice techniques are presented below.

Game or role-playing

Identifying the Community
The scope of consultation needs to be carefully considered to ensure that people are made aware of their right to participate. In general terms, the more people involved in the process the better.

In established areas it will be easier to identify the local community. In undeveloped areas the community may be sparse, peripheral or non-existent. This may pose greater challenges, and the community may need to be considered as a larger entity of surrounding and potentially related areas.

Wider community consultation
An effective technique for engaging the wider community is by way of a public call for submissions, typically advertised in the local press. This serves the dual purpose of alerting people to the fact that the plan preparation process has been initiated and providing an initial conduit for submissions to be made. Calls for submissions are most effective where they are specific about the nature and scope of what is being sought without 'leading'. For example, by asking people to list things about the area that they consider to be positive or negative.

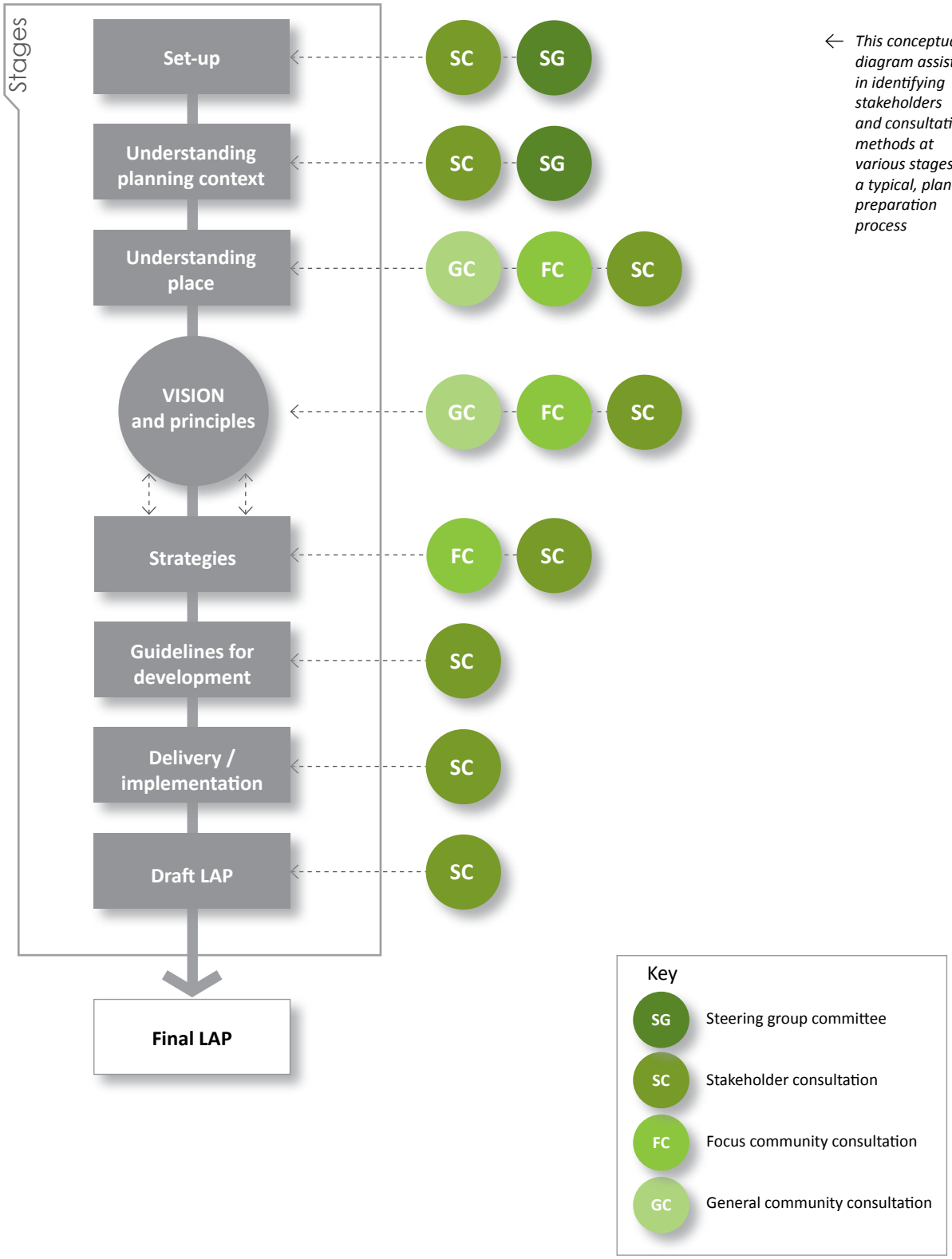
Web-based consultation and communication
The internet is already being harnessed as a medium for public consultation, notably for plan notification, display of plan material and receipt of comments, feedback and discussion. Social networks are now playing an important role in connecting local communities, and will, no doubt, be harnessed in the future as a technique for wider community consultation.

Structured community consultation
Structured workshops are an effective method for engaging people in a targeted and productive way. They need to be carefully planned and facilitated to ensure that the issues are understood and weighed appropriately, while also ensuring that proceedings are not dominated by personal agendas. Workshops can be tailored to suit the experience of the participants, whether they include the general public, built environment professionals or key stakeholders (preferably a combination of these). Workshops can be used in a number of ways to garner information about the area, identify strengths and weaknesses (e.g. SWOT analysis), to facilitate sectoral analysis, agree a vision and to help set priorities.

Game or role-playing
This involves a particular form of workshop where games, exercises or role-playing techniques are devised for people to test alternative planning and development scenarios against their vision, and to identify the potential consequences these might have for the place.

Walkabouts
Facilitated walking tours of the area combined with tours of equivalent successful places where high quality development has already taken place can help people to understand the potential and effects of change, and to foster an appreciation of the benefits of good design.

Envisioning
Envisioning is a vital early stage in the plan preparation process. It engages the community and others in considering and communicating a vision for their area for the future. Vision can be communicated for example, through words, text, images, sketches and models. To be effective, the community needs to be engaged from the outset, so that people can get involved at a point when they know they can make a difference.



This conceptual diagram assists in identifying stakeholders and consultation methods at various stages in a typical, plan-preparation process

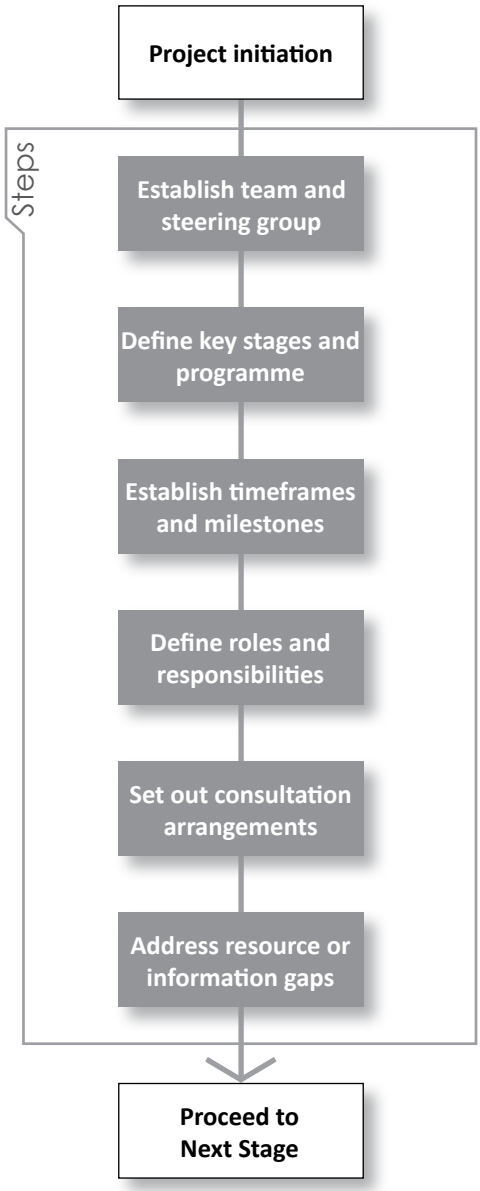
Ensuring Delivery
A role for the community in the delivery and monitoring of LAPs is outlined in the Planning Guidelines. These roles will need to be considered towards the end of the LAP process and should be set out clearly in the relevant delivery sections of the LAP.
The plan preparation and statutory processes will need to be carefully designed. A project management approach should be adopted. This operates on the basis of a set of agreed actions, with continuous review of progress during the process.

Project management and resources

Key aspects of the management process are to:

- Appoint a dedicated Project Manager:
- Establish a multi-disciplinary LAP team and steering group;
- Set out an overall project process and identify key stages;
- Establish important timelines, milestones and outputs;
- Define roles, responsibilities and resources; and
- Set out consultation arrangements.

Once adequate time has been allowed for the process, resources need to be matched to the tasks in hand. The range of resources will vary from project to project, depending on many variables, such as the nature and complexity of the LAP area, the characteristics of the plan area, information sources and gaps, in-house expertise and the need for specialist advice.



← *This diagram shows a typical, first stage for local area plan preparation. This is crucial stage in project planning management*

Case example iiA

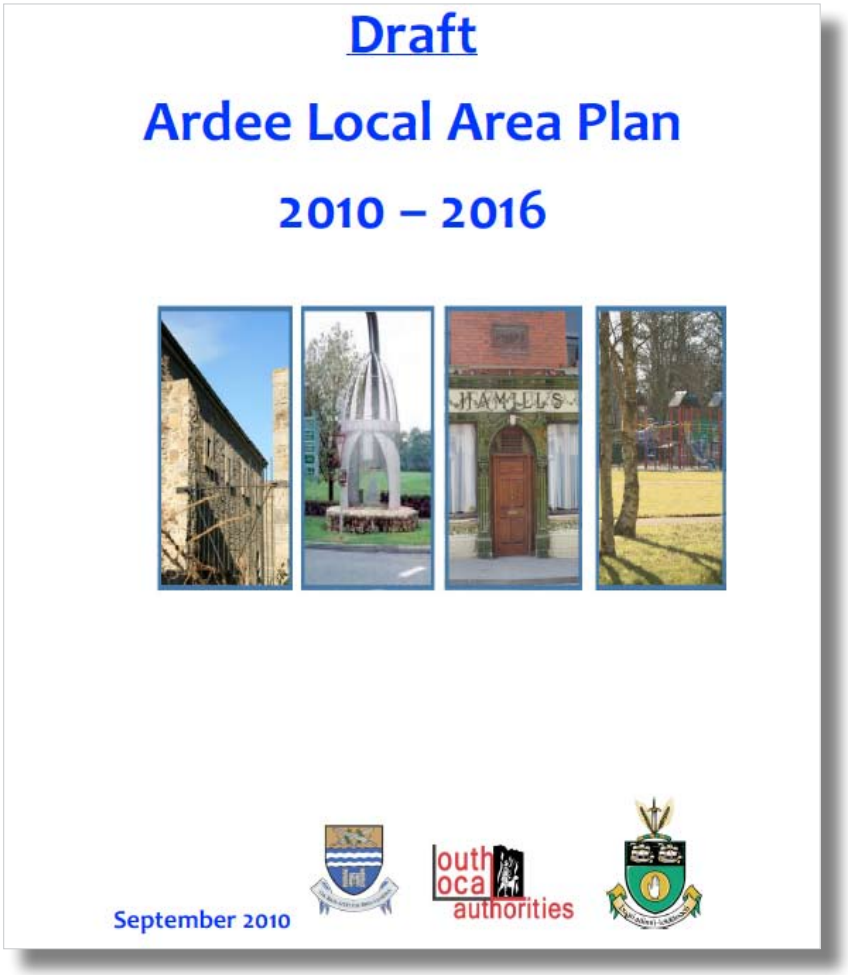
Ardee - engaging the wider community at an early stage

Ardee is a principal County Town in Louth, with a population of approximately 3,500. The Ardee LAP is set within the context of the Louth County Development Plan with the intention of setting out an overall strategy for the planning and development of the town, and, in particular, to provide an area-specific focus for the detailed assessment of local planning issues.

The Council engaged in an extensive pre-draft public consultation programme as part of the background work stage of the plan preparation process. This included the preparation of a compact, clear, concise and illustrated issues paper. The issues paper set out a summary with background information on a range of key issues to be addressed in the preparation of the LAP. It also framed a number of key questions on each issue to prompt community discussion and help develop and shape their comments and observations.

The issues paper was widely distributed to voluntary and community groups, libraries, schools, statutory bodies, service providers, elected members and stakeholders. It was also posted on the internet with a facility for receipt of public comments and observations.

The early engagement of the community in identifying issues, vision and strategy for Ardee, improved the plan preparation process by providing, at the right stage, the understanding of community needs and aspirations and important aspects of local knowledge.



Case example iiB
Askeaton – involving children in pre-draft consultation processes

This LAP sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Askeaton, a small rural settlement with a population of approximately 1000 persons, located approximately 25 kilometres from Limerick City. The LAP is set within the context of the Limerick County Development Plan and aims to guide the long-term development of the built up area of the existing town.

The Council engaged in a pre-draft public consultation programme that included a public workshop in Askeaton. The feedback from this workshop was used to frame the vision statement for the LAP. Consultation also involved school children from Scoil Mhuire, Askeaton, in the envisioning process during the early stages of the plan preparation process. The children were asked to prepare drawings and paintings on the theme 'Askeaton 2028'. These were included in the written statement for the LAP, helping to promote a sense of ownership of the plan within the youngest sector of the community.

↑

An example of the work of the children as presented in the LAP

1
Set out the context

The background and purpose and the broader planning policy context of the LAP should be explained in the document. It should explain the Planning Authority's rationale for preparing the LAP, with reference to the proposed plan area, its boundary and the need for preparing the plan, including whether this is mandatory or discretionary.

1

Set out the context

1.1 Purpose, process and policy

The background and purpose of the LAP should be explained in the document, including a succinct account of:

- The reason for deciding to prepare the LAP;
- The processes and procedures that were followed;
- Its fit with higher-level and other related plans;
- Other relevant plans and studies;
- Relevant policies and significant planning decisions affecting the area;
- Its relationship to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and other EU Directives; and
- The general structure and content of the LAP.

The document should explain the Planning Authority's rationale for preparing the LAP, with reference to the proposed plan area, its boundary and the need for preparing the plan, including whether this is mandatory or discretionary.

The processes and procedures that were followed in preparing the LAP should be summarised. Preferably, this should be supported by an explanatory flow chart showing important stages in the plan-making process.

1.2 SEA and AA

The requirements and processes for SEA and AA are dealt with in detail in the Planning Guidelines. In terms of process, all LAPs, for which full SEA environmental reports are not mandatory, will need to be screened in accordance with the *Planning Guidelines 12: Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, 2004*, unless a prima facie case exists to proceed directly to the scoping stage.

Also, all LAPs should be screened as part of the AA process, to determine whether a full AA is required. The AA process will be guided by *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009*. In terms of content, the LAP will need to set out clearly how both of these processes have been handled and integrated into the LAP.

The LAP should include an SEA and AA statement, setting out the decision of the Planning Authority in relation to the need, or otherwise, to carry out full reports, and a summary of the reasons for the decision. If necessary, full statements could be contained in LAP appendices or as a separate, stand-alone document.

1.3 Planning and development policy

The LAP should include a review of relevant plans and policies affecting the plan area including:

- Higher-level plans;
- Development plan policies and objectives;
- Other relevant, non-statutory plans and studies; and
- Significant and relevant planning decisions.

The Planning Guidelines set out the broad range of relevant strategies, policies and plans at the various spatial levels.

National policy

Most National-level policy, strategy, plans and planning guidance will have been addressed and applied at the Development Plan level. However, the LAP may need to address consistency with relevant aspects where delivery in practice and at the local level is critical, for example, National Climate Change Strategy and the policy document, *Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future*.

Development plan policies

The review should set out relevant place-specific policies and objectives contained in the development plan (and/or the draft development plan). Particular attention should be given to population projections and housing, economic, retail and settlement strategies. This should not take the form of an exhaustive cut and paste exercise of generic policies, but focus on relevant aspects that have spatial implications, for example, specific roads objectives affecting the area, policies for the protection of views or areas designated for special protection, such as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs).

The core strategy
The LAP should clearly describe and show 'on-the ground', local-level compliance with the Development Plan Core Strategy [Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010, and Guidance Note on Core Strategies, DECLG, 2010]. At an early stage, potential implications for the LAP process and outcomes will need to be identified. Of particular importance will be potential implications arising from relevant EU Directives, the current development plan strategies, such as settlement, housing and retail.

At this stage it will be necessary to determine whether the basic premise of the LAP is broadly in line with higher-level development plan policy. It will also be important to flag potential mismatches between strategy and the demand and provision for zoned land (including zoned, undeveloped land and vacant or unfinished residential development). This issue will become clearer in subsequent stages of the plan-making process.

Other plans and projects
The LAP should identify any other relevant, non-statutory plans and include a summary of any aspects that the planning authority considers relevant, for example, any non-statutory urban framework plans or site development briefs for significant sites/projects or recommendations for protection of special habitats such as hedgerows, zones of archaeological interest. Lastly, the LAP should include a summary of any significant development proposals affecting the area, particularly those considered likely to have a significant impact on their surroundings or other aspects of the LAP.

1.4 EU directives and legislation

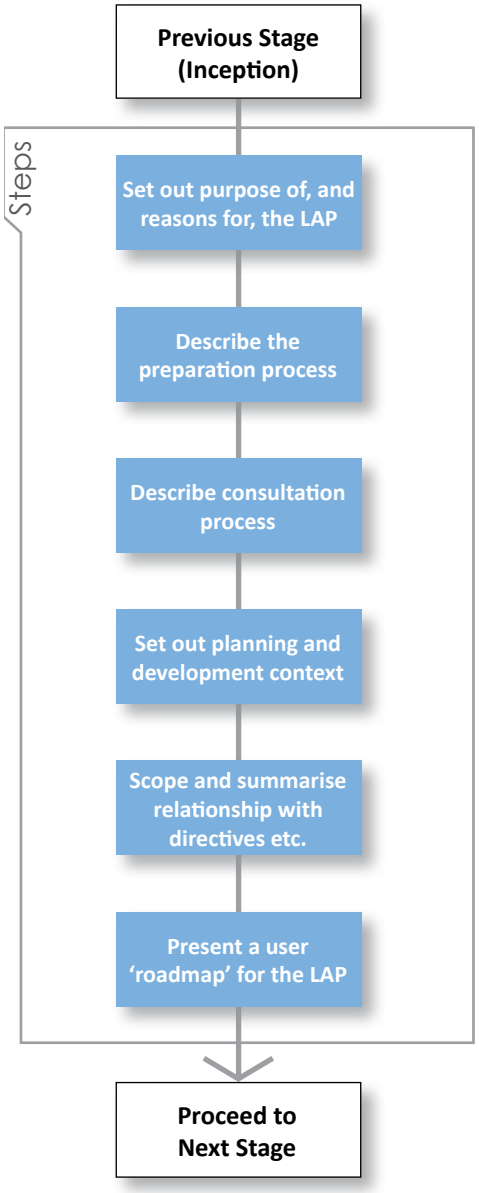
Designations, plans or studies produced under all relevant EU Directives and other legislation that may have an impact on the LAP area should be considered. This exercise may include:

- Natura sites (Habitats Directive);
- Wildlife Acts;
- Areas protected under River Basin Management Plans (Water Framework Directive);
- Vulnerable ground conditions (Groundwater Directive); and
- Areas at risk of flooding (Floods Directive).

The LAP should explain the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment processes carried out under the SEA Directive and the Habitats Directive respectively, including the screening exercise and the reason for deciding whether or not a full environmental report was considered necessary. The LAP should also make reference to the full SEA and AA Environmental reports (if undertaken) and the SEA Statement, describing how the plan was modified in the light of their findings.

Proposals for monitoring should be included in the LAP, making sure these are aligned with monitoring proposals contained in the SEA, and setting out a programme and responsibilities for monitoring to avoid duplication of work. These may be addressed in greater detail in the later delivery sections of the plan.

LAPs should not include exhaustive lists of EU Directives and Regulations if these are not directly applicable. Compliance with Directives at all levels is mandatory, whether referenced in an LAP or not.



← *This diagram shows a typical, context stage for local area plan preparation*

1.5 'Roadmap' for the LAP

It is useful to include a brief description of the structure and content of the LAP when setting out the context of the LAP. This will assist the user and may also identify which aspects of the plan or related work are included in appendices or in other, related or supporting documents.

The LAP for Craughwell was adopted by Galway County Council in 2006. Craughwell is a small village with a population of approximately 500 people, situated 23 km south east of Galway City. This Plan sets out the context within which the LAP was prepared in a comprehensive yet succinct manner. The hierarchy of guidelines and plans is considered and the policies and programmes. The relationship between other plans and policies is clearly set out and those which will either directly or indirectly affect the LAP are identified. The LAP pays particular attention to:

- The legislative basis for the plan;
- Its relationship with the Galway County Development Plan;
- The overall hierarchy of plans;
- The need for consistency with the above;
- Providing information on the likely significant effects of implementing the plan.

The LAP focuses on the development of a 55ha site set within an overall village area of 87ha. Future development is carefully considered through a map of proposed development areas which includes the indicative location of 'strategic gateways'.

Consultation with the community and key stakeholders was an important part of the LAP preparation process.

Case example 1A

Craughwell - setting out the context for the LAP in the hierarchy of plans and the SEA Diagrams

The LAP for Craughwell was adopted by Galway County Council in 2006. Craughwell is a small village with a population of approximately 500 people, situated 23 km south east of Galway City. This Plan sets out the context within which the LAP was prepared in a comprehensive yet succinct manner. The hierarchy of guidelines and plans is considered and the policies and programmes. The relationship between other plans and policies is clearly set out and those which will either directly or indirectly affect the LAP are identified. The LAP pays particular attention to:

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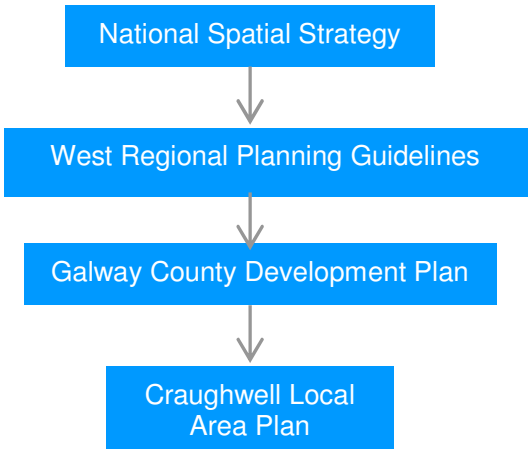
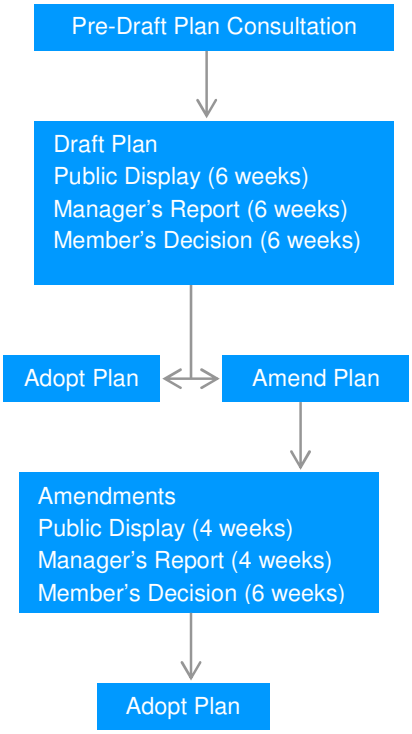
The LAP focuses on the development of a 55ha site set within an overall village area of 87ha. Future development is carefully considered through a map of proposed development areas which includes the indicative location of 'strategic gateways'.

Consultation with the community and key stakeholders was an important part of the LAP preparation process.





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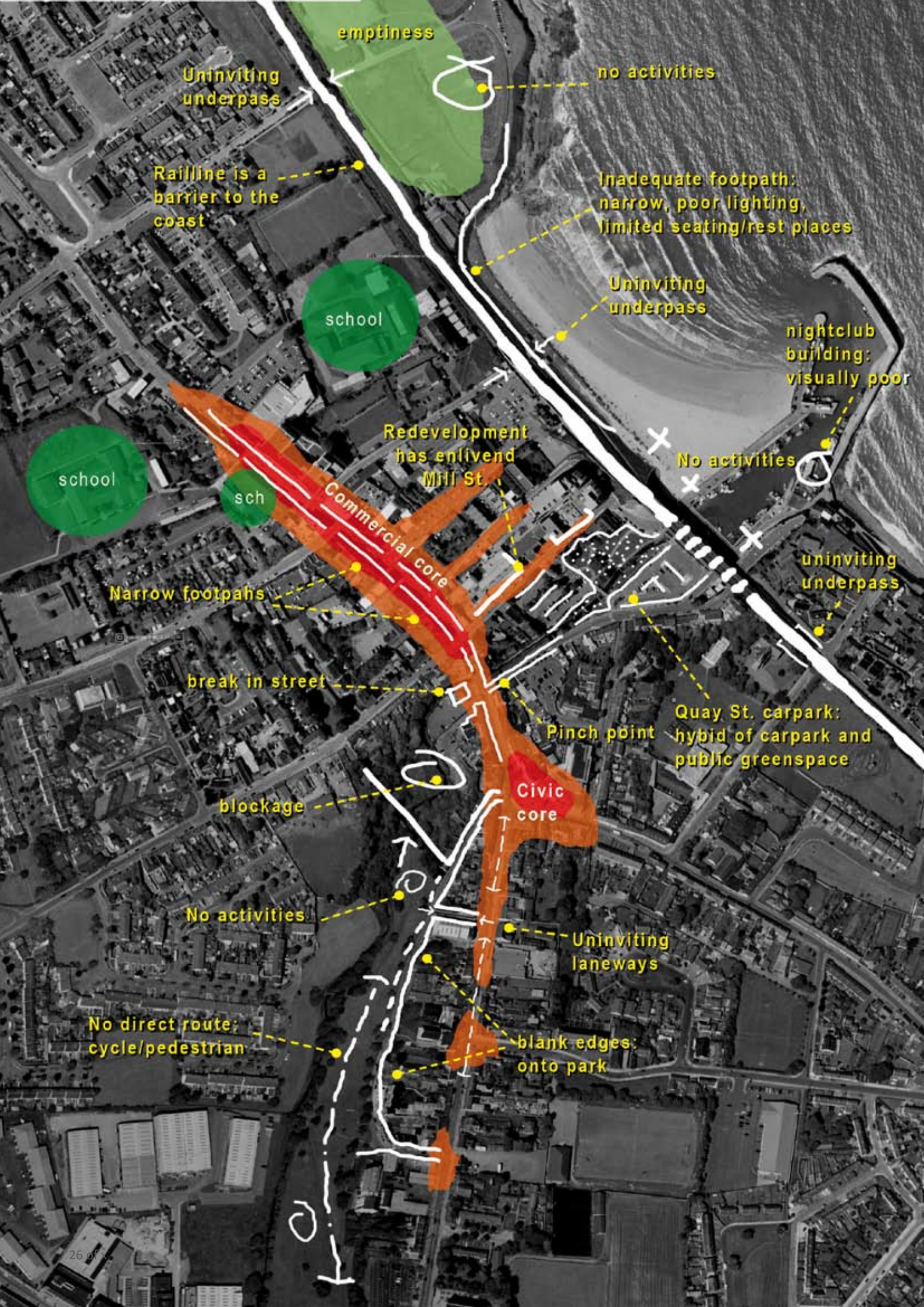
Diagrams in the LAP clearly set out the hierarchy of plans and LAP preparation process


emptiness
Uninviting underpass
no activities
Railline is a barrier to the coast
Inadequate footpath: narrow, poor lighting, limited seating/rest places
Uninviting underpass
school
nightclub building: visually poor
Redevelopment has enlivend Mill St.
No activities
school
sch
Commercial core
uninviting underpass
Narrow footpahs
break in street
Pinch point
Quay St. carpark: hybid of carpark and public greenspace
Civic core
blockage
No activities
Uninviting laneways
No direct route: cycle/pedestrian
blank edges: onto park

2
Understand the place

The LAP is the level at which the planning system concerns itself with the reality and potential of places. Place embodies a range of elements which include the community, function, form and qualities of an area. Good LAPs are based on a strong understanding of context, place and community.

2

Understand the place

2.1 The importance of place

The LAP is the level at which the planning system concerns itself with the reality and potential of places. Place embodies a range of elements, which include the community, function, form and qualities of an area.

Good LAPs are based on a strong understanding of context, place and community.

The broad scoping of issues and the proper choice of techniques for survey and analysis should provide the plan-maker with adequate information and knowledge to make informed decisions about the future of the area.

Importantly, a good understanding of place and community also facilitates better understanding of existing environmental issues and the likely impacts of implementing the LAP.

The scope and techniques for LAPs are likely to be unique, as no two places or communities present the same character, issues or potential.

2.2 The bigger picture

The understanding of the place must sit within the broader plan and socio-economic context. This is dealt with in more detail in Planning Guidelines.

Some area-specific objectives from other related plans, for example, planned roads or public transport, may also need to be included in the spatial analysis of LAP. All plan areas will need to be considered in the context of the wider area or spatial context, such as the larger urban structure, transport networks and infrastructure, green infrastructure and biodiversity and microclimate.

2.3 Community involvement

Community involvement through structured public consultation has a key role to play in developing this level of understanding of place. This is addressed in greater detail in Section X of this Manual.

2.4 Process

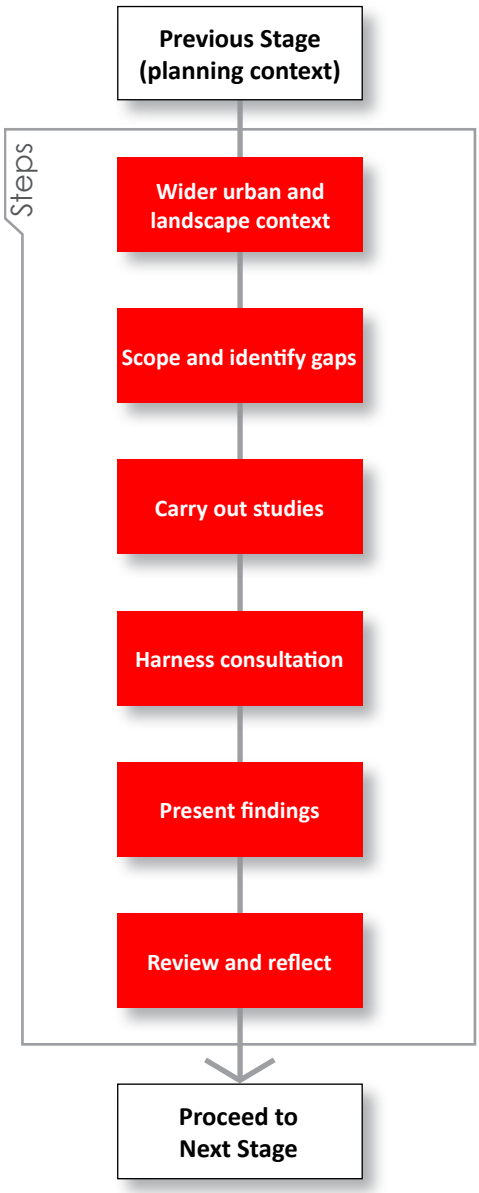
This stage should commence as soon as possible after the set-up and context stages. Adequate time and resources need to be given to this process, as consultation feedback, new, updated or specialist studies may take time.

Importantly, this process is iterative as later stages can identify or uncover new issues and opportunities. It should also align with the FRA, SEA and AA processes. This will include the following important steps:

- Scoping of survey and analysis (SEA/AA screening and scoping);
- Gathering all relevant information;
- Analysing the material;
- Collating the results;
- Reviewing and reflection on the stage and the findings;
- Allowing for update of findings during later stages.
-

2.5 Scoping

Scoping of the survey and analysis work needs to be undertaken at the outset. It should attempt to identify broad areas of concern, interest or potential. These should



← *This diagram shows a typical survey and analysis stage for local area plan preparation*

be considered not as separate elements in their own right, but as a series of overlapping studies or strands. This step can also be aligned with screening/scoping for FRA, SEA and AA, as appropriate.

2.6 Studies

The analysis is best broken down into smaller elements, which can be tackled individually. These might include, for example, studies of:

- The larger society, economy, environmental - issues and opportunities.
- The local community - issues and aspirations.
- Local character - built and natural heritage.
- Urban and landscape form or structure.
- Land use and functions.
- Housing, health and education.
- Employment and enterprise.
- Movement and transport.
- Flood risk, hydrology and water quality.

2.7 Information gathering and gaps

Having established the scope of work, an information inventory and list of available sources should be prepared (see section 4.10.1, below). All relevant information should be gathered and any gaps should be identified. Review should commence on all relevant information and significant gaps should be plugged by carrying out or commissioning new research, surveys or studies, while avoiding duplication of existing work.

Where possible, existing information sources, such as SEA Environmental Reports, Environmental Impact Statements, local habitat studies, flood risk management reports, community publications and heritage studies, should be used.

2.8 Findings

Each study should summarise the main findings and the possible implications for the plan vision, principles and strategies. Relationships between separate issues should be identified, for example where aspects of biodiversity may overlap with aspects flood risk management.

Again, the studies should overlap with other statutory requirements such as SEA and AA report preparation, as appropriate.

2.9 Presentation

It is essential that analysis and findings are presented in a clear and unambiguous way. Written elements should be brief and focus on relevant and main aspects of character, issues and aspirations. If the analysis is extensive but still worthy of publication, it may be appropriate to append supporting material to the LAP, prepare separate addendums or working papers.

Where possible, graphics should be used to express the spatial aspects of the analysis. This will facilitate understanding of the plan.

2.10 Review and reflection

Prior to completing this stage the plan team should review the process and reflect on the outcomes. Important questions should be addressed:

- Has this stage been carried out in a collaborative way?
- Have all significant issues been considered?
- Have the studies been completed satisfactorily with no significant gaps in

knowledge?
- Are the findings clear and well presented?
- Are the relationships between issues identified and understood?
- Have other statutory processes been successfully integrated?

If necessary, the team should use this step to address incomplete or unsatisfactory aspects of survey and analysis before proceeding to the next stage of the plan preparation process.

2.11 Techniques

Each of the studies will utilise different techniques. These should be considered at the earliest possible stage and should reflect the nature and complexity of the study or the specific plan issues.

Techniques can be broadly categorised as being either qualitative (measuring or describing character or qualities) or quantitative (empirical or based on statistical or scientific data). Most studies will consist of elements of both types, and will typically require a mix of desk-based and field-based work.

2.11.1 Baseline information

It is essential to gather all relevant baseline information at the earliest stage possible. This information will generally be held in paper or hard copy or electronically. Baseline information may be dispersed in terms of locations and sources, for example held in other sections of Local Authorities or in other statutory agencies.

All relevant registers and office libraries/filing systems should be reviewed. All Local Authorities operate GIS and all relevant baseline information from this source should be collated and examined. This information may be presented in layers and/or by theme.

A suitable base map is an essential starting point, and this should be augmented where necessary by a 3D base map and aerial photography.

2.11.2 Quantitative techniques

Some element of statistical and/or scientific research will need to be employed in most LAPs. The most common techniques for LAPs include:
- Population profile and projections (Statistical);
- Topography, landscape features, site survey (Desk, walkover and land survey);
- Land use/land ownership surveys;
- Traffic profiling and projections;
- Flood risk/hydrology assessments;
- Habitat mapping and wildlife surveys;
- Urban and landscape structure;
- Infrastructure and services.

These techniques normally provide the basis for predictive modelling or projections.

2.11.3 Qualitative techniques

Analysis diagrams for Urban Design Framework Plan and Guidelines, North Main Street, Ballymun ↑

These techniques focus on aspects of character, quality, issues and opinion. Useful techniques for LAPs include:

- Character and quality – (photographic studies, tissue studies, typical sections);
- Visual analysis – photographic and representative;
- Activity and behavioural surveys - post-occupancy surveys and evaluations;
- Community consultation;
- Questionnaires and interviews.

2.11.4 Issues

Issues will be identified from the analysis of the survey work. The core issues need to be identified, and this requires some level of consensus. An effective means for achieving this is through group working and community consultation. Techniques such as SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) can be useful in scoping plan issues.

In terms of the spatial aspects of the LAP, a layer analysis - overlaying the various spatial analysis diagrams - may also help to identify issues.

Case example 2A
Waterford North Quays – analysing the urban fabric

This LAP was prepared by Waterford City Council in 2008. A detailed urban design framework plan was developed as a base plan for the LAP. The framework focused on:

- Creating a strong and complementary extension to Waterford City;
- The provision of a rich and diverse mix of uses;
- Creating strong character and sense of place;
- Providing an adaptable, yet coherent urban structure; and
- The creation of civic spaces.

The sensitivity of the site and its strategic importance and prominence in the City required an in-depth analysis of the urban character and fabric of the area, surrounding areas and the city centre. Urban analysis included:

- Historical development;
- Natural and built heritage and microclimate;
- Urban fabric and form including analysis of the urban block and plot patterns using tissue studies (analysis of the shape and dimensions of selected elements);
- Visual analysis of the topography, streetscapes, landmarks and character areas;
- Existing land uses and activities;
- Movement and access – including existing access and permeability, with particular emphasis on the walking catchments; and
- Transport.

These studies informed the issues, vision and strategy for the LAP.

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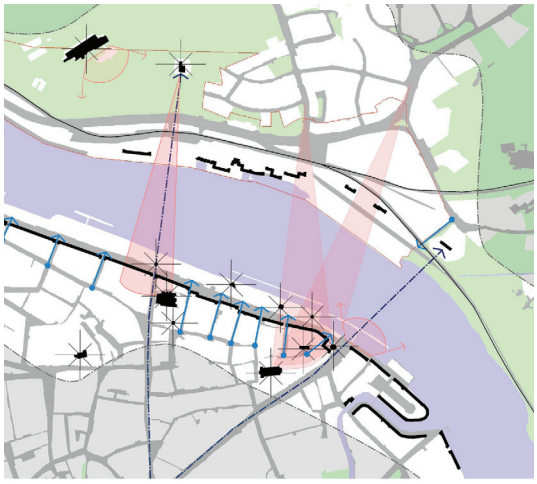
Analysis of historical development of urban morphology



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Visual analysis indicating main views, vistas, landmark buildings and significant frontage

Case example 2B
Loughmacask – the importance of the landscape

The LAP for Loughmacask was adopted jointly by Kilkenny Borough Council and Kilkenny County Council in 2008. The Loughmacask area is an undeveloped suburban location west of Kilkenny City. It was recognised by the joint County Councils that the development of the area would require a detailed and coordinated planning and development framework as an integral part of the LAP, which has a distinctive landscape character. The Plan includes a comprehensive analysis of the form and character of the landscape. It identifies aspects of particular importance such as:

- Landscape character and views;
- Topography;
- Field patterns and boundaries;
- Prominent tree groups;
- Geology and hydrology; and
- Biodiversity.

This analysis was brought forward to later stages of the plan and informed the decisions regarding location, layout and character of the proposed development.

↑

The Open Space and Movement Strategy

Image

3
Establish the vision and principles

The plan should be guided by an agreed vision of what the place will be like. The vision should be informed by a thorough understanding of the place, established through consultation and underpinned by a set of core principles for its development.

3

Establish the vision and principles

3.1 Importance of vision and principles

The vision is the aim or goal of the plan. It embodies a strategy for the future of the place. The vision can be expressed in different ways: as a mission statement, a narrative that encapsulates some desired qualities or characteristics, a set of goals or more specific targets.

The vision should be aligned with the core strategy and supported by proper planning and sustainable development principles.

The vision and principles together articulate the synergy between the community's aspirations for the place and what is feasible: its desired characteristics and qualities; how they can be achieved; who will take responsibility for achieving them and how.

The vision will not remain static because as progress towards goals is made, the 'horizon' ahead continually shifts. Therefore, provision should be allowed to re-visit the vision at a later date.

3.2 Agreeing a vision

It is important that a shared vision is developed because it will form the basis for consensus building, guide the plan strategies and, ultimately, determine the character and quality of future development.

3.3 Public consultation

Community and stakeholder involvement via structured public consultation has a key role to play in establishing an agreed vision for the area as detailed in Section ii of the Manual.

3.4 Establishing principles for development

The vision should be amplified by sound planning principles. These should be rooted in proper planning and sustainable development, but tailored to support the realisation of the agreed vision and to provide a link between the vision and more place-specific plan strategies and objectives.

Agreeing a vision for the Balbriggan Public Realm Plan, 2010

↓

3.5 Elaborating the vision and guiding the strategy

The plan strategies should be informed by an understanding of the place and generated by the agreed vision of how the place will work in the future: how it will look and feel, how people will use it and how it will be different from other places.

Doing so will help to ensure that the strategies:

- Are guided by qualitative considerations;
- Integrate themes in an holistic manner;
- Are spatially oriented; and
- Character driven.

3.6 Presenting the vision

The agreed vision should be articulated clearly and succinctly using plain non-technical language and should be elaborated by means of images and/or diagrams and sketches that illustrate the character or qualities of the place that the plan is seeking to achieve. This can also help to reduce the amount of text that is needed to explain the intent of the plan, making it easier to read and understand.

Diagrams in 2d or 3d can help to explain ideas whereas photographs can highlight special qualities or standards. Such 'mood' type images should be selected carefully to avoid tokenistic references that may impart a misleading impression of what is realistically achievable in a given location.

Examples of sketches and visualisation →

Case example 3A
Liberties/Coombe, Dublin – vision through consultation

The Liberties/Coombe Local Area Plan was prepared by Dublin City Council in 2008. The Liberties/Coombe area is an historic precinct located in the western segment of Dublin's inner city. The area comprises a land area of approximately 136ha with a population of approximately 13,000. The purpose of the plan is to manage a significant level of change proposed for future development in a way that recognises and respects the historic character of the area, while also promoting best practice sustainable urban planning.

The LAP envisages that the area will develop as an exciting, attractive and liveable city quarter that will contribute to the economic prosperity and social success of the city and the nation. Of the many detailed elements of this LAP, the vision and principles element stands out. It is also a 'stand-out' example of developing a vision through public consultation.

The 2020 Vision for the Liberties shows aspirations for the future development of the area. The Vision is presented using clear graphics and supporting text to show details of how the area will develop if the ideas, recommendations and guidelines proposed in the draft LAP are implemented.

The vision is to be delivered through the realisation of a development strategy for the precinct as a whole and a series of detailed objectives established for eight character areas. The development strategy is developed around six themes: Economic, Social, Cultural; Spatial and Urban Form; Movement and Sustainability.

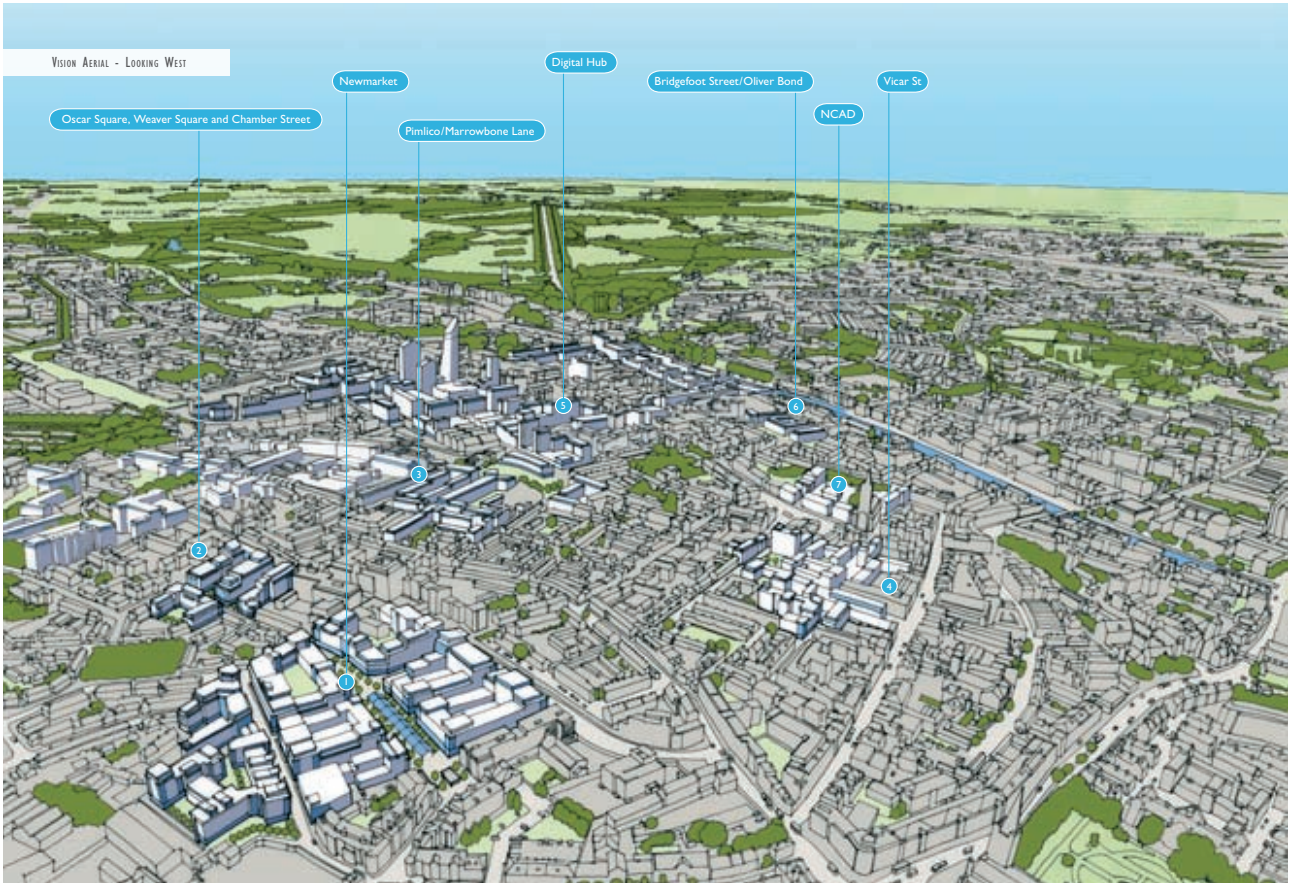
A comprehensive process of community engagement and public consultation underpinned the development of the Vision for the area. This process culminated in a Community Planning Weekend and a public presentation of the Community Vision for the Liberties, which was documented in the 'Liberties Community Planning Report'.

Key outcomes included the establishment of the Liberties Public Forum and five separate Focus Groups. The role of the Forum was to provide comment on emerging proposals for the draft LAP. Focus Groups participated in the development of action plans for key aspects of the proposed regeneration including built heritage, environmental sustainability, arts and culture, sports and leisure, and biodiversity and open space.

The preparation of the draft LAP was supported by a communication strategy, driven by the local community. The strategy included the production of newsletters and a project website to provide information to the wider community.

↑ *Agreeing a vision for the Liberties Local Area Plan, Dublin*

Extract from the LAP "Vision aerial looking west" ↓



Case example 3B
Phibsborough/Mountjoy – vision for a sustainable urban village

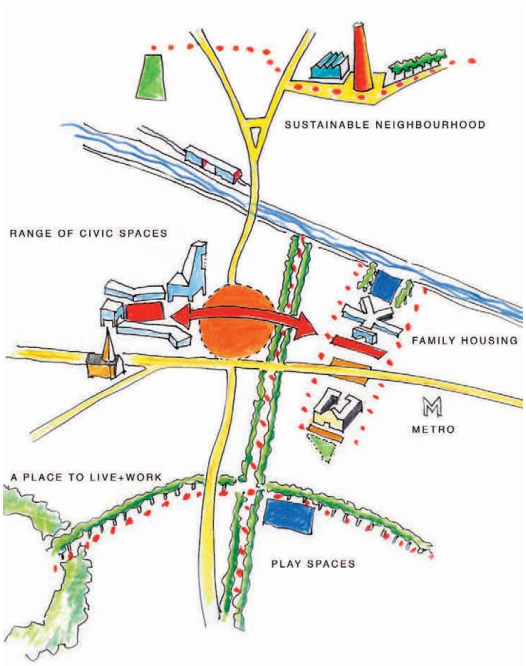
The Phibsborough/Mountjoy Plan was prepared and adopted by Dublin City Council in 2008. The plan represented a close collaboration between the City Council, elected members and local communities. The Phibsborough/Mountjoy area will undergo significant future change with the planned redevelopment of a number of significant sites and the planned introduction of new public transport schemes (Metro North and Luas Line D). The purpose of the LAP is to plan and direct the future development of this area as a quality urban neighbourhood.

Vision
The LAP sets out a clear vision for the regeneration of the area as a sustainable, integrated urban village, including the identification of 16 characteristics underpinning the urban village concept. The vision is elaborated through the preparation of a comprehensive development strategy which details objectives for important aspects of future development including housing and land use, transport, community needs, urban structure and form, public spaces, environmental sustainability and site frameworks for key development sites.

The development of the vision was underpinned by a comprehensive public consultation process, which is perhaps one of the reasons why the vision and principles aspects of the LAP are particularly well considered and elaborated. An extensive process of pre-draft public consultation included initial presentations to local residents groups, meetings with key stakeholder and community groups, posting of project information on Dublin City Council website, public open days and the preparation of a public consultation report.

Integrated Strategy
Building on the plan vision, the Local Area Plan sets out an integrated strategy for the coherent development of the area. There are four main elements in the development strategy: a hierarchy of open spaces, integrated transport systems, mixed-use and local services and facilities. The key development sites are set within these elements of the strategy.

Importantly, the strategy is presented in a simple and easy to understand format. This allows all readers to appreciate the most important aspects of the LAP. The development strategy is elaborated in more detail in the following Local Site Framework Strategies.



← *Sketch of main concepts underpinning the LAP*

3D sketch of proposals
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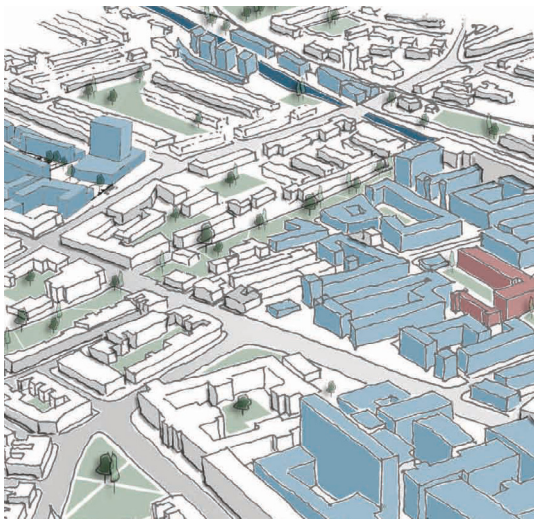
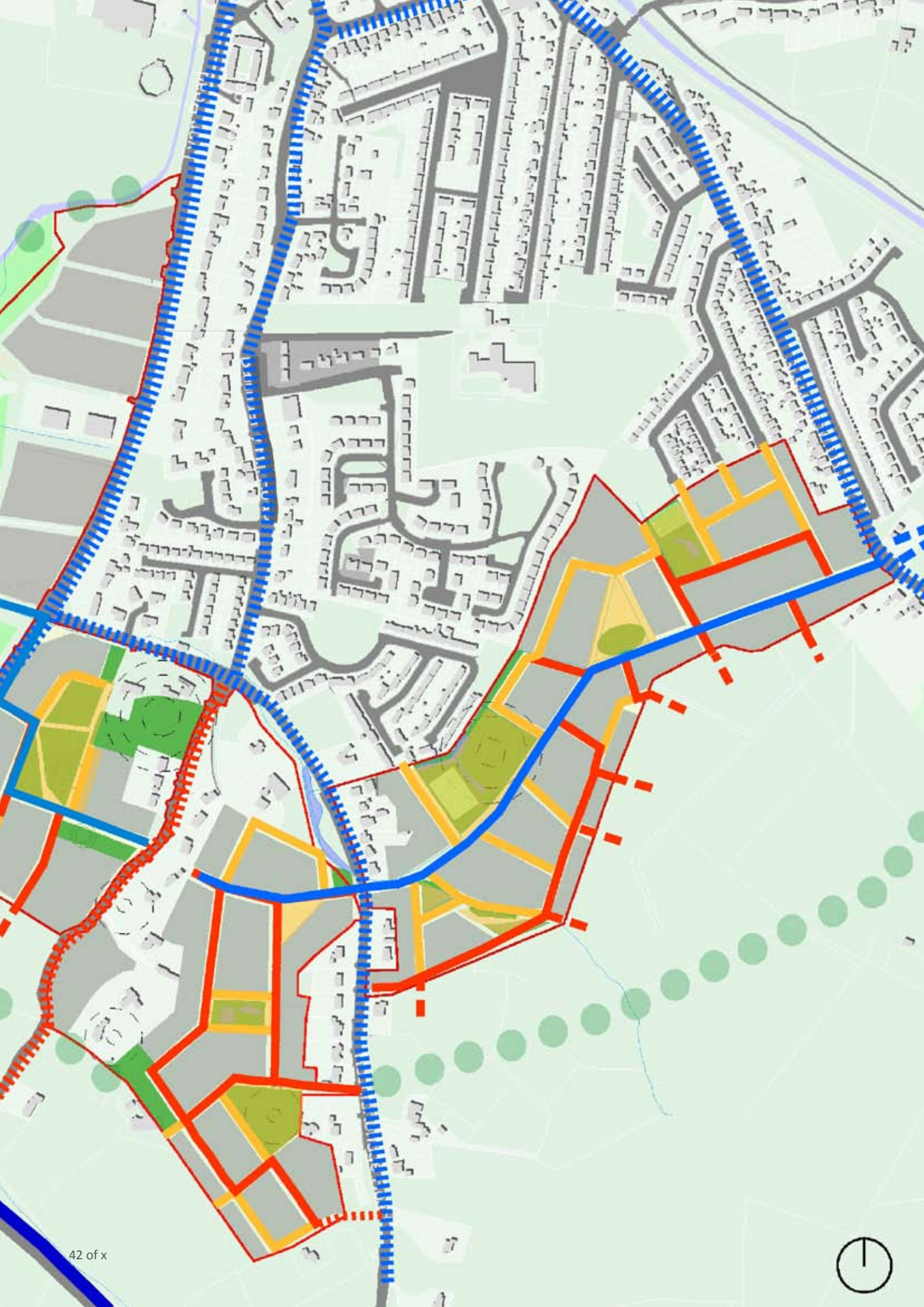




4
Generate the strategies

Strategies encapsulate a set of policies, objectives or actions, which aim to address issues over the short, medium and long terms. LAP strategies are generally place-specific, and spatially oriented. They should be derived from the vision and principles of the plan and should provide the framework for the detailed guidance and implementation aspects of the LAP. Strategies may also be presented as development frameworks or concepts.

4

Generate the strategies

4.1 What are strategies?

Strategies encapsulate a set of policies, objectives or actions, which aim to address issues over the short, medium and long terms. LAP strategies are generally place-specific, and are spatially oriented. They should be derived from the vision and principles of the plan and should provide the framework for the detailed guidance and implementation aspects of the LAP. Strategies may also be presented as development frameworks or concepts.

In summary the strategies must:

- Reveal the essence of the LAP.
- Be selective of information presented.
- Be clear and concise.
- Use words and graphics effectively.

4.2 Process and requirements

The strategies stage in the plan-preparation process commences after the vision and principles have been agreed. within the strategies stage there are a number of important steps to be undertaken:

- Investigating the range and nature of the strategies.
- Preparing preliminary alternative strategies (in conjunction with SEA process, if appropriate).
- Evaluating and choosing the preferred strategies.
- Developing the key strategies.
- Bringing the strategies together in an integrated framework.
- Reviewing and reflecting on the stage of the process.

The best way to advance strategies is to work in consultation with key stakeholders and the community.

The strategy aspects of the LAP should fulfil important aspects of the statutory requirements for local area planning, including core strategy and aspects of social community and built form objectives.

4.3 Investigating strategies

As each place presents unique issues and opportunities, the range and nature of strategies is likely to be unique in each LAP area. Choosing a small number of strategies will help to ensure that the LAP is workable and understandable. The investigation of the range of the strategies will benefit greatly from the input of the community, key stakeholders and key officials from the Planning Authority. The workshop is an ideal forum for this.

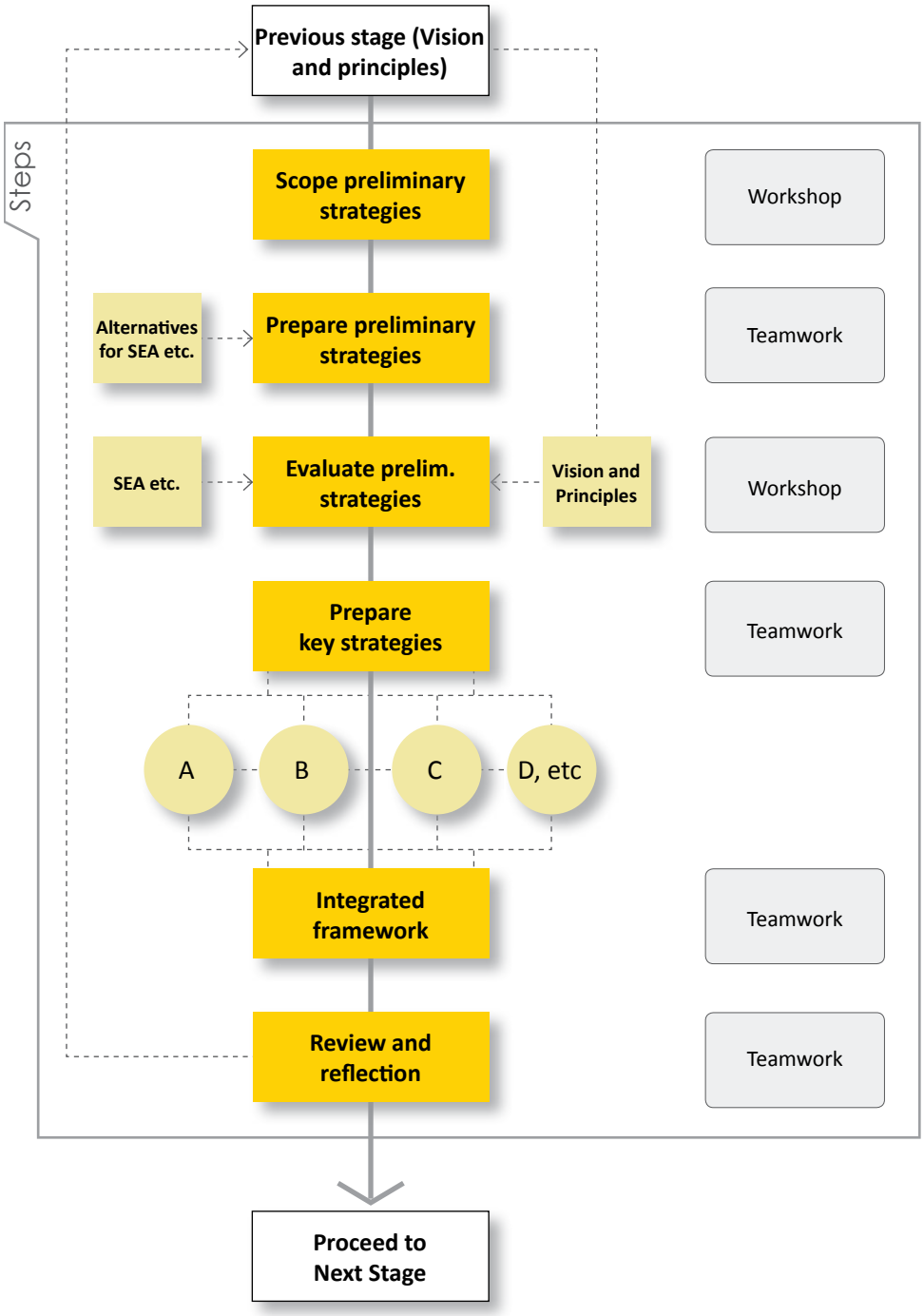
4.4 Preliminary, alternative plan strategies

Having investigated and decided on the range of strategies to be pursued, it will be important to set out preliminary alternatives within this range, for example, if a public transport strategy is considered necessary then preliminary, alternative public transport strategies should be prepared.

The preliminary, alternative strategies will be provided in outline, normally consisting of a brief description and a basic spatial diagram. This is good practice even if LAPs are sub-threshold or do not warrant full SEA Environmental Reports.

Preliminary, alternative strategies should be broadly consistent with the Core Strategy (See section 3.4).

Preliminary strategies should be generated to a level of detail where clear differences can be identified between alternatives and where a preliminary assessment of the nature, extent, quantum and likely environmental effects (where SEA is required) can be made. Preliminary alternatives may, for example, relate to the nature or direction of growth, development of physical infrastructure such as roads, avenues or streets. While the range of alternatives for LAP strategies may be limited by higher-level plans, it should be possible to consider alternative urban and landscape structures, densities and land uses within these constraints. Unstructured, piecemeal development may be considered as an alternative to an unrealistic 'Do-nothing' scenario.



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This diagram shows a typical strategy stage for local area plan preparation. This is crucial stage in project planning management.

4.5 Evaluating preliminary, alternative strategies

The strategies should be evaluated at a high level on the basis of:

- Consistency with higher-level plans and the Core Strategy,
- The LAP vision and principles;
- The likely development capacity or yield;
- Likely environmental effects (In conjunction with SEA process).

The preferred alternatives should provide the best fit with these considerations and should then be developed into the key LAP strategies.

This stage of the process will also benefit from the input of the community, key stakeholders and key officials from the Planning Authority.

4.6 Key strategies

The range of strategies and level of detail will depend on the issues, opportunities and complexities of the place. Key strategies must be succinct, selective in terms of presenting essentials, use graphics, where these can better explain spatial aspects, and be clear and concise for all plan users. While there is no shortlist for key strategies, as a minimum, Planning Authorities should ensure that the following aspects are addressed:

- Character and heritage;
- Vitality and diversity;
- Community and housing;
- Urban and landscape structure;
- Movement and transport;
- Energy and climate;
- Infrastructure and services.

4.6.1 Character and heritage

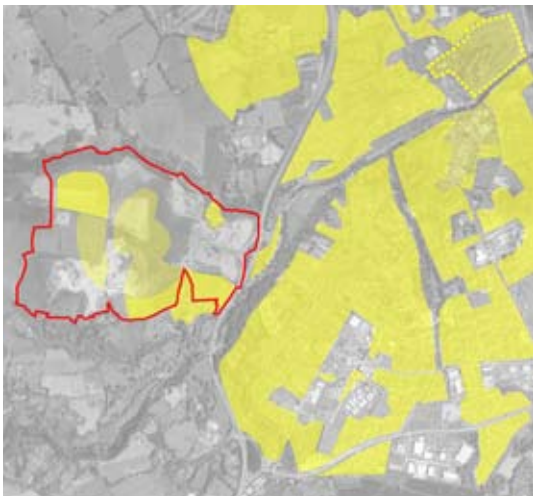
Building on an area's character and heritage is an important starting point. Strategies for character and heritage should be based on issues and opportunities identified in the urban and landscape analysis and the vision and principles stages. Strategies for character and heritage should aim to:

- Create or improve distinctive, local character and identity;
- Protect and enhance natural heritage (incorporating any Natura 2000 sites or other statutory designations, such as, National Heritage Areas or Landscape Conservation Areas);
- Protect and enhance built heritage and archaeology (incorporating designations such as Protected Structures, Record of Monuments and Places, Architectural Conservation Areas, etc.);
- Protect, enhance and enrich significant, local cultural identity such as associations, festivals, activities, customs and practices; and
- Protect landscape or urban areas of recognised quality (Landscape character areas, Architectural character areas, etc.).

4.6.2 Vitality and diversity

In the longer term, an area's success as a place will be determined by its vitality and its ability to change over time. A key element in ensuring vitality is to provide a range and diversity of uses, activities and built form.

Place strategy



Strategic Housing

Strategies should aim to:

- Set out a basic concept of the function and purpose of places;
- Reinforce local functions by ensuring the right mix of uses and activities across the plan area and within parts of the plan area;
- Fully optimise or develop strengths or opportunities within the local economy, for example local enterprise, agri-business, knowledge or creative networks;
- Comply with, and reinforce, the Retail Strategy;
- Inform and reinforce the existing or desired spatial structure with the appropriate land uses;
- Promote a close relationship between living and working, through close, spatial relationships and built-in adaptability to allow for mixed-uses of blocks, plots and buildings.
- Ensure compatible mix of uses.

4.6.3 Community and housing

LAPs should set out the conditions needed for healthy and vibrant communities. The Local Area Plan has an important role to play in addressing the concerns and aspirations of the community. The issues that affect communities are many and may vary from place to place. This means that their involvement in defining issues and opportunities and shaping the vision, principles and strategies is essential. In practice strategy should aim to:

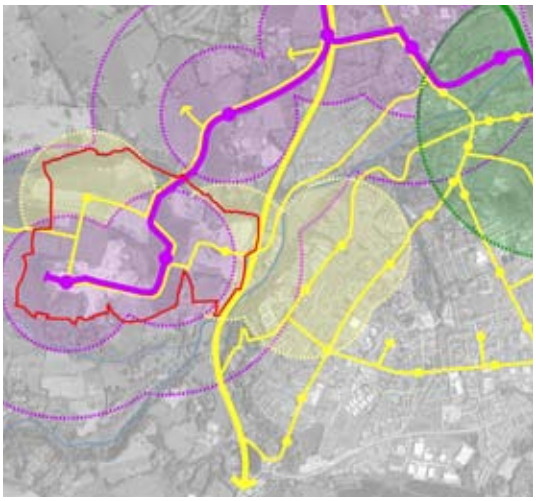
- Address educational needs and aspirations;
- Carefully balance housing need with supply at the local level;
- Address community housing needs and aspirations;
- Address local health and well-being;
- Promote shared social and community infrastructure, for example multi-functional community centres providing for education, health and recreation needs;
- Needs of those with disabilities, older people and children;
- Provide for new or improved local services and facilities to meet local needs;
- Provide a healthy, walkable and pleasant environment where social interaction can flourish; and
- Have regard to Departmental Guidelines and Code of Practice for provision and standards for primary and secondary schools.

4.6.4 Urban and landscape structure and form

Coherent and distinctive spatial strategies provide the framework on which the character, functionality and vitality of a place is realised. In recent years, greater emphasis has been placed on landscape and urban structure as a central element of local area planning. Strategies for urban and landscape structure should aim to:

- Ensure high levels of access, permeability and connections for priority users such as pedestrians, cyclists and public transport;
- Create or enhance a distinctive hierarchy of streets, spaces and landscape within an integrated structure;
- Provide legible and imageable places and spaces;
- Integrate elements of landscape, biodiversity and the natural heritage within a green infrastructure;
- Create or reinforce the place and function strategy;
- Provide for urban blocks and built form (scale and density) which reflect place and function; and
- Address issues of urban block type and building scale.

Landscape Strategy



Access Strategy

4.6.5 Movement and transport

The movement strategy will both inform and reinforce other key strategies. The movement strategy should aim to:

- Ensure priority for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport;
- Integrate with the urban and landscape structure;
- Set out the nature and hierarchies of public transport;
- Optimise areas of high accessibility to public transport in terms of density and intensity of use;
- Promote shared, safe movement routes for all users and avoid duplication or separation of main movement routes; and
- Set out the general movement function of routes and spaces within the route hierarchy.

4.6.6 Energy and micro-climate

The conservation and sustainable use of energy is a core concern of urban planning. The spatial aspects of other key strategies should promote energy conservation. The strategy should address:

- Sustainable transport;
- Reducing energy consumption through heating of buildings;
- Reducing consumption of energy for business and enterprise or community/civic uses;
- Reducing energy demand from local services and infrastructure;
- Sourcing of green energy locally or elsewhere; and
- Alternative energy and green energy sources, such as area/district heat and power or waste to energy facilities;

Energy strategy should also address local microclimates and the potential to ameliorate aspects which may impact on energy consumption or even quality or comfort of open spaces. Aspects which should be addressed include:

- The location of development – working with the existing landscape and avoiding exposed areas;
- Gaining shelter from existing or structured landscape and planting; and
- Urban structure, aspect and solar orientation.

More detailed aspects, or specific projects for the energy and microclimate strategy should be included in the Detailed Guidance section of the LAP.

4.6.7 Infrastructure and services

A key concern for local area planning is the timely delivery of services and infrastructure to match the delivery of development, and the need to address any existing deficits. Community infrastructure is an important part of the local infrastructure (addressed above). It is essential that the strategy for infrastructure addresses:

- The nature and scope of key infrastructure and services;
- The relationship between elements of key infrastructure and services and particular areas or phases of development;
- The nature of streets and urban spaces (refer to other key strategies above);

An integrated framework

- Sustainable energy, gas, electricity, etc;
- Sustainable urban drainage systems and the landscape structure;
- Sustainable waste management; and
- Sustainable water supply and water conservation.

Where possible, the aspects of the strategy should be shown in a spatial context and should reinforce the urban and landscape structures.

4.7 Bringing the strategies together – an integrated framework

Where the plan area relates to a single urban area or part of an urban area, an integrated framework plan should be prepared to bring together the spatial aspects of the strategies. The level of detail will vary from plan to plan. It should provide a good indication of the future nature and character of the place, whether it is to be created, changed or improved.

Abstract land use maps with vague symbols are not suitable or acceptable, as they provide little or no indication of the likely nature or character of future development.

Frameworks should be presented in two and three dimensions. This will provide greater certainty in terms of final development outcomes and it will allow a greater understanding of the likely built form for all plan users, particularly the local community. The framework should, at minimum, show the primary elements of the urban and landscape structure for the area and important relationships to surrounding areas, including:

- Streets and spaces;
- Indicative urban blocks;
- Open space and landscape; and
- Indicative frontage and massing.

4.8 Review and reflection

Prior to completing this stage the plan preparation team should review the steps and outcomes. Important questions should be addressed:

- Has this stage been carried out in a collaborative way?
- Have preliminary strategies been adequately formulated and considered?
- Do the strategies address the plan issues?
- Do the strategies effectively elaborate the plan vision and principles?
- Are the strategies realistic and realisable?
- Are the strategies explicit where required and/or flexible where required?
- Are the strategies well presented and understandable? and
- Does the integrated framework effectively bring together the spatial aspects of the strategies?

If necessary, the team should use this step to address incomplete or unsatisfactory aspects of the strategies before proceeding to the next stage of the plan preparation process.

4.9 Detailed guidance

Some actions or objectives identified in the strategies stage may require more detailed guidance. It is better to set these out in a detailed guidance section, so as to ensure the strategies remain clear and concise.

4.10 Techniques

First and foremost, techniques must ensure that the LAP strategies are well-informed and strongly supported by evidence of different kinds and from different sources. A range of techniques can be employed.

4.10.1 Basic spatial representations

The principal technique will be concept representations for spatial strategies. These will be supported by concise and succinct written statements. Graphical representations must relate to location and local features and could include basic line diagrams, notation or “blobs and arrows” type diagrams.

Graphical representations will require good base mapping, which includes only relevant map detail. The graphics will also need to show a clear distinction between existing and planned development and features.

4.10.2 The integrated framework plan

This framework should be an area-wide plan, presented in two and three dimensions. The framework must:

- Adequately represent the nature and intended character of the place;
- Give greater certainty to the planning authority, community, developers and other stakeholders in terms of development outcomes; and
- Provide enough flexibility ('loose-fit') to allow for diversity of uses and built form within the overall framework over the lifetime of the plan and beyond.

The level of detail of the framework(s) will depend on the size and complexity of the plan area and its issues and opportunities. However, the framework should normally provide a 'strong fix' for the primary aspects of landscape and urban structure, physical and community infrastructure. It may allow for some degree of flexibility in relation to secondary or more detailed aspects of the LAP.

4.10.3 Quantitative techniques

Development capacity
The framework will enable a more accurate assessment of development capacity. Capacity studies should indicate a broad range for development and population. These studies may also indicate that parts of the plan area are not required in the short term for development, or they may show that the area cannot deliver the amount or type of development expected. In establishing development capacity it will be important to:

- Establish the range and breakdown of land uses;
- Set out indicative densities for each use type, based on the location of the use within the plan area;
- Set out indicative occupancy rates for housing and commercial development; and
- Establish overall, indicative population yields/ targets.

Housing
Housing demand and supply will need to be matched carefully at the local level. The Housing Strategy and Core Strategy will set out the broad quantitative parameters for housing in the plan area and the LAP analysis section should establish local demand and existing supply/oversupply. Within the context of the strategies, the LAP should:

- Establish overall local need (population);
- Establish equivalent household quantum and breakdown of household type;
- Consider tenure type;
- Seek to broadly match housing typologies with household type – while ensuring a 'loose-fit';
- Consider supply options – for example, new housing development and/or use of existing unoccupied or unfinished housing stock; and
- Investigate delivery options - for example, private, affordable, social, partnership/co-operative (See section 6).

Community infrastructure
Given that development in most LAP areas will be carried out on a phased basis over time, the strategies need to set out a clear strategy for delivery of community infrastructure. The strategy should set the overall requirement for:

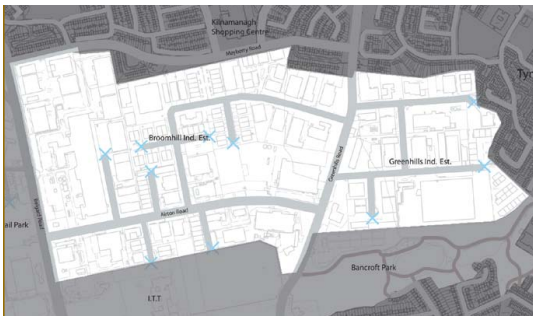
- Type;
- Nature and quantum;
- Location and spatial aspects;
- Stage or phase of delivery; and
- Responsibility and funding.

Case example 4A
Tallaght – a strategy for distinctive precincts

The Tallaght Town Centre Local Area Plan was prepared by South Dublin County Council in 2008 to guide the future development and regeneration of the heart of Tallaght. The town centre area is extensive and includes areas of different character and urban context. The LAP Strategy seeks to develop these areas, within the context of the larger town centre, by presenting individual and detailed local framework plans for each of 15 identified precincts. The boundaries for each of the precincts are defined on the basis of local characteristics such as land use, building form, activity levels, proximity to serivces and transport and regulatory factors including land use zonings and recent planning permissions.

The local framework plans set out the existing and desired characteristics of each precinct in terms of land use, access and movement and built form and landscape. The desired masterplan outcomes for each precinct are presented through a series of framework plans, 3D perspectives and other illustrations. These show the location and type of desired future land uses, proposed changes to existing street networks, upgrade of existing movement infrastructure, improved access and permeability and improved links to public transport facilities. Proposals for future built form and landscape include the location of gateways and landmark buildings, improved street tree planting and improved access to and treatment of existing areas of public open space.

Existing and future access and movement for a precinct →



Sketch of masterplan outcome for a precinct
↓

Case example 4B
Kilfinane – a strategy to protect the important qualities of the town

This plan was prepared by Limerick County Council in 2007 to provide a long-term framework for the future physical, social and economic development of Kilfinane and its environs. Kilfinane is a market town, with a population of approximately 1,000 people, located 48km to the south of Limerick City.

The LAP establishes a clear vision and supporting strategy for future development that aims to direct and co-ordinate future development in a way that protects and builds on the town's existing character and qualities. These qualities, partly identified through a SWOT analysis, include setting and physical context, built heritage, existing local, community and civic facilities and a strong community structure. Five goals, each with a series of objectives, are identified, including to:

- Consolidate and strengthen the existing town core;
- Enable dedicated community and recreation services;
- Promote the development of adequate infrastructure and amenities;
- Create a self sufficient local economy;
- Create an environmentally sustainable place.

Elements of the strategy are expressed in the Development Framework.

Development Framework for Kilfinane

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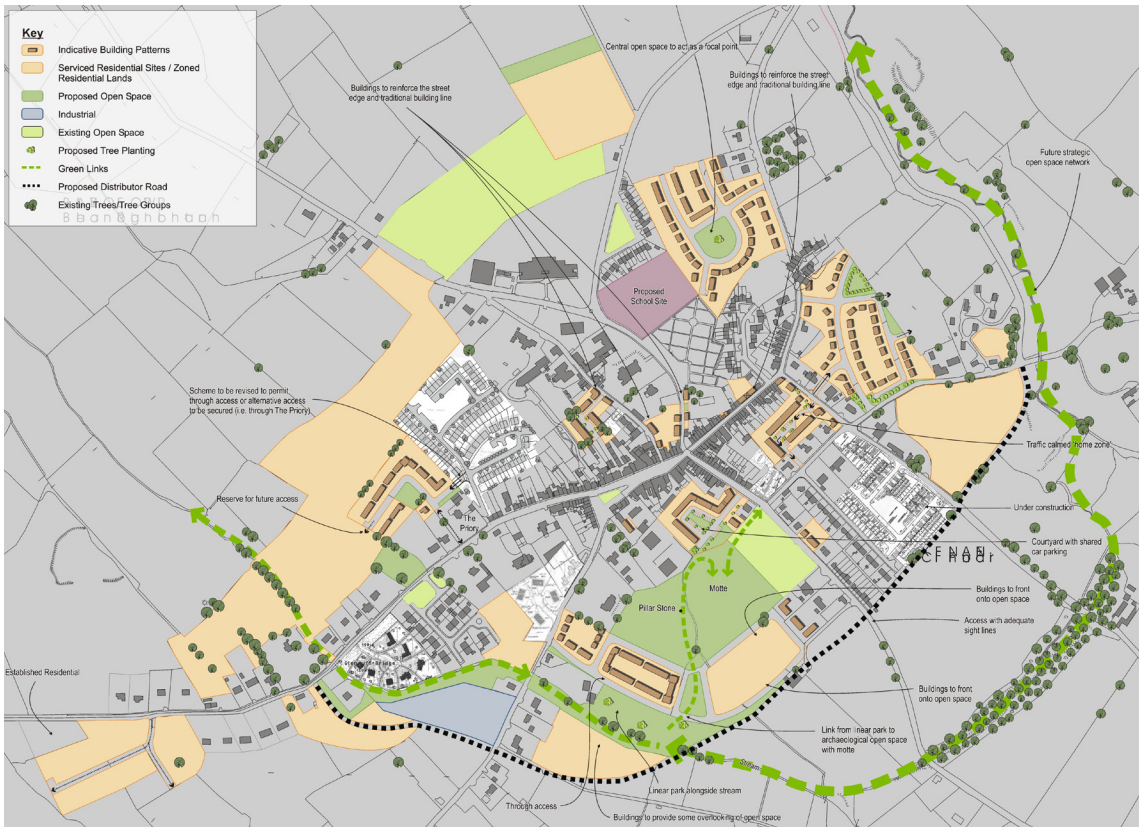
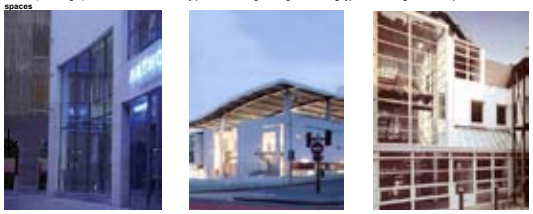


Case example 4C
Clonburris – a strategy for sustainable use mix

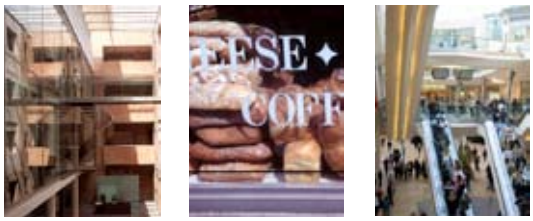
The Clonburris SDZ Planning Scheme and LAP, 2008 sets out a development strategy for a strategic land-bank of 265ha, located next to the M50 and west of Clondalkin. The area was considered to represent one of the best opportunities for the development of a sustainable urban district given the scale of the site, key site assets (including the proximity of the Grand Canal) and proposed public transport infrastructure improvements such as improvements to the Kildare Rail line, the provision of Metro-West and major Quality Bus Corridor networks.

The plan set out a framework for the development of an Eco-District. This included the preparation of an integrated masterplan based on robust analysis and the development of a clear vision for the area. The masterplan includes a design framework and concept for 8 sub-areas or 'Eco-Districts'. Detailed development frameworks have been developed for each Eco-District. These detailed frameworks elaborate on the masterplan and clearly illustrate the primary urban structure for each area and address the issues of neighbourhood development, movement and access, development and land use, land and open space, urban form, community framework and service infrastructure. Key development components, including fixed and variable elements are also identified. Fixed elements include committed infrastructure, required in accordance with the plan. Non fixed or variable elements need to be provided but their design and location can be varied so long as they adhere to the principles and guidance set out in the plan.

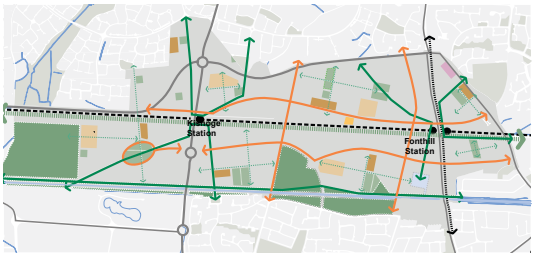
ABOVE (left to right): Mixed Residential amenity provided through a range of building types and configurations of public and shared spaces

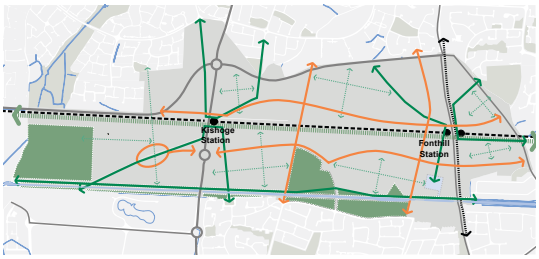


ABOVE: A range of cultural, entertainment and community uses will be provided at public spaces to form nodes of local significance



ABOVE: High-quality commercial and retail space will be provided in the district and local centres





↑ *Structuring concepts for local links, local life and neighbourhood activity*

↖ *Providing for a mix of uses*

← *Sketch of the vision for Canal character and activity*

Case example 4D

Cork South Docks LAP 2008 – a structured strategy for viability and diversity

The Cork South Docks LAP has been prepared to build on the vision expressed in the Cork Docklands Development Strategy 2001. It establishes a planning and development framework for the regeneration of the city's south docks area, based development of a high density urban quarter comprising of a District Centre and two Neighbourhood Centres with residential and employment target populations of 20,000 and 25,000 respectively. It includes proposals for community and medical facilities in addition to a third level education facility.

The LAP includes a Public Realm Strategy containing proposals on how the 'space between buildings' will be managed. The Strategy is based on acknowledgment of the context established by the topography and landscape of Cork and focuses on utilising the existing qualities and elements of the River Lee. It clearly sets out a range of strategies, objectives and guidelines for the development of the public realm. This includes the identification of a series of precincts with distinctive character and sense of place. The development of each precinct is based upon the establishment of a permeable urban design framework, including the development of attractive streets and squares and a diversity of open spaces. An ordering principle is applied to the public realm to emphasise a hierarchy of particular spaces with a variety of treatments, materials, designs and structural elements.

The implementation of the Public Realm Strategy will be supported by the development of a detailed street and public open space design code and specification to ensure consistency and high quality in all public realm treatments.

A framework plan for structuring land use: Integrating elements of built form and structure, landscape, streets and spaces

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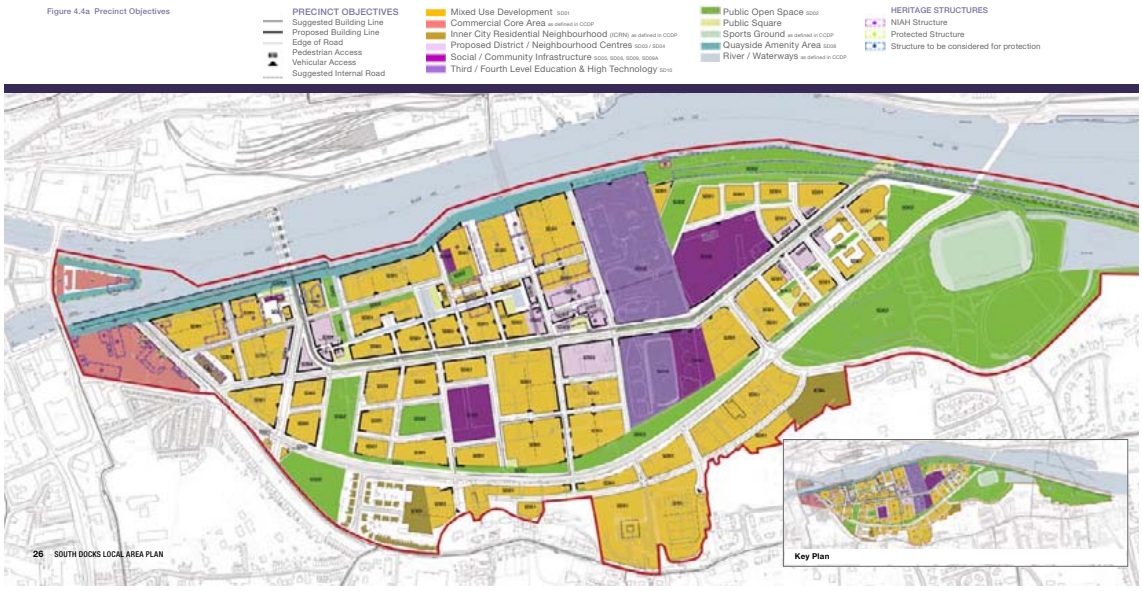


Case example 4E

Shannon Town Centre – a strategy for robust urban structure

The Shannon Town North (Special Development Area) plan was developed as part of the South Clare LAP, 2009, Part 2. It establishes a framework for the future development of a 37ha site at a pivotal location within the Town Centre and the Shannon Free Zone. The aim is to provide a central hub for Shannon with a new population of between 2,500 and 3,000 people and between 35-40,000 sqm of commercial floorspace. It also includes proposals for the development of public transport and community infrastructure.

The plan comprises an overall concept, framework and detailed guidance for the future development of the site. The concept includes the development of a core area and a series of neighbourhoods (or precincts) and contains proposals for the development of Main Street, Shop Street, a civic park, a series of green linkages including the railway line, urban tree planting and ecology. These are brought together in a flexible 'overall framework plan,' which aims to integrate these proposals as a whole. The development of the framework is supported by the preparation of a series of more detailed frameworks and guidelines.

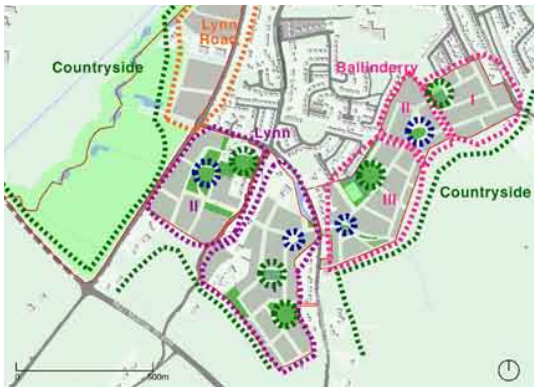
Example of plan detail for new square at centre →

A framework plan for structuring land use: Integrating elements of built form and structure, landscape, streets and spaces
↓

Case example 4F
Mullingar South– a physical framework for the town edge

The Mullingar South Local Area Plan was prepared for Westmeath County Council in 2010, to secure the sustainable development of these strategic lands (comprising three distinct parcels totalling approximately 83 hectares) and the sustainable urban extension of the Mullingar South Area. The vision saw the creation of four distinctive 'places' or character areas, which would provide for the development to accommodate an additional population of up to 3,000 people over the short to long term.

The lands are characterised by an attractive landscape with significant archaeological heritage. Important plan issues included the need for good connections and permeability with adjoining areas, high quality community and educational infrastructure and consideration of localised flood risk. In response to these issues a set of robust spatial concepts were prepared to provide a coherent and distinctive urban structure for the area. Character areas or 'places' were clearly identified along with their associated physical and community infrastructure. A flood risk assessment (FRA) was also carried out to inform the urban structure and development strategy relating to affected areas. The strategies were drawn together in a two and three dimensional framework plan, showing the proposed urban and landscape structure, indicative urban blocks, frontages and building envelopes. Selected, detailed development guidelines were also set out along with measures for delivery and monitoring.



Urban place and structure concepts for South Mullingar ↑

↓ *3D image of framework plan*

Case example 4G
Grangegorman – a sustainable transport strategy

The Grangegorman draft Strategic Plan 2010 has been prepared by the Grangegorman Development Agency, which was established following legislation in 2005.

The plan aims to develop a new City Quarter on a 73 acre site located 1.5km north of Dublin's city centre. The development of the quarter is based on the establishment of an educational campus for the Dublin Institute of Technology, redevelopment of health care facilities for the HSE and accessible public spaces. The quarter will accommodate approximately 20,000 students and a new residential population of 20,000.

A key aspect of the Grangegorman Masterplan is the promotion of a sustainable transport strategy. This includes measures to integrate the future development of the site with planned improvements to public transport infrastructure within the wider area. These improvements include the construction of Metro North and the Luas Line D. The latter will directly serve Grangegorman.

Within the site itself, priority is placed on sustainable modes of transport. Priority is given to pedestrians and cyclists and measures are proposed to ensure that the Quarter makes effective connections to surrounding public transport networks and walking/cycling routes.

Car access is to be limited, and the majority of parking is to be provided at two main locations on the periphery of the site. The development of a Mobility Management Plan for the new quarter is also proposed as a means of minimising private car dependency.

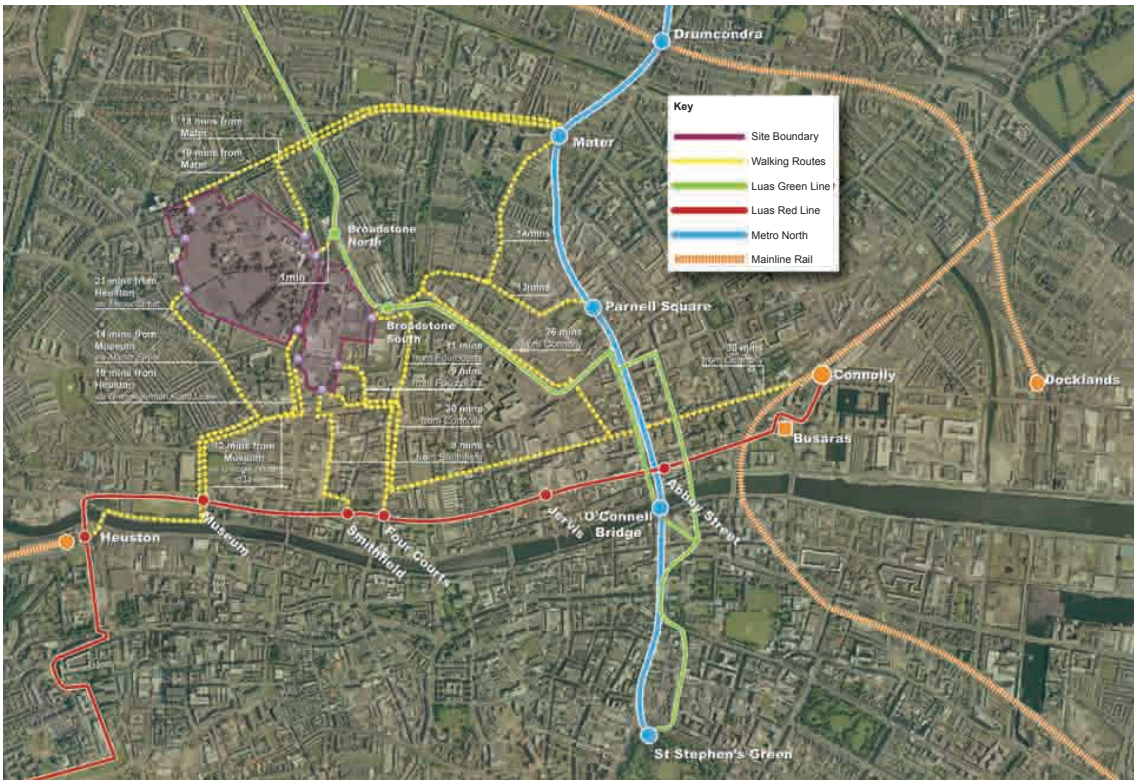


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Diagram showing strategic public transport connections

Case example 4H

The Naul – a development strategy and framework for the Village

The Draft LAP for the Naul, was prepared by Fingal County Council in 2011. This small village of approximately 390 people, has a notable built heritage and has witnessed significant growth in recent years. Existing housing in the village will accommodate approximately 500 persons, when completed and occupied.

The LAP sets out a clear development strategy for the village, addressing housing, design, employment, retail/ commercial, education and community, tourism, environment, heritage, public open space and recreation, sustainability and infrastructure and services. Twelve development areas are identified within the development boundary of the village, within which a range of uses including residential, community, recreation and commercial are proposed. The new residential development is intended to accommodate an additional population of between 150 and 200.

The LAP is informed by a Village Design Framework, a guidance document which sets out a long-term strategy to achieve the sustainable development of the village. General design principles are established and an indicative site layout is included. Development proposals are required to be in accordance with the Village Development Framework

↑

Development framework for the Village

↑

Concept for the main square

Case example 4I
Viikii, Helsinki – planning for sustainability

The Viikki-Kivikko area of Helsinki is one of the major urban projects for Helsinki City Council. It is located about 8km from the City Centre, between the east and north east of Helsinki. The area was envisioned as an ecological district providing third-level education facilities for up to 6,000 students, a science and technology park employing up to 8,000 workers and distinct housing areas for a community of about 15,000 residents. The area comprises approximately 1,100 hectares. As it utilises a compact form of development, however, only 290 hectares of this area is allocated to development and access. The remainder is provided as strategic open space and ecological areas.

The local plan (osayleiskaava) for Viikki was adopted in 1995 after a long development process. The plan recognised the potential of the area as an ecological pilot community. Throughout the process the community were involved in the planning and development of the area through an eco-community project umbrella group.

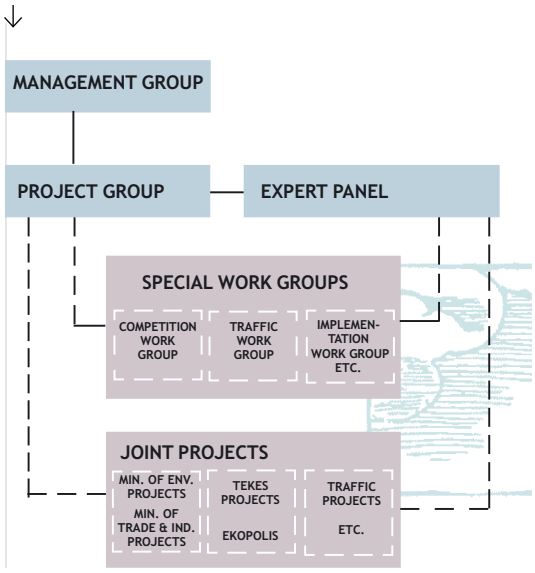
The next stage of the planning process was an open ideas competition for the detailed plan (masterplan). This focused on the larger urban and landscape structure. The winning entry offered a distinct urban and landscape structure which provided for 'green fingers' within the built up areas and discrete 'home zones'.

The following stage of the planning process was a design competition for residential blocks. The emphasis of this stage was to address sustainable building processes, minimisation of pollution, use of natural resources, healthy homes, diversity of nature and food production. Emphasis was also placed on passive and active use of solar energy. A part of the area was explicitly identified as a location for more experimental research in construction, including timber-framed apartment buildings. It is expected that the area will be fully developed by 2015.

Notably, the key indicators of ecological performance in the area are being monitored, including solar collection, building adaptability, vegetation, water consumption, energy (heat and electricity) consumption, water savings, emissions and energy use, site/household waste, noise, children's play, ecological knowledge and social bonding. The indicators are showing largely positive results with impressive performance in the areas of energy conservation, water consumption and waste management. Another key element of the success of the plan is that a 50/50 split has been achieved between the provision of social and private housing.

Aerial view and garden allotments →

Organisation and operation of the Eco-community project ↓



Case example 4J
Tubingen-Sudstadt, Germany – encouraging diversity

Tubingen is a university town located approximately 80km to the south of Stuttgart in southern Germany. The Tubingen-Sudstadt development has created a mixed use urban quarter on a 65ha brownfield site formerly used as a French army barracks. The new quarter will accommodate 6,500 residents and 2,000 workplaces. The development was guided by a competition masterplan, which formed part of a Local Development Framework Plan.

An innovative development process, involving plot-based development, was adopted for the regeneration of the barracks site. Land for development was purchased by the local authority and then sold on to 'building partnerships' at a nominal cost. The building partnerships were composed of groups of individuals and families who commissioned an architect and contractor to design and construct their homes on a co-operative basis.

The urban form and structure for the regenerated urban quarter was guided by the masterplan. The masterplan established the structure of each of the urban blocks (perimeter blocks) and established set building lines and a range of permitted building heights and depths, with no minimum plot width. The plots were then sold to the building partnerships, which were given a limited time to implement their development schemes.

The masterplan also facilitated a range of architectural styles within a given range. The result is that each building has its own individual design, which has helped to create architectural and visual diversity and a sense that the quarter has grown organically over time. Each building was also required to find an active ground floor use to help create a fine grain mix of uses, while at the same time promoting street activity in the quarter.

Tubingen provides a model for the promotion of fine grain, mixed use, perimeter block development as part of an urban regeneration project. The regeneration of the barracks site has resulted in the development of a compact and vibrant inner urban quarter with its own distinctive quality and identity.

Views showing close grain subdivision of building plots to encourage variety in appearance and diversity of land uses

↓

Case example 4K
Ipswich IP – One Area Action Plan: a strategy for urban regeneration

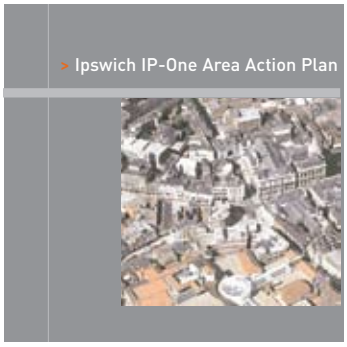
Local Authorities in the United Kingdom are required to prepare Core Strategies for their areas over a 15-20 year timeframe as part of the suite of documents for their Local Development Frameworks, the main forward planning tool used by Local Authorities in the UK. Each Core Strategy establishes a vision for the future development of the area based on a clear understanding of place. Considerable emphasis is placed on translating the proposed individual themes for future development into an integrated spatial approach. Area Action Plans form part of this Local Development Framework.

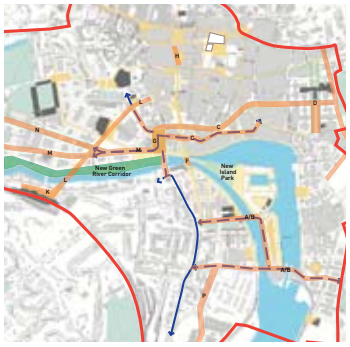
The Ipswich IP – One Area Action Plan was developed to promote the sustainable regeneration of the central part of Ipswich and to link it to a regenerated waterfront. Ipswich waterfront, a designated conservation area, is located on approximately 80ha of land south of Ipswich town centre. It had become run-down during the 1980s and many buildings were vacant. Some new residential development took place during the 1990s and early 2000s, however, Ipswich Council was concerned that this development was not contributing to the sustainable development of the waterfront or the creation of a vital and diverse area which could support daytime and evening activity. The Council also wished to develop a long term vision for the future development of 280ha of land in the centre of the town, in an area known as IP-One. The town centre had become cut off from the waterfront by vacant sites and a one-way road system.

The Action Plan focused on four key areas:
- Linking the historic town centre to its surroundings;
- Creating mixed use along the waterfront;
- Developing a commercial area north of the railway station; and
- Establishing an education quarter around Suffolk College.

The preparation of the area action plan was underpinned by the following process:
- Establishing a clear project brief;
- Developing a baseline study to promote a through understanding of the place;
- Identification of five key points on which to develop the action plan;
- Engaging local people, based on the development of a 'hierarchy of importance';
- Creation of a spatial masterplan and physical model, based on the development and integration of four nodes; and
- A phased Development Programme.

The Ipswich waterfront is now emerging as an integrated and mixed-use waterfront destination. New developments such as a pedestrian and cycle bridge have helped to create new links between the waterfront and the town centre. Investing in high quality design in the public realm has helped to raise the design quality of new developments. This will help to raise values in the area over the longer term. The area action plan has been used by Ipswich Borough Council in the assessment of planning applications and the development of design briefs for larger regeneration sites.





← *Sketch of regeneration proposals*

← ← *Excerpt from transport strategy*

Case example 4L
Vauban, Frieburg – planning for sustainable energy

Vauban has developed as a new planned suburb on the site of a former army barracks, located approximately 3km south of the city centre of Freiburg in Southwest Germany. The suburb is constructed on a 38ha site, providing accommodation for more than 5,000 inhabitants and 600 jobs.

The new suburb was developed on the basis of a development plan and a more detailed masterplan, in the form of a B-Plan. B-Plans (Bebauungsplan) are developed to guide development in areas that are either the subject of significant development pressure or require regeneration. They provide detailed planning and design guidance including designation of urban development, appropriate land usage, urban structure and form, built form and density and the provision of infrastructure. The B-Plan for Vauban was based on the outcomes of an urban design competition to establish an appropriate design solution for proposed development.

The masterplan was developed and delivered on the basis of extensive and comprehensive community participation. This was primarily facilitated through the establishment of the legally recognised citizens' association, 'Forum Vauban,' which co-ordinated the participation process . The community was committed to the creation of an environmentally sustainable community based on the principles of 'car-free' and 'parking-free' living, partly facilitated by the provision of good public transport (bus, tram and rail) and a system of car sharing. The sustainable management of water is promoted through the inclusion of SUDS principles in building construction and landscape design and management.

All the houses in Vauban are built to a low-energy standard, with some reaching a 'plus energy' status, whereby they produce more energy than they need. Many of the housing developments incorporate solar panels and photovoltaic cells. The ecological approach adopted by developers often exceeded the standards required in the Development Plan.

The development of Vauban was also based on the establishment of a local network for the supply of heat and power. Locally based networks help to reduce transmission losses that result from the transfer of heat and energy from remote power plants. The incorporation of a combined heat and power (CHP) plant and short distance heating system was a key element in the development of the masterplan. A highly efficient co-generation plant has been constructed on the periphery of the suburb and connected into the district's heating grid. The plant uses natural gas (20%) and wood chips (80%) to provide homes with hot water and a substantial proportion of their electricity needs. The combination of the solar installations and CHP plant produce sixty-five percent of the electricity needed in Vauban.

← *Co-generation plant*

↓ *Adaptable use building*

Sustainable transport ↓

Case example 4M
IJburg, Amsterdam – sustainable urban extension

The IJburg project was conceived as a sustainable urban extension to Amsterdam, constructed on a series of 6 interlinked artificially constructed islands in the eastern harbour. It is anticipated that the completed district will accommodate 45,000 city dwellers and over 18,000 homes. The aim is to achieve a living-working ratio of 2:1. The islands are connected to the mainland by a series of bridges, including a new cycle and pedestrian bridge. The IJ Tram was constructed in 2005 and links the new neighbourhoods to the centre of Amsterdam.

The development of IJburg is guided by Projectbureau IJburg, which was established within the City of Amsterdam's Physical Planning Department. The development has been divided into a series of stages, and land released for development in a phased way. Stage 1 is nearing completion and comprises the development of three islands – Stigereiland, Haveneiland and Reieteilanden. The City undertook the construction of the islands and developed the social and physical infrastructure, prior to the commencement of private construction projects. The costs for this initial work were then recouped from the sale of development land to the private sector. As such, IJburg provides an example of infrastructure led development. The planning and delivery of IJburg has been carried out in an integrated way by a multidisciplinary team comprising planners, social geographers, architects and urban designers. The Projectbureau oversaw the development of an urban design masterplan, which guides the development as a whole.

The development of the masterplan is based on an urban design format that promotes the creation of a strong orthogonal framework that sketches out the broad lines of the overall scheme and the underlying urban structure. Fixed aspects include the division of each district into neighbourhoods, including the identification of a district centre, main infrastructure and residential densities. The aim is to facilitate the development of individual neighbourhoods, as opposed to repeatable clusters of standardised buildings.

The IJburg masterplan aims to emulate the urban form and neighbourhood structure of central Amsterdam. The development of Haveneiland has been based on the creation of an urban grid of rectangular blocks, rectilinear streets, green strips and waterways. Steigereiland has been developed in accordance with an urban design scheme based on the 'collage city concept'. This concept promotes the development of 8 neighbourhoods, each with its own individual identity. Private developers are required to meet area and site-specific design codes contained within the masterplan. Variety is permitted in terms of plot layout and development type. Each urban block is designed by a consortium of different architecture teams, co-ordinated by a government appointed quality control team. This approach has helped to create architectural variety and vibrant streetscapes, while also ensuring a high quality of development overall.

A key aspect of the development on Steigereiland has been the creation of individual self-build plots, which are being developed for family homes by private individuals. These are not required to conform to any aesthetic controls, resulting in a high degree of architectural diversity and visual interest along residential streets.

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View showing close grain subdivision of building plots to encourage variety

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Excerpt from 2040 Vision for Amsterdam
Source: Dienst Ruintelijke Ordening, Gemeente Amsterdam, 2011.

5
Formulate the guidance

Strategies encapsulate a set of policies, objectives or actions, which aim to address issues over the short, medium and long terms. LAP strategies are generally place-specific, and spatially oriented. They should be derived from the vision and principles of the plan and should provide the framework for the detailed guidance and implementation aspects of the LAP. Strategies may also be presented as development frameworks or concepts.

5

Formulate the guidance

5.1 Clarity and quality

LAPs may need to provide guidance to ensure the quality and delivery of important aspects of the built environment. The guidance provided in an LAP may take the form of detailed or specific objectives, including development management objectives. They may augment, or substitute for, more general or generic development management objectives contained in the Development Plan.

Guidance for the provision and design of infrastructure, buildings and projects in the public and private domains will be required to promote the principles of good urban design, communicate the vision for the place and promote the standards of design that will be expected of developers.
The type and level of guidance will often depend on the geographical context of the plan area – be it urban, suburban or rural and the nature of the area – be it an existing or new area. Most importantly, the type and level of guidance needed will become clear during the preceding preparation stages of the LAP. The vision and principles will have established the broad character and qualities of the place and the strategies will identify the overall spatial approach and aspects of the strategy that require particular focus.

In the case of an LAP for an urban area, it may be appropriate to provide more detailed guidance than for an extensive rural area. Such guidelines will normally address aspects:

- Of technical detail - which may not be suitable at the broader, strategy stage;
- Requiring a consistent approach, particularly where ownership is fragmented – for example, ensuring connected streets and spaces;
- Where collaboration for delivery is required – for example, when providing for local schools;
- Of important structural elements – for example, a major new avenue as a spine for an area;
- Of innovation – such as live-work, alternative energy, waste management, community development and partnership;
- For managing development – for example, new codes for development or measures for protection of elements of local heritage; and
- For the briefing of significant new buildings or projects in the public or private domains. Projects in the public or private domains.

Guidelines can promote the provision of green technology and sustainable drainage →

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5.2 Location

The guidance may provide greater clarity or, in some cases, absolute precision in terms of the location of important plan elements. This will depend on the size and extent of the plan area and the nature of the strategy and the detail already shown in the integrated framework.

In some instances, for example, a community facility such as a crèche could be identified in a general location within the plan area. In others, it may be located within an urban block in the urban framework or tied to a specific site or plot.

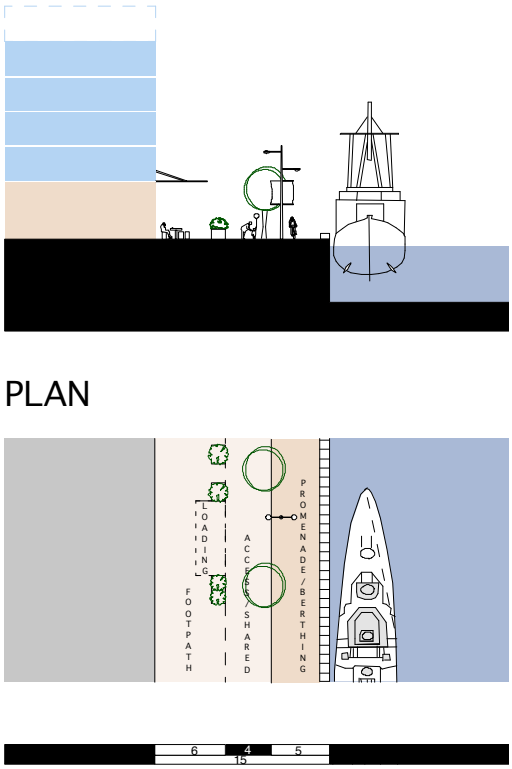
It may also be important to be more prescriptive in terms of the location and routing of physical infrastructure and their networks, such as streets and spaces, energy, water and drainage. These should normally reflect and reinforce the spatial structures in the strategy and integrated framework plan.

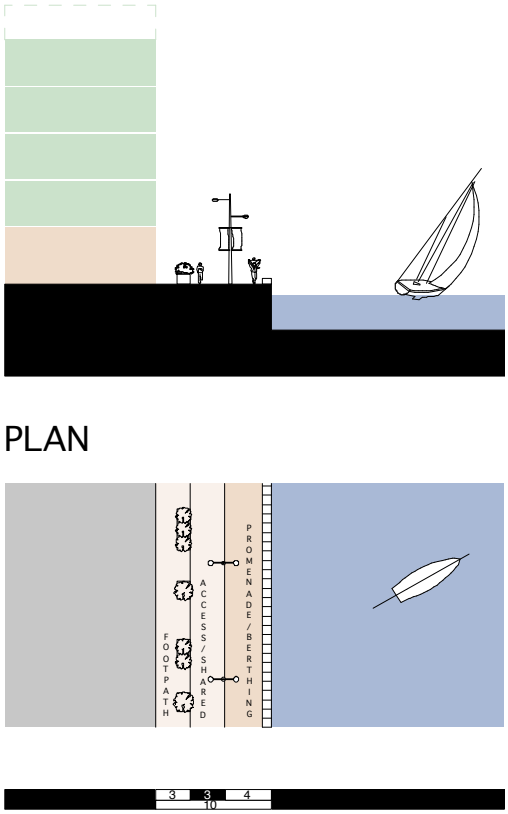
5.3 Quantum

LAPs should clearly indicate and quantify development, open space and critical community and physical infrastructure and facilities. The overall, planned development capacity, population and intensity of use should be also established (this is considered in section 4).

This is essential in identifying the need for community and physical infrastructure. The rate of provision is generally determined on a population basis, having regard to appropriate policies and guidelines. (For more information, please refer to the planning guidelines). Where explicit standards are not available, good practice case examples should be reviewed. It will also be important to address, where possible, existing deficits for existing or surrounding communities.

Indicative guidance for key streets and spaces, Waterford North Quays →





Some aspects of community infrastructure can be delivered on a phased basis to match development. Phases may be based on development or population thresholds or 'tipping points'. Others, for example strategic public transport or open spaces, may need to be provided in a complete state at the outset.

5.4 Quality

The potential for success of the place can be won or lost in the quality of its design. Achieving quality will require a commitment to good urban design. Good design is important because it can help to create more sustainable communities by:

- Improving quality of life;
- Promoting social inclusion;
- Fostering diversity;
- Generating civic pride;
- Adding value; and
- Inspiring developers.

Although guidance cannot substitute for the skills of a good designer, it can help to ensure that the right design decisions are made at the appropriate level.

Guidance may also draw on generic 'best practice' manuals, but these should always be applied with due regard to the unique character and identity of the place. In other cases, guidance for specific sites or projects may be needed. In general, however, design guidance at the level of the LAP should be focused on the spatial vision: how the place should work, look and feel, and not on minutiae, so that it can provide a framework for achieving design excellence without strangling innovation. In most instances, guidance should be 'style neutral'.

Where detailed design guidance has already been prepared by the planning authority, for example in relation to high buildings, infill or building sensitively in the countryside etc., it may be more appropriate for the plan to refer to these guidelines than to duplicate them.

5.5 Streets and public spaces

Guidance for streets and public spaces should focus on making them attractive places that meet the needs of all users. This requires a step change in attitudes and a more collaborative approach among those involved in the design process.

LAPs that endorse good practice in this area and provide guidance that is tailored to the place can play an important role in achieving this. The forthcoming Manual for Streets (Department of Transport and DECLG) will set out National best practice objectives and standards for better streets and spaces.

There is a wealth of detailed urban design guidance available about streets and public spaces, however, much of this is generic in nature and will need to be interpreted to reflect local qualities, needs and circumstances. Guidance on streets and spaces should focus on:

- Their function in the local movement hierarchy (e.g. their character and capacity to accommodate different modes of movement);

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Using simple 3d models to illustrate urban form

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Using sophisticated 3d models to give an impression of what the place will look like

- Their essential spatial qualities (e.g. their sense of enclosure, sunlight and daylight); and
- The dual role they need to perform as 'links' and as 'places' in their own right.

Once guidance that supports the 'place' function of streets and open spaces is established, guidance on other aspects that support and consolidate their sense of place, such as materials, street furniture, signage and public art, can be set out.

5.6 Community projects, facilities and services

It is essential that community and supporting infrastructure is rolled out in advance or in tandem with development.

As a minimum, quantitative requirements (number, nature, size of facilities and thresholds) for the following need to be established:

- Schools;
- Childcare;
- Local health facilities;
- Special needs housing;
- Community buildings;
- Local shops and services;
- Open space and recreation; and
- Local transport, walking and cycling.

Detailed and qualitative aspects of community infrastructure or projects, such as quality of design and layout, should be addressed by preparing project preliminary project briefs. These may be followed by more detailed site briefs, required prior to the development management stage.

5.7 Blocks, plots and building design

Guidance for blocks, plots and building design goes hand-in-hand with the design of streets and public spaces.

This requires consideration of:

- Use mix;
- Block size and configuration;
- Urban grain;
- Block typologies;
- Building lines; and
- Scale, height and massing.

5.8 Physical infrastructure

Too often the location and design of physical infrastructure such as pumping stations, electricity sub-stations and their like, is given a low priority, with standardised solutions 'bolted on' at the end of the design process.

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Using photographs of similar places to convey a sense of the character of the place

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The effect of physical infrastructure on the quality of the place should not be underestimated

Such installations can have a dramatic effect on the quality of the built environment and merit careful consideration early in the process with regard to their land-take and location, and at the later stages with regard to their design and integration with the urban fabric they serve.

Guidance is needed to address the integration of new and enhanced infrastructure and the urban and landscape structure. This can be done through typical, generic guidance and, where appropriate, preliminary project briefs.

5.9 Techniques

5.9.1 Location

It may be necessary to provide more detail than that provided in the integrated framework of the LAP to locate or define the extent of important plan elements such as schools, community centres, main streets or spaces. This can be done by moving to a larger plan scale and focusing on this part of the plan area.

5.9.2 Indicative plans and sections

Aspects of the LAP which require greater clarity, will often need to be shown in greater graphical detail. Detailed plans and sections should normally be considered, and stated, as being indicative. It is very important that the LAP recognises the role and importance of later design stages.

A range of techniques can be used, including:

Typical plan detail – such as a typical plan of the street or space.

Typical section – this will provide some indication of future three dimensional relationships. It is particularly useful in showing the relationship between buildings, landscape elements and streets and spaces. It is most effective when provided with a corresponding, typical plan.

Sketch concept – this provides initial or explorative detail on the form and qualities of a plan element – such as an important urban space or civic complex.

Sketches – these are normally, but not always, hand-drawn sketches of important aspects of the plan. They are most effective when they portray the anticipated 'life' (spatial qualities and activities) of places or spaces. Eye-level perspectives are particularly useful.

3D graphics - These are very effective in giving an appreciation of the likely form and character of important aspects of the LAP. They provide an appreciation of scale and proportion, and the relationships between proposed development and the receiving environment.

Detailed visualisation – these may be appropriate for aspects of the LAP which are of particular importance, and/or where a good understanding of quality of the built form is necessary. It is likely that detailed visualisations will only be required in special cases.

Photographic images – images of existing, successful places or projects of a similar nature to those planned in the LAP are very powerful in evoking character and quality or even providing useful comparisons for plan users. These should be carefully chosen to match the place or project.

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Indicative sketch using sectional perspective to indicate proposed environmental improvements

5.9.3 Permission to use graphics

Permission should be obtained for the use of any images which are not the property of the Local Authority or a party working on its behalf.

5.10 Zoning map and matrix

The zoning objectives are an important statutory aspect of the LAP. However, is important to remember that the zoning objectives should represent the culmination of the LAP process and the statutory framing of its important elements.

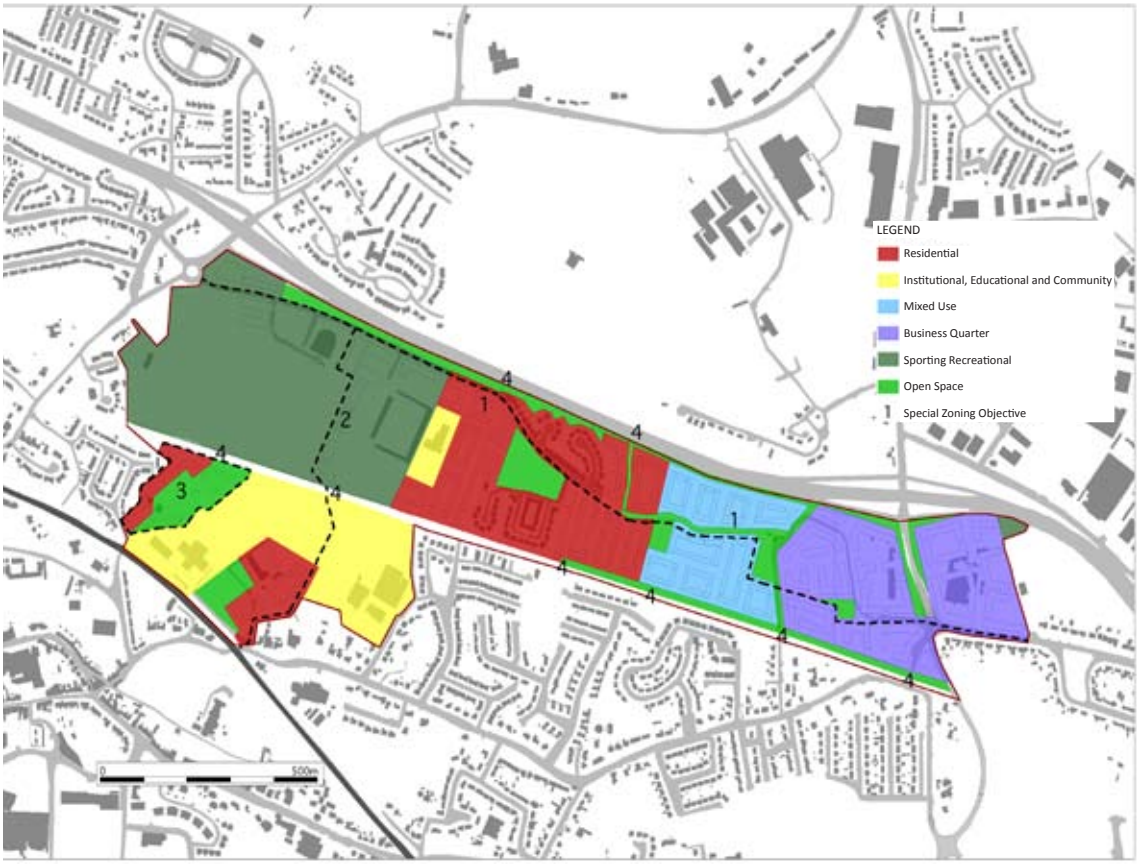
Rudimentary zoning objectives and generic zoning matrices do not provide a starting point for good local area planning.

The normal practice is to prepare a zoning map with a supporting explanatory matrix and/or text.

This may be provided in this part of the LAP or as a stand-alone aspect of the main body or the appendices of the LAP.

Each local authority will need to set out the relationship between the LAP strategies, integrated framework and the zoning objectives.
Good practice indicates that the main spatial aspects of the LAP, which are critical to the coherent and sustainable development of the area, are identified and included in the zoning objectives map. This may, for example, identify access points, main routes and spaces, landscape structure, important public or private projects, physical or community infrastructure.

Established zoning matrices, which are used at Development Plan level or in other operative LAPs, may be appropriate. However, these must be reviewed and refined where necessary to reflect the content of the LAP. If it is not possible to use or refine existing zoning objectives then new, 'plan-specific' zoning objectives should be devised.



Example of zoning map identifying significant local objectives which underpin the plan framework

Case example 5A
Grand Canal Dock – guidance for urban structure

The Grand Canal Dock Planning Scheme was developed in 2000 to provide a development framework for the Grand Canal Dock area of Dublin's Docklands. It was based on a previous development framework and Area Action Plan.

The Grand Canal Dock area comprises a land area of 29.2 hectares, located on the south side of the River Liffey in close proximity to the centre of Dublin. The Planning Scheme sets out the nature and extent of proposed development, including the distribution, mix and location of land uses. The planning scheme also contains proposals for the development of amenities, conservation and transportation in the area.

Detailed guidance on the overall design of future development was a key component of the planning scheme. Key structuring principles, based on a simple grid structure, were established with the objective of creating a permeable and connected urban area while also reinforcing important views and memorable structures and landscapes. Standards for block structure and urban grain were also established, along with guidance on the bulk, scale and massing of each development block and the proportion and scale of new streets.

The planning scheme also aimed to promote architectural design of the highest quality. Design guidance was given on issues of detailed design, including building entrances, corner elements, materials and external finishes and sustainable design features such as combined heat and power and water conservation.

The Quays during development in 2006 →

Grand Canal Dock Planning Scheme urban structure diagram
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Case example 5B
Lisseywollen South – coding for self-build

The South Lisseywollen LAP was prepared on behalf of Athlone Town Council and Westmeath County Council in 2008. The purpose of the LAP is to identify opportunities for development of lands comprising 81 hectares, located on the edge of Athlone Town Centre. The lands are currently characterised by a mix of rural landscape and suburban development, including key community and educational facilities.

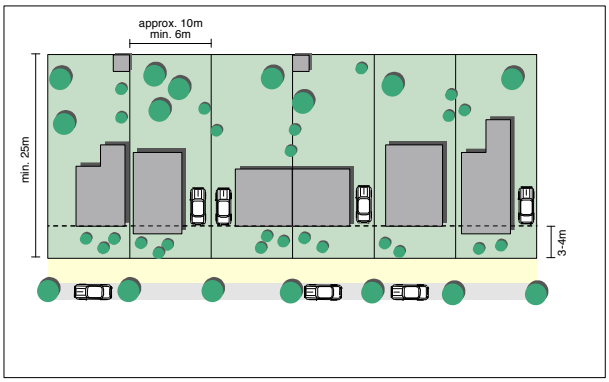
Part of the vision for the future development of the area was to create a sustainable, well connected and distinctive place with a mix of activities and living environments.

New and improved housing is an important feature of the Plan, which aimed to provide a mix of housing typologies, styles and tenures as a means of supporting the development of a diverse community. This included proposals for the development of a number of self-build plots with individually designed housing units.

The LAP included a system of coding to guide the development of these self-build plots. Key aspects of the development code included:

- Provision of a number of small to medium sized lots, with set standards for plot width and depth;
- Guidance on building footprints and layouts, including desired building setbacks and open space dimensions.

The planning authority decided to prepare more detailed guidance for potential applicants for the self-build plots, to support the implementation of the broad objectives for this type of residential development as established in the LAP.



← *Typical plot development*

2 and 3D framework plan graphics

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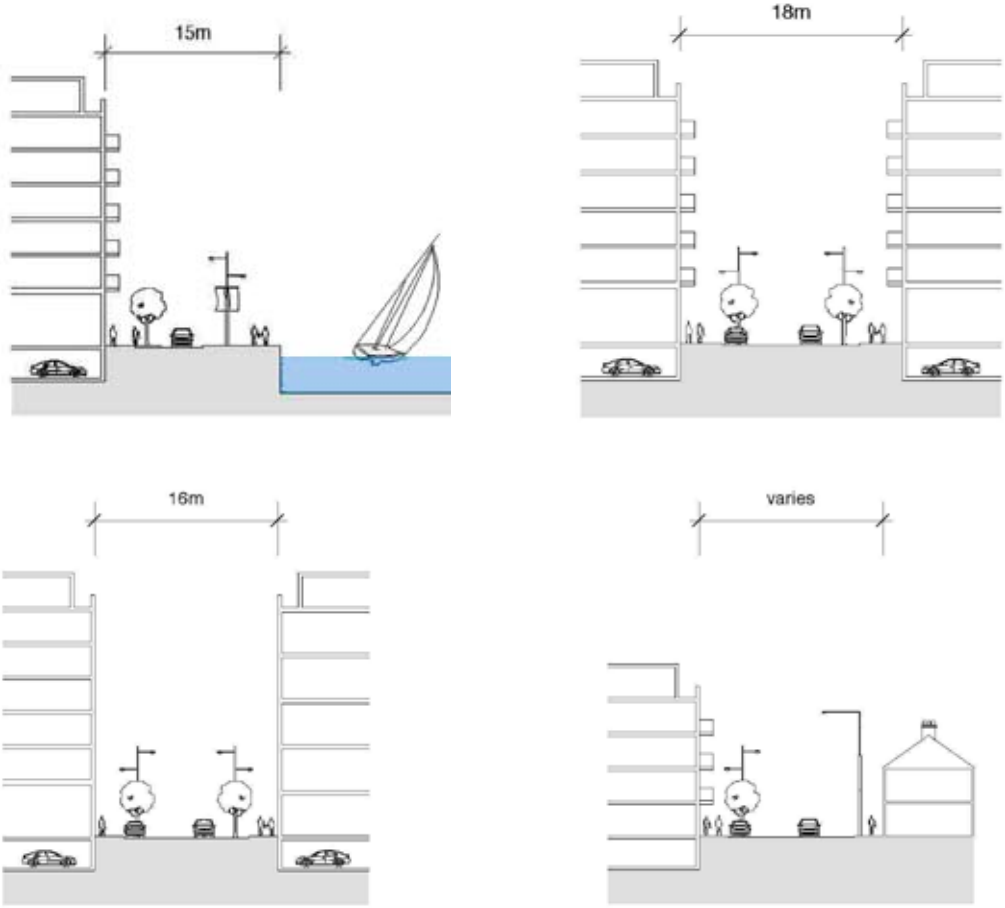
Case example 5C
Drogheda Docklands – guidelines for new streets and spaces

The Drogheda Docklands Plan was prepared for Drogheda Borough Council and adopted as a variation of the statutory Town Development Plan in 2007.

The Docklands area consists of approximately 28 hectares of strategically located town centre lands, much of which are no longer used for docking or related port activities. The challenge was to provide a coherent framework to protect the significant local heritage, provide for a range of new civic spaces and facilities, and address the issue of the fragmented ownership of the area. The plan presents a comprehensive review of local character and context, sets out a broad vision based on consultation, presents clear spatial strategies, a unified 2 and 3 dimensional framework. Given the importance of the area for the town and the local heritage, such as the iconic railway viaduct and the Boyne river, and the fragmented nature of ownership, detailed guidelines for streets and spaces were set out. These addressed important new infrastructure such as quay walls and promenade, buildings, streets and spaces at the viaduct.



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Extract from the plan showing indicative sections through key streets and spaces. Clockwise from top: the quays, spine route, secondary link street, existing street

Case example 5D
Midleton – concepts for important public spaces

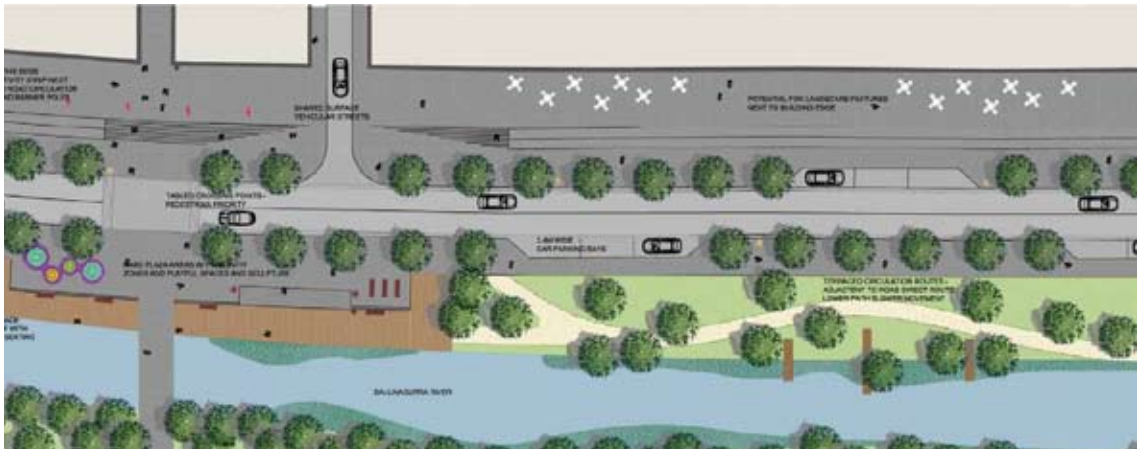
The draft Development Framework and Masterplan for the Riverside Way Area, Midleton was developed to meet an objective of the Midleton Special LAP 2005.

The preparation of the Framework and Masterplan extends beyond the brief established for the area within the Special LAP. It establishes a clear purpose, context, vision and concept for the future development of a green corridor along the river. Five character areas were set out within the whole Riverside Way area, clearly establishing the Owenacurra River as a focus for the development of the corridor. A series of public realm projects were identified, including measures to:

- Make the area attractive to pedestrians;
- Introduce buildings to generate activity;
- Establish new connections; and
- Promote activity on riverside terraces.

The plan also included the preparation of a 3D study to help illustrate the impact of the proposals for future development.

Detail of Riverside proposals



UNION
Coca-Cola

6
Deliver

Creating sustainable places requires the integrated and timely provision of development, with supporting physical and social infrastructure. Integrated and timely provision of infrastructure is important because it provides the physical framework within which sustainable development can be fostered, it demonstrates commitment and reduces uncertainty for investors, it provides greater control of phasing and it allows a greater range of developers and actors to take part.

6

Deliver

6.1 Integrated and timely infrastructure

Creating sustainable places requires the parallel provision of development with supporting physical and social infrastructure. Integrated and timely provision of infrastructure is important because:

- It provides the physical framework within which sustainable development can be fostered;
- It demonstrates commitment and reduces uncertainty for investors;
- It provides greater control of phasing; and
- Allows a greater range of developers and actors to take part.

6.2 What does implementation entail?

The delivery of sustainable places requires a proactive approach to delivery of supporting physical and social infrastructure. More often than not, the preparation of LAPs has not been accompanied by a firm commitment to implementation and this is reflected in a failure for things to happen on the ground.

6.3 Identifying infrastructure requirements

The nature and scope of the infrastructure required will depend on the aims and objectives of the plan. In the majority of cases there will be a presumption in favour of mixed uses, with different modes of transport integrated into a permeable and connected urban and landscape structure. Consequently, and to promote the creation of more sustainable places, consideration will need to be given to a broad range of different physical and social infrastructural requirements.

Physical infrastructure includes roads, open space, public transport, sewers, drainage, water and service utilities, etc., including environmental infrastructure. Social infrastructure includes schools, shops, childcare and community facilities.

While some elements are essential to facilitating development, such as roads and sewers, others, such as public transport or swales may be discretionary, but important for the creation of more sustainable places.

The plan preparation stage should scope all the infrastructural requirements for achieving the vision and strategies, and identify infrastructural elements are inter-dependent, so that they can be coordinated. Where further specialised studies are deemed necessary these should be carried out as part of the initial feasibility process, and not tacked on as plan objectives.

6.4 Phasing and matching of delivery

The requirement for most services will be triggered by a critical threshold of population. However, space requirements for land uses such as schools and childcare, must be planned and integrated into the plan area in advance having regard to relevant Guidelines and the targets identified in the Core Strategy, so that their later provision is not compromised (see also Section X of the Manual).

Alternative phasing arrangements or strategies may be included in the LAP where a degree of flexibility is needed in terms of the nature extent or location of development and supporting infrastructure and services. Each alternative must satisfactorily meet the various strategies and objectives of the LAP.

Example of phasing diagram (Source: Cosgrave Property Group)

The benefits of public investment in mandatory and discretionary elements, such as district heating or public transport infrastructure, in advance of development thresholds being reached should also be considered as it has the potential to attract private investment and alter the perceived attractiveness of the area.

It is also necessary to ensure an holistic approach to the design of infrastructure such as roads, in order for these to be rolled out at a later date with minimal disturbance.

In order to achieve this the LAP must give careful consideration to the sequential phasing and release of serviced parcels or plots of land in line with the phasing and delivery of supporting infrastructure. This, in turn, will require consideration of parceling and development capacity, especially where there is potential for the pre-existing pattern of land holdings to compromise the desired phasing of development. Parceling should prioritise the needs of the place not ease of development.

Alternative phasing options should be explored as part of the plan preparation process and their strategic environmental impacts assessed before coming to a conclusion. The preferred phasing option should be presented in a clear and unambiguous fashion while making provision for review in the event of changing circumstances.

6.5 Establishing feasibility and funding

Public investment in infrastructure removes an element of risk from the private sector. The corollary of this is that the risk is carried by the public sector, and expenditure recouped on the basis of development taking place. Alternatively, it may be possible to share risk by engaging in public-private partnership arrangements.

In today's less buoyant market, public sector interventions may be necessary to change market perceptions: making development attractive to developers who would otherwise perceive it to be unviable.

However, LAPs should avoid the generation of unrealistic expectations associated with proposals that cannot be realised, by preparing realistic cost estimates and matching these to their contribution schemes and capital allocations or known investment commitments of relevant government departments, agencies or developers.

6.6 Setting out roles and responsibilities

Effective leadership is required to link vision to delivery. Leadership needs to come from the local authority, underpinned by high-level professional as well as political commitment. Places where high quality development has been delivered tend to share one or more of the following characteristics:

- A proactive local authority;
- A dedicated delivery organisation;
- An influential project promoter acting within a supportive organisation; or
- An 'enlightened' developer(s).

The planning authority should give serious consideration to the need for a dedicated implementation and monitoring group before committing to the preparation of an LAP.

6.7 Monitoring progress

Monitoring is an integral part of the plan preparation process. Monitoring should be commenced at the pre-plan preparation stage in order to establish sufficient baseline data and indicators against which progress can be measured at the review stage. Monitoring should take account of:

- The main physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area, including its population;
- The principal purposes for which land in the area is used;
- Communications, transport and traffic (including accessibility by public transport); and
- Any other considerations which may be expected to affect the above mentioned matters.

This information will play a key role in identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that will inform the generation of alternative development options, help develop a spatial vision for the area and provide the evidence base for strategies and objectives. The framework for monitoring should be established by the LAP implementation group and aligned with the programme for monitoring the environmental effects of the plan contained in the SEA.

Case example 6A
Grangegorman – planned, phased and funded delivery

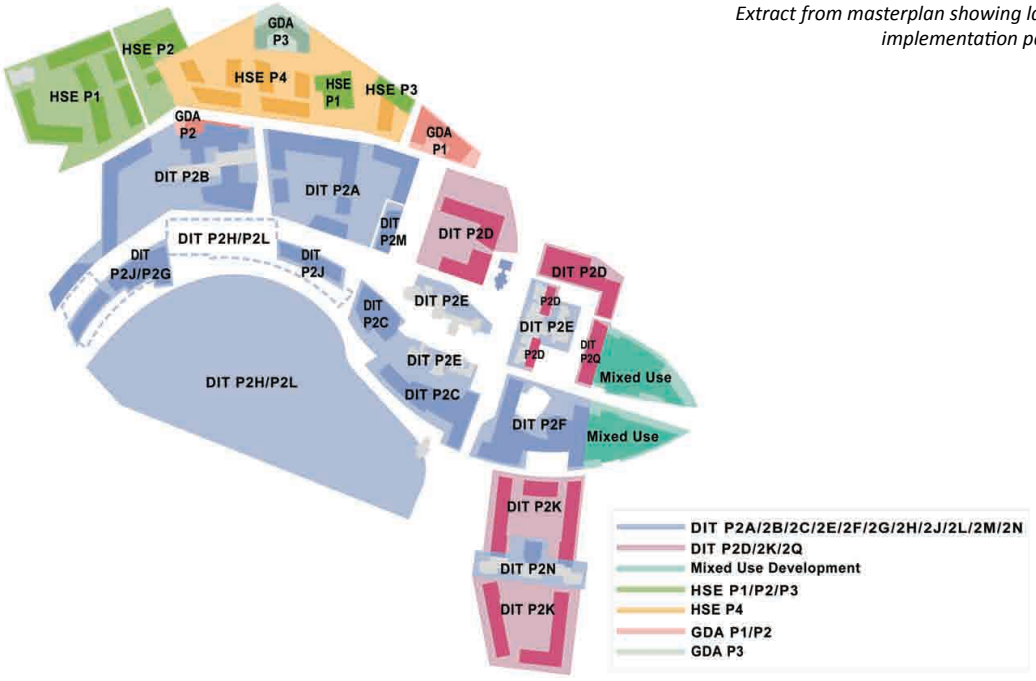
The Grangegorman plan will guide the development of a new City Quarter on a 73 acre site located in north west inner city Dublin. The new quarter will be structured around the construction of a new educational campus for the Dublin Institute of Technology and redevelopment of clinical services for the HSE. The Plan also promotes the development of a range of community, cultural and recreational facilities, along with residential accommodation for up to 20,000 people. The proposed development will create a new urban structure for the site, with a network of new streets, parks and plazas set within a high quality landscape structure based on the development of a 'green fingers' concept.

The plan recognises that the delivery of such a large, complex and diverse project necessitates integration and co-ordination across a broad range of areas. In order to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of the Grangegorman project, the plan contains a comprehensive implementation strategy comprising a series of integrated plans and strategies designed to deliver environmental protection, appropriate and timely planning approvals, site engineering and infrastructure requirements and project funding.

The Development Delivery Plan establishes a clear sequence of development works to facilitate an orderly roll-out of the project. This plan breaks the delivery of the project down into four key elements, each of which is further broken down into a series of delivery tranches and associated delivery packages. Each tranche comprises a number of buildings and types of accommodation that will be delivered within the same timeframe. The delivery packages define the quantum of buildings that will be procured together. The Development Delivery Plan was developed on a collaborative basis in consultation with the Grangegorman Development Agency, key stakeholders and the Masterplan team.

The final section of the Grangegorman plan addresses the issue of Project Funding. This section of the plan clearly identifies key development costs for delivery of the plan, including infrastructure costs, sustainability measures, professional fees, contingency, levies and planning contributions and VAT. The funding plan is matched with the proposed development tranches as set out in the Development Delivery Plan, with key project costs, funding sources and a procurement strategy identified for each.

Extract from masterplan showing layout of implementation packages



Case example 6B
Robinstown – structure for incremental growth

This LAP was prepared on behalf of Westmeath County Council in 2005. The LAP establishes the context, goals, objectives and strategies for the future development of a new quarter on a 500ha site located on the north-east edge of Mullingar.

Chapter 6 of the plan includes an innovative implementation strategy based on the development of a 'local delivery vehicle' (LDV) in combination with a special development contribution scheme to balance out the resources of developers 'up-front'. The intention of the strategy is to attach the cost of infrastructure provision to the land (and its re-sale) rather than the end user.

Other provisions include:

- The creation of a lead delivery agency comprising an alliance of landowners... as a means of unifying land ownership;
- The allocation of land use by typology;
- Measures for the phased release of land for development to support the provision of parkland, recreational facilities and structural infrastructure;
- Proposals for phased implementation, with each phase having necessary provision.

Aerial view of area

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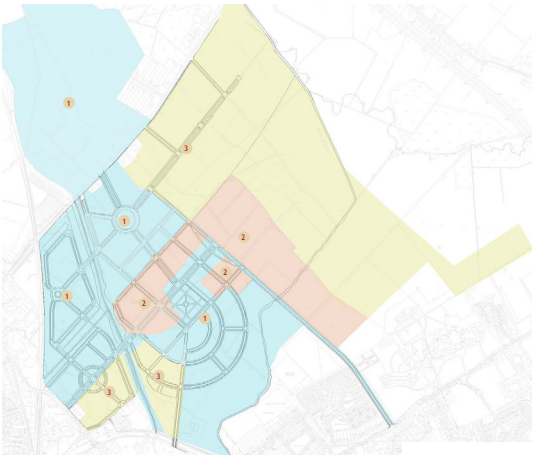
Phasing strategy

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