

## PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES SEIRBHÍSI PLEANÁLA AGUS FORBHARTHA EACNAMAÍOCHTA

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Planning & Economic Development Services is to ensure that development is planned in accordance with the principles of sustainability, provides for economic and social progress, promotes the efficient use of resources and protects the environment. The service also aims to achieve a balance between the need to encourage sustainable development whilst at the same time preserving and enhancing the quality of our countryside, towns and villages, historic buildings and wildlife areas.

The Planning & Economic Development Service is developing a more strategic focus in the context of the adoption of the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines. The review of the County Development Plan is at an advanced stage and will come before the members for adoption in July 2006. It will have major policy implications for land use planning and for the economic, social and cultural development of the county for the period 2006 - 2012.

The resources available to the Council are considerable and tremendous progress has been made over the last ten years, however it is now time to reflect and to develop a vision for the County up to 2012 and beyond. The Council needs to target its investment carefully to ensure that the population of the County benefit to the maximum possible extent. We will only do this by achieving greater economic and social cohesion through employment creation and this can only be achieved through strengthening the productive capacity of the Donegal economy, supporting key development sectors, upgrading essential infrastructure, encouraging local development initiatives, social inclusion and working in partnership with the County Development Board and its stakeholders.

**PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**  
**SEIRBHÍSÍ PLEANÁLA AGUS FORBHARTHA EACNAMAÍOCHTA**

**Draft Budgeted Expenditure: €4,587,800**  
**Draft Budgeted Income: €2,443,300**

The following pages set out the above for all the relevant Programme Groups.

## Programme Group 4

### **PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES SEIRBHÍSÍ PLEANÁLA AGUS FORBHARTHA EACNAMAÍOCHTA**

Draft Budgeted Expenditure: €4,028,100

Draft Budgeted Income: €2,186,500

(Pages 11 - 13 of Blue Pages)

#### **THE CENTRAL PLANNING UNIT**

The resources of the Central Planning Unit have been concentrated during the past year on the task of preparing the County Donegal Draft Development Plan 2005. This major piece of work which commenced in July 2004 progressed through the earlier period of 2005 with the development of policies in a wide range of subject areas such as Spatial Strategy, Employment Generation and Development Strategies. Housing, especially policy development on Rural Housing, to include issues related to Holiday Homes etc. was an area of work, which required detailed analysis and consideration. The Chapter on Natural Resource Development considered a broad range of subject areas such as Renewable Energy, Forestry, Peatlands, Wind Energy, Extractive Industries and the Marine resource. Built and Natural Heritage, dealt with Landscape Natural Conservation, the Built Heritage and Archaeology, while a very important Section on the Gaeltacht examined the issues related to the development of the area as a vibrant sustainable community where the Irish language and culture could flourish.

In addition following extensive research and assessment, updated strategies have been produced for Retail, Housing and Childcare, which will be incorporated into the Development plan. A Design guide focusing on Rural as well as Urban forms of housing development has been produced, introducing for the first time guidance for developers on energy saving, disability access and crime prevention measures.

The Draft Plan was put on public display during the Summer of 2005 and attracted some 350 written responses following an extensive programme of public participation and consultation in the 6 Electoral Areas. All submissions were assessed and a number of themed responses developed, which were all, included into the Manager's Report on the Public Consultation process which was submitted to Members in November, 2005. Members have a specified period of time to consider the Draft along with the Manager's Report and decide which amendments to make to the Draft Plan. Any Material Alterations arising will be published and put on display for a period of 4 weeks in the spring of 2006.

A final Manager's report on submissions/representations which arise will be prepared as the next stage and the Development Plan will be published by July 2006. For the first time the Development Plan will be published bilingually and in an electronic form available on a CD Rom and on the County Council's web site in a downloadable format.

It is the vision and aim of the County Council to ensure that its entire area achieves its full social and economic potential in a sustainable manner, which provides for and enhances the existing built and natural environment. The published Development Plan will provide the strategic priorities of the local authority in respect of the development and use of land through the County.

The Development Plan will take into account the Regional Planning guidelines which were published in May, 2004. The Regional Planning Guidelines have a major impact upon the Development Plan. The objectives of the Regional Planning Guidelines are to provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the development of the Border Region over the next 20 year period. This framework sets the scene for the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy at a Regional level and will contain strategic objectives which will cross the boundaries of each County in the Region and to be incorporated into the policies of the County and other Development Plans within Donegal.

The Development Plan will have a lifespan of six years to 2012, with an ongoing review process every four years, which will commence in 2010. The Plan therefore regenerates itself in a rolling programme on an ongoing basis. Once the Development Plan has been published the next stage is to prepare an Operational Programme to examine the implementation of the objectives, policies and programmes included in the Plan over its lifespan.

The Draft 2006 Budget includes a provision of €115,000 for this heading.

### **CONSERVATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The Conservation Officer was appointed to the Central Planning Unit in June 2004. The Conservation Officer deals primarily with the built fabric of the County, and in particular dealing with owner/occupiers of buildings, which are listing on the Record of Protected Structures. Information is provided to such persons on;

- The provision of specialist advice to owners of protected structures and the issue of Statutory Declarations if required.
- Advice to planners and engineers on the conservation aspects of planning applications.

- Inclusion of the Conservation Officer on teams for the Council's own developments, where applicable.

The Conservation Officer provides a consultancy service to the public on a daily basis and makes a concerted effort to meet with members of the public who have requested either a meeting on site or information of a technical or legislative nature.

This service attempts to not only raise awareness of the value of our historic built fabric but also alleviate fears, which many individuals may have with regard to the legislation and the impact this same legislation may have on future development. The premise of the Council is to encourage the sustainable development of historic buildings, allowing these same buildings to work for their owner/occupiers while still respecting the quality of materials and craft employed in previous generations. This appointment has also allowed the Council to establish closer working relationships with the prescribed bodies for the architectural heritage.

The DOELG Conservation Grant Scheme administered by the County Council allocated €120,000 on 16 projects in 2005. The Grants were announced in December, 2005.

## **2006 WORK PROGRAMME**

### **1. Seeking of Grant Aid in the sum of €253,420 from Peace II Funding**

The Conservation Officer within the council has also been working to enhance the Councils Record of Protected Structures. This work has resulted in the establishment of partnerships and communication with bodies such as the tourist board (N.W. Tourism), the farming community, rural groups, FÁS and Údaras na Gaeltachta. The Central Planning Unit has applied for funding in the sum of €253,420 to the Peace II Funding. This grant aid is to fund a project officer and also to provide for the restoration of historic buildings. The work of the Conservation Officer and proposed project officer, supports this initiative which is proposed to be carried out on an electoral area basis with direct consultation with Elected Members through the electoral area committee processes already established within the council. The project consists of 4 sub- initiatives that will lead to comprehensive community regeneration over a targeted 2 year period:

The establishment of a training programme, which aims to generate a sustainable workforce looking at areas such as the repair of timber sash windows, the repair of cast iron windows, slating a roof with graded slates, roisin slates or shingles, the application of lime plaster, thatching, re-

pointing of stonework, the cleaning of stone. These skills could be established working with the local colleges, FÁS and/or the Leader Companies, whereby a certificate of competence is acquired at the end of the courses (similar to a woodworking course at evening class or/either as a training programme for construction workers already in the industry). This training programme will lead to the development of a skills register in the county of local craftspeople resulting in entrepreneurialship and new employment in specialist areas.

The recording of all buildings of interest within a specific geographical area that show indicators of rural or urban deprivation, for example a photographic record of all the rural cottages and settlements on the Islands off the west of Donegal. Visits have already been undertaken to Gola Island to investigate the potential for such an inventory. These islands are untouched by commercialism, which continues to give us an insight into rural Ireland and in particular life on the islands. Once recorded this information can be utilised as a tourist guide or as a historical reference document for the general public as well as an academic source to inform policy and future strategy for the islands.

There are ongoing community seminars within each Electoral Area to equip individuals with the skills to recognise the qualities of their buildings, looking at historical reference and using buildings within their own communities as case studies. The programme of seminars would begin with the study of one building element such as the maintenance of timber sliding sash windows. The seminar would introduce a skilled craftsperson and use a live situation, to teach the mechanisms of a sash window, where the weights are, how to remove the glazing beads, how to remove the window from the frame for repair, how to splice and repair a bottom rail, how to identify the quality of the glass, whether it is crown glass, plate glass etc, how to date the window by looking at the details of the horns or astragals in the window.

Provision of grant aid to community groups for re-use of church buildings, national school buildings or an historic building for capital works, encouraging a sustainable approach to the re-use of the county's existing built fabric. The focus of funding provision is to seek reuse of such buildings for community based purposes such as community centres, crèche facilities, heritage centres, drop-in centres, tea-rooms. These centres act as focal points in towns/villages and encourage the interaction of community members and outside persons which aims to facilitate integration and facilitate solutions to community segregation whilst also facilitate the improvement of community facilities leading both directly and indirectly to economic regeneration. It is proposed that specific criteria would be established in this regard to seek projects located within geographically or socially deprived urban and rural areas.

**The objectives of these proposals are as follows: -**

- To conserve buildings of significant architectural merit and the innovative use of derelict buildings
- To encourage the regeneration and establishment of a skilled workforce in the county thus improving and increasing employment opportunities that encourages and supports locally based social, economic and cultural activity
- To build better communities by promoting interaction between different members of the community and bring about reconciliation and overcoming isolation
- To sustain the buildings we already have, developing rural based tourism that is based on small-scale investment by the County Council and other active groups within the community that encourages the regeneration and revitalisation of towns and villages.
- To raise awareness of the importance of a shared and valuable built heritage, using our buildings as an effective marketing tool to attract more visitors to the county and encouraging the innovative use of derelict/dilapidated buildings that strives towards sustainable development.
- To provide for the exchange of information, skills, knowledge and understanding so as to enhance peace building and social inclusion by encouraging social activity (facilitation of community facilities), economic activity (learned skills, employment generation, tourism products) and cultural activity (recognition of value of built heritage, understanding, respect of traditions).

It is proposed that a key principle underpinning the project is the need to network and communicate with other bodies in order to achieve successful outcomes in partnership and to identify and reach the most deprived rural and urban areas.

## **2. Discussion Forum**

- The establishment of a discussion forum among the four main church bodies with the objective of forming a Building Committee dealing specifically with concerns regarding sustainability and on-going maintenance of church buildings.
- An audit of transportation infrastructure primarily bridges and railway bridges

- Work with Community and Enterprise to introduce a programme of Heritage in schools educating children at primary and secondary level about the importance of our built heritage from not only an historical view but also exploring the social nature of our buildings; e.g. vernacular architecture, living patterns, European architectural influence, industrial built form and others.
- The publication of a skills register working in tandem with the programme outlined previously.
- Forge further links with the Royal Institute of Architecture of Ireland, The Heritage Service Harcourt Street in Dublin, the Ulster Architectural & Heritage Society UAHS in Belfast, Historic Scotland in Edinburgh and English Heritage in Swindon, England.
- Establish a literary reference base of books, manuals and documents relating to technical and historical aspects of conservation of the built environment.
- Liase with the Heritage Officer regarding the Draft Heritage Plan and any other related matters.
- Introduce Conservation Areas to members of the community with the hope of designating identified areas on an ongoing basis. The Ballyshannon Local Area Plan will be used as a pilot project for this proposal.

The economic potential and importance of our built heritage is recognized in the picture postcard images of the thatch cottage reminiscent of a bygone age, this image is to be nurtured not only for the benefit of the local community encouraging local art and craft and local business initiative but also used as a tool to drive tourism and investment from visitor numbers that avail of our natural and man-made landscape through the promotion of town trails and walks as well as specific buildings of relevance in a given area.

It is recognized the above objective can only be successfully implemented further through ongoing and thorough discussion with the members of each Electoral Area. To introduce these matters to the public a series of seminars as set out in the context of Peace II funding proposals will be arranged.

These objectives as listed above are not definitive but will be revised on an ongoing basis as the need is identified.

The 2006 Draft Budget includes a provision of €130,000 for this area.

### **THE PLANNING AND WORK PROGRAMME 2005/2006**

In addition to the production of the Draft County Development Plan for the County, the following Planning Projects were initiated and or completed in 2005.

- **Ballybofey/Stranorlar Local Area Plan 2005-2011.**  
This Local Area Plan was progressed through its various stages and was adopted by the County Council in February 2005.
  
- **Donegal Town Plan**  
The Plan was prepared in partnership with the Donegal Chamber of Commerce, managed by the Area Manager, Donegal, was also adopted following a number of Material Alterations. A major project which was delivered at Area level. It is an excellent example of achievement through the County Council's decentralised management structure.
  
- **Bundoran Development Plan 2004-2010 - Variation no 1**  
The County Council in conjunction with the Town Council has proposed the Variation to include selected changes to particular sites within Bundoran. The Manager's Report on submission received was considered by the Town Council in December 2005, when the procedure for initiating the Variation was agreed. It is anticipated that the Variation will be put on public display early in 2006.
  
- **Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan**  
The Area of the Town Centre Extension and Urban Design Brief Variation No. 2 of the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2003-2009.  
At the Town Council Meeting on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November Members decided to initiate this Variation of the Development Plan to incorporate an Urban Design Brief for the area of Letterkenny Town Centre which has been subject to major pressure for growth in the last few years.

The County Council at its Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2005 also agreed to initiate the Variation, as it is a joint Plan made by both Authorities. The proposed Variation will be put on public display and could be adopted in the spring of 2006 to guide future development proposals in this important part of Letterkenny.

- **Plean Áitiúil Ghaoth Dobhair**

Obair leanunach ar phlean Ceantair Áitiúil Ghaoth Dobhair

Is réamhdhréacht atá sa phlean go dtí seo, agus tá muid go fóill i gcomhairle chuimsitheach le pobal áitiúil na Gaeltachta, agus ē mar chuspōir again comhaontū a bhaint amach ar roinnt ceisteanna, a mbeidh glacadh ag an phobal āitiūil leo, sa dōigh gur fēidir linn Drēachtphlean a fhoilsiū in am agus í dtráth. Cuireann muid fáilte roimh an díospōireacht shlāintiūil phoiblí atā ag dul ar aghaidh fá dtaobh de chosaint na hoidhreachta teanga agus cultūrtha sa Ghaeltacht, agus cur chun cinn na Gaeilge mar theanga labhartha an phobail. Beidh cuspōiri sa Drēachtphlean leis and chosaint atā riachtanach a thabhairt don teanga, chomh maith le í a chothū agus a chur chun cinn.

This plan is at pre draft stage and detailed and comprehensive consultation with the local Gaeltacht community continues, with the objective of arriving at a stage where agreement can be reached on a number of issues which are acceptable to the local community, so that a Draft Plan can be published in due course. A very welcome public debate has continued in connection with the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht including the promotion of Irish as the community language. The roll out of a series of Local Area Plans in the Gaeltacht is proposed in the Draft County Development Plan and this Plan will need to be reassessed and evaluated on this basis.

- **Border Villages Programme**

The Border Village Local Area Planning Programme continued through out 2005 with the adoption of Plans for the villages of Castlefin and Rossnowlagh following a number of Material Alterations. It is anticipated that this successful programme will continue into 2006 and beyond with the preparation of Plans for Lifford, Newtowncunningham and Pettigo

- **Plean Ceantair Áitiúil do Pharóistí Chill Charthaigh agus Ghleann Cholm Cille**

Tá tús á chur leis an obair chun an Plean Ceantair Áitiúil seo a ullmhú i gcomhar leis na pobail áitiúla agus ag obair i gcompháirt leis an Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta agus Údarás na Gaeltachta. Tabharfaidh an Fhoireann Pleanála Ceantair Áitiúil an Plean Ceantair Áitiúil fríd gach céim reáchtúil go dtí go nglacfar leis go foirmeálta ag deireadh 2006 / tús 2007.

Work is commencing on the preparation of this Local Area Plan in conjunction with the local communities and working in partnership with An Roinn Gnothai, Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta and Udaras Na

Gaeltachta. The Local Area Plan will be taken through its various statutory stages by the Local Area Planning Team and formal adoption towards the end of 2006 early 2007.

- **Plean Ceantair Áitiúil a ullmhú don Chlochán Liath**

Leanfar leis an athbhreithniú ar Phlean Baile an Chlocháin Léith, ar cuireadh tús leis í 2005, agus tabharfaidh an Fhoireann Pleanála Ceantair Áitiúil an plean seo fríd gach céim reáchtúil go dtí go nglacfar go foirmeálta leis ag deireadh 2006 / tús 2007.

The Review of the Dungloe Town Plan which commenced in 2005, by the Local Area Planning Team and will progress through its various statutory stages towards its formal adoption towards end of 2006 early 2007.

- **Ballyshannon & Environs Local Area Plan**

Basic groundwork, survey and data collection was initiated in 2005. An issues report will be prepared in early 2006, in order to progress the planning process towards adoption of the Local Area Plan towards the end of 2006/beginning of 2007. The opening of the bypass and the downgrading of the existing National Primary Road will create development opportunities between the town and Bundoran. The regeneration of the town including the development of initiatives to tackle dereliction will be addressed through the review process. Ballyshannon is also one of the Towns earmarked as a pilot to explore ways of providing a coherent and integrated approach to local area planning, development and service delivery.

- **Killybegs Local Area Plan**

Once again, basic survey work, data collection and information gathering have commenced. It is anticipated that a Draft Local Area Plan will be prepared during 2006 with adoption of the Local Area Plan towards the end of the year or early in 2007.

- **The Woodlands Study**

This study was commenced during the Summer of 2005 and a public meeting was held to discuss problems and opportunities in the area. A full report to the County Council is to be presented early in 2006.

- **Drumboe Masterplan**

One of the proposals arising out of the adoption of the Ballybofey/Stranorlar Local Area Plan was the requirement that a Masterplan be produced for Drumboe. Work commenced on this sensitive project in 2005. It will be concluded in 2006, and will form the basis for guiding development proposals in the area.

- **Buncrana & Environs Development Plan**

This is a major project, which requires the process of reviewing the Buncrana Development Plan 2002. The Development Plan will be a joint project undertaken on behalf of both the Buncrana Town Council and the County Council, which will take two years to produce. The Review will commence in February, 2006. Basic survey work will commence in the spring of 2006, with a Draft Plan nearing completion towards the end of the year, with a period of public consultation following in the spring of 2007 and final adoption in 2008.

## **TOWN RENEWAL TAX INCENTIVE SCHEME**

The Draft Budget provision for 2006 is €10,000. The Town Renewal Scheme, which was introduced in 2000, designated 210 sites within 5 towns for tax relief incentives if same were developed in accordance with the site-specific criteria for each site. Incentives were offered on sites either to be refurbished or new built for commercial or residential development, or a combination of both.

The five towns which were designated for tax relief were Ardara, Ballybofey/Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Merville and Ramelton. The Council's role in the Tax Incentive Scheme is to issue preliminary certification in respect of developments which would comply with the site-specific criteria, prior to commencement of the development. Once development has been completed, it is the role of the Council to furnish a letter of Final Certification, if the development has complied with the site-specific criteria.

The following table illustrates the update of the Scheme to date:

<b>Town</b>	<b>No. of Preliminary Certificates Issued</b>	<b>No. of Final Certificates Issued</b>
<b>Ardara</b>	1	2
<b>Ballybofey/Stranorlar</b>	3	3
<b>Ballyshannon</b>	8	3
<b>Merville</b>	8	4
<b>Ramelton</b>	5	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>

The closing date to avail of the Scheme was the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004, in that applicants must have had a planning application lodged prior to this date or in the case of exempted development, 15% of the costs of the project incurred before the closing date. Applicants who have complied with the above criteria, have until the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006 to carry out works under the Scheme.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government are currently carrying out a review of the scheme in terms of the environmental/social benefits which have derived from the Scheme. The Department of Finance is also carrying out a review in terms of the financial gains which arose from the Scheme.

### **IRISH CENTRAL BORDER AREA NETWORK (ICBAN)**

The Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) was formed in 1995 and consists of the 10 member authorities of Armagh, Cavan, Cookstown, Donegal, Dungannon, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Monaghan, Omagh and Sligo.

ICBAN was established to provide a collective body which would seek to improve the economic and social development of the region through a cohesive and co-ordinated approach in the provision of infrastructure, transportation, environment, civic and community services.

In 2004, an application for funding under Interreg IIIA, Seaside Towns, Improving the Image of Traditional Resorts was approved by ICBAN. Funding of €240,000 was granted for the following works:

<b>Town</b>	<b>Nature of Works</b>	<b>Funding Sought</b>
<b>Donegal Town</b>	Environmental Improvement works on the quay area.	€82,500.00
<b>Bundoran</b>	Further phase of Promenade.	€82,500.00
<b>Buncrana</b>	Development of a number of walkways from Swan Park to Stragill.	€75,000.00
<b>Total</b>		€240,000.00

This funding was granted on the condition that the Council would provide 25% match funding, bringing the total investment in the above projects to €320,000. The works on the Promenade in Bundoran and the development of the walkways from Swan Park to Stragill have now been completed. Works have commenced to re-develop The Quay, Donegal Town and will continue in 2006.

A marketing committee has also been established consisting of officials from the member authorities which have benefited from this funding, to develop a strategy to market these locations. A provision of €25,000 has been included in the Draft Budget to co-fund the secretariat and other interregional activities including NASC.

## **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

The unprecedented growth in the number of Planning Applications received during the 1990's, culminating in an annual total of 5687 in 2000, has continued to expand in the new millennium. Following a slight fall in 2001 (4517 applications) the figures for 2003 spiralled to 7139, an increase of 25% over the previous record high of 5687 in 2000.

The 2004 applications peaked at 8564 . Applications in 2005 to the end of November are running at 6726

### **Comparisons with other Counties**

County	Applications received to the 30/11/05
Cork	8827
Donegal	6726
Galway	4571
Kerry	4094
Mayo	3270

The Planning and Development Regulations, regarding planning application content, continues to give rise to problems. Although the percentage of invalid applications has decreased from 27% in 2003 to 20% this year it is still alarmingly high and is placing unreasonable workloads on the planning system, already overloaded with a very high number of applications. This is particularly disappointing, as every effort has been made to clarify the requirements and the validation process. Planning staff engaged with a large number of Architects\Agents earlier in the year in an effort to reduce the unacceptable level of invalid applications.

Planning Applications Received			
Year	Applications	Invalid applications	Valid applications
2000	5687		
2001	4517		
2002	5920	1413	4507
2003	7139	1961	5178
2004	8564	1978	6686
2005 (Jan-Nov)	6726	1348	5378

**Planning Applications: Breakdown of Decisions made between the  
1<sup>st</sup> Jan.'05 and 30<sup>th</sup> Nov. '05**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of applications determined</b>	<b>Applications determined within 8 weeks (Further Info not requested)</b>	<b>Applications where F.I. was requested</b>	<b>Applications Granted</b>	<b>Applications Refused</b>	<b>Applications appealed</b>	<b>Withdrawn/ Modified/ Dismissed</b>	<b>Appeal Decision Upheld</b>	<b>Appeal Over turned</b>
<b>Housing Development</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>215 (92%)</b>	<b>185 (44%)</b>	<b>338 (81%)</b>	<b>80 (19%)</b>	<b>12 (3 %)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7 (58%)</b>	<b>5 (42%)</b>
<b>Individual Houses</b>	<b>3742</b>	<b>2400 (97%)</b>	<b>1259 (33%)</b>	<b>2856 (79%)</b>	<b>786 (20%)</b>	<b>73 (2%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33 (45%)</b>	<b>40 (55%)</b>
<b>Other – Not requiring EIA</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>641 (98%)</b>	<b>140 (17%)</b>	<b>729 (91%)</b>	<b>66 (11%)</b>	<b>25 (3%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10 (40%)</b>	<b>15 (60%)</b>
<b>Other requiring EIA</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>17 (94%)</b>	<b>9 (33%)</b>	<b>25 (91%)</b>	<b>2 (9%)</b>	<b>5 (19%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4 (80%)</b>	<b>1 (20%)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4982</b>	<b>3273 (95%)</b>	<b>1593 (32%)</b>	<b>3948 (86%)</b>	<b>934 (14%)</b>	<b>115 (7%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>54 (56%)</b>	<b>61 (44%)</b>

The total number of applications granted, refused and deferred in County Donegal compares with the national average, but significantly, the County at 66% is well ahead of the national average of 56%, which are decided within eight weeks of submissions.

Additional resources were made available to the Planning Service in 2005 to cope with the additional workloads created by the continued high numbers of planning applications and the introduction of the registration of quarries.

This has been funded out of the increase in planning fees. Provision has been made in the 2006 Draft Budget to retain these additional members of staff.

### Section 140 Motions under the Local Government Act 2001

Under S.140 of the Local Government Act 2001 the elected members of a local authority may, by resolution, direct that any particular Act, matter or thing be done or effected. I set out hereunder details of the S.140 planning motions considered by the Council in 2005.

E.A	Ref No	Dev Description	Refusal Reasons	Outcome	Decision
D	04/1012	Livestock mart dev + access to NPR	Access onto NPR.	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
L	04/6733	Workshop & Manufacturing unit for headstones	Set an undesirable precedent for industrial development in a rural area, constitute a traffic hazard, Proximity to ecclesiastical site	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
M	05/7039	Erection of Dwelling & Septic Tank	Perm granted before meeting date	Withdrawn	Granted
L	05/6065	Retention of access, entrance and erection of workshop & manufacturing unit for headstones	Set an undesirable precedent for industrial development in a rural area, constitute a traffic hazard, Proximity to ecclesiastical site	Passed	Granted
M	05/7348	Retention of 18 no Caravan Pitches with associated site works & wastewater treatment system	Sect 2.6.4 Policy no 7 - Landscape conservation, Policy no 7 - Visible from scenic route. Sect 5 Vol. 2 landscape does not have capacity to absorb development. Caravan & camping standards not complied with	Passed	Granted but appealed by An Taisce
M	05/7320	Retention of 70 no Caravan Pitches with associated site works & wastewater treatment system	Sect 2.6.4 Policy no 7 - Landscape conservation, Policy no 7 - Visible from scenic route. Sect 5 Vol. 2 landscape does not have capacity to absorb development. Caravan & camping standards not complied with	Passed	Granted but appealed by An Taisce

	Ref No	Dev Description	Refusal Reasons	Outcome	Decision
M	05/7380	Erection of Dwelling, garage & Septic Tank & retention of access road	Section 2.6.4 Policy no 1 - Landscape cannot absorb development, Policy no 7 - Visible from scenic road, Sect 2.5.5 - Not in reasonable proximity to family home	Passed	Granted but appealed by An Taisce
M	05/7349	Retention of 52 no Caravan Pitches with associated site works & wastewater treatment system	Sect 2.6.4 Policy no 7 - Landscape conservation, Policy no 7 - Visible from scenic route. Sect 5 Vol. 2 landscape does not have capacity to absorb development. Caravan & camping standards not complied with	Passed	Granted but appealed by An Taisce
G	05/2610	Erection of dwelling and septic tank at Dooley Lettermacaward	Sect 2.6.4. Policy no 7 - Visible from designated scenic route	Passed	Granted
D	05/720	Erection of retirement Village 54 houses at Magheracar Bundoran	Sect 2.5.5 multiple development proposed outside of control points	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
G	05/2771	Erection of dwelling and septic tank at Glasserchoo, Meenlaragh	Sect 2.6.4. Policy no 1 - Landscape cannot absorb development. Policy no 7 - Visible from designated scenic route, Sect 2.5.5 not in reasonable proximity to family home	Passed	Refused
G	05/30119	Erection of dwelling and septic tank at Fanaboy West Gortahork	Perm granted before meeting date	Withdrawn	Granted
G	05/30383	Erection of dwelling and septic tank at Errarooey Beag, Falcarragh	Section 2.5.5 Not in reasonable proximity to existing house, located on elevated ground in a highly scenic area	Passed	Refused
D	05/20303	Erection of dwelling and septic tank at Magheracar, Bundoran	Within lands conditioned as open space under previous	Passed	

### **Unauthorised Development**

Enforcement procedures, as a result of unauthorised development, continue at a high rate in the County, with the more streamlined legislation responsible for more effective action. While many cases are dealt with, before the need for Court appearances, nevertheless 3 injunctions, 14 enforcement notices and 76 warning letters were issued in 2005 so far. The enforcement of Planning is dealt with by the Area Planning Service, with the support of other services, particularly the Roads and Transportation Service. In the second half of this year, three enforcement officers were appointed one for each pair of electoral areas to assist in effectively responding to complaints and it is intended to set in place a systematic approach to follow up inspections on developments once they have commenced.

### **Integrated Online Planning Search Facility**

The online planning system has proven to be a great success since it was launched in 2004 and is going from strength to strength. The e plan system has on average 50,000 hits per month and g plan, which is the digital mapping system, has in the region of 46,000 hits per month.

The planning department participated in a pilot project for the Department of Environment for a three-month period during the summer. Electronic applications were accepted by both email and CD from a number of agents around the county. The digitised documents and plans were then exported into the system instead of the cumbersome method of having to scan them. The Department is to further advance this process in the coming year so that all applications can be referred digitally to other agencies. The feedback from the public on the services available to them has been positive to date and indeed this is reflected in the vast numbers of people who log on. The online facility is a replication of the internal systems in use by the planning section. All information that is viewable at the office counter is now available in its electronic format on the web. The customer can now search for an application, by application number if known, by name, or by searching on a map and clicking on the location of the application. Online mapping now enables the user to interact with maps, go wherever they wish and retrieve relevant information. If you are doing a specific search or general search the web facility will allow the user to find what he/she wants. All documentation from site layouts, elevation plans, reports, submissions, conditions and manager's order are now viewable online.

## **PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS IN CUSTOMER SERVICES 2006**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

The public frequently requires information under the following four broad headings:

- Exempted Development.
- County Development Plan.
- Planning Applications (general).
- Miscellaneous.

The Council receives in the region of 100,000 queries annually in relation to planning. In order to access this information the public travel to Public Services Centres, phone the Council Offices or often contact elected members seeking casual information. The Council's website does contain a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section which is intended to assist the public. It is not intended to be a totally comprehensive description of questions, which can arise but deals primarily with the questions, which are frequently asked. The list of questions will be reviewed and new questions and answers shall be added to the site. It is intended to publish the draft Planning Policy Guideline (PPG) notes and this shall provide the public with a better understanding of Policy/Practice and enable the planning service to provide greater consistency in planning decisions. The online planning service and the FAQ's should help to provide a better service to the public and reduce the need for the public to contact the planning office or elected members directly.

### **Pre-planning Consultation**

Prior to the enactment of the Planning and Development Act 2000 Donegal County Council have provided pre-planning advice and guidance to persons with an interest in carrying out a development, although this was not required by legislation. The Planning and Development Act now specifically provides for a formalised system of dealing with pre-planning consultations for specific proposals for specific sites and one of the "Performance Indicators" upon which the Council are measured is the average length of time from a request for consultation to the actual pre-planning consultation meeting. During 2005 the Council have put in place a computerised system for tracking pre-planning consultations, which has been developed through the LGMSB. It is intended to have the pre-planning consultation process fully operational in January 2006 with all queries regarding specific proposals for specific sites dealt through this new system.

### **Registration of Quarries**

Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, provided for the Registration of all existing quarries, except those which had received planning permission since 28<sup>th</sup> April 1999, i.e. within five years of the commencement of the section. Under the registration system, quarry owners/operators must have supplied full details of their operations to the Planning Authority by 27<sup>th</sup> April 2005. The Council received 112 applications for registration under Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act. The registration process involves the Planning Authority deciding if the applications relate to quarries which can be registered. In some instances this requires further information to be sought. Once the quarries are deemed to be registered a public consultation in respect of the registered quarry must be carried out with the local community, within six months of the registration. This consultation takes the form of a public notice in an approved newspaper setting out the Planning Authority's views on the quarry e.g. should the quarry be permitted to continue operating with the original conditions or should new or modified conditions be applied. The Planning Authority may also decide if "pre-planning" quarries should be asked to apply for permission, which could also require an Environmental Impact Assessment. To date the council have published its views in respect of 64 of the registered quarries and have sought further information in the case of almost 30 quarries. Following the period of public consultation, the Planning Authority must consult with the quarry operators, informing them of any new or additional conditions and the reasons for their imposition. And they then have the opportunity to make submissions to the Planning Authority. Accordingly whilst a significant amount of work has been carried out to date there is a very significant workload to be undertaken during 2006.

### **Summary**

The Draft Budget for 2006 makes provision of €3,889,600 for the Planning Service which is an increase of €350,800 over 2005.

## Programme Group 5

### ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COSAINN NA TIMPEALLACHTA

Draft Budgeted Expenditure: €10,200

Draft Budgeted Income: € Nil

(Page 14 - 16 of Blue Pages)

#### Tree Planting

The Draft Budget for 2006 includes a provision of €10,200 in expenditure for Tree Planting.

## Programme Group 6

### RECREATION & AMENITY CAITHEAMH AIMSIRE AGUS TAITNEAMHACHT

Draft Budgeted Expenditure: €549,500

Draft Budgeted Income: €256,800

(Page 17 - 19 of Blue Pages)

#### Casual Trading

The Draft Budget for 2006 includes a provision of €41,500 in expenditure under this heading.

Please see next page.

## Casual Trading - Progress Report

Town	Byelaws Adopted	Current Position at 03/12/05
Carndonagh	26/09/03	The Council has a Casual Trading Area designated at Mart Road, Carndonagh, which has been operational from 14 <sup>th</sup> October, 2003. However, arising from roadworks in the area it is now necessary to designate an alternative Casual Trading Area for Carndonagh.
Ballybofey		The proposed designation of a Casual Trading Area in Ballybofey was published on 13 <sup>th</sup> February, 2003 and an appeal against the designation was upheld in the District Court. Donegal County Council is currently appealing the decision of the District Court to the Circuit Court and the Council is now attempting to secure a date for hearing.
Ballyshannon	31/05/04	The Council designated a Casual Trading Area, at rear of the Market Yard Car Park, which has been operational from 12 <sup>th</sup> July, 2004. It is intended to evaluate the potential of extending trading to additional days in the week in Ballyshannon.
Killybegs	26/01/04	The Council have designated a Casual Trading Area, at Shore Road, Killybegs, which has been operational from 13 <sup>th</sup> February, 2004
Moville		Public Meeting held in Moville and selected site was in contravention of the Moville Development Plan. However subsequent meetings have taken place with the elected members to select a temporary site suitable for designation.
Falcarragh		Draft Bye-laws were published and have been appealed to the District Court. It is anticipated that a date for hearing shall be set for early in 2006.
Dungloe		Draft Bye-laws were published and have been appealed to the District Court. It is anticipated that a date for hearing shall be set for early in 2006.
Ardara		The examination of a suitable site for designation in Ardara has been initiated
Lifford		The examination of a suitable site for designation in Lifford has been initiated
Donegal Town		The examination of a suitable site for designation in Donegal Town has been discussed with the Donegal Electoral Area Committee and it is intended to prepare draft bye-laws for consideration early in 2006.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

### Programme Group 8

#### MISCELLANEOUS ÉAGSÚIL

Expenditure on Loan Charges for the Provision of an Economic Development Fund is included in the Finance Directorate.

#### Economic Development Fund

The Economic Development Fund of €6.3 million was established as a recommendation of the Donegal Employment Initiative Task Force Report 1998, which was prepared by the Donegal Employment Initiative Task Force set up in the aftermath of the high number of job losses in the county.

The Fund of €6.3 million has been a valuable lever to attract investment to the County and create a climate to promote economic and social development. A variety of projects have been supported by the Fund, which have included the provision of premises for companies to establish a base in Donegal, and thus creating much needed employment and economic growth.

In addition, a number of land banks have been purchased in strategic locations, which have facilitated indigenous business to set up and expand operations. Most recently, the Council has completed negotiations with the IDA to purchase parcels of land at Milltown, Donegal Town and Milford. The Fund has also contributed to the cost of providing the Letterkenny Metropolitan Area Network, which will provide an attractive location for companies to establish in Letterkenny as well as improving the competitive advantage of existing businesses within the Town, in terms of quicker access and download of information.

The Fund will also provide the co-funding of an estimated €1,000,000 necessary to support the provision of Metropolitan Area Networks in Ballybofey/Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Carndonagh, Bunrana, Bundoran and Donegal Town.

In 2006 the Council hope to attract investors to develop the lands purchased at Lifford Common from the Fund and to also attract businesses to develop the remaining parcel of land, at Glencrow, Movice.

## CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

### Development Charges/Development Contribution Scheme

Under the Planning Acts, the Council can impose conditions on planning permissions granted to contribute to the cost of infrastructure, which has benefited or will benefit the development. The monies collected from the development charges levied, are re-invested in the services for which the charge was imposed. In 2005, a total of €6.08 million, comprising €4.88m for the W/E/E Service and €1.2m for the Roads & Transportation Service was provided for re-investment in capital works, across the various services. The details of these projects were set out under the relevant headings in the Draft Budget 2006 book.

At present, the Council is operating two development charges schemes, which are summarised below:

### Pre March 2004 - Development Charges Scheme

A schedule of charges were adopted in the County Development Plan 2000 approved by the Council, and are applicable on all decision of planning permissions granted before the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2004.

The following Table 1 sets out the total sum of development charges on hand to date in respect of the Pre March 2004 Development Charges Scheme:

Table 1

<b>Electoral Area</b>	<b>Total</b>
Inishowen	€4,254,508.86
Donegal	€1,279,489.23
Glenties	€827,452.32
Letterkenny	€2,549,909.24
Milford	€1,086,616.61
Stranorlar	€1,605,396.17
Monies received in respect of payment agreements - all areas	€1,046,312.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>€12,649,685.08</b>

The following Table 2 sets out the estimated commitments to be funded from the development charges collected to date:

**Table 2**

<b>Commitments</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Roads (per Budget 2005)	€1,200,000.00
WEE (per Budget 2005)	€4,884,232.00
2003 & 2004 Roads Footpath Programme	€300,000.00
Other unfunded balances	€5,943,448.00
Road Works Glenties EIS	€280,000.00
Dredging Buncrana Harbour	€68,500.00
<b>Estimated Total Commitments</b>	<b>€12,687,180.00</b>

In 2005 to date, in excess of €2.4 million has been collected under the Pre March 2004 Scheme and a lesser sum will be become due each year under this Scheme. It is estimated that a sum of €1.4 million will be collected under the Pre March 2004 Scheme in 2006.

In common with previous years, the W/E/E and the Roads and Transportation Section will be setting out details of the projects in 2006 which will be funded from development charges. In addition, projects progressed under the Town and Village Renewal Programme are also funded from development charges collected in the area where the development is to be carried out.

**Development Charges Scheme Pre March 2004 - Top 300 Debtors**

The development charges unit was strengthened with the appointment of a number of staff in October 2004, to target the collection of development charges in each Electoral Area. These staff members are presently targeting the top 300 deemed highest accounts in the County. In October 2004, of €7,402,152.72 was deemed to be outstanding on these accounts. The following Table 3 illustrates the progress made on this exercise:

**Table 3**

Balance as at 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2004	€7,402,152.72
Outstanding Bal 16 <sup>th</sup> November 2005	€3,588,179.50
<b>Reduction</b>	<b>€3,813,973.22</b>
<i>Reduction accounted as follows:</i>	
Charges Paid	€2,416,362.55
Charges Written Off (works in lieu, duplicate charges, etc)	€1,397,610.67
	<b>€3,813,973.22</b>
<b>Breakdown of outstanding Balance (Difference)</b>	
Amounts contained in agreements	€1,066,048.13
Uncollectable to date (e.g. due to non commencement)	€499,700.97
Potential write offs (works in lieu)	€1,037,342.38
Ongoing follow ups	€918,045.84
Referred for Enforcement	€67,042.18
	€3,588,179.50

**Notes:**

In excess of €1 million of the outstanding balances on the above accounts is tied up in payment agreements.

It is envisaged that a further €1 million will be written off in lieu of works to be carried out by developers.

**Development Charges Scheme Pre March 2004 - Outstanding Balances All Accounts.**

In 2005 to date, €6,545,288.65 is outstanding on the Pre March 2004 Scheme, which can be summarised on **Table 4** as follows:

**Table 4**

**Outstanding Charges Per Electoral Area**

<b>Electoral Area</b>	<b>Outstanding (To 22/11/2005)</b>	<b>%</b>
Donegal	€457,547.04	6%
Stranorlar	€765,553.02	12%
Milford	€1,259,870.42	19%
Glenties	€330,694.93	5%
Inishowen	€1,474,422.32	23%
Letterkenny	€2,257,200.92	35%
Total	€6,545,288.65	100%

**Notes:**

During 2005, works to the value of €401,472.92 were carried out in lieu of payment of charges.

53 agreements are in place to pay development charges due by monthly instalments, the details of which are set out in Table 5 below.

**Table 5**

<b>Electoral Area</b>	<b>Number of Agreements</b>	<b><u>Amounts</u></b>
Inishowen/Letterkenny	25	€850,499.13
Donegal/Stranorlar	12	€280,800.16
Milford/Glenties	16	€413,291.50
Total	53	€1,544,590.79

The following table summaries action carried out on the charges of €6,545,288.65 outstanding to date.

**Table 6:**

<b>Outstanding Balance as at 22.11.05</b>		<b>(a) €6,545,288.65</b>
<i>Less:</i>		
Agreements	€1,544,590.79	
Uncollectable to date (e.g. due to non commencement as per top 300 accounts)	€499,700.97	
Potential write offs - works in lieu (per top 300 accounts only)	€1,037,342.38	
Referred for Enforcement (per top 300 accounts only)	€67,042.18	
Write offs (period 1990 to 1997)	€323,676.56	
<b>Total</b>	<b>(b) €3,472,352.80</b>	
<b>Ongoing follow up</b>	<b>(a)-(b) = €3,072,935.85</b>	

In accordance with Circular Letter Fin 20/2005, Local Government General Purpose Allocations 2006, I set out the information stipulated:

- Estimate of development levies to be collected in 2006 is €4.4 million;
- Total balance of development levy income on hands is €12,649,685.08 (breakdown set out in Table 1, page 194);
- The Council's commitments for this balance are as set out in Table 2 (page 195).

### **Development Contribution Scheme 2004**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2004, the Members of the Council adopted a new Development Contribution Scheme, in accordance with Section 48 of the Planning & Development Act 2000. The charges collected under the Scheme, as with the previous Scheme, will be used to fund and progress the Council's various capital programmes.

All planning decisions made after the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2004 are levied development charges in accordance with this Scheme. However, charges will still be due for collection under the previous Scheme for a number of years as the duration of permission does not expire for 5 years from the date of grant of the planning permission.

The following Table 7 details the charges levied and collected under the current Development Contribution Scheme.

**Table 7:**

<b>Charges Levied to 22.11.05</b>	<b>Collected to 22.11.05</b>	<b>Outstanding at 22.11.05</b>
€5,184,466.93	€1,410,792.74	€3,773,674.19

Table 8 below provides a breakdown of the charges collected by service per Electoral Area.

**Table 8:**

Description	Total amount	Donegal	Glenties	Inishowen	Letterkenny	Milford	Stranorlar
DCS - Sewer	€215,673.66	€20,611.38	€6,029.44	€48,443.72	€92,296.33	€22,298.64	€25,994.15
DCS - Water	€481,240.63	€61,022.40	€64,314.16	€143,906.54	€85,618.25	€73,663.76	€52,715.52
DCS - GWSS	€8,929.40	€3,201.00		€4,279.40		€866.00	€583.00
DCS - Car Parking	€56,448.30	€53,273.30		€2,540.00		€635.00	
DCS - Roads	€423,981.43	€67,594.25	€23,092.94	€117,833.25	€94,616.23	€49,233.68	€71,611.08
DCS - Roads Misc	€25,540.00	€23,000.00		€2,540.00			
DCS - SLI	€4,956.00			€4,956.00			
DCS - Sewer Specific	€21,578.00	€10,500.00					€11,078.00
DCS - Specific Charge	€6,752.27	€6,752.27					
DCS - Village & Urban	€158,693.05	€16,122.76	€38,386.60	€46,753.32		€57,430.37	
DCS - Water Specific	€7,000.00	€7,000.00					
<b>Total</b>	<b>€1,410,792.74</b>	<b>€269,077.36</b>	<b>€131,823.14</b>	<b>€371,252.23</b>	<b>€272,530.81</b>	<b>€204,127.45</b>	<b>€161,981.75</b>

**Notes:**

1. In excess of €1.3 million (of the outstanding amount of €3.7m) is tied up in payment agreements.
2. The remaining outstanding charges are in respect of accounts for which an invoice has only been raised within the last few months.
3. It is estimated that a sum of €3 million will be collected in 2006 under the current Development Contribution Scheme.

It was a stipulation of the current Development Contribution Scheme that a review of this Scheme would commence in 2005, which has now lead to the preparation of a Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2006 - 2007.

### **Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2006 - 2007**

Following a meeting with the Planning Strategic Policy Committee and the Elected Members of the Council, a Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2006 - 2007 was published on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2004 and members of the public and interested groups had until the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2005 to consider this draft Scheme and submit their observations/submissions on same.

It is envisaged that a new Scheme will be adopted by the Elected Members of the Council in January 2006. The Council have also published details of capital projects that are being proposed to be funded by the new DCS and a commitment has been given that members will receive a quarterly report on the progress of these capital projects.

### **Capital Development Programme Urban and Village Renewal Programme 2005-2007**

#### **Urban & Village Renewal Programme 2000-2006**

The Planning & Economic Development Service continue to progress the Urban & Village Renewal Programme 2000-2006 as approved by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Due to the long lead in time for these projects, taking into consideration the public consultation process, approval of the Council Members and tendering process, it is envisaged that the scheme will extend to 2007.

The aim of the scheme is to carry out environmental improvement schemes and enhancement works in the many towns and villages throughout the county, through the provision of the following works:

- Undergrounding of overhead cables,
- Provision of street furniture and decorative lighting,
- Provision of new footpaths incorporating drop kerbs,
- Landscaping works.

A major source of funding for the works carried out in the Urban Centres is derived from an annual allocation received under the Urban and Village Renewal Measure of the Regional Operational Programme, 2000-2006. The allocation from this Programme in 2005 is €554,500.00. In addition to this allocation, the Council will also invest its own resources, collected from development charges, and approach other funding bodies such as An Roinn Gnothai Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta and Udaras na Gaeltachta for support also. To date,

under the current programme approximately €6 million has been invested in Urban and Village Renewal Programme with the average cost of each scheme, approximately €400,000.00.

The following table gives details of the urban projects currently being progressed under the scheme:

Urban Centre	Progress on scheme to November 2005
Ballyshannon (Fairgreen)	Planning Approval (Part VIII) sought. Due to commence works in early 2006.
Killybegs (Street Improvements)	First public consultation meeting held in October 2005.
Magheraroarty (Traffic Management Plan)	Public consultation meeting held in October 2005. Next stage to apply for planning approval (Part VIII) and funding package to be secured.
Ardara (Herrons Field)	Phase I works commenced in October 2005. Phase II works to commence in early 2006, subject to funding being available.
Milford	Second public consultation meeting to be held in December 2005, drop in event arranged in November 2005.
Rathmullan	Works commenced in November 2005.
Castlefin	First public consultation meeting held in November 2005.
Raphoe	First public consultation meeting held in November 2005.
Convoy	First public consultation meeting held in November 2005.
Moville (Main Street improvement works)	Works commenced in September 2005.
Burtonport (Main Street improvement works)	Works commenced in September 2005.
Bunbeg/Derrybeg (improvement works)	Works commenced in November 2005.

### **Village Renewal Works**

The Council has made an application to Peace II for funding to carry out smaller scale village enhancement works. In 2004, funding of €300,000.00 was allocated and the following towns benefited from the allocation:

<b>Electoral Area</b>	<b>Village</b>	<b>Funding allocated</b>
<b>Inishowen</b>	Culdaff	€35,000.00
	Malin	€15,000.00
Donegal	Dunkineely	€25,000.00
	Carrick	€25,000.00
Milford	Kilmacrennan	€30,000.00
	Glen	€20,000.00
Glenties	Stramartin/Stranacorkra	€30,000.00
	Narin/Portnoo	€20,000.00
Letterkenny	Raphoe	€50,000.00
Stranorlar	Dromore Bridge	€50,000.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>€300,000.00</b>

Each year the County Council and An Roinn Gnothai Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta agree a programme of works to carry out village enhancement works in the Gaeltachta. In 2005, funding of €350,000.00 was provided by An Roinn Gnothai Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta for these works, which was co-funded by the Council and brought the total investment in village improvement works to €700,000.00. The attached table sets out the Gaeltacht Village Renewal Programme for 2005:

Village	An Roinn	DCC	Co-Funded by	Description of Works
Brockagh	€12,500	€12,500	Roads & W/E/E	Stone face boundary walls; Landscaping; Landscaping and concreting area at recycling facility.
Carrick	€12,500	€12,500	Roads	Provision of 190 m footpath on Main Street.
Portahawley	€15,000	€15,000	Roads	Protection of access to beach.
Kilcar	€30,000	€30,000	Roads/P & ED	Reconstruction of wall opposite Udaras buildings
Dungloe (Chapel Road)	€10,000	€10,000	Roads	Works on Chapel Road to include provision of footpath (approximately 75 meters), accommodation works, etc
Dungloe (Quay Road)	€15,000	€15,000	Roads	Works on Quay Road to provide provision of footpath from Town to road at O'Gallchoir.
Dungloe (Carnmore Road)	€11,000	€11,000	Roads	Works on Carnmore Road to include provision of 75m of footpath, accommodation works etc to continue existing footpath to Little Bridge.
*Luinnagh	€12,500	€12,500	P & ED	Continuation of existing footpath, stone face existing walls and provision of new footpath (for approximately 100 yards).
*Stramartin	€67,000	€67,000	P & ED	Provision of footpaths as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 186m of footpath and accommodation works from the Crannog to the Stramackilmartin/Stranacorcragh townland boundary;</li> <li>• 170m of footpath and accommodation works from Stramackilmartin/Stranacorcragh boundary to the bridge at Joe McGee's;</li> <li>• 304m of footpath and accommodation works from Joe McGee's to Teague Divers (Does not include provision of footpath at the Nurse's Home which will be funded through Peace II 2004 Allocation (of €30,000).</li> </ul>
*Dobhair	€7,500	€7,500	P & ED	Continuation of existing footpath (135m approximately) on the Dobhair to Bunbeg Roads.

<b>* It is proposed that these works will be carried out over a 2 year period</b>				
<b>Old Derrybeg</b>	€16,000	€16,000	Roads	Provision of footpath (approximately 100 meters) from Old Hall, Derrybeg to Hollow at Stranacorkra boundary.
<b>Meenbanad</b>	€3,000	€3,000	P & ED	Complete monument relocation and provision of wall (portion of wall to be stone faced).
<b>Glassagh</b>	€1,500	€1,500	P & ED	Completion of accommodation works south of Teach Jack.
<b>Falcarragh</b>	€15,000	€15,000	P & ED	Completion of car park undertaken under EIS.
<b>Loughanure</b>	€9,000	€9,000	Roads/P & ED	Provision of footpath and accommodation works to the north of the Irish College - approximately 40 meter stone wall to be built.
<b>Bunbeg (Clady Bridge)</b>	€50,000	€50,000	Roads	Works to include provision of pedestrian bridge alongside road bridge, provision of new footpath from Bunbeg Crossroads to the Bridge and accommodation works.
<b>Maghery</b>	€1,500	€1,500	P & ED	Provision of picnic benches.
<b>Downings</b>	€17,000	€17,000	Roads	70m of kerbs and footpath repair in front of beach hotel: 200m extension of footpath works carried out in 2004; Surfacing of 593m of footpath.
<b>Carrigart</b>	€10,000	€10,000	Roads	Construction of 200m footpath on the Creeslough side of Carrigart Main Street.
<b>Graduate Planner and Support Services</b>	€34,000	€34,000	P & ED	Preparation of Local Area Plan for the distinctive Gaeltacht Area consisting of the Parishes of Glencolmcille and Kilcar in South West Donegal. Lar Chomhairle Paroiste Ghleann Cholm Cille (LCPG) has already prepared a five-year development plan for the Glencolmcille Parish. It has been agreed that the Council in conjunction with An Roinn, Gnothaí, Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta; Udaras na Gaeltachta and the Parish Councils etc, prepare a statutory Local Area Plan (LAP) for this unique Gaeltacht area on a pilot basis. The LAP will be the first in Donegal to include a geographical area consisting of both villages and rural areas. The Gaeltacht areas within the County are unique and it would be inappropriate to have one policy approach to the entire Gaeltacht, including the Irish language, in present circumstances. Accordingly, the policy approach proposed is to explore through local area planning and to examine each area with a view to developing appropriate policies and approaches appropriate to each area.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€350,000</b>	<b>€350,000</b>		

In addition to this funding, the Council has recently been notified by An Roinn of additional funding in the sum of €222,350.00 to carry out the following works:

Area	Village	Works	Grant from Dept	Grant from Co Co	Total Grant
Gaoth Dobhair	An Bun Beag/ Doirí Beaga	Provide 1 km footpath and ancillary works, wooden fence, street benches and litter bins	€75,000	€75,000	€150,000
	An Bun Beag	Design footbridge for Bun Beag	€6,850	€6,850	€13,700
An Clochán Liath	Charraig Airt Village	Extend footpath to the small bridge (approx. 500m)	€30,000	€30,000	€60,000
Carraig Airt	Charraig Airt Village	Replace old footpath with new one. Resurface road from Carraig Airt to the carpark on the Craoslach side.	€55,500	€55,500	€111,000
	Carraig Airt	Extend current footpath from Carraig Airt to the junction past the Health Centre.	€20,000	€20,000	€40,000
Ailt an Chorráin	Ailt an Chorráin	Provide footpath and ancillary works from the cottages to the main junction	€35,000	€35,000	€70,000
<b>Total Cost</b>			<b>€222,350</b>	<b>€222,350</b>	<b>€444,700</b>

This means that the total funding for village improvement works in the Gaeltachta area for 2005 will be over €1 million. It is envisaged that a further programme of works for 2006 will be agreed, subject to funding being available, early in the new year.

### **CLÁR VILLAGE AND COUNTRYSIDE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME**

In 2005, the Council agreed to fund projects at Malin, Culdaff and Termon under the Clar Village and Countryside Enhancement Scheme. Under the scheme, local community groups seek approval to pursue projects under the scheme. The schemes are carried out by the Council who must also contribute of the cost of the scheme, not exceeding a total contribution of €10,000.00. These schemes provide a further mechanism for progressing small-scale village enhancement works, which can compliment previous works carried out or act as a catalyst for future works.

### **Flagship Projects.**

In addition to the above projects, the Planning & Economic Development Service are progressing a number of flagship projects throughout the County as follows:

***Lands at Lifford Common*** - proposed development of lands to incorporate residential, commercial and social/amenity area.

***Dungloe Foreshore*** - proposed re-development of foreshore area to include new streetscape, car parking, promenade and a range of environmental enhancements.

***Barrack Hill, Carndonagh*** - proposed development of lands for residential and commercial development in addition to providing sites to cater for a number of expressions of interests received from local community groups to develop the lands.

### Conclusion

Planning staff has been under tremendous pressure again this year due the ongoing high level of activity in planning generally. Staff have however performed very well having regard to the additional work pressures thrust upon them. It was a very sad year for the Planning Service with the passing away of our dear friend and colleague Gaye Moynihan which is a great loss to us all.

The progress made during the year would not have been possible without the co-operation of the elected members and the members of the Strategic Policy Committee. Members have been very supportive of the Planning & Economic Development staff and understand the pressure they have had to work under during the year. I wish to acknowledge the co-operation and support of the elected members and I look forward to working with you in 2006.

F Coyle  
Director of Services  
Planning & Economic Development