

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The provisions for the preparation of *Regional Planning Guidelines* are set out in Chapter III Sections 21-23 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. In May 2003, the Minister directed the Mid-East and Dublin Regional Authorities to make new *Regional Planning Guidelines* in respect of the combined area of their regions.

The objective of these *Regional Planning Guidelines* is to provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the development of the Greater Dublin Area for a period of 12 years. While these Guidelines are set within a 12 year context, they will be reviewed after 6 years.

Part A of the Regional Planning Guidelines Greater Dublin Area, Review 2003, Implementing the National Spatial Strategy

This part of the *Regional Planning Guidelines* has been prepared by the *Regional Planning Guidelines* Office and sets out the background and current trends regarding the *Strategic Planning Guidelines* and the *National Spatial Strategy*.

Part A describes the current situation (and background to the *Regional Planning Guidelines*) in terms of the international, regional and local policy contexts. It focuses on matters for the whole of the Region to which the Guidelines relate in accordance with the principles of the proper planning and sustainable development as described in Section 23 (2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. This forms the basis and starting point for Part B.

Part B of the Regional Planning Guidelines Greater Dublin Area

The *Regional Planning Guidelines* contained in this document provide a robust sustainable planning framework for the Greater Dublin Area within the context of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and the *National Spatial Strategy* 2002-2020. They provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the development of Greater Dublin Area in the 12 year period up to 2016 within the NSS vision for 2020. The *Regional Planning Guidelines* have been devised and prepared having regard not only to the recommendations of the NSS for the Dublin and Mid-East Regions (the Greater Dublin Area), but also, importantly, for the regions surrounding the GDA.

It must be clear that Part B of the *Regional Planning Guidelines* for the Greater Dublin Area is to be read in conjunction with Part A, *Regional Planning Guidelines* Greater Dublin Area, Review 2003, Implementing the *National Spatial Strategy*, as prepared by the Regional Planning Guideline Office. Part B has been prepared based on the Guidance Note Preparing *Regional Planning Guidelines* Guidance Notes February 2003, issued by the DEHLG, and subsequent revisions issued in October 2003 and November 2003.

Vision for the Greater Dublin Area

As the *Regional Planning Guidelines* for the Greater Dublin Area build on the *Strategic Planning Guidelines* and the *National Spatial Strategy* as foundation, the vision presented for the Greater Dublin Area as described in the *Strategic Planning Guidelines* is used as primary starting point.

The City-Region is to excel as an international competitor where all areas located within the Greater Dublin Area collectively contribute to its success and in turn draw their individual strengths from the City-Region.

Preferred Strategy

The settlement strategy in these Guidelines proposes separate Development Policy Areas within the Greater Dublin Area and they are the:

- (a) Metropolitan Area.
- (b) Hinterland Area.

Development within the Metropolitan Area will be consolidated, with a much-enhanced multi-modal transport system. For Dublin City Centre, this will require a further increase in overall residential development densities, the delivery of well-designed urban environments, as well as measures to ensure priority for public transport. Outside Dublin City Centre, towns will be consolidated with an increase in overall residential development densities particularly in proximity to public transport corridors.

Development within the Hinterland Area will be balanced by the concentration of development into identified towns separated from each other by strategic green belt land, an increase in overall development densities and a high level of employment activity, high order shopping and a full range of social facilities. The longer-term objective will be to create self-sufficient towns, with only limited commuting to the Metropolitan Area. Nevertheless, the towns will require to be well linked to Dublin and each other by good road and/or rail infrastructure. Rural generated needs will be addressed through the direction of development in appropriate areas having regard to good design and siting in the rural landscape.

Compliance with Section 23 (2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000

Section 23 (2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 requires that the *Regional Planning Guidelines* address the following matters for the whole of the Region to which the Guidelines relate in accordance with the principles of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area:

- Projected Population Trends and Settlement and Housing Strategies;
- Economic and Employment Trends;
- Location of Industrial and Commercial Development;
- Transportation, including public transportation;
- Water Supply and Waste Water Facilities;
- Waste Disposal;
- Energy and Communications Networks;
- Provision of Educational, Health Care, Retail and other Community Facilities;
- Preservation and Protection of the Environment and its Amenities, including the Archaeological, Architectural and Natural Heritage;
- Information on the Likely Significant Effects on the Environment of Implementing the Guidelines; and
- Such other matters as may be prescribed.

Compliance with these matters in the *Regional Planning Guidelines* for the Greater Dublin Area 2004 is summarised below:

Projected Population Trends and Settlement and Housing Strategies

It is envisaged that the Greater Dublin Area will accommodate approximately 1.831 million people by 2020. This large population will help ensure a dynamic, robust and diverse regional area, while also underpinning and sustaining a strong and well performing economy. The following table indicates the projected household numbers allocated to the various local authorities to ensure the required consolidation of the Metropolitan Area. These targets must be achieved within the first six years of these Guidelines.

Local Authority	Households Forecasts SPG 2001	Households Census 2002	Households Forecasts RPG 2010	Increase in Households 2002-2010	Housing Units Allocation 2003-2010
Dublin City	195,000	180,852	210,557	29,705	39,926
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	68,000	64,132	77,868	13,736	18,462
Fingal	57,000	60,872	94,349	33,477	44,996
South Dublin	71,000	73,516	91,815	18,299	24,595
Kildare	44,000	50,477	65,107	14,630	16,950
Meath	37,000	41,675	54,827	13,152	15,237
Wicklow	35,000	36,572	47,077	10,505	12,171
Total	507,000	508,096	641,600	133,504	172,337

In interpreting these housing allocations, it should be noted firstly that it represents a target for the period as a whole, and that there will be annual fluctuations in housing output in line with market conditions. Secondly, local authorities will need to zone land for housing in excess of that strictly needed to cater for their allocated number of housing units. This “headroom” is required to ensure that an adequate supply of land becomes available for housing and that the market provides a locational choice to both consumers and the house building sector. The households enumerated in the census are those units only occupies on Census night.

The RPGs build upon the SPGs by identifying two inter-urban relationships. The SPGs identified Primary Development Centres and Secondary Development Centres, respectively. The RPGs identify Primary Dynamic Clusters and Secondary Dynamic Clusters, respectively. Unlike the SPGs, such clusters can relate to differing urban settlements within a five-tier hierarchy.

The designation of the clusters identifies the urban dynamism and relationships between the constituent towns. The longer-term goal of the Guidelines is that such centres should build upon such dynamism, and develop a self-sufficient critical mass of complementary towns

Five classifications of urban centres are detailed for the Preferred Strategy advocated in these RPGs. These urban centres include different categories of towns and villages based on size and function. These categories are broadly in line with the provisions of the NSS, and are as follows:

1. Metropolitan Consolidation Towns – which will be the main growth areas within the Metropolitan Area.
2. Large Growth Towns I & II (Primary Development Centres). Such towns occur both in the Metropolitan and Hinterland Areas.
3. Moderate Growth Towns (County Towns and Towns with over 5,000 population). Such towns occur both in the Metropolitan and Hinterland Areas.
4. Small Growth Towns (Towns 1,500-5,000 Population). Such towns occur in the Hinterland Area.
5. Villages (Villages 1,000 Population) – within this category are two further categories:
 - (a) Commuter Villages and (b) Key Villages. Such villages occur in the Hinterland Area.

Development Plan policies must be tailored for each area so as to address the different development issues that arise in relation to housing demand. This approach is designed to achieve the appropriate balance between development in towns, villages, settlements and the rural countryside. An increase in the overall residential densities should be achieved with a high priority on the creation of elegant and exciting urban places. The approach also includes the location of quality employment, residential developments and amenities in proximity to each other in order to reduce the need to travel and the dependence on private transport.

The proposed hierarchy is summarised in the following table. This demographic-spatial pattern is offered as guidance to the Local Planning Authorities with the aim to indicate the size of catchments for services and employment at each level.

Settlement Type	Population Range	Accessibility	Typical Distance from higher-level settlement	Economic Function
Metropolitan Consolidation Towns	40,000 to 100,000.	Quality Bus Corridors / Rail / Major radial routes.	Close to City Centre.	Main attractor for major investment. Strong international marketing.
Large Growth Town I (“Satellite town”)	25,000 to 40,000.	At junction of major radial and orbital multi-modal transport corridors. Commuter rail.	Within 40 km. from Dublin.	Main attractor for major investment. Strong international marketing.
Large Growth Town II	15,000 to 25,000.	On major radial multi-modal transport corridor. Commuter rail.	15 km from satellite or Dublin.	Subsidiary attractor for inward investment.
Moderate Growth Town	5,000 to 15,000.	On or near multi modal transport corridor. Rail if possible.	10 km from Large Town.	Attractor for substantial investment.
Small Growth Town	1,000 to 5,000.	On national primary or secondary road. Good bus links to railway and major settlements.	10 km from Large Town.	Attractor for investment.
Village	Up to 1,000.	Improved Rural Road. Bus links to Railway and larger settlements.	10 km from Small Town (or other town).	Small rural-based enterprises.

Economic and Employment Trends

The Dublin City area has consistently performed stronger as an economic generator and attractor of employment sources and opportunities than the remainder of the Dublin and Mid-East Regional areas. Outside of Dublin City centre, a number of major employers have been established in recent years, which are often attracted to existing centres that are well served by major transport corridors and are approximate or offer ease of access to Dublin Airport and Dublin Port.

The major pulling attraction of Dublin City centre, given its extensive employment base coupled with the significant population dispersal to locations outside the Metropolitan Area, has resulted in the increasing trend for a number of centres, especially those located close to railway lines or national roads, to take on a dormitory function. These centres serve as commuter towns with their inhabitants often travelling significant distances to go to their places of employment.

The priority for economic policy in the region is in the relief of supply constraints in relation to infrastructure and some categories of labour. Measures should be adopted to raise the rate of occupancy in housing in mature areas currently well served by public transport.

Location of Industrial and Commercial Development

The least restrictive enterprise land use approach to zoning of land, consistent with good planning, should be taken and a sufficient amount of serviced land should be available to meet demands from enterprise. High quality built and natural environment that is attractive to industry is to be promoted and the speedy implementation of key infrastructural projects, including a coherent solid waste management strategy, should be supported.

Transport and Services Infrastructure

Against the backdrop of increasing population levels and significant housing demand and supply, the existing transport and services infrastructure throughout the GDA has experienced a dramatic increase in pressure. Significant levels of investment have been directed into the transport and services infrastructure by the Planning Authorities in association with the relevant Government Departments and Transport Agencies.

- Transportation, including Public Transportation

These Guidelines emphasise the need to continue to improve the international, national and local accessibility and connectivity of the Greater Dublin Area and of the settlements within it. The planned and orderly development of the region should contribute to the achievement of a reduction in travel demand, a sustainable balance between public and private transport modes and by the integration of land use and transportation planning. The DTO's *Platform for Change* provides a starting point for the continued development of such a strategy.

- Water Supply and Wastewater Facilities

The continued investment in water conservation is a priority and the liaison and cooperation between local authorities is required to ensure the development of a major new long term source to ensure security of supply to the Greater Dublin Area. Major investment in sewer rehabilitation and the implementation of recommendations emanating from the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (when completed) is of critical importance.

- Waste Disposal

An interregional solution should be sought, through the liaison and cooperation between relevant parties, to address the critical lack of waste disposal infrastructure within the Greater Dublin Area.

- Energy and Communications Networks

The current level of capacity for gas and electricity is sufficient to cope with all minimum day scenarios to the end of the forecast period.

The Greater Dublin Area is served by several competing metropolitan communication rings but depends on the Eircom network for almost all residential last mile services and a significant part of business services. Internationally, Ireland is well connected, with several commercial cables as well as the Government funded Global Crossing link.

The Commission for Communications Regulator has as one of its objectives that it shall take into account the national

objective regarding broadband rollout which is to ensure the widespread availability of open-access, affordable, “always-on” broadband infrastructure and services for businesses and citizens on a balanced regional basis within three years. This is to be achieved on the basis of the utilisation of a range of existing and emerging technologies and broadband speeds appropriate to specific categories of service and customers.

Provision of Educational, Health Care, Retail, Services and other Community Facilities

The quality of life in a community does not only depend on the provision of housing, employment and infrastructure support, but also on access to social, community and cultural facilities that are fundamental to social cohesion, a sense of community and personal enhancement. The social, community and cultural needs of all persons and communities should be catered for through the provision of well dispersed and easily accessible social, cultural and community infrastructure contributing to and ensuring the delivery of a high quality of life.

Preservation and Protection of the Environment and its Amenities, including the Archaeological, Architectural and Natural Heritage

A sustainable approach to development planning means that the aim should be the provision of a high quality of life for this and future generations. This has two basic elements:

- Ensuring that development does not result in adverse impacts on those living and working in/visiting the area as a result of changes in emissions, stress levels etc, and
- Protecting and enhancing the visual and environmental capital of the Greater Dublin Area (its natural and built heritage).

Planning Authorities should therefore develop policies that clearly identify:

- Those environmental resources which are to be protected from development;
- Proposals for environmental enhancement; and
- The means by which potential impacts on visual and environmental resources are to be mitigated (for example, through design, compensation, phasing).

Along with the requirements of the legislation, it should be a policy of all Development Plans to take a holistic and integrated approach to heritage and protect all relevant aspects of national heritage, including cultural and linguistic heritage.

Information on the Likely Significant Effects on the Environment of Implementing the Guidelines

The Environmental Appraisal, undertaken as part of the development of the *Regional Planning Guidelines*, has addressed the key aspects of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which came into force in July 2001 and is to be implemented by Member States by July 2004. The environmental appraisal must identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan, and should consider a number of options as part of the evaluation process. The methodology and results of the appraisal are discussed in the *Regional Planning Guidelines* and summarised in tabular form in the Appendices.

Such Other Matters as may be Prescribed

No other matters have been prescribed for inclusion in the *Regional Planning Guidelines*.

Next Steps

The realisation of the strategy requires the necessary changes in the objectives and policies of each local authority and other relevant statutory agencies, which may take some time to put into effect. Following the making of the *Regional Planning Guidelines* for the Greater Dublin Area, the seven constituent Planning Authorities are required to review their existing Development Plans and consider whether any variation of those Development Plans is necessary in order to achieve the objectives of the *Regional Planning Guidelines*.

The implementation of the *Regional Planning Guidelines* strategy will be achieved primarily through:

- The Development Plan process of the local authorities that will guide and control development throughout the Greater Dublin Area.
- The implementation of *Regional Planning Guidelines* in other regions including adjoining regions in line with the NSS; and
- The provision of major transportation, sanitary services and other infrastructure that will be primarily undertaken by the public sector with increasing participation by the private sector in accordance with Government procurement policies.