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1.1. STATUTORY OBLIGATION

This Plan is written and made under Sections 9-17 of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Section 9 obliges Cobh Town Council to make a Plan every six years. The latest date for the completion of this Plan is April 2006. It is the intention to complete it at an earlier date if possible.

Section 10 obliges the Development Plan to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Section 10.2(a)-(m) requires the inclusion of 13 categories of objectives. Section 10.3 indicates additional categories of objective that may be included. Section 10.5 requires that information be provided on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Plan.

Section 11 details the procedure for preparing the draft Development Plan.

Section 12 details the procedure for making the Plan.

Section 13 details the procedure for varying the Development Plan.

Section 14 details the procedure for including the preservation of rights of way in the Plan.

Section 15 imposes a duty on the Planning authority to secure the objectives of the Development Plan.

Section 16 details how copies of the Plan and associated reports and drafts are to be made available to the public.

Section 17 addresses legal issues relating to evidence of a Development Plan.

1.2. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The main function of the Plan is to provide a planning framework for the town so that Cobh and its people can develop their potential within a sustainable context. It identifies the natural and man-made assets of the town and its amenities, while addressing the physical requirements of future growth. The aim is to secure a balance between employment, housing, services and amenities; thus enabling a basis for a stable well-integrated community. The Plan must be, as far as practicable, consistent with national plans, policies and strategies and with the County Development Plan. Other functions of the Plan include:

1.2.1 The identification of development demands likely to arise over the next six years and more generally over a period of approximately 20 years.

1.2.2 The facilitation of sustainable and balanced economic investment, taking into account these demands.

1.2.3 A dialogue with and informing of all stakeholders in the town of the likely extent, pattern and form of future development.

1.2.4 The protection, conservation and enhancement of the environmental quality of the town within a sustainable pattern of growth.

1.3 FUNCTIONAL AREA OF THE PLAN

The statutory functions of this Development Plan apply to all of the lands within Cobh Town Council. Cognisance will be taken of that area of the town that is located in the County area and of other relevant adjacent areas in the preparation of the Plan.

1.3.1 It is the intention of the Town Council to make available information on this Plan on a future website for the Town.

1.4. MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCESS

It is a requirement under the Planning and Development Act 2000 for the Manager to prepare a report for the Members of the Council on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Development Plan, two years after the making of the new Plan. The Act also imposes a duty on the planning authority to take such steps as are in its powers and as may be necessary for achieving the objectives of the Development Plan.

FORMAT OF THE PLAN

The Plan is divided into two volumes as follows:

Volume 1 outlines the background and analysis providing the basis for the Plan. It also includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment which attempts to assess the environmental impact of the Plans proposals on the environment.

Volume 2 contains the objectives of the Plan along with relevant maps. This volume outlines that the Town Council proposes to do based on the Survey and Analysis in Volume 1. It also includes a number of Scoping Studies.

1.6. PERIOD OF THE PLAN

2005 - 2011 (SIX YEARS)

1.7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The staff of the County Architect's Department would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance of the Town Manager, Ms. Mary O'Halloran, the members of the Town Council, the many people who made submissions and suggestions and the town's people of Cobh.

We would also like to thank Páraig Lynch, Town Clerk, his staff and also to those not mentioned here whose contribution is gratefully appreciated.

We would like to thank Ms. Jane Wales, Consultant Conservationist, for the preparation of the Cobh Record of Protected Structures Study.

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HISTORICAL CONTEXT

No overview of a town would be complete without taking account of its historical context. Much of the following history is extracted from Mary Broderick (1989) History of Cobh (Queenstown) Ireland. The rock type of Great Island is mainly grauwacke, which is a Germanic term for porphyritic-looking rock, with a strip of limestone at Whitepoint. The history of Great Island has been greatly influenced by its maritime potential which revolved around naval, military, mercantile, industrial and leisure themes. There is evidence that Great Island was inhabited from as far back as 5,000 BC and during the classical period there was trade in timber between Great Island and the Mediterranean. Ptolemy referred to Cork Harbour as Dabrona.

In the early seventh century St. Sennanus lived in a monastery situated to the eastern side of where Cobh now stands. The Vikings plundered Cobh in 820 A.D. and subsequently used the town area for ship building and trade.

The earliest reference to a village on the Great Island is that made by Smith, the historian, when he stated that "the village existing on

the Great Island in 1750 A.D., was mostly inhabited by seamen and revenue officers". During the American War of Independence the strategic importance of Cobh was realised and in 1765 the first Admiralty House was built and initiated the development of the harbour village into an important town. Subsequently the original name of the village which was Ballyvaloon was changed to Cobh although a portion of the town is still known by the older name. Many ships en route to America to take part in the attempted suppression of the American revolution were assembled and provisioned in Cobh and this generated much trade and business. The "Water Club" which was founded by Lord Inchiquin in 1720 and moved from Haulbowline to Cobh in 1800, received its admiralty warrant and prefix "Royal" in 1831. It was the forerunner of the Royal Cork Yacht Club. Lord Midleton, a keen sailor, had the graceful Italianate Royal Cork Yacht Club house constructed and it is now the Sirius Building.

In the early part of the nineteenth century there were still very few streets or buildings in the developing town of Cobh. The successive Lords of Midleton were mostly responsible for the development of the one time village of Cobh into a thriving town and commercial port. Lord Midleton had quays and houses built along what is currently known as the East and West beach. What is currently the Courthouse and Library was built in 1806 as a Market House. St. Mary's Protestant Church and Midleton Road were built around this time. In 1815 with the end of the Napoleonic wars the Admiral was withdrawn from Cobh and the economy of the town suffered. The then Lord Midleton acted to enlarge the town and diversify its economy into tourism. The town became a health resort on account of its climate and location. It also became a popular visiting location for visitors from Cork using the river paddle steamer "City of Cork" which commenced service in 1815. First class return tickets were tenpence and second class five pence.

Following the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 Cobh enjoyed a half century of prosperous port trading. In the same year Cobh again became a naval station and the admiral returned. Lord Midleton improved the road into the town, now known as High Road, the Esplanade and villa-type houses in Midleton Park. The fine crescent of thirteen houses above Market House was also built during this period and were used to promote Cobh as a health resort on a par with Bournemouth and Ventnor.

During the early part of the nineteenth century the town developed into an important port of immigration. From 1825 as many as 2,000 people per month were using the port to leave the country and over the course of a century over 3,000,000 left the port. The "Sirius" which was the first paddle steamship to cross the Atlantic left Cobh on its epic voyage on 4th April 1838.

Cobh had the benefit of two dockyards. What is now the Cork Dockyard was opened in 1860 and was known then as the Queenstown Repair Dockyard. Construction on the Haulbowline dockyard was commenced in 1869 and was completed by 1892. Construction of the Cathedral commenced in 1868 and was solemnly consecrated in 1919. It cost £235,000.

In 1860 the Cork-Cobh railway line was opened. This facilitated the transfer of mail which coincided with the development of Cobh as a port of call for transatlantic liners. The deep water quay was built in 1883.

In 1922 Cobh acquired its current name of Cobh after previously being Queenstown and Cove.

One of Cobh's most famous sons was Jack Doyle, (1913-1978), aka "The Georgeous Gael" and "The Prince of Cobh", Champion Boxer, Singer, film star and general bon viveur whose remains are interred in the Old Church graveyard and a ballroom in the Commodore Hotel has been named the Jack Doyle room in his honour. One of Cobh's more famous daughters is Sonia O'Sullivan who won a Silver Medal in the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

On 11th July 1938 the port of Cobh was handed back to the then Irish Free State. The Haulbowline Island was developed for a steel plant in 1938 to assist Cobh recover from the loss of income from the departing British forces. The Irish Naval Service was also established at Haulbowline in 1946.

In 1959 a Dutch concern took over the Ship Repair Dockyard in Rushbrooke and formed the Verolme Cork Dockyard Ltd., and during the late 1960's it employed 1,400 workers.

Since then the Irish Steel Plant, subsequently known as ISPAT, and Marino Point IFI plant have closed. The existing Cork Dockyard is a mere shadow of its old self in employment terms.

Cobh retains its unique built heritage, its superb topography and location on a corner of the second largest harbour and arguably the most scenic. While acknowledging and retaining its wealth of heritage Cobh confidently looks forward to a new era of enterprise based on the post-industrial knowledge economy. Leveraging its unique built heritage, its superb topography and ideal scenic location on the second largest harbour in the world Cobh is poised to move forward with assurance into the twenty first century.

History and Urban Morphology

The town was originally a small number of fishermen's cottages located close to West Beach. The 1844 edition of the Ordnance Survey shows Pearce Square with the bulk of the town located to the east. (c/f copy of 1844 OS map). During the next fifty years the town developed further to the east as far as what is now Bishop Roche Park and to the west the Middleton Park villas were added, as was the rail line. The town acquired what was then known as Scots Square and what is now Pearce Square, designed by Desimus Burton. Many of Cobh's landmark buildings such as the Crescent, the adjacent Convent, The Park and Admiralty House were constructed at this point. The town centre extended as far as Ferry Street. (c/f 1902 OS Map).

From 1902-1950 much of suburban Cobh was constructed to the north east and north west of the town. A number of attractive council houses were built in squares at this time.

The modern era extends from 1950 to the present and this has been characterised by extensive suburban development extending ever further to the north east and north west. In the last ten years over 600 houses have been built in the Ballynoe area.

Despite this extensive growth over the past 150 years the town still retains its original character and has over 400 buildings of heritage value.

Topographical overview:

Located on south west coast of Great Island Cobh has an attractive south facing aspect with Carisle and Camden Fort as its southern prospects. For the most part the land rises from the shore. The town has an east west orientation with the Lee channel marking the western boundary and Cuskinny bay defining the east. The existing northern Town Council boundary is terminated by a series of three hills. The western Ballynoe and central Ticknock hills rise to 80 metres over sea level. The eastern hill in Carrignafoy rises to 90 Metres and presents the towns water reservoirs against the skyline. The summits of each of these hills and their western and southern sides offer superb views of the harbour and the southern shores of the harbour such as Aghada, Carisle, Camden etc.

Six roads of varying capacity and quality approach the town. To the west along the coast runs the R.624 which is reasonably well aligned and carries the bulk of traffic into the town. A little to the east climbing over Ballynoe Hill runs the Ballynoe road which is in need of realignment in places, has a number of steep gradients but has a reasonable width. Between Ballynoe Hill and Ticknock Hill runs the "Bothar Salach" which is quite narrow and steep at its northern end. Between Ticknock Hill and Carrignafoy Hill runs the Ticknock/"Back road" which has been improved over the years and is the second principle approach road to the town. To the east of Carrignafoy Hill the Ballywilliam road skirts the golf club and is a fairly narrow winding road with poor alignment. Further to the east the Cuskinny road approaches the town by the coast and has a moderate alignment and width with some fine scenic views.

A valley runs east west about one mile north of the town and parallel to the main axis of the settlement. Through this valley runs the tree lined Tay Road which varies in elevation from 20 to 30 metres. The Tay stream accompanies the road for over half its length and flows eastward into the Cuskinny Bay. This road forms the linkage between the six roads above and forms a natural northern boundary to the town.

This varied landscape makes for an interesting canvas for any settlement and for the most part the town has availed of the amenities of the topography by developing in an east west direction on the towns southern slopes. In the early nineteenth century the poet John Locke of Callan, Co. Kilkenny penned a lyrical and apt metaphor when he anthropomorphised the town as

leaning back on the hill, basking in the southern sun with its feet in the water:

“And doesn’t old Cove look charming there,
Watching the wild waves’ motion,
Leaning her back up against the hills,
And the tip of her toes in the ocean.”

Only recently has the direction of the town developed along the western extremity to avail of the spectacular views and offer convenient access to the Rushbrooke rail station to Cork City.

The town may be divided into the following topographical and landscape areas. Some of these are located in the County area:

Area A: Ballynoe Hill and hillside:

The Ballynoe area has now been extensively developed with housing. It is crowned with an attractive wooded area which helps to integrate the built environment with the topography.

Area B: Ticknock Hill and hill side

This is an elevated area comprising mostly early and mid twentieth century suburban residential development, much of it comprising local authority housing. It is currently bereft of trees and would benefit from a tree planting scheme.

Area C: Carrignafoy Hill and hill side.

This area has its pinnacle in the Local authority water reservoirs which are the highest points in town. A number of educational institutions and their ancillary playing fields give this area an open amenity ambience. Some tree planting associated with a number of nineteenth century residences give parts of the neighbourhood a leafy character.

Area D: Cork Dockyard.

The town enjoys an extensive regular south and west facing shoreline of over five kilometres. Starting on the west side the Cork Dockyard lands has extended a flat area of some 15Ha (38 acres) out into the harbour with a superb west and southwest aspect. The area is visually dominated by the five cranes that tower over the area. There are also a number of high sheds that are used for light engineering. The site is a study in contrasts with the functional cranes and glass/metal sheeted buildings on the eastern half

proffering its unique mechanical aesthetic and distinguishing itself from the western portion of the site which contains some attractive landscaped gardens and an ornate Italianate building.

Area E: White point

This flat shoreline leads into the wooded area of White point which is a leafy residential area falling to the water. The area is separated from the “mainland” by the railway and the main road. The area is heavily wooded with houses of various vintages, sizes and styles, many dating from the nineteenth century when this was a fashionable suburb, as it still is. It is surrounded by a western, southern and eastern facing shores.

Area F: Suburban Victoriana and greenery

The lower portions of the southern hillside from the Whitepoint area to the town centre are ornamented by nineteenth century Victorian villas generously spaced in leafy, Robinsonian, ornamental greenery attractively framing tastefully designed villas set in mature woodland. The topography, the south facing aspect, the vegetation, the sea views, the thoughtfully scaled disposition of the buildings all create the illusion of detached country houses that belie the density involved. This is a very vertical space with a number of cliff like areas to which the buildings cling to the side. The hanging gardens effect further reduces the apparent density.

These factors create the potential for a unique architectural and landscape conservation area.

Area G: Old town centre

The town centre proper nestles in a valley between Ballynoe Hill and Ticknock Hill. It comprises two well proportioned Nineteenth squares located on a gentle crescent overlooking the esplanade and harbour. Rising above the town centre much of the valley and land between Ballynoe Hill and Ticknock Hill within the Town Council area comprises 1950's+ suburban housing.

Area H: Cuskinny sea front.

This area includes the old military barracks and naval fortifications. It also includes some undeveloped areas associated with adjacent housing estates. In addition to the heritage structures in the area the locale has an elevated high visibility profile and requires

sensitive handling. There are superb views of the harbour from here.

Area I: the Waterfront:

The shoreline from white point to the east pier has extensive harbour and dock facilities and various sea works, most dating from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This is a stretch of waterfront that has enormous potential to benefit the town. White point bay is a pleasant area sheltered by Haulbowline island and currently has a number of pleasure boats moored there. The shoreline in the Carrignafof town land has an indented shoreline with a number of private residences enjoying the spectacular southern views.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Living in a free market pluralist society, there is quite often no single, universally agreed, “public good” but a plurality of values and interests which are shifting and evolving. While economic development and improved material standards of living are worthy goals it is desirable that such improvements are widely distributed and that the environmental sustainability of such improvements are considered. It is also acknowledged that many of the elements that contribute to the overall quality of life such as a tolerant friendly society, a sense of inclusiveness, low crime rates etc. are not necessarily dependant on material or economic factors. In effect the balanced overall quality of life of all stakeholders in the town in all their varied facets must be the guiding aim of the plan.

It is acknowledged that these are complex issues and they are not expected to be fully resolved in the life of this plan. The aim is to make a start and during the course of the plan and subsequent plans the town can move towards a clearer understanding of its own goals.

In an effort to produce an inclusive Plan that takes account of as many stakeholder values as possible the following steps have been carried out:

Publication of notice advising of preparation of plan and inviting submissions

This process attracted two submissions.

Organisation of a public meeting to enable stakeholders to gain an overview of the town and make comments

Consultations with various statutory bodies as prescribed by the 2000 Planning and Development Act.

Supplementary consultations with a select number of stakeholder representatives who may have information or functions that will enhance the plan.

Preparation and submission of a Section 11 report to the elected members and cognisance of their response.

It is the intention to take cognisance of the plurality of interests and to attempt to achieve a balance between as many as possible.

There will also be an opportunity for all stakeholders to present their views after publication of the draft plan and its public display.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement of the Plan is:

To identify as far as possible the full range of stakeholders in the town,

To identify as far as possible their interests and values

To achieve a balance between those stakeholder interests, so as to

Articulate the best balance of overall quality of life for all

To mobilise and co-ordinate government, corporate and voluntary resources to achieve these aims

To the extent that this is possible to guide the mobilisation of these resources through the instruments of the Planning and

Development Act 2000 and subject to government funding to achieve a fair and balanced overall quality of life for all

stakeholders.

To achieve these objectives in the context of the opportunities and constraints of the adjacent areas and regions.

This mission will be complemented by the main planning goals of the Cork County Development Plan, which include: -

(a) Enhanced quality of life for all, based on high quality residential, working and recreational environments and sustainable transportation patterns;

(b) Sustainable patterns of growth in urban and rural areas that are well balanced throughout the county, together with efficient provision of social and physical infrastructure

(c) Responsible guardianship of the county so that it can be handed on to future generations in a healthy state

Introduction:

The Cobh Town Plan was conceived within the context of a variety of other plans and strategies addressing issues of relevance to Cobh and at scales normally greater than that of the town. The following is a selected list:

National Spatial Strategy,

Cobh was included in the National Spatial Strategy as a Town with a population of less than 5,000. (This was probably based on the 1997 census and would not include the area outside the then UDC boundary but which form part of the town). It states:

“Towns close to Cork City such as Midleton, Youghal, Cobh and Carrigaline, need to be promoted and developed as self sustaining towns. They will benefit from proximity to Cork and at the same time build up their employment and services functions through the implementation of the Cork Area strategic Plan, in particular through enhancing their road, rail and bus links to Cork City”.
(p.87.)

Comment:

The objective of promoting and developing Cobh as a self sustaining town is laudable one. The objective of building up the employment and service functions of the town is particularly noted.

Self sustainability would include the provision of adequate retail, employment and other service functions to ensure that the town was not dependent on outside settlements for the servicing of the needs of the Cobh population.

Regional Planning Guidelines

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for the South west Region have been drawn up by the South West Regional Authority. They have been developed on the strength of guidance provided by the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and a wide range of existing plans that obtain at individual agency level within the Region. The Draft South West Regional Planning Guidelines are currently available on the web at: www.swra.ie .

The task of the Guidelines is “to provide a broad canvas to steer the sustainable growth and prosperity of the regions and its people, over the next sixteen years. The Plan contains statements and analysis of key economic objectives, together with a set of planning guidelines to be incorporated within the development plans of the local authorities in the Region”.

Summary goals for the Region relevant to Cobh include:

To develop the Cork City Gateway as a dynamic and progressive European City Region – attractive to investment and people and the primary counterfoil to Dublin, as envisaged in the NSS and Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) – to the benefit of the Gateway itself and the entire Region.

To develop an integrated transport system in line with CASP in the Cork Gateway which will enable it to deliver on its potential as a counterfoil to Dublin.

To provide an appropriate level of services in selected towns outside the gateways and Hubs, to enable these towns and villages to develop critical mass in population, employment and services and to act as service areas for their rural hinterlands.

To further sustainably develop the tourism industry in the South West Region building on its existing success in this sector.

In addition to setting out strategies to attain these goals the Guidelines make the following references applicable to Cobh:

The CASP area is made up of Metropolitan Cork, the Mallow Hub, the ring towns and their rural hinterlands. Metropolitan Cork comprises the City and the area immediately surrounding it (including towns such as Midleton, Cobh, Ballincollig, Carrigaline, etc.), and it is envisaged to function as a single housing and employment market.(P.75)

Plan for improvement in town centres, in terms of public goods and services provision. Critical to this is the concentration of retail facilities, in line with the joint retail strategy in towns such as Ballincollig, Carrigaline and Midleton. These locations are either already underserved, due to past population growth, or will be shortly, due to future growth. Even in smaller centres (such as Blarney, Cobh, Carrigtwohill, etc.), there is a need to build up the town centres to maintain vibrant towns, making them attractive to residents, workers and visitors.(P.79)

Commuter Services

The CASP land use strategy is based on the development of sustainable transport services, particularly public transport services. Critical among these, are proposals to develop commuter rail services linking Mallow, Cork City, Midleton and Cobh - together with the construction of a number of new stations and park and ride facilities. The NSS endorsed the public transport proposals of CASP.(P.60)

Following the adoption of the CASP land use strategy, a rail feasibility study was carried out by Fauber Maunsel on the proposals, in the course of 2002. Having analysed a number of options, the study recommended the following:

- Re-opening the Midleton line, with new stations Carrigtwohill and Midleton and with a 15-minute service from Midleton to Cork.
- Half-hourly services on the Cobh to Mallow line.
- New stations to be constructed at Dunkettle (which would serve both the Midleton and Cobh lines), Kilbarry and Blarney, with associated park and ride facilities.
- These proposals to be implemented from 2008, with construction work taking place in 2006 and 2007.

The Guidelines welcome the recently introduced commuter rail services from Charleville and Mallow to Cork, with a number of through services to Cobh. This development can be viewed as the

implementation of the first phase of the CASP rail proposals and gives an added impetus to the development of public transport in the Region.

“Creation of an integrated transport system – which is central and critical to the entire CASP.

These proposals include:

o New suburban rail services Mallow to Midleton/Cobh.” (P.10)

“Rail

In particular, a prerequisite for the sustainable development of the Gateway is the development of new commuter rail in the Cork area, linking Mallow with Midleton and Cobh, in accordance with the transportation recommendations of CASP, and with the potential for further expansion to Youghal, at some future date. A vastly improved rail commuter service from Charleville, via Mallow, to Cork and Cobh, commenced in December 2003 and this, in effect represents the first stage in the implementation of the CASP rail strategy.” (P.22)

The following regional routes are prioritised for upgrading:

- R577, Boherbue to Castleisland.
 - R569, Kenmare Junction and N22, to Kenmare.
 - R624, Cobh Junction to Cobh.
 - R587/R582, linking Dunmanway to Macroom and Millstreet.
 - R552/R553, linking Listowel to Ballybunion and Ballylongford.
- (P.58)

Regional priorities internal to the Region:

o R624, Cobh Cross to Cobh (P.107)

Gateway:

Metropolitan Cork (including Cork City, Midleton, Cobh, Blarney, etc.) Strategically placed, national scale urban area, which individually and in combination will be key elements for delivering a more spatially balanced Ireland, driving development to their own regions. (P.53)

Mallow has been designated as a Hub town in the NSS. Its close proximity to Cork means that it can support the development of the Gateway. The development of an improved commuter rail service to the City, which was recently launched by Iarnród Éireann, the development of through running trains at Kent Station, and the opening up of the Middelton commuter rail service will bring employment and residential locations within easy reach of the Town. It will allow residents of Mallow to have a wide variety of employment opportunities - locally, or in the proposed new Science and Technology Parks, or in industrial parks east of the City, at Little Island, Carrigtwohill, Midleton and Cobh. The attractiveness of Mallow as an employment location will increase significantly through increasing the employee and skills pools available to potential employers. (P.80)

Also of relevance is the reference to a new Regional Science Park on Page 78:

7.1.2 Economic/Employment

- Cork City and County Councils, working with the industrial development agencies and third level institutions, need to identify a site for a new Regional Science Park, of between 20–50 acres. This should be a high-spec, quality-environment park, with provision for the location of some third level facilities on site and space for incubator units. The marketing and operational aspects of the Science Park should be very closely tied to the third level educational sector and existing and proposed new research facilities within the Region.
- There are a number of possible locations for the park, but any potential locations for the development should be within close proximity to the City, enjoy good road and public transport access and broadband, and should be well serviced with an electricity infrastructure.
- The site could be located along the commuter rail line from Mallow to Midleton, to facilitate ease of access by public transport - thus enhancing its attractiveness and sustainability and reinforcing the viability of the commuter rail service. This site may also be an extension of an existing industrial/ technology park, such as at Blarney or Carrigtwohill.
- Once a site has been located, the local authority, IDA, and third level institutions need to work together to drive its development. Development plan policies and zoning may need to be changed to facilitate this development. Once operational, development control

policies need to be put in place which will protect the asset for truly research-based companies and operations.

- Once identified, development could be progressed by means of the Strategic Development Zone provisions of Part IX of the Local Government Planning and Development Act 2000, if it is considered by the development agency to be the best way forward. (P.78)

Comment:

The principal elements of the SWRA Planning Guidelines relevant to Cobh are:

The infrastructural proposals including the prioritisation of improvements to the R.624 road and the upgrading of the Cork-Cobh Rail frequency to a regular half hour service.

The Cobh area ought to propose itself for a Regional Science Park of 20-50 acres. The harbour setting of the Cobh Environs renders it a very attractive area in which to work and properly conserved Cobh's Heritage would prove attractive to creative, knowledge workers. Coupled with excellent rail links to Cork City and the rest of the CASP area the locale is proximate to the pharmaceutical industry in Little Island and Ringakiddy and the proposed Marine College near Haulbowline. The Cobh environs could well prove to be an eminently attractive area for the proposed Regional Science Park.

Cork Area Strategic Plan:

The Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) was commissioned jointly by Cork County Council and Cork City Council in 2000 to provide a framework to enable Cork to become a leading European city region – globally competitive, socially inclusive and culturally enriched. The CASP seeks to build on Cork's many assets, integrating landuses and transport, improving public transport and other infrastructure and developing economic, social and environmental capacity in the area. It sets out to ensure that Cork is attractive to inward investment and will be able to reinforce its reputation as a centre of excellence, learning and innovation. In short CASP's goal is the creation of a dynamic and progressive European City Region.

The following are excerpts from the CASP relevant to Cobh:

On page 25 the CASP states:

“A key component of the overall strategy is the concept of Metropolitan Cork, which encompasses both the city proper, and the settlements of Ballincollig, Blarney, Carrigaline, Douglas, glanmire, Glounthane, Carrigtwohill, Midleton and Cobh. It is envisaged as a unified entity having a single jobs and property market, an integrated transport system and the social, cultural and educational facilities of a modern European city”. P.25

“Relatively extensive development will also be encouraged in Cobh in order to take advantage of its good rail connection, existing infrastructure and ability to expand with minimal environmental impact.” P.34

The CASP envisages

“Enhanced rail service, new park and ride station at Ballynoe. A possible bus/ferry link to Ringaskiddy. A local transport plan for town and hinterland.” It outlines indicative rail frequencies of train services every 30 minutes and then every 15 minutes in the longer term. (P.40+45)

Table 3.3 of CASP proposes:

| | | Additional dwellings proposed | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|--------|------------|-----------|-------|
| No of hsehlds | | Tranche 1 | T1+ | Tranche 2 | Tranche 3 | |
| Year: 2000 | 2001-2006 | 2007-2013 | | 20014-2020 | Post 2020 | |
| Cobh | 3520 | 1,200 | 780 | 490 | 570 | 1,080 |
| Cumul No. of Hsehlds | | 4720 | 5,500 | 5990 | 6560 | 7640 |
| Pop Equivalent @ 2.65 | 9,328 | 12,508 | 14,575 | 15,873 | | |
| | 17,384 | 20,246 | | | | |

(Note: the bottom two rows were added to the table) (P.62)

Comment:

In 2000 Cobh is estimated to have c.3,520 dwellings. Over the five years 2001-2006 it is targeted to add (1,200 + 780=) 1,980 dwellings. In the life of the plan 2006 to 2011 it is projected to add an additional 490 dwellings. By the end of the plan period in 2011 the CASP projects a total of 5,990 households for Cobh. At an average of 2.65 persons per household this will give Cobh a total population of just short of 15,900. If we assume that the 2004 population is 11,500 this projection envisages an increase of the population of 38% during the plan period. On current growth rates

the CASP projection may be exceeded. This population growth will require a substantial increase in support facilities.

Table S1 gives the following job projections for the CASP area as a whole:

| | 2000 NSS | * 2020 | Growth % |
|------------|----------|---------|---------------|
| Jobs | 155,000 | 210,000 | 55,000 (+35%) |
| Population | 345,000 | 440,000 | 95,000 (+28%) |
| Households | 110,000 | 166,000 | 56,000 (+50%) |

* Includes potential additional growth arising from the National Spatial Strategy.

P.9

This envisages an overall increase of 35% in the number of jobs during the 20 year plan period. If we assume 60% of this increase will have occurred by 2012 then Cobh must expect a pro rata increase of some (60% of 35%=) 21% in jobs in the plan period to 2012. Additional land will be required to facilitate this.

Commercial Property: Built Area and Land Requirement 2000-2021

| Use type | Built area (m2) | Plot cover | Average height (storey) |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| | Land requirements (Ha) | Cobh 7% (Ha) | |
| Offices | 143,260 | 50% 4 | 7.2 .49 |
| Business Park Space | 112,810 | 25% 2.5 | 18.0 1.26 |
| Incubators | 6,090 | 25% 2 | 0.8 0.056 |
| Technology Park Space | 48,270 | 25% 2 | 9.6 0.672 |
| Sub Total | 310,630 | | 35.6 2.492 |

Commercial Property: Built Area and Land Requirement 2000-2021

| Use type | Built area (m2) | Plot cover | Average height (storey) |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| | Land requirements (Ha) | Cobh 7% (Ha) | |
| Distribution park space | 150,720 | 35% 1 | 43.1 3.017 |
| Production units | 45,000 | 35% 1 | 12.9 0.903 |
| Standard Industrial/ Warehouse | 232,660 | 35% 1 | 66.5 4.655 |
| Subtotal | 428,380 | | 122.58.755 |
| Total | 738,660 | | 158.111.067 |

P.108:

Tourism:

The tourist profile of the (CASP) area should be expanded and enhanced through the introductions of a range of new initiatives. These would include more focussed strategies to increase tourist interest in the area, for example, improved place marketing and promotion, and the identification of new attractions and improved accommodation in the city, the coast and ring towns and rural areas. (P.56)

“The harbours and coast of the Study area are an under-appreciated resource and there is considerable scope to further develop their tourist potential. The main tourist destinations and service focuses for these areas are likely to be Cobh, Kinsale and Youghal. While Kinsale is an established resort, the potential of Cobh and Youghal has yet to be realised fully.” (P.56)

“Visitor access to Cork Harbour should be improved, and Cobh, Crosshaven be promoted as premium leisure sailing destinations. Specific developments in Cobh should include the creation of a distinctive ambience through enhancement and restoration of Victorian streetscapes and features, including interpretation of the Cathedral and other landmarks. In the longer term consideration should be given to the development of tourist and leisure facilities of Spike Island if it is compatible with the development of a new container berth at Curlane Bank, and vintage steam train operation between Cork and Cobh. Greater emphasis should be given to promoting and developing the harbour as a facility for water-based sport and leisure activity.....Modern mid-range hotels with leisure facilities would also be required, for example in Cobh.....This would require an increase in the stock of visitor accommodation of the order of 60-70%, including improved utilisation of existing accommodation and an improved seasonal spread of demand.” (P.56)

There are nearly 9,000 hotel beds in the study area, 45% of which are in Cork City. It states that there are some 3 million bed nights spent at present and that this can grow to 5.6 million. (P.98)

Referring to the CASP area as a whole the document refers to the importance of place marketing and the importance of Cork aspiring

to an international standard. These sentiments are especially applicable to Cobh.

“All place marketing programmes are based on the fundamental assumption that a location enjoys some form of competitive advantage over its competition..... an annual benchmarking programme should be introduced which measures Cork’s performance against Europe’s leading sub-regions with a similar or comparable profile to Cork.....where appropriate Cork should seek to establish practical partnership programmes with outstanding European sub-regions along the lines of the Four Motors Initiative which involves four of Europe’s most successful regions Baden Wurttemberg, Catalonia, Rhone Alpes and Lombardy.” (P.67)

In the event that the present industry installations at Haulbowline Island, Rushbrooke and Marino Point were to close Then major medium to high density mixed use redevelopment (perhaps including high quality workplaces, apartments and cultural projects) could be pursued. (P.126)

Comment:

This suggests some interesting and varied uses compatible with the transformation of Cobh from an industrial to a Post-Industrial, knowledge intensive entrepreneur driven economy.

Conclusions:

It is concluded that moderate growth in and around Cobh could be environmentally acceptable, economic ...(in the use of).. infrastructure and well served by public transport. However the centres at Monkstown and Passage West lie on narrow heavily trafficked roads, which cannot be bypassed, and the generally steep hillsides and townscape and landscape quality constrain future expansion. (P.126).

Strategic guidance: Port.

The port of Cork’s Strategic Development Plan should be adopted, subject to on-going partnership with the CASP, particularly with respect to;

Promotion of the Harbour and Docks area for leisure and amenity; and as a unique selling point for the Cork City-Region with regard to quality of life.

Co-ordination of the Docks Development with the relocation of commercial port activities to Ringaskiddy, and other appropriate locations, and safeguarding the Ringaskiddy area for Port development. (P.157)

Table G.2:

| | Existing no. of jobs 2000 | Total no of jobs in 2020 | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|-------|
| | | Growth to year 2020 – no of jobs | % increase | |
| Cobh | 4,160 | 5,600 | 1,440 | +36% |
| Carrigaline/ Ringaskiddy | 4,010 | 8,430 | 4,420 | +210% |
| Midleton | 2,960 | 8,370 | 5,320 | +280% |
| Metropolitan Cork | 52,580 | 78,750 | 26,170 | +50% |

(P.171)

Comment:

It may be desirable to increase the job growth rate in Cobh without affecting the overall thrust of the CASP strategy.

CDB STRATEGY

Cork County Development Board (2002) Integrated Strategy for the Economic, Social and Cultural Development of County Cork, 2002-2011 was prepared by the Cork County Development Board (CDB). The objective of the CDB Strategy is to provide a single template to guide the activities of the many public sector agencies operating in the county. The objective is to prepare and implement a 10-year strategy to attain this objective.

The key challenges facing Cork County include:

The uneven growth between different parts of the county.

The uneven distribution in educational attainment in many parts of the county.

Agriculture accounts for a very high proportion of employment in the county while the proportion engaged in service sectors is well below average.

While the manufacturing sector is strong there is an over reliance on a narrow range of manufacturing sectors including food and pharmaceuticals.

Serious deficiencies remain as regards infrastructure.

The specific goals to be achieved by the strategy are:

Provide an effective infrastructure that supports Sustainable Development throughout County Cork.
To achieve a wide spread distribution of employment opportunities and economic growth with adherence to sustainable development principles
To improve the quality of life for all.
To provide equal access and opportunity to education and training.
To raise education attainment levels.

The measures adopted to address these issues can be categorised under the headings of:

Infrastructure
Balanced sustainable development
Quality of life
Education and training.

In regard to Cobh specifically its settlement and strategic aims are: “important residential development opportunities based on accessibility by rail; promotion of its distinctive character and scenic greenbelt/harbour setting”.

Comment:
These goals and strategies largely support the proposals contained in this Plan for transforming the town from a declining industrial economy to a post industrial knowledge and service economy.

Cunnane, Stratton Reynolds: Cork Recreational Needs Report. (1999)

The Cork Recreational Needs Report prepared by Cunnane, Stratton, Reynolds was produced in 1999. This report provided much valuable data on the extent of and requirements for Sporting facilities in the LUTS area. The report detailed existing (1999) provision and perceived demand for the following sports:

| Sport | Existing Provision in LUTS area | Recommended additional Provision |
|--------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| GAA | 93 pitches | 14 Pitches |
| Soccer | 97 Pitches | 10 Pitches |
| Rugby | 28 Pitches | 1 Pitch on north side |
| Hockey | 8 Pitches | 5-8 |

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Swimming Pools | 8 Pools | 1 Pool |
| Indoor Sports Halls | 47 Halls | 2-5 Halls |
| Fitness/Multi Gyms | 21 Units | Upgrade existing |
| Golf | 15 Courses (252 holes) | 1 Course on North side |
| Pitch and Putt | 19 courses | 1 new course |
| Athletics Tracks | 3 tracks | Upgrade existing |
| Tennis | 128 courts | Upgrade existing |

The report recommended the following objectives:

That all existing land and facilities be retained in their present use.

That provision be enhanced both qualitatively and quantitatively

That means of implementation be identified.

That all new developments make adequate provision for the full range of sport and recreational activities anticipated to arise.

The report also included a recommended schedule of recreation and open space provision which is included in Paragraph 13 below.

The report confined itself to the above sports and did not include:

Water Sports: Sea sports, Outdoor Swimming, Beach, Sailing, windsurfing, cruising, motor boats, ski Jets, Angling etc., Cycling, Walking eg. Urban 1-3 mile walks, Rural long distance walks of 10-20 miles etc.

Comment:

The study offers a useful methodology and standards for assessing the present and future recreational requirements of Cobh

County Development Plan,

The county development plan states that the overall strategy aims to promote Cobh's important opportunities based on accessibility by rail, promotion of its distinctive character and green belt/harbour setting. It notes that vehicular traffic growth in the town is excessive and traffic management measures will be necessary to facilitate essential users. It states that the important issues for the town include the preservation of the natural and manmade environment, the conservation and development of natural amenities and the provision of recreational and community facilities. The following are extracts from the CDP:

“The County Council will co-operate with the (Cobh) Town Council in ensuring the primacy and vitality of the town centre is maintained”.

“The principal providers of sports open space in Cobh are the GAA, the Soccer Club, the Rugby Club, and the various secondary schools. With the harbour constraining the southern and western edges of the town it is essential to maintain and expand on the provision of open space for additional sporting recreational uses close to the main residential areas.”

“the existing current residential zoning is principally located at the north western end of the town, to avail of its proximity to the rail-line, and other parcels of land adjacent to existing residential areas round off the development boundary”

“Water supply- the area is supplied from the waterworks at Tibbots town and also supplemented by the Cork Harbour and City Supply and Glashaboy Schemes. Pressure problems have been resolved through the construction of a 2000m³ reservoir on Ballard Hill. It is proposed to increase the water supply to the area from the CH and CWSS scheme.

“Sewerage – the sewerage scheme has no wastewater treatment plant and existing sewers discharge to the harbour via a number of outfalls. The existing combined network is at full capacity in some locations and does not serve all the existing zoned lands. The provision of a new treatment plant is in the planning stage and it is proposed to treat the sewerage by providing a treatment plant to serve all the lower harbour towns”.

“Surface water drainage – the existing drains are combined with the foul sewers and experience overflowing during heavy rainfalls. The proposed sewerage scheme will ensure the separation of the foul and storm water drainage”.

“Roads – access roads to the town require upgrading. In particular, the R624 has poor alignment and capacity problems. There is a need for continued upgrading of the existing roads and the consideration of new roads from east to west to connect to any new developments”.

The plan zoned a number of areas in the county area for residential, open space, extension to cemetery, industrial and enterprise areas and pedestrian areas.

Comment:

As much of the new growth in Cobh is likely to take place in the county area it is desirable that both the Town Council and County Council co-operate on an overall strategy for the development of the town.

Waste/Recycling strategy:

Cork County Council (2004) Waste Management Plan for Cork County.

The plan provides the following summary of waste produced in County Cork:

| Sector | Total Arising 2002 (Tonnes) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Household | 119,777 |
| Commercial | 96,018 |
| Non-Hazardous Industrial | 438,403 |
| Hazardous Industrial | 115,347 |
| Municipal sludges | 4,489 |
| Construction and Demolition | 500,000 |

The total quantity of waste deposited in Cork County landfills in 2003 was 169,393 tonnes. There are four landfill sites operated by Cork County Council, five civic amenity sites and 133 Bring sites in the county.

The Waste Management Plan proposes 10 objectives for waste prevention, 21 for waste collection, 12 for waste recovery, 11 for disposal, 7 for packaging, 6 for litter, 6 for Hazardous waste management and 5 for general waste management.

The Waste Management Plan proposes investment of c.€70M in the county in the period 2004-2009 and estimates operating costs by Cork County in addressing the waste issue at €53M per annum.

Comment:

From the planning perspective it is important to take note of this important trend and with the County Council to allocate land use for these sustainable uses. For the most part the collection, sorting and transshipment uses, properly regulated, can be located in many industrial estates. It is desirable that the Cobh Town Council work with the County Council in zoning and regulating land use for these functions.

Retail strategy,

The purpose of the Cork Retail strategy is to outline an overall view of retailing function in County Cork and to propose measures to enable the development of retailing floor space to take place in an orderly and sustainable manner.

The following are some excerpts from the study relevant to Cobh:

In the southeast Cobh provides shopping facilities for a limited and localised catchment, constrained by its island location and performs a neighbourhood shopping role. Cobh supports 2,299 square metres of shop floor space, although at the time of our survey a further 800 square meters (equating to 25% of the floor space) was vacant. In comparison to the other Metropolitan towns Cobh has very limited convenience goods floor space provision, amounting to only 850 square meters and no significant store capable of providing main food shopping trips. Cobh attracts a significant amount of tourist spending which is the mainly directed to local pubs and restaurants rather than specialist tourist retail facilities. (P.6 of Cork Strategic Retail Study).

The following table has been extracted from table 2.1 of the Cork retail hierarchy matrix:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Existing retail floorspace Sq M. | Existing population |
| Population target 2020 | |

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------|--------|--------|
| Ballincollig | 8,213 | 16,760 | 26,000 |
| Carrigaline | 8,026 | 12,880 | 17,420 |
| Cobh | 3,036 | 11,570 | 14,570 |
| Midleton | 7,584 | 10,150 | 21,000 |
| Glanmire/Riverstown | 2,203 | 7,030 | 5,110 |
| Blarney | 3,500 | 1,870 | 14,570 |

Comment:

It may be noted that in comparison to Ballincollig, Carrigaline and Midleton Cobh's retail floorspace provision, on a per capita basis, is less than 50% of that of these comparable towns. This under provision is emphasised when we note that Mallow has a population of 11,510, which is only 60 persons less than Cobh, and has 13,159 square meters of retail floorspace. On a per capita basis this is four times more than Cobh.

Commenting on Cobh the Retail strategy states:

Attractions:

Cobh like nearly all coastal towns in County Cork is under pressure to provide for the needs of the resident population and the tourist trade. The shopping provision reflects the limitations of the catchment population, but is under-provided for in terms of convenience provision. Evidence suggests that the proportion of the retailers trade only during the tourist season. The shop vacancy rate is high, and the tourist related outlets make up a significant part of the overall offer, which indicates a fragility and suggests that the centre could be vulnerable to any further erosion of the main shopping attractions.

Accessibility:

Whilst access to Cobh is not as easy as it is to most of the other Cork centres, particularly in the peak tourist periods and also particularly for HGV's, it is the traffic circulation within the town that is the particular weakness. Traffic flow is congested due to the compact heart of the town and lack of alternative routes. Servicing of the Super Valu on West Beach and other premises in the town centre can give rise to congested conditions in the town centre. The shopper survey in Cobh indicates that the existing parking provision is inadequate and that the parking provision is poorly located and there is a lack of turnover of parking spaces in the town centre. The lack of parking turnover could, and should be

addressed by a management regime that favours short-term parking over long stay.

The influx of tourists brings in added expenditure, but also brings pressures to bear on the road network and car parking facilities. The stakeholders SWOT carried out in Cobh identified the opportunity to develop an alternative easterly access route which would significantly benefit the functioning of the town and aid linkages to the other larger towns. Main line rail access greatly enhances the town as a tourist destination and commuter base.

Amenity:

The combination of the quality of the natural setting and the public realm in Cobh is the town's major strength. Cobh is strikingly attractive and shops, bars/restaurants and services along West Beach, in Casement and Pier Squares are very well maintained and present a very attractive frontage. The main weakness is the impact on the shopping environment resulting from the amount of traffic that attempts to negotiate around Cobh's narrow streets in search of a parking space. However the wide and well maintained pavements on West Beach and Casement and Pier Squares helps to counterbalance the impact of the traffic, and the shopping environment is reasonably convivial.

Action

Cobh benefits already from active town centre management. Completion of the quayside development will add balance to the retail pattern in the town centre. Due to the location, the town does not benefit from passing trade and must derive maximum benefit from the resident and tourist market. Every effort should be made to retain Super Valu store in its present location, notwithstanding the real difficulties in accommodating its further expansion, as it is central to maintaining the vitality of the town centre. This would require the introduction of a short term parking regime.

Conclusion.

Cobh is the least successful of the metropolitan towns, but the most attractive. Accessibility around the centre and parking problems are the chief weaknesses. The retail centre serves a limited catchment area that is under-provided for in terms of convenience goods provision, and offers little opportunity for expansion of the comparison good offer.

Blarney and Cobh can accommodate additional floorspace serving the tourist market. (P.47)

The following are excerpts from the Variation to the Cork County Development Plan 2003, Retail Strategy, March 2004:

In table 4.2 of that variation Cobh is listed as a Town/District Centre.

“The Ring towns have relatively greater independence from the City Centre and serve well defined catchments and it is important that they maintain their attractiveness as self-sufficient towns by developing the range and quality of retail development in their town centres. These towns will be encouraged to improve their town centre retail functions within the capacity of their respective catchments, with emphasis upon central retail expansion as a priority”. Para. 4.3.18:

“The preferred location for new retail development where practical and viable is within a town centre (or district or major village centre). Where it is not possible to provide the form and scale of development that is required on a site within the town centre then consideration can be given to an edge of town centre so as to encourage the possibility of one journey serving several purposes”. Para. 4.3.28.

“Cobh can accommodate additional floorspace serving the tourist market”. Para.4.3.37:

Comment:

Cobh is an expanding town with a current population in excess of 11,000 and a projected population of 16-17,000 by 2011. Passage, Glenbrook and Monkstown are expected to grow to 5,000+. This gives Cobh a projected catchment population in excess of 20,000, which is quite substantial. This is an ample catchment population to justify a self-sustaining and self-sufficient retail floor space provision. Cobhs existing and projected population would require an additional 13,000 square meters of floor space which would in turn require a minimum of 4 HA of additional land zoned for retail usage.

Housing Strategy,

The Cork Planning Authorities Joint Housing Strategy has the following objectives:

Ensure that sufficient land is zoned to meet housing requirements in the region for the lifetime of the plan

Ensure there is a mixture of house types and sizes to meet the needs of various households.

Ensure that housing is available for people on different income levels

To provide for the need for both social and affordable housing.

The strategy had three key points:

Over the years 2001-2011 around 38,000 new households are expected to form in Cork City and County.

The distribution of households will be directed by strategic spatial planning policy

An estimated 5,000 residential units will have to be provided each year to 2006.(p.11)

Table 4,p.14 set the following targets for housing size and distribution:

| Household size and distribution | Suburban housing size distribution | Urban housing size distribution |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 person 27% | 1 bed15% | 1 bed5% |
| 2 person 34% | 2 bed35% | 2 bed20% |
| 3 person 16% | 3 bed35% | 3 bed40% |
| 4 person 16% | 4 bed10% | 4 bed25% |
| 5+ person 8% | 5 bed5% | 5 bed10% |
| Total 100% | 100% | 100% |

The strategy (p.29) estimated that by reserving 20% of residential zoned lands for social and affordable housing around 5-600 units per year may become available for these combined needs.

The strategy proposed 4 policy principles, 18 policies and over 60 policy actions to achieve the objectives outlined above.

Comment: the figures regarding household size are useful targets for inclusion in the Cobh Plan. It will be desirable that the Town

Council supports Cork County Council in its implementation of the Housing Strategy.

07 Cork Port Strategy,

The Port of Cork Strategic Development Plan, 2002 indicates that in the medium term a new facility will be required to accommodate displaced City Quays and other traffic should redevelopment recommence. In the long term a new container terminal is required. Six possible sites were considered for development : Dunkettle, Marino Point, ADM jetty, Quarter ramp berth at Ringaskiddy, Oyster Bank, Curlane Bank. The Oyster Bank is currently favoured but no decision has been made.

The other two options of interest to Cobh town are Marino Point and Curlane Bank. Marino Point is under consideration for dry bulks but has navigation difficulties and an area of SAC would be affected. Curlane Bank is under consideration for a deep sea container terminal but is visually exposed.

Comment:

There is a need to incorporate the Cork Port Strategy with any overall strategy of the development of Cobh and its environment.

Strategic Context: Conclusion and Overview

Cobh is located overlooking the Cork Harbour and on the west is the Lee channel. In the immediate proximity are the following:
The now defunct IFI/Marino Point site which comprises 106 acres.
Little Island to the north of the Marino Point site
Passage to the West of the Marino Point site and on the west side of the Lee channel
Glenbrook to the immediate south of Passage and on the west side of the Lee channel
Monkstown further south of Glenbrook and to the west of Cobh on the far side of the Lee channel
The Ringaskiddy industrial and deep water docking complex to the south and east of Monkstown Creek and to the south of Cobh
Haulbowline Island to the south of Cobh and separated by the Lee channel. Haulbowline Island contains the now defunct ISPAT steel plant and the Naval Services Depot. It also contains a number of

substantial and attractive nineteenth century stone warehouses. It is connected to Ringaskiddy by a bridge and there is a passenger ferry between Cobh and the Island.

Spike Island, located to the south of Cobh and to the Southeast of Haulbowline contains a fine nineteenth century naval fort in very good condition. It was until recently used as a prison. The island is connected by passenger ferry to Cobh. It is separated from Ringaskiddy by a short stretch of water which is bridgeable.

Passage, Glenbrook and Monkstown are linked by a car ferry at Carrigaloe, which in turn is linked by road to Ringaskiddy.

An upgrading of the existing passenger ferry from Cobh to Haulbowline Island to a car ferry would link Cobh more satisfactorily to the Island and Ringaskiddy.

The Marino site and Little Island are linked to Cobh by the R.624 and the Rail line. The road and rail line to Little Island is quite circuitous and environmentally sensitive. The distance by water from Little Island to the Marino Point site is a little over 600 metres and a car ferry between the two might have many advantages.

On page 40 the CASP envisages a possible bus/ferry link to Ringaskiddy.

Page 47 of the CASP suggested the encouragement of Water buses which would also enhance access between Cobh and its adjacent areas.

Page 51 of the CASP refers to the possibility of developing the Curlane Bank adjacent to Spike Island for port use as part of the Port of Corks Strategic Development Plan. This would involve linking Spike to Ringaskiddy by a bridge.

Page 94-97 of the CASP refers to key economic development themes of:

Role of Education

Clusters of Excellence

Recent commercial and industrial development in the Cork City-region.

Internationally traded services and

Technology Hubs.

There is considerable scope for Cobh to unite with the above 8 areas and develop a coherent development strategy which would leverage the unique environmental quality and amenity of the harbour topography with a view to attracting knowledge and innovation based enterprises. A possible designation for the area could be the “Great Island Innovation Area”.

In the “old economy” natural resources and physical infrastructure attracted investment. In the “new economy” human/intellectual resources, social infrastructure and quality of life attracts investment. Cobh has these qualities and resources in abundance. There is enormous scope for the Cobh area to take advantage of its assets and realise its potential.

It would be desirable for the Town Council to work with the Development agencies and Cork County Council with a view to igniting an enterprise renaissance in the Great Island Innovation Area.

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to outline the social and economic infrastructure of the town, identify its strengths and weaknesses and ensure the provision of any physical landuses that are required. In particular the intention is to articulate the demand, capacity and location of this social and economic infrastructure and translate this to physical landuse polices and strategies.

Population

The following table shows the population of Cobh Town and environs for from 1946-2001:

Table 5.1

| Cobh Town | Envir -ons | Total | Great Island |
|-----------|------------|-------|--------------|
|-----------|------------|-------|--------------|

| Year | pop | % ch pop | % C | Pop | % C | Pop | % C |
|------|------|----------|------|-------|------|-------|-----------|
| 1946 | 5619 | | | | | | |
| 1951 | 5711 | -2% | | | | | |
| 1956 | 5472 | -4% | 594 | 6066 | | | |
| 1961 | 5266 | -4% | 876 | +32% | 6124 | +1% | |
| 1966 | 5613 | +6% | 1113 | +21% | 6726 | +9% | |
| 1971 | 6076 | +8% | 1056 | -4% | 7124 | +6% | |
| 1976 | 6668 | +9% | 1583 | -4% | 7124 | +6% | |
| 1981 | 6587 | -1% | 1852 | +1.5% | 8430 | +2% | 1748 |
| 1986 | 6369 | -3% | 1913 | +3% | 8282 | -2% | 1837 +5% |
| 1991 | 6369 | 0% | 1921 | +0.4% | 8290 | +0.9% | 1800 -2% |
| 1996 | 6486 | -1% | 1991 | +3.6% | 8459 | +2% | 1598 -11% |
| 2001 | 6767 | +4% | 3044 | +52% | 9811 | +16% | |

Cobh enjoyed substantial growth through the late 1960's and 1970's followed by negligible growth from 1981-1991. In the 1990's growth has increased to over 1% per annum and has continued in recent years. According to CASP the population is expected to double over the next 20 years which equates to growth averaging 3-4% per annum over the period. As can be seen below, at current rates of growth it is likely that Cobh will achieve this target at a much earlier date.

The Cork Area Strategic Plan (p.62) indicated the following population and residential targets for cobh:

| Year: 2000 | Additional dwellings proposed | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| | No of hsehlds | Tranche 1 | T1+ | Tranche 2 | Tranche 3 |
| 2001-2006 | 1,200 | 780 | | | |
| 2007-2013 | 490 | 570 | 1,080 | | |
| 2014-2020 | | | | 6560 | 7640 |
| Post 2020 | | | | | |
| Cobh | 3520 | | | | |
| Cumul No. of Hsehlds | | 4720 | 5,500 | 5990 | 6560 |
| Pop Equivalent @ 2.65 | 9,328 | 12,508 | | 14,575 | 15,873 |
| | 17,384 | 20,246 | | | |

Comment:

In 2000 Cobh is estimated to have c.3,520 dwellings. Over the five years 2001-2006 it is targeted to add 1,200 + 780 dwellings. During the subsequent six years it is projected to add an additional 490 dwellings. By 2013 the CASP projects a total of 5,990 households. At an average of 2.65 persons per household this will

give Cobh a total population of just short of 15,877. If we assume that the 2004 population is 11,000 this projection envisages an increase of the population of 32% during the plan period. This population growth will require a substantial increase in support facilities.

The following table is derived from the CSO 2002 Census of Ireland:

| | 1996 | 2002 | 1996-2002 | | |
|------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|
| Area | Persons | Persons | Males | Females | % Change |
| Cobh Urban | 6468 | 6767 | 3372 | 3395 | + 4.6% |
| Cobh Rural | 1991 | 3044 | 1502 | 1542 | + 52.9% |
| Total | 8459 | 9811 | 4874 | 4937 | + 16% |

As can be seen the population of the Town Council portion of the town has remained relatively stable. However there has been a dramatic increase in the population of the environs from 1991 persons to 3044 during the 1996 to 2002 period. The total increase between both the urban and rural areas has amounted to 16% which is quite substantial for a six year period. Given that the bulk of retail, social, community and civic services are at present located in the Town Council area it will be necessary to assess the adequacy of these services, both in terms of capacity and location, with respect to the recent and proposed population growth.

It is estimated that the two largest builders in Cobh are constructing approximately $(200 \div 75 =)$ 275 houses per annum and if we assume that other builders are building at least 25 houses per annum that would give a minimum of 300 houses being built per annum in cobh. If we assume an average of 2.65 persons per house this amounts to an addition of c.800 persons to the population of Cobh pa. If this trend continues for the remainder of the Plan period, including the period 2002-2005 after which the Plan will commence it is reasonable to add $(9 \text{ by } 800 =)$ 7,200 to the 9,811 persons recorded in the 2002 census. This would give a total population of almost 17,000 persons in Greater Cobh by the end of the Plan period in 2011. This is ahead of the numbers envisaged in the CASP projections outlined above.

The current and projected increase of 800 persons per year equates to an annual growth rate of 8% which for a small to

medium sized town is an extraordinary rate of growth. As can be seen in Table 5.1 above Cobh was growing at a rate of 1-2% per annum during the boom years of the late sixties and seventies. The current rate of growth is of an entirely different order of magnitude being four to six times greater.

To put this rate of growth in context, consider that from 1952 to 2002 Cobh grew from a population of 6,000 to just under 10,000, an increase of 4,000 people. During the period 2002 to 2011 Cobh will grow from 10,000 to 17,000, an increase of 7,000 people. During the period of this Plan Cobh will add more people to its population than it added during the previous 50 years. It is essential at this stage to make provision for the future population in the form of physical infrastructure, employment opportunities, retail services and social and civic facilities.

As of September 2004 it is estimated that there is c.3 Ha of undeveloped residentially zoned land in the Town Council area. The area of undeveloped residentially zoned land in the County Council area is estimated at 91.6 HA on that date giving a total of 94.6 Ha of residentially zoned available in the Cobh town area, subject to serviceability. This is the equivalent of 2,365 dwelling units or 6,267 persons population at 25 units per Ha and 2.65 persons per unit. At current rates of growth 1,800 dwelling units will be constructed during the Plan period 2005-2011. There is an estimated spare capacity of 565 units in the current residential zonings.

There is a perception and anecdotal evidence that a good deal of the new population in the recent private developments are not integrating fully into the community, are treating their estates as dormitories and working, shopping and spending their leisure time outside Cobh.

This is a matter that the plan takes very seriously. It is important that the town is a self contained and cohesive unit with a vibrant community and economic life relating on equal terms with settlements like Midleton, Douglas and Cork City. For this reason it is important to ensure that adequate retail, employment and leisure facilities are located in the town and its periphery to ensure a vibrant and self contained social and economic community. It is also important that the resources and energies of economic and social entrepreneurs are harnessed for the good of the Cobh

community. This may not fully harmonise with the current version of the various County Development Plan and Retail Strategy.

The potential for a growing retail function is capable of producing a spiral of growth in the town. The more retail investment and the more shopping facilities that are provided the more people will shop in the town. The more people that shop in the town the more investment there will be in local shopping facilities.

There is anecdotal evidence that substantial volumes of shopping expenditure are being diverted to Midleton and other areas, expenditure that should properly be spent in the Cobh area. There is also evidence that enhanced vitality in the Cobh retailing sector would encourage retail entrepreneurs to establish in the town and is also encourage the entrepreneurial energies of existing retailers in the town.

It is important that community leaders, “social entrepreneurs” and social organisers feel that there is a sufficient community spirit and support in their area so that they will expend their skills and energy to the enrichment of the town. It is important that the Plan supports such socially useful and valued persons.

From a sustainability point of view it is contrary to all principles of sustainability to have a substantial (and unnecessary) proportion of the towns population commuting out of the location to work, shop and recreate.

Cobh has a current population of over 11,000 and is projected to have a population of 15-17,000 during the course of the Plan. It is also sufficiently close to Monkstown, Glenbrook and Passage to synergise with these settlements. With a population of 11,000 growing shortly to 15-17,000 and with a further 5,000 in its immediate hinterland Cobh has more than adequate mass to sustain its own retail, enterprise and leisure facilities.

For all of these reasons it is essential to ensure the provision of adequate retail, enterprise and recreation amenities within the towns environs and to ensure the development of self sustaining, self reliant, self contained and self confident prospering community.

Employment and Enterprise

The following table is based on a commercial business intelligence service and refer to the estimated number of jobs actually located in Cobh. They are estimates and should be treated with caution. The differ from the Census figures in that the census figures measure the occupations of the persons residing in Cobh on census night but who may work in location outside Cobh. The CSO figures should be regarded as the more authoritative.

| Sector | Number | Comment |
|----------------------------------|--------|--|
| Basic industry and miscellaneous | 108 | |
| Manufacturing | 141 | (This takes account of the loss of 400 jobs from ISPAT and 175 from Proscen) |
| Energy | 4 | |
| Construction | 77 | |
| Car sales+servicing | 44 | |
| Wholesalers | 159 | |
| Retail | 171 | |
| Accommodation | 116 | |
| Café +restaurants | 51 | |
| Pubs+clubs | 100 | |
| Transport | 120 | |
| Communications | 30 | |
| Financial services | 51 | |
| Services | 29 | |
| Professional services | 127 | |
| Other services | 77 | |
| Civic Administration | 1139 | Includes 1,000 in Naval Service |
| Education | 142 | |
| Health | 71 | |

Organisations 47 Includes religious
 Recreation 48

Total:2852

The apparent dependence on the Naval service with almost one third of the total employment of the town in this sector is notable. The number of 141 in manufacturing is possibly an underestimate yet if the figure is roughly accurate 5% is a very low percentage. These figures are an estimate of the number of jobs located in the Cobh area. In contrast the CSO figures give a breakdown of occupations of the persons residing in Cobh on census night but not necessarily working in Cobh. It is notable that the difference in total numbers is relatively minor. The CSO figures should be treated as the more authoritative.

The CSO figures for Cobh indicate the following breakdown in employment.

CSO - CENSUS 2002(Census Night: 28-04-2002)

| COBH 2002 | | IRELAND 2002 | |
|------------------------------------|-------|--------------|----------------|
| Numbers | % | Numbers | % |
| Farming, Fisheries and forestry | 26 | 1% | 96,000 5.3% |
| Manufacturing | 668 | 25% | 225,000 12.5% |
| Building and Construction | 271 | 10% | 136,000 7.5% |
| Clerical, Mgt and Government | 243 | 9% | 318,000 17.5% |
| Communication and transport | 312 | 11.7% | 102,000 5.6% |
| Sales and Commercial | 218 | 8% | 239,000 13% |
| Professional, technical and health | 307 | 11.5% | 293,000 16% |
| Service | 355 | 13.3% | 170,000 9.4% |
| Other | 235 | 8.8% | 196,000 10.8% |
| Looking for work | | | 21,000 1% |
| Total: | 2666 | 100% | 1,800,000 100% |
| Population: | 9,811 | | 3,917,203 |
| Labour participation %: | 27% | | 46% |

(Note: Since the completion of the census Cobh has lost employment in ISPAT (2002) and IFI (2003) and more recently a firm is relocating outside the town. This would have a significant effect on the above figures which relate to April 2002)

The most striking element of the above figures is the low labour participation rate which at 27% of the population is almost half that of the national participation rate of 46%. This low participation rate is bound to have a severe effect on the local economy and it is reasonable to speculate that at least a portion of this low participation is due to the lack of locally based employment opportunities.

If Cobh were to attain the national average participation rate for the projected population of 17,000 persons that would require some 7820 jobs to be located in the Cobh area. Given that the total number of jobs in the area are of the order of 2,500-3,000 this means that Cobh requires an additional 4-5,000 jobs within the life of the Plan. Given that these jobs will cover the entire spectrum of the economy it is difficult to speculate on the land area required. However zoning up to 40 HA for employment/enterprise may not be excessive. It would be a useful exercise for the Great Island Innovation Area Scoping Study to make a more accurate assessment of the areas and categories of land use required. This may not fully harmonise with the current version of the various County Development Plan.

This gives added emphasis to the need to zone substantial areas of land in the immediate Cobh area, in the very near term for employment and enterprise purposes, in order to enable the local population to obtain employment in their immediate vicinity. It will be desirable that the Town Council work with the County Council to identify and zone appropriate lands and to work with the development agencies to transform the local economy from a declining industrial area to a post industrial knowledge economy.

It would be desirable to examine the possibility of investigating the feasibility of making a substantial area of land available at an early date to facilitate Cobh's transformation from a declining industrial centre to a new economy innovation centre.

The main categories of land which require consideration are:

Business campus for sunrise/new economy industry
Foreign Direct Investment
General industry
Poor neighbour and recycling type industries.
Logistics and distribution
Tourist industry

Cobhs main assets in holding existing and attracting new enterprises is its quality of life, scenic physical environment and heritage character.

The SWRA Regional Planning Guidelines (p.78) refers to the need for Science Park in the Cork area. Cobh either currently or potentially fulfils many of the requirements for this Park. It would be desirable to conduct a study examining the suitability of Cobh for such a facility and if it is appropriate to make a case to the relevant authorities for its location in Cobh.

Tourism and Leisure

The Cobh tourist industry can be considered under the following headings and within the overall context of the Cork City and Harbour area.

Attractions – the main attractions in the town are

- The Cathedral
- Cobh's unique architectural heritage
- The Heritage Centre
- Cobhs Maretime Heritage as a New World disembarkation point
- Cobh's Military Heritage
- The Cobh Museum
- The Sirius Arts Centre
- The water frontage and promenade
- The Admiralty House/Benedictine Convent and Biblical Garden
- The sailing School
- Proximity to Fota Island and its attractions

Shopping

There is a satisfactory number of tourist related shops and these can be expected to grow with the increase in tourist numbers

Entertainment

The town has a reasonable number of pubs and one night club. It also has the Sirius Gallery and Heritage Centre. There are a number of festivals during the year. These facilities and events cater for local residents and tourists alike. The town needs to expand this sector.

Bars and restaurants:

The town has a reasonable number of bars, restaurants and cafes and these can be expected to grow with the increase in tourist numbers.

Transport facilities

Accessibility at present is not entirely adequate and is a matter that requires attention.

Accommodation

The town has four hotels/guesthouses, a hostel and a number of B&B's. The town needs a modern four or five star bed hotel, with bedroom numbers in excess of 200 with room for future expansion and a substantial conference and leisure facilities.

There is a need to develop a pipeline of new attractions through an organised New Product Development process to refresh the present attractions and develop the true potential of the town. There is also a need for improved promotion, signage and interpretation facilities.

Possible future attractions:

- Access to and renovation of the closed forts at Camden, Carlisle and Spike
- Cobh's unique military history.
- Access to the second largest natural harbour in the world
- The Ecological area of Cuskinny
- The sailing potential of Crosshaven and Cobh
- A genealogy and migration studies centre
- Pilgrimage visitors travelling to the Cathedral and the Benedictine Convent and Biblical Garden.
- A new Marina synergising with the marinas at East Ferry and Crosshaven and the moorings at Monkstown.
- A new 200+ bedroom Hotel with ancillary conference and leisure facilities to take advantage of Cobh's unique south facing seafront location

- Measures to develop and make accessible the approximately 5+ Km of south and west facing shoreline that the town enjoys.
- Measures to develop aquatic based activity holidays with the prospect of the improvement in the water quality of the harbour.
- Measures to develop activity based holidays exploiting the unique topography and landscape of Great Island with its elevated and wooded views of the harbour.
- Steam based trains travelling from Cobh to Cork to avail of the unique Cork-Cobh marine viaduct and via Fota House. Such steam train would operate on a chartered rather than scheduled basis. If successful, and at a later date, the potential to extend the service to Kilarney/Tralee is available.

There is strong potential for the old town centre to become the tourist focus of the Island. This will require additional space for:

- Tourist attractions eg
- Genealogy centre
- Marina
- A pipeline of up coming attractions.
- Tourist shopping
- Tourist transport
- Tourist accommodation
- Tourist entertainment
- Tourist food and drink

All of the above will require additional floor space to be allocated for them. There is also a need to integrate these specific use strategies with area strategies.

There is a need for a scoping study and Marketing plan to improve Cobhs performance targeting:

- Independent travellers
- Tour bus tourists (+ operators)
- Cruise travellers
- Repeat travellers
- Corporate market
- Different age groups

Consumer Retail and commercial Services

The following table has been extracted from table 2.1 of the Cork retail hierarchy matrix:

| | Existing retail floorspace Sq M. | Existing population |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Ballincollig | 8,213 | 16,760 |
| Carrigaline | 8,026 | 12,880 |
| Cobh | 3,036 | 11,570 |
| Midleton | 7,584 | 10,150 |
| Glanmire/Riverstown | 2,203 | 7,030 |
| Blarney | 3,500 | 1,870 |

It may be noted that in comparison to Ballincollig, Carrigaline and Midleton Cobh's retail floorspace provision, on a per capita basis, is less than 50% of that of these comparable towns. This under provision is emphasised when we note that Mallow has a population of 11,510, which is only 60 persons less than Cobh, and has 13,159 square metres of retail floorspace. On a per capita basis this is four times more than Cobh.

From the same table we note that there is a total of 319,733 square metres of retail floor space in the study area of County Cork. The total population of the county is 434,600 in 2001. This amounts to an average of 735 square metres per 1,000 population.

On a per capita basis we would expect Cobh to have 8,500 square metres at present. Projecting forward to 2011 when the town is expected to have a population of 16-17,000 then Cobh will have a requirement of 12,500 square metres. It would be useful to make provision for such floor space at this point in time.

By any comparative measure Cobh is seriously deficient in retail floor space provision and will become more so as the population increases in the course of the plan period. This deficiency is given greater emphasis by the fact that Cobh is the nearest town to Passage, Glenbrook and Monkstown which form its natural hinterland. The past, current and projected populations of these settlements are: 1996:3638, 2002:4184, 2011: 5,000+(CASP projection). It would be reasonable to allocate say 30% of the shopping requirement of these settlements to Cobh which would

add 1,500 square metres to Cobh's requirement giving a total of 14,000 square metres.

Furthermore if one subtracts the tourist related floor space then Cobh retail floor space provision per capita diminishes further. Or alternatively if one adds on the tourist related floorspace requirement then Cobh's requirement grows accordingly.

Cobh is an expanding town with a current population in excess of 11,000 and a projected population of 16-17,000 by 2011. Passage, Glenbrook and Monkstown are expected to grow to 5,000+. This gives Cobh a projected catchment population in excess of 20,000, which is quite substantial. This is an ample catchment population to justify a self-sustaining and self-sufficient retail floor space provision. Cobh's existing and projected population would require an additional 12-14,000 square metres of floor space which would in turn require up to 4-5 HA of additional land zoned for retail usage. This may not fully harmonise with the current version of the County Development Plan and Retail Strategy.

The following are categories of retail floorspace that require attention:

- Convenience
- Comparison
- Bulky goods
- Car showrooms
- Petrol stations
- Retail services:
 - o Professional
 - o Physical eg hairdressers, shoe repairs etc.
 - o Financial

The old town centre needs to reassess its role and function in the modern world and re-position itself so as to cater for a balance of the following strategic functions:

Its function as a local shopping centre – it is essential that the existing Supervalu supermarket is retained in the town centre to serve the needs of the immediately adjoining population and to serve as an anchor for the existing ancillary shops.

- Its function as a leisure and entertainment centre.
- Its function as a civic centre and as the symbolic centre of the town.

- Its function as a service centre.
- Its function as a tourist centre – shopping, entertainment, accommodation, attractions. and the need for a pipeline of New Product Development (attractions) (eg genealogy centre)
- Its function as a heritage repository
- Its function as a potential Arts forum/arena – ie its potential to develop as an artistic centre.
- Its waterside amenity potential
- Its function as a port.
- Bus, car and Cycle parking provision

There is a need for an inventory of the limited amount of space that is available in essential town centre uses and a need to budget this and relocate non essential retail uses to edge of town locations.

It would be useful at this stage to make a preliminary estimate of the floorspace requirements of the above uses. The following is an approximation of Cobh Town Centre's essential floorspace requirements additional to the existing:

- Its function as a tourist and local entertainment centre (+ 1,500 sq metres)
- Its function as a civic centre (+ 3,000 sq metres)
- The retail needs of a growing tourist market. (Shopping is a key element of the tourist experience) (+300% of existing – say +1,500 sq metres)
- New tourist attractions and features over the next 20 years (+3,000 square metres)
- Its function as a service centre (+1,000 sq metres)
- Its function as a heritage repository (+ 2,000 square metres)

In effect there is a need for a total of 12,000 square metres of additional floor space in the town centre to cater for the above essential requirements in order to allow Cobh to develop to its full social and economic potential. In addition to this there is a need for additional bus, car and cycle parking provision to provide for existing usage, to provide for the additional floor space usages indicated above and to enable further pedestrianisation and pedestrian priority measures to be implemented. A minimum of an additional 400 multi-storey car parking spaces is required.

There is a need to reassess the future retailing role of the old town centre. Clearly it is impossible for the existing congested town centre, constrained on the south by the sea and designed 150 years ago for a population of 2-3,000 to cater for the modern retail requirements of a population up to 20,000+.

In addition to the floor space requirements detailed above there is a need for the following retail floorspace requirements which are unlikely to be accommodated in the town centre:

Cobhs own indigenous retailing needs (+6,000 sq metres)
The needs of future population (+3-5,000 sq metres)
The needs of Monkstown, Glenbrook and Passage (+1-3,000 sq metres)

In effect the Cobh area needs to provide some 12-14,000 square metres of retail floor space in its immediate environs. This floor space requirement will have a land use demand of up to 4-5 HA. This may not fully harmonise with the current version of the Retail Strategy.

The potential for a growing retail function is capable of producing a spiral of growth in the town. The more retail investment and the more shopping facilities there are provided the more people will shop in the town. The more people shop in the town the more investment there will be in local shopping facilities.

There is anecdotal evidence that substantial volumes of shopping expenditure are being diverted to Midleton and other areas, expenditure that should properly be spent in the Cobh area. There is also evidence that enhanced vitality in the Cobh retailing sector would encourage retail entrepreneurs to establish in the town and is also encourage the entrepreneurial energies of existing retailers in the town.

It would be desirable that the Town Council works with the County Council in ensuring that Cobh has an adequate retailing infrastructure commensurate with its population and aspirations, and adequate to serve its own needs and those of its neighbouring settlements of Passage, Glenbrook and Monkstown.

It is also desirable that a Scoping Study outlining a detailed Town Centre Development Strategy be initiated.

Housing

According to the 2002 Census there are 6767 persons c.2250 dwelling units within the Town Council boundary. There is approximately 3 HA of undeveloped residentially zoned land within the town boundary. At 25 dwellings per HA this would amount to 75 dwellings.

The bulk of development in the recent past has taken place in the Ballynoe and Ticknock areas on the northern and north western ends of the Town Council area. The census has recorded an increase in population from a total of 1991 persons in 1996 to 3004 persons in 2002. Development has continued at a substantial pace since then. Quite a number of dwellings in the Ballynoe area were built but not occupied during the census.

In the 2002 County Development Plan approximately 108 Ha of land was zoned for development on the Cobh outskirts of which it is estimated that in August 2004 91 Ha remain undeveloped. At a density of 25 houses per Ha this would mean that here is land for at least 2275 dwelling units assuming that all the zoned land can be serviced.

A major difficulty with residential development in the county council area is the lack of an overall drainage strategy for the north and south watersheds of the town. It would be desirable that the town council work with the County Council in providing an overall drainage strategy. This would guide private developers in the provision of drainage facilities.

A second major difficulty is that the towns economic and social infrastructure has not kept pace with past and projected residential growth in the town. On the economic side the economic infrastructure has been seriously eroded by the closure of ISPAT and IFI and decline of Cork Dockyard. On the social side there are serious shortfalls in the provision of recreation, leisure and open space although the new swimming pool and community centre will go some way to remedying this. There is also a serious shortage of retail floor space for a population of this size. The plan proposes substantial remedial action in this regard and it is the intention of the Town Council to work with the County Council in devising scoping studies to address shortfalls in the social and economic

infrastructure such as employment/enterprise, retailing, recreation and community facilities.

Cobh Town Council has participated in the Cork Local Authorities Joint Housing Strategy and it is the intention of the Town Council to work with Cork County Council in the implementation of this policy.

During the period of the last Plan the Town Council has developed 28 dwellings in Bayview, 39 in Ticknock, and 16 private sites at Eaton Heights. The Town Council owns 57 acres in the Ballynoe area of which c.20 are zoned for enterprise and the remainder for residential. There is capacity for 200-250 houses.

The following are the densities relevant to the various density zonings contained in the County Development Plan and which are appropriate to the town:

Low density: less than 10 dwellings per HA

Medium density: 20-50 dwellings per HA

High density: in excess of 50 dwelling per HA

Travellers

The Town Council recognises the distinct requirements of Travellers in relation to the provision of accommodation and other facilities. The Town Council will support the Traveller Accommodation Programme for County Cork 2000-2004 which was adopted in March 2000 under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 and any subsequent programme. The plan puts forward a programme for the provision of permanent accommodation for the County's indigenous Traveller community.

Community Facilities

There is a new community centre as marked. The swimming pool has been closed since 1985. There are proposals to replace it with a leisure complex costing €8.3m.

Departmental approval has been received to proceed with the new swimming pool/leisure centre and this should be completed in the course of the plan.

A sheltered housing/community facility has been developed by Respond on the old creamery site on Park Road, and is being operated in conjunction with the adjacent hospital.

Civic Uses.

The town Council Offices are located at the Town Hall at Lynch's Quay. The Council are shortly to move to larger premises in Carrig House. The Courthouse and town Library is located in the Arch Building at Casement Square. The Architects department oversees its maintenance.

The recently completed Garda Barracks is located beside the five foot way to the north of the train station.

The town Museum is located in Scots Church, the old Presbyterian church, overlooking the train station. A voluntary Museum committee administers this. Cork County Council owns the building. The possibility of enhancing the scale and focus of the museum will be looked at in the Heritage Plan, which will be part of a Heritage Scoping Study.

Gallery-Display – the Old Royal Cork Yacht Club building is now operated by the Sirius Company. It has been renovated and is used for artistic and exhibition purposes.

The Cobh Heritage Centre: the old train station buildings have been renovated and converted to the Experience of the Queenstown Story which outlined the many ages of Cobh including:

- The Age of Steam,
- The Age of Sail,
- The Age of Emigration,
- The Age of Elegance,
- The Age of Change.

The Community Welfare Office is located in Bishop Street and the Social Welfare office is located in Harbour Road.

Religious:

There are a variety of denominations of religious practice in the town of which the largest sector is accounted by the Catholic Church.

Catholic Church:

There are five priests at parish level in the town and sixth assisting the Bishop of Cloyne who resides in the town.

The Cathedral serves the pastoral needs of most of the town population and a further three masses are said at weekends in the Convent chapel. The Benedictine Monastery in the old Admiralty House also hosts extensive religious services.

Given the projected increase in population it may be desirable to locate a new church in the Ballynoe area. This matter can be addressed in the Ballynoe Neighbourhood Scoping Study.

Other denomination:

The Church of Ireland “ChristChurch” Church is located in Rushbrooke. It is part of the Cobh and Glanmire Union of Parishes and that has one rector. There is also a “Good News Christian Church” located in the town.

Education:

Childcare/preschool:

This matter is addressed in the Childcare section.

Primary Education:

Cobh is currently served with the following primary educational facilities.

| School | Number of pupils (Sept. 2004) | Number of teachers |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Norwood School/Rushbrooke National School | c.420 | 13-14 |
| St. Mary’s Primary School | c.416 | 13-14 |
| Bellvue National School | c.35 | 2 |
| St. Josephs Primary School. | c.293 | 11 |
| Walterstown Primary School. | c.100 | 4 |
| Gaelscoil – Sean Ui Heagairtaigh | c.120 | 4 |
| Total: | 1,144* | 47- 49 |

* This represents the towns population between the ages of 4-12.

No exact figures on the age profile of the town are available however if the age profile of the town matched that of the county in the 2002 Census then we would expect 700 children in each of the 0-4 years, 5-9 years and 10-14 years cohorts. This would give a total of approximately 2,100 children in total under the age of 14 years. However these figures may be distorted in the coming years as the large number of starter homes being occupied by young families particularly in the new estates to the north and north west of the Town Council area. For this reason Cobh can expect to have a substantial increase in the numbers of children in the coming years. This will have implications for child care provision, educational facilities provision and sports, recreation and leisure provision.

As a proxy indicator for internal population growth the following are the numbers of baptisms for the years 2000-2003 in Cobh Cathedral. These figures are not inclusive of all babies living in the town nor do they take into account further in migration into the town:

COBH CATHEDRAL

Year Baptisms

2000 167

2001 186

2002 181

2003 193

There is a clear trend to higher birth numbers in the town which would indicate that an increase in school numbers can be expected.

The location of Norwood School is eminently suited to its existing catchment area and may shortly be extended. The question of the future provision of further educational facilities in the Ballynoe area can be addressed in the Scoping Study for the possible Ballynoe Neighbourhood Centre.

Second Level Educational Facilities:

The two second level facilities in the town are:

Colaiste Mhuire Secondary School

VEC Cobh Community College.

There is some congestion caused by school traffic in the vicinity of Colaiste Mhuire Secondary. This will be ameliorated when the proposed relief road running through the adjacent estate is completed.

Third and Fourth Level Educational Facilities:

Given that it is a key aim of the Plan to transform the town from a declining industrial town to a postindustrial information age economy it will be essential that third and fourth level elements be located in the town. There is a considerable potential for a synergy between education and sunrise, technology intensive and knowledge intensive enterprises. It will be an objective of the Great Island Innovation Area scoping study to explore the possibility of a third and fourth level educational facility in the Cobh area and to consider allocating an appropriate area for this purpose.

Childcare,

No exact figures on the age profile of the town are available however if the age profile of the town matched that of the county in the 2002 Census then we would expect 700 children in each of the 0-4 years, 5-9 years and 10-14 years cohorts. This would give a total of approximately 2,100 children in total under the age of 14 years. However these figures may be distorted in the coming years as the large number of starter homes being occupied by young families particularly in the new estates to the north and north west of the Town Council area. For this reason Cobh can expect to have a substantial increase in the numbers of children in the coming years. This will have implications for child care provision, recreation provision and educational facilities provision.

The following is a extract from the County Development Plan (pps. 97-98) relevant to childcare:

National policy recognises childcare facilities as integral to economic and social well being. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy identifies child care provision as a means of alleviating poverty and social exclusion.

The Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities published by the Department of the Environment and Local Government (June 2001) emphasise the role of planning in the promotion of increased childcare provision, ensure adequate standards of provision and protection of the local environment. The detailed regulation of childcare facilities is carried out in accordance with the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996. The specific Zoning objective in the Plan contains specific objectives for the provision of Child Care Facilities as an integral part of new development.

From the Development Plan point of view it is important to ensure that provision is made for childcare facilities to be in appropriate locations including residential areas, town and neighbourhood centres and employment areas. One of the more important locations for childcare facilities will be larger new housing developments. Here normally, provision should be made for well-located, purpose built childcare facilities in developments of 75 dwellings or more. The size and number of the facilities should be determined in relation to local needs and likely future demand from the immediate locality. In existing housing developments, the establishment of small crèches will be considered, but the premises must remain primarily residential and traffic and access arrangements must not interfere with general residential amenity.

In town and neighbourhood centres and employment areas the provision of child care facilities will, normally, be encouraged. Facilities located in these areas should be able to provide open space, good access to public transport and any cycle routes, off street carparking and drop off and collections points.

Reference may also be made to the Cork County Childcare Committees Strategic Plan 2001-2006 which states as its mission statement:

“Cork County Childcare Committee will develop and implement a coordinated childcare strategy for Cork County. It will support the development and provision of a range of integrated, high quality, accessible and affordable care and educational initiatives for children from birth to twelve years of age. This will be achieved through partnership with all existing service providers and by the provision of co-ordination mechanism at county level”.

Health and Well Being

There is a hospital at Ballyvoloon. A sheltered housing/community facility with 40 units has been developed by Respond at Park Road. There are eight medical general practitioners and three pharmacies listed in the Golden pages for Cobh. There is also the Physiotherapy Clinic located at Parkview. For the future it would be desirable that health related facilities were located in commercial areas such as retail centres and neighbourhood centres to facilitate ease of access and for the convenience of the local population.

The term Health and Well-Being has been chosen to progress beyond traditional concepts of health as being an absence of physical malady and to adopt a more holistic approach which encompasses physical, social, emotional and cognitive well being.

The largest player in the Health and Well Being industry is the Southern Health Board (SHB). The Board employs 13,000 persons in Counties Cork and Kerry (6% of total workforce) and has an annual budget of £500 Million.

It is possible to categorise the issue of health and well-being into a number of aspects:

1. Traditional 'narrow' focus of remedial and support role approach to Health and Well Being – In the past health has been perceived as a matter of remedying illness by means of GP's, day care centres, complementary medicine centres, hospitals, pharmaceutical etc. While this 'traditional' role still remains an important consideration it is also an approach that needs to be broadened (as is discussed below). However within this narrow 'traditional' perspective the provision for the traditional, remedial and support role of the Health and Well Being industry facilities will be addressed by means of allocating and zoning land for the relevant land uses.
2. Environmental factors of Health and Well Being; consideration of Health and Well Being is wider than simply allocating space for remedial and support functions. In order to consider the Proper Planning and sustainable development of an area the effect of environmental factors on Health and Well Being

must also be considered. eg. The effect of transport, recreation, pollution control etc. on health need to be considered in formulating strategies and plans.

3. Environmental effects on Health and Well Being are wider than physical factors. The Political, economic and social environment also impinge on health and well being. For example the effect of Social equality, income distribution, availability of employment etc. all impact on Health and Well Being. It is important that these factors be addressed by considering the effect of Objectives, Policies, Zonings and standards of the Town Plan on the Regulatory, Economic and Social environment. The County Development Board has drafted a County wide strategy to address these considerations. It is the intention that the Economic, Social and cultural elements of the CDB Strategy will subsequently be translated into the Objectives, Zonings, Policies and Standards of the Town Development Plan.

4. In addition to environmental factors, Lifestyle factors also impinge on Health and Well Being. eg. Effect of exercise, alcohol, smoking etc. all impact on Health and Well Being. By 'Health Proofing' its Objectives, Policies, Zonings and Standards the planning authority intends to facilitate and enable Lifestyle factors to be enhanced. Eg. By providing ample recreational opportunities, encouraging pedestrianisation, enabling safe cycling etc. it will facilitate and encourage exercise and other healthy lifestyle activities and attitudes.

5. Besides Environmental and lifestyle factors age, gender and genetic factors also impinge on Health and Well Being (e.g. people are more vulnerable to illness as they get older, males have less robust immune systems in certain dimensions, certain persons are genetically disposed to certain weaknesses and illnesses etc.). In addition to 'Health Proofing' its plans the planning authority will attempt to identify and articulate the effects of Age, Gender and Genetic factors on Health and Well Being it will attempt to ameliorate these effects in devising its objectives, policies, zonings and standards.

It will be desirable that the planning authority address these items by means of various objectives.

Social welfare,

The Community Welfare office (SHB) is located at Bishop St. and the Social Welfare Office is located in Harbour Road.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Instead of “planning” for people with disabilities, as if they were passive recipients of planning expertise, one of the objectives of this Plan will be to encourage and enable participation by people with disabilities in the planning process.

The community with disabilities comprises some 10% of the population. In other words there are over 1,000 people in Cobh who have a disability of one form or another. There are also 2,100 persons under the age of 14 (children have special accessibility and other needs), 1,100 people in Cobh over the age of 65 and at any one time there are on average 180-200 pregnant women in Cobh. Out of a total population of 11,000 only 60% are not under 14 years of age, not over 65 years of age and do not have a disability. (And are not pregnant). Forty percent of the population who have special accessibility needs is a very significant proportion of the population. (Table 5A, 9A, Vol I, 2002 Census)

The National Disability Authority (1999) Act defines disability as:

“A substantial restriction to participate in economic, social and cultural life due to enduring Physical, Sensory, Learning, Mental Health or Emotional impairment”.

Disability is an evolving concept. Some illustrations of the range and diversity of disability are:

- Physical: Wheel chair, Speech impaired etc.
- Sensory: Blind, Deaf etc.
- Learning: Autism, dyslexia, language difficulties
- Mental Health: Bipolar disorder, Schizophrenia etc.
- Emotional: Depression, Anxiety, Social Phobias etc.

Planning/Designing for people with disabilities is complex and technical due to

- The complexity of needs of people with disabilities.
- The range and diversity of disabilities.

- Contradictions (and Synergies) between the needs of the various categories of disability and the needs of the population without disabilities.

There is also a shortage of expertise on the subject. Until recently Planning/Architecture/Engineering etc. courses rarely included modules on designing for people with disabilities. Specific disability design expertise is rare and not always easy to source. There has been some work carried out but much more needs to be done.

A second area of concern is the predominant planning/design philosophy. This is generally the post-design, modification/bolt-on school of design. In this approach the town/building/bridge or whatever is designed to meet the requirements of an average twenty five year old fit male and then subsequently modified with some facilities to cater for some categories of disability.

A third aspect is the Planning and Development Act 2000. S.10 includes 13 categories of objective which must be included in the Plan. None of these 13 categories of objective refer to Disability

The First Schedule (p.256) of the 2000 Planning Act lists 55 categories of objective that may be included in a Development Plan. One category (Part III (c)) refers to facilities for people with disabilities. A Development Plan may include objectives for providing facilities for people with disabilities. There is no legal obligation to do so. There is of course a social and moral obligation in this regard.

It would be desirable therefore for this plan to take cognisance of these facts and to adopt a disability friendly planning/design philosophy. This would include:

- Disability Design ab initio – a pro-active positive attitude and consciousness of people with disabilities from the start.
- Needs of people with disabilities “Designed in” (not post design modifications)
- Range and Diversity of Disability recognised
- Technicality and Complexity of disability recognised.

The publication Building for Everyone (2002) by the National Disability Authority refers to the issue of personal ability and specifically mentions

1. Mobility
2. Hearing
3. Vision
4. Breathing
5. Grip
6. Height
7. Other considerations

and places responsibility for responding appropriately with:

1. The developer
2. The designer
3. The builder
4. The manager
5. Central government
6. Local authorities
7. National Disability Authority

The document distinguishes between the external environment and buildings. For the most part it is considered that the building regulations are best suited to ensuring that buildings are adapted to the full range of potential users.

On this basis it is felt that the Development plan might be more usefully orientated towards the external environment. "Building for Everybody" categorises the external environment as follows:

1. The natural landscape such as mountains, beaches, peat lands etc. (Checklist on p.41)
2. The tempered landscape such as parks, golf courses, woodlands and arboreta etc. (Checklist on p.49)
3. Tamed landscape such as parks, cemeteries, sports grounds, gardens pavements, parking areas, plazas, etc. (checklists p50-55)

Cobh town has a share of each of these different categories of external environment although being an urban area the bulk is represented by "tamed landscapes".

The central issue relating to these categories of landscape is the importance of accessibility for everyone. From a town planning perspective there are no major implications for landuse per se. ie it is generally not necessary to introduce new or specific landuses to cater for people with disabilities. The focus is primarily on the issue of accessibility for everyone to and between landuses.

Accessibility for everybody therefore needs to be designed into the development plan process.

It is desirable that a scoping study addressing the needs of people with disabilities be an objective of this Plan. Such a scoping study would address:

1. Encourage and enable participation by people with disabilities in the planning and design process
2. A scoping study for the three categories of landscape, the identification of their avenues/means of accessibility and applying the checklist to them. Ie an audit.
3. A scoping study applying pps. 50-55 and the details in chapter 5 to the publicly accessible areas. Ie an audit.
4. A gradual policy of learning from the audit and the application of lessons learned in maintenance and renewal programs.
5. The focus will be on accessibility and on participation by the people affected in the design process.

Voluntary sector

There is a strong voluntary ethos in Cobh. The following are some of the voluntary organisations located in the town:

- Cobh Family Resource Centre Ltd. – Park House
- Cuskinny Nature Reserve
- Cork Harbour Islands Project
- Cobh Red Cross
- Cobh Community College Parents Council
- Junior Chamber
- O’Sullivan’s Place Residents Association
- Russell Heights Residents Association
- St. Patrick’s Day Parade
- Sirius Arts Centre
- Cobh Tidy Towns
- Flower and Horticulture Club.
- Aontas Handicap project
- Daft Theatre Company.
- Haulbowline Theatre Company.
- Pioneers Association.
- Cobh Youth Services
- Historical Society

- Cobh Community Theatre
- Community Centre Company

It is the intention of the Plan to encourage and work with the voluntary groups in the town to achieve the objectives of the Plan, particularly in the Scoping Studies.

Sport,

Sport and recreation is an important element of the towns attractions and it is the intention of the Plan to encourage all residents in the town to participate in sport and recreation. It is the intention of the Plan to conduct a scoping study of the future needs of the sporting and leisure participants in the town.

GAA:

There are around 300 junior members in the Cobh GAA club which has two pitches including Pairc Ui Chonnail and a club house. There is a camogie club also.

SOCCER:

There are four soccer clubs in cobh:

Cobh Ramblers who are a League of Ireland Club and own St Colmans Park.

Cobh Ramblers Schoolboys Club lease two pitches

Cobh Wanderers have a pitch on the Bothar Salach Road.

The Springfield Soccer Club have 400 youngsters and have one pitch.

RUGBY:

Cobh Pirates Rugby Club have two pitches and a clubhouse in Ballynoe.

HOCKEY;

There is a hockey club in Cobh, who play in Colaiste Mhuire and in Carrigtohill.

TODDLERS PLAYGROUND:

There is a children's playground in the promenade and along the Five Foot Way.

INDOOR SPORTS HALLS.

There is an indoor sports hall in Colaiste Mhuire and the proposed Community Centre will also have one.

FITNESS/MULTI-GYM

There is a multi-gym proposed to accompany the proposed swimming pool.

There is also one proposed on the first floor of Carrig house.

GOLF

There is a 9 hole golf course in Ballywilliam.

PITCH AND PUTT

The Elton pitch and putt course is located in Carrignafof.

ATHLETICS

Ballymore/Cobh Athletics Club – Sonia O’Sullivan’s club – is based in Ballymore but covers all of the town. It uses the VEC/Cobh Community College grounds beside the VEC.

TENNIS

The Rushbrooke Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club is located near Norwood School. It is well supported and well run. There is also the Mount Crozier Tennis Club which is in a dilapidated condition. This facility ought to be retained in sporting usage and refurbished and developed for local sporting purposes.

OTHER:

There is an active boxing club located in the Mount Crozier Tennis Club pavilion.

There are two Twai Kwon Do clubs in the town and another Martial Arts Club operates out of the Bellview Club

The following are the sporting organisations supported by the Town Council:

- Southern Tae Kwon Do
- Cobh Boxing Club
- Cobh Summer Recreation Scheme
- Cobh Athletic club
- Fisherman’s Rowing Club
- Cobh GAA Sports Club
- Cobh Ladies Hockey Club
- Cobh Wanderers AFC

- Cobh Basketball Club
- Parks Tennis
- Cobh Martial Arts Academy
- Springfield AFC

The County Council commissioned the Cunnane Stratton Reynolds (1998) Cork Recreation Needs Report in 1998. This contains some useful standards on provision of sports facilities and leisure facilities. It would be desirable to carry out a scoping study of the sporting facilities in Cobh, establish a projected target for all manner of sport, open space and amenity provision and ascertain means for ensuring that the existing and projected population of Cobh enjoy a recreation environment appropriate to their needs and requirements.

Based on the metrics of the Cunnane, Stratton Reynolds report a preliminary estimation would suggest that a population of 17,000 would have a minimum requirement for 10-30 acres of sports and active recreation space additional to current provision during the Plan period 2005-2011. (This does not include parks, amenity spaces and golf related areas). It would be desirable that the above acreage be dispersed in small 3-5 acre blocks around the town close to residential and educational buildings rather than in one monolithic block.

It is desirable that such spaces are located within the built up areas rather than out in the countryside to enable such spaces to be readily available to young people without reliance on motorised transport. It would be desirable that the Town Council work with the County Council towards this end. C/f table 3 on page 55 of CSR.

It is useful to compare the sporting facilities provided by Cork City Council which has a population of 135,000 and take that as a useful benchmark for Cobh to aspire to.

Cork City Council has a substantial parks budget, 118 employees in the Parks section, and has a total landholding of almost 1,700 acres including the recently acquired 60 acres at Mahon Tunnel and the 124 acres at South Link landfill which is currently being converted to an urban park. If Cobh Town Council had a pro rata allocation they would have 8 employees in the Parks section, a total sport and amenity related landholding of 100 acres.

The following are details of areas located in the City Council area:

- Formal parks : 200 acres (c/f p.7 of parks strategy)
- Landfill : 124 acre
- Golf course : 120 acres
- Pitches : 60 acres (22 pitches)
- Mahon tunnel : 60 acres (17 pitches)
- SubTotal : 564
- Other : 1,100 acres (incidental, road cutoffs etc.)
- Grand total : 1684 acres

RECREATION + LEISURE

Recreation is an essential part of the life of any town and is a major component of the Quality of life rating for a town. Apart from the benefits for the existing residents a rich and diverse recreational environment renders a town attractive to investors and entrepreneurs.

The following are some of the recreational organisations supported by the Town Council:

- Cobh and District Show Bird Society
- St. Colmans Scout Group
- Cobh Sea Scouts
- Cobh Girl Guides
- South of Ireland Pipe Band Championships
- Cobh YMCA
- Sirius Strings
- Cobh Confraternity Band
- Great Island Fiddlers
- Cobh Youth Forum
- American Civil War Re-enactment Group
- Cobh Community Centre

Local Festivals:

Cobh Peoples Regatta

Sea Angling Festival

There is also a Bridge Club in the Commodore Hotel and a Writers Club. The towns sole night club is in the Commodore. There is no cinema in the town and this would be a desirable addition to the

towns portfolio of recreation facilities. There are plans to include a theatre in the new community centre which is at present (Sept 2004) going through the planning process – it will also provide space for voluntary and sports groups. Its gross floor space is 1355 sq meters will include multipurpose rooms, hall, theatre, workshop.

AMENITY

Cobh enjoys a naturally attractive topography overlooking one of the most scenic harbours of the world. These natural amenities are enhanced by well located and designed buildings magnificently landscaped with mature vegetation.

The following are some of the amenity areas in the town:

- The esplanade/promenade
- Town park – opposite the Commodore
- 5- foot walkway beyond the deep water quay
- White point beach
- Bishop Roche park on far east side of town
- A small park immediately north of Casement Square
- Visual amenity: There are a number of viewing areas around town.

Amenity can be considered under the headings of Passive amenity, Visual amenity, Ecological and educational amenity.

Due to the towns topography most of the roads run in an east-west direction, which afford spectacular views of the harbour. There is a need for a general objective restricting development that would impair views of the harbour and a specific objective restricting any development that would impair views of the harbour from the lower road.

In addition to the views from the public roads there are a number of attractive viewing points, some of which are included on the “Titanic Trail”. There are also a number of areas which due to their steepness are unsuitable for development for residential or other purposes. It will be desirable to explore the possibility of providing viewing points/platforms in these locations for the enjoyment of the towns people and tourists.

There is extensive vegetation in the town, particularly the older areas, and it ought to be an objective of the Plan to designate a landscape Conservation area for the Midleton Park area. It will also be desirable to look at the possibility of improving the hard and soft landscaping of many of the towns open spaces particularly in the suburbs. Many of the trees in the town area are worthy of conservation on amenity and visual grounds. There is a need for a scoping study addressing the landscaping needs of the town.

CULTURE

Tourism, the knowledge industry and the arts enjoy a tremendous synergy and mutually support each other. Artists in a community lend an exotic, cosmopolitan air to any society and provide the social backdrop that attracts creative, new economy entrepreneurs. Due to modern communications the new economy can be located anywhere. The key ingredient is the social infrastructure. At the same time a lively tourist industry both supports the artists and also support a richer cultural and entertainment milieu than the indigenous population could support. This in turn is attractive to the new economy entrepreneurs.

SOMA and the Mission district in San Francisco are examples of such artistic communities attracting and holding a vibrant new economy. Closer to home Galway has developed an artistic milieu and reputation over the past twenty years that today makes it the most attractive town for software startups in the country outside Dublin. While Galway always had a strong musical artistic community it has strategically strengthened its reputation and artistic infrastructure by promoting a range of cultural festivals. These include:

1. Cuirt
2. The Arts Festival
3. The Film Fleadh
4. The Oyster Festival

It has also supported movements like Macnas, Druid, various musical groups and has provided the artistic performance space known as “An Bosca Dubh” - the Black Box. For a relatively small investment twenty years ago Galway continues to reap an enormous return. It is worth bearing in mind that thirty years ago Galways population was not much greater than what the combined population of Cobh, Passage and Monkstown will be in five years

time. It may be desirable to take a leaf out of Galway's book and actively promote a vibrant artistic community in the town.

The town already has a very strong foundation in the Sirius Centre with an able and energetic administrator. The Centre continues to promote a growing number of festivals, schools, exhibitions and performances. The "Art in the Park" market coupled with the Farmers Market all support a more cosmopolitan lifestyle. Cobh has a very strong indigenous musical tradition and the entertainment activities generally continue to improve each year. There is vigorous amateur theatrical movement in the area. There is a brass band (confraternity Band), Cobh Pipe band (who organise the South of Ireland championships in Cobh), the Great Island Fiddlers, Sirius Strings, and Suzuki violin schools. There is already a significant artistic community estimated at over 50 practicing artists along with a strong corps of talented hobbyists. A useful target would be to increase the number of practicing artists in the town by 200 during the course of the Plan.

It will be desirable for the Town Council to actively support these activities with a view to enhancing Cobh's objective of increasing the artist population by 200 over the existing population during the course of this plan.

An artistic community requires an audience, a means of support, a place to live, a place to work and a community of peers. It would be desirable that a scoping study devoted to providing these facilities to enable the objective to be attained. Such scoping study would also resonate with efforts to promote artistic, cultural and entertainment activities in the town.

Art may be categorised as:

1. Fine art
2. Arts and Crafts
3. Commercial art
4. Applied art.
5. Design

Howkins, J.(2001:116)The Creative Economy indicates that globally the creative economy amounts to \$2.2 Trillion or around 7.3% of the global economy. He lists the core creative industries as:

Market size of Creative Economy (\$Bn)

| Sector | Global | USA | UK | Ireland |
|---|--------|-----|-----|---------|
| advertising | 45 | 20 | 8 | |
| Architecture | 40 | 17 | 2 | |
| Fine art | 9 | 4 | 3 | |
| Crafts | 20 | 2 | 1 | |
| Design | 140 | 50 | 27 | |
| Fashion | 12 | 5 | 1 | |
| Film | 57 | 17 | 3 | |
| Music | 70 | 25 | 6 | |
| Performing arts : theatre,opera, dance, ballet. | 40 | 7 | 2 | |
| Publishing | 506 | 137 | 16 | |
| reseacch and Development | 545 | 243 | 21 | |
| Software | 489 | 325 | 56 | |
| Toys and games | 55 | 21 | 2 | |
| TV and Radio | 195 | 82 | 8 | |
| Video Games | 17 | 5 | 1 | |
| Total | 2,240 | 960 | 157 | |

THE IRISH LANGUAGE

In recent years, some progress has been made in promoting the use of the Irish language in the everyday life of the community. This is evidenced on shop and pub fronts, general advertising signs, directional signs, street names, etc.

This promotion has become synonymous with towns in County Cork like Cobh and has created a sense of national identity which is readily recognisable by both tourists and locals alike. The Town Council has been to the fore in this movement and will continue this policy as directed by the Minister of the Environment, directive F.15/74 and F.2/86, which states "Local Authorities should use a bilingual format for name plates for new housing areas and for name plates in old housing areas when they are due for replacement if an English only format is used at present. In selecting a name for a housing scheme, established local names should be used in preference to names which have no local connection. In doing so, local authorities would ensure that historic placenames are preserved and not allowed fall into disuse".

Local Authorities should make available the official version of names of streets, roads and residential areas to ensure that the Irish form of address can be used in the addressing and delivery of mail without causing undue difficulty to the postal services. Special care should be taken to ensure that the Irish versions of street and place-names are correct as regards spelling and grammar. The Minister has been assured by the Placenames Commission that their services are available to local authorities for advice as to the correct Irish version of placenames.

RTE transmits TG4, the main Irish Language Channel into the town and environs. A new Gaelscoil has recently been opened in the town.

Under new regulations introduced in 2004 all signs and place names must be indicated in Irish, along with all other signs and Council produced documents. It is the intention of the Town Council to comply with the spirit of this legislation.

The most recently constructed council housing estate was given an Irish name. It is the intention that all new signs and place names that are erected will be in Irish. It is the intention also that all signs and documents will be in Irish

There is a new, well supported Gaelscoil in the town.

FUNDING

The bulk of funding for expenditure by Cobh Town Council originates from receipts from goods and services, government grant, rates, development levies, urban and village renewal schemes and some other miscellaneous sources. The Council has also received some corporate sponsorship of individual projects eg. IFI and the Town Park, AIB and a children's playground etc.

Many town plans draw up objectives without giving sufficient thought to their funding. A novel element of this Plan will be to explore the various additional sources of funding and ascertain their applicability to the various objectives of the plan.

The following are some possible sources of additional funds:
Better sourcing of Council funds
Development levies

Private sector sponsorship
Voluntary work
National Lottery – applications for £25M in 1999 - £9 M disbursed
Dept. of Education
Tourism industry liaison
EU funding
Cobhs Island Status
Corporate support
Voluntary sector.

A key intention of the Plan is that public money is judiciously used to prime and leverage private and voluntary effort, energies and resources for the benefit of the towns population

A scoping study researching the various funding opportunities available should prove to be rewarding.

Heritage and conservation

Heritage Council (2000) Heritage Appraisal for Development Plans.

The “National Heritage” is defined in the Heritage Act, 1995 as including:

1. Monuments
2. Archaeological objects
3. Architectural Heritage
4. Flora
5. Fauna
6. Wildlife Habitats
7. Landscapes
8. Seascapes
9. Wrecks
10. Geology
11. Heritage Gardens and parks
12. Inland waterways.

This clearly refers to physically extant structures but obviously cultural artefacts such as literature, music, folklore etc is also part of the towns heritage.

“A “Heritage Appraisal” is a process used to assess systematically, comprehensively and impartially, the effects on the heritage of plans, programs or policies or any combination of these. A Heritage Appraisal helps to ensure that the full scope of heritage considerations is dealt with fully and consistently (although not necessarily in great detail) throughout the preparation of any plan or programme. It is an iterative process, intended to help modify a plan or programme as it is developed in order to Maximise potential benefits for the heritage.” – Heritage Council(2000) Heritage Appraisal for Development Plans.

Comment: When we examine the social construction of heritage we find that the identification of an artefact as heritage is a combination of expert, popular and political decision making. During the past 20 years the definition of heritage has broadened considerably to include technological, scientific and vernacular artefacts. In 20 years time it is possible that our definitions will have broadened again.

An important aspect of heritage is the issue of conserving a representative sample of the heritage germane to an area. For example in a county that has only one thatched cottage left does that cottage have more heritage value than one in a county that still has many hundreds remaining? A town needs to adopt a portfolio approach to its heritage both in terms of diversity and balance.

The document offers the following benefits from carrying out a Heritage Appraisal:

“The heritage is an integral part of the wider environment, interacting with all other aspects of the world around us. It is fundamentally important to the quality of life for people, to their education, culture, health and well-being, enjoyment and amenity, and to the economy and special identity of Ireland (p.8-a.8) ”.

National Heritage Plan - Ireland

“The increased focus on, and public support for, protecting our heritage is a reflection of the more self assured, prosperous and educated society which has emerged in Ireland in recent years. Heritage is valued by the people of Ireland not only for its intrinsic value but for its economic benefits through tourism; the educational benefits of studying monuments, archives, flora and

fauna; and the cultural and recreational benefits of castles, museums, canals and parks”. – P.3 Foreword

“While our heritage is inextricably intertwined with our sense of identity, it also affirms the historic, cultural and natural inheritance which is shared on the island of Ireland. For present and future generations who will live in Ireland that inheritance has the ability to enhance and enrich the context of everyday existence. It has the capacity to vividly convey to visitors and those living in Ireland alike what it means to be Irish. In short, our heritage is a presence which physically expresses the essence and the heartbeat of our collective historical identity.” P.7

Comment:

The quality of scenery in Ireland has been identified as the single greatest attraction we have to offer overseas tourists, who in 2000 contributed almost €3.8 billion (£3 billion) to the economy. A 2000 survey demonstrated that over 50% of overseas tourists had engaged in cultural or other heritage activities during their holidays, while other surveys showed that in 1998 over 600,000 overseas visitors engaged in outdoor activities such as hill walking, cycling, angling, or cruising on our inland waterways. Ireland's physical environment has also been identified as a major attraction for the international film industry, which in 1999 generated over €116.82 million (£92 million) for the economy through productions in Ireland as well as providing valuable work experience for those employed in the Irish film industry.

Our heritage plays an economically valuable, if unquantifiable, role in other areas of activity. For example, Ireland's food and beverage exports, which were valued at over €6.35 billion (£5 billion) in 2000, are assisted greatly by the reputation of our unspoilt natural environment, while Ireland's arts and craft sectors continue to draw inspiration from our natural and cultural heritage. Economic considerations primarily influence the choice of location to invest capital and create employment, but our quality of life, the richness of our cultural heritage, and our local environment should not be underestimated in this respect. In this and in other regards, our heritage in all its manifestations is one of Ireland's key assets.

Planning Act 2000:

The planning act 2000 refers to architectural heritage as structures

“of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest”.

It also refers to Architectural Conservation Areas as

“the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures”

Given Cobhs wealth of heritage it will be desirable to include in the plan:

1. Items in the Archaeological record
2. Record of Protected Structures
3. Architectural Conservation Areas
4. Landscape Conservation Areas
5. Natural Heritage Areas and Special Areas of Conservation
6. Proposals for a Heritage Plan

The main potential ACA's are the

- Town centre,
- Victorian villas adjacent to and in Midleton Park
- The Crescent
- Patricks Square.

The main potential Landscape Conservation Areas:

- The Midleton Park Victorian villas.
- The wooded areas around whitepoint and adjacent to Ballynoe Hill.
- The areas adjacent to Bishop Roche Park
- The full extent of the towns waterfront.

Environment

The environment can be thought of as referring to:

1. The natural environment

2. Landscape and visual amenity
3. Archaeological heritage
4. Built environment
5. Cultural heritage.

The County development Plan outlined the following principles applying to the environment and heritage of the County:

“The natural and built environment, particularly those elements that are non-renewable and most valuable, need to be properly protected, managed and enhanced.

The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, natural heritage, landscape and the built environment should be promoted as important elements on the long term economic growth of the county

The protection of Cork’s physical heritage (including archaeology and historic buildings) is a tangible representation of the County’s past and is a sound basis for economic growth and regeneration.

The “polluter pays” principle and the “precautionary approach” principle are important elements of any planning policies that deal with environmental and heritage matters.

The long term economic social and environmental well being of Cork requires water and air quality to be of the highest possible standard.”

It would be desirable to incorporate these principles into the Town Plan.

The main environmental aspects as they apply to Cobh are:

Water quality, in particular the current discharge of raw sewerage into the harbour is unsatisfactory and needs to be addressed.

Air quality – Cobh’s proximity to large pharmaceutical plants and an oil refinery requires strict monitoring of air quality.

Landscape: Cobh enjoys visually outstanding aspect and prospect and these need to be maintained.

Heritage: Cobh enjoys an unusually extensive and well maintained built heritage and this is an asset for the town that ought to be maintained.

The Planning and Development Act 2000 requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment be carried out on the policies proposed in the Town Plan. This assessment is addressed in section 9 of volume II. The following are the aspects considered relevant to such an SEA:

1. Flora
2. Fauna
3. People
4. Land
5. Water
6. Air
7. Climate
8. Landscape
9. Heritage
10. Material assets
11. Interaction between the above.

Major Accidents

The Town Council is not aware of any sites or activities affected by the Seveso II Directive. (the IFI site is no longer in use for Seveso II uses) Any proposals for new developments at risk of causing major accidents will be addressed with the need to prevent major accidents in mind and with a view to maintaining public safety and safeguarding the environment.

Waste recycling and disposal.

The “waste” collection, sorting, transshipment and reuse/disposal issue is in effect the reverse of the manufacturing and distribution function. For example materials such as metals are removed from the earth, manufactured into artefacts such as spoons or clocks, distributed via warehouses and shops, bought by the consumer and eventually disposed of. In the past the solution to the disposal issue was landfill.

This is no longer a sustainable option and the objective is to collect, sort and recycle the artefacts. The collection and sorting function is the reverse of the distribution function and the recycling process is the opposite of the manufacturing process. Waste management, collecting, sorting and recycling is therefore a legitimate land use like manufacturing or retailing.

With the growth of the economy and increased material standard of living for everybody there is an obvious need for more land use to be allocated for the manufacturing, distribution and retail usage and such usages are amply catered in most land use plans. As the recycling movement gathers pace there is a need for a greater understanding of the need to provide land use space for the opposite of the manufacturing, distribution and retail functions. This space requirement is beginning to approach a significant proportion of the initial production and distribution process. For this reason there is a need to integrate the provision of space for the recycling process. (eg bottle banks, civic amenity sites, private waste transit sites, etc.)

Provided the recycling processes are properly sited and properly regulated there is no reason why these collection, sorting and trans shipment facilities need be any more anti-social than say a chemical or pharmaceutical plant. It is useful to also recognise that these functions are the beginning of a high growth sustainable industry with considerable employment potential.

In particular it would be desirable that civic amenity sites, bring sites and commercial collection, sorting and transportation sites be included in the plan making process like every other infrastructure and enterprise landuse.

From the planning perspective it is important to take note of this important trend and with the County Council to allocate land use for these sustainable uses. For the most part, the collection, sorting and transshipment uses, properly regulated, can be located in many industrial estates. It is desirable that the Cobh Town Council work with the County Council in zoning and regulating land use for these functions.

There is a need for strategies for the various categories of waste, which include categories of consumer waste and categories of enterprise waste. Such strategies would address:

1. Bring sites for consumers (small scale)
2. Collection procedures for sorted domestic, commercial and enterprise waste.
3. Aggregation, sort and transfer sites for commercials (large scale)
4. Large scale reprocessing sites for the various types of waste

It is desirable that land use areas for these activities are included in the development plan making process. It is particularly important that land is zoned in a manner that treats public and commercial waste collection, sorting, transshipment and recycling as legitimate regulated industries, no different from other regulated industries such as the pharmaceutical industry, which need to have land appropriately zoned for the purpose. It would be desirable to support the County Council in identifying and zoning sufficient lands for these purposes.

TREES IN COBH

Cobh has a wealth of arboreal heritage largely put in place during the suburban development phase during the nineteenth century. Many of the residential areas in Midleton Park, Rushbrooke, Whitepoint and environs were planted with native and exotic specimen trees which have now come to maturity.

The lower portions of the southern hillside from the Whitepoint area to the town centre are ornamented by nineteenth century Victorian villas generously spaced in leafy, ornamental greenery attractively framing tastefully designed villas. The vegetation creates a hanging garden effect that appealingly complements the scale and design of these heritage buildings.

It will be desirable to produce a scoping study compiling an inventory of specimen trees in the town council area and environs and examining the possibility of conserving the visually and/or ecologically important ones by means of Tree Preservation Order.

ACCESSIBILITY:

There are two aspects to accessibility and Cobh external accessibility to and from Cobh and internal accessibility within Cobh. There is also the issue of ensuring accessibility for all stakeholders in the town.

External:

Cobh ought to be seen in context and the benefits of its location ought to be recognised. It is adjacent to

1. Marino Point,
2. Little Island
3. Passage
4. Glenbrook
5. Monkstown
6. Ringaskiddy
7. Haulbowline and
8. Spike Island

Cobh is connected to Marino Point by road and rail and to Passage, Glenbrook and Monkstown by the Carrigaloe Car Ferry. Little Island, Ringaskiddy, Haulbowline and Spike Island remain separated by the harbour waters.

Comment:

It would be desirable to enhance accessibility by exploring the provision of additional ferry/bridge solutions to these adjoining areas.

Roads,

The town is served by the R.624 that joins the N25 near Carrigtohill. It crosses the Belvelly bridge and separates into the Coast road and Ticknock/ "Back" road. The R624 is also linked to the Monkstown-Douglas road via the Car ferry at Carrigaloe.

Running east west to the north of the town is the Tay road. This is a road in reasonable condition and with reasonable capacity save that it is in need of foot and cycle paths. It is capable of forming a distributor road for the whole of the northern portion of the town. The Tay road feeds the R.624, Ballynoe Road, the Bothar Salach, the Ticknock/"Back"road, the Ballywilliam road and the Cuskinny road which all lead to the town centre.

Comment:

The current R.624 from the N.25 is below standard for the needs of the town. It will be desirable that access to the N.25 be upgraded.

It would be desirable that the R.624 and Tay road be widened to incorporate two number 2 metre wide footpaths and two number one metre wide cyclepaths. It would also be desirable that the five other roadways leading from the Tay road to the town be up graded to a similar standard.

Bus Transport:

There is no public bus service to Cobh. The train service provides the public transport service.

During the summer season bus tours transport tourists into Cobh. There is some parking space available on the street opposite the Pillars.

Comment:

The issue of ease of access and facilities for tour buses ought to be considered in the context of the development of the tourist industry in Cobh.

Rail,

The town is served by the Cobh-Cork rail line which is linked by schedule to the Cork-Mallow-Charlestown line. The frequency is about one train per hour and carries up to 20 trains each way per day. The station is located at the west of the town and incorporates a heritage centre.

Comment:

Substantial development has been encouraged in the Ballynoe area to enable easy access to the train stations at Cobh and Carrigaloe. While the objective to maximise usage of existing infrastructure is a worthy one, sight must not be lost of the over riding goal which is to develop a reasonably self contained, self sustaining and sustainable social and economic community. The objectives to increase service frequency contained in CASP and SWRA Planning Guidelines are endorsed

Air Transport: Cork Airport is some 14 miles away by the shortest route.

Comment:

The proximity of the air port is an advantage in marketing Cobh both as an enterprise destination and as a tourist destination. It would be desirable to improve accessibility to Cobh from the airport by improving road links and signage.

Sea Transport:

Cobh used to be a noted disembarkation point for emigrants. Since the advent of inexpensive air transport this function has disappeared but has been replaced by a growing cruise liner trade. There were 26 cruise liners visiting Cobh in 2002 and some 33 vessels visited in 2003, the majority of whom used the Cobh Deep Sea Quay.

The Marino Point Jetty is under consideration as a potential location for a dry bulks terminal.

The Cork Dockyard provides service facilities for fishing and other vessels.

The Admiralty Quay in the town centre provide berthing for passenger ferry vessels to Haulbowline and Spike Island. It also provides berthing for a variety of small fishing and other craft.

Comment:

The Cruise Liner industry is a growing business of enormous potential benefit for Cobh and ought to be included in any strategy for the development of Cobh tourist industry.

There is an urgent need for a marina in Cobh which would benefit the towns tourist industry enormously.

Consideration could be given to developing the potential of the Admiralty Quay in the town centre which is under-utilised and presents something of a visual disamenity at present.

Cycle:

There are no dedicated cycle lanes on the roads approaching Cobh. The roads are undesirably narrow and not conducive to Cycle usage.

Comment:

The issue of cycle lanes and facilities for cyclists is a matter that deserves attention. The current policy and investment bias in favour of car transport is not in the best interest of the people of Cobh. It would be desirable that Cobh Town Council work with Cork County Council with a view to enhancing cycle and pedestrian facilities on roads approaching the town and within the Town Council boundary area

Pedestrian:

Pedestrians are poorly served by the roads approaching Cobh, being narrow, lacking footpaths and having poor horizontal alignments.

Comment:

Inevitably this encourages car use that reinforces a culture in favour of the car that in turn results in a bias in policy and investment to the detriment of non car modes of accessibility.

The issue of pedestrian paths and facilities for pedestrians is an matter that deserves attention. The current policy and investment bias in favour of car transport is not in the best interest of the people of Cobh and is not conducive to long term enhancement of the Quality of Life of the residents and stakeholders in the town. It would be desirable that Cobh Town Council works with Cork County Council with a view to enhancing pedestrian facilities on roads approaching the town and within the Town Council boundary area.

Logistics – distribution

Currently Heavy Goods Vehicles approach the town via the R.624. The road is narrow and poorly aligned for significant portions of the route. There is bottle neck at Belvelly Bridge.

Comment:

It would be desirable to explore various possibilities for enhancing HGV access to the town and island and to work with Cork County Council and the NRA to this end.

Internal

Internally the town may be divided into the town centre and the remainder.

The remainder:

Roads,

Six roads of varying capacity and quality approach the town. To the west along the coast runs the R.624 which is reasonably well aligned and carries the bulk of traffic into the town. To the east over Ballynoe Hill climbs the Ballynoe road which is in need of realignment in places, has a number of steep gradients but has a reasonable width. Between Ballynoe Hill and Ticknock Hill runs the “Bothar Salach” which is quite narrow and steep at its northern end. Between Ticknock Hill and Carrignafoy Hill runs the Ticknock/

“Back road” which has been improved over the years and is the second principle approach road to the town. To the east of Carrignafoy Hill the Ballywilliam Road skirts the golf club and is a fairly narrow winding road. Further to the east the Cuskinny Road approaches the town by the coast and has a moderate alignment and width with some fine scenic views.

Comment:

Investment in these latter roads would greatly ease future accessibility goals for the town.

The Town Centre:

In the town centre and immediately to the east the narrow streets, steep hills and sharp precipitous turns contribute to the old world charm of the town but severely curtail the vehicular traffic capacity in the area. Further the lack of public or private parking exacerbates the congestion and the extensive on street carparking detracts from the nineteenth century character of the environs which was designed with the pedestrian in mind. Barry’s Bus service, a private Cobh based enterprise, operates a 20 minute service for most of the day and contributes to the relief of traffic congestion in the centre.

The area to the north of Midleton road has some congestion, due to the narrowness of the streets and the presence of shops and schools in the area. This has largely been relieved by a one way system. There are also proposals to provide a relief road through the adjacent residential estate.

Remainder of the Town:

In general with the exception of the town centre, the area immediately to the north of Midleton road and the eastern portion of the old town road alignments and capacities are satisfactory. For the future the upgrading of the Ballynoe, Bothar Salach, Ballywilliam roads to cater for all modes of mobility will greatly contribute to the provision of adequate accessibility for the currently undeveloped areas of the town.

Comment:

The role, functions and objectives of the town centre need to be more clearly defined and an accessibility strategy to facilitate these

objectives needs to be put in place balancing the needs of all modes of mobility and stakeholders in the process. A scoping study exploring these matters is desirable.

Parking

A parking survey was conducted in August of 1997 and found that there were approximately 270 spaces in the town centre with an 80% occupancy rate.

There is a public car park at the Five foot walk and north of the cathedral.

There are some 250 on street parking spaces in the town centre. There are also a number of private car parking spaces in the town centre. The Five Foot walk car park is beyond the 400 metres commonly considered to be the limit for casual parking. For shopping and other activities a limit of 200 metres is taken as the current desirable distance.

The cathedral car park is within this distance but is considered to be unsuitable for all save full day parking due to the steep and inconvenient climb.

It is assumed that there are c.30,000 square feet of retail floor space requiring 180 parking spaces and 300 number of residential units in the town centre requiring 300 parking spaces. There are a further requirement for 100 number of spaces to accommodate the growing number of tourists which can average up to 250 per day.

There has been some progress made to prioritise pedestrian usage in the town centre. It is desirable that this process be extended both on visual, safety and environmental grounds. If a further 50-70 parking spaces were returned to pedestrian usage this would give a total demand for approximately 650 of spaces. It would be desirable to ascertain the real demand and to explore possibilities for the provision of this number of spaces in the town centre. It is also possible that demand could increase if more accessible spaces were available.

There are 17 spaces provided for taxis in Pearse square. There are three tour bus spaces provided along west Beach street to the west of the town centre

Comment:

As adequate parking provision is integral to all proposals to revitalise and develop the town centre it will be desirable to incorporate proposals for carparking into any scoping study for the old town centre

Logistics – distribution

At present delivery vehicles have reasonable access to shops in the town.

Comment:

Facilitating delivery vehicles will be an important consideration in the evolution of any accessibility strategy for the town centre.

Bus transport,

Barry's Bus service is a private operation operating a 20 minute intra town service. It contributes to the reduction in congestion in the town centre.

There is no public or other intra town bus service.

Cycle,

Cobhs topography does not naturally lend itself to cycling. Never the less this is a valid and important mode of sustainable transport.

Comment:

An exploration of the facilities for cyclists including cycling lanes and cycle parks in the town centre ought to be explored.

Pedestrian,

There has been significant progress in making the town centre pedestrian friendly. There are adequate pedestrian footpaths on most roads with the possible exception of the roads approaching the town.

Comment:

There is a need to maintain an awareness of the importance of pedestrians over car transport especially in the town centre. In addition there is a need to take account of all stakeholders including persons with disabilities so as to ensure access for all.

Cobh has the rare distinction for a town of its size in that it has no traffic lights.

Water Supply

The town is supplied from the waterworks at Tibbotstown and also supplemented by the Cork Harbour and City Supply and Glashaboy Schemes. Pressure problems have been resolved through the construction of a 2,000 cubic metre reservoir on Ballard Hill that was commissioned in 2000. It is proposed to increase the water supply to the area from the CH and CWSS scheme.

Drainage

The Town Council area of Cobh has had a sewerage system for many years. All sewers in Cobh operate as combined sewers. The main discharge from the old town is at the Admiralty Pier where sewage discharges untreated below low water. In addition to this discharge there are approximately 30 other discharges into low water between Cuskinny Bay in the East and Cork Dockyard (the dockyard formerly known as Verolme) in the west. With the continued expansion of the urban built up area the old towns sewerage system has been tested to its limits in many cases.

The County Development Plan makes the following references to the drainage situation in Cobh:

Sewerage – the sewerage scheme has no wastewater treatment plant and existing sewers discharge to the harbour via a number of outfalls. The existing combined network is at full capacity in some locations and does not serve all the existing zoned lands. The provision of a new treatment plant is in the planning stage and it is proposed to treat the sewerage by providing a treatment plant to serve all the lower harbour towns.

Surface water drainage – the existing drains are combined with the foul sewers and experience overflowing during heavy rainfalls. The proposed sewerage scheme will ensure the separation of the foul and storm water drainage.

There are a number of ongoing reports to investigate the provision of an updated sewerage system for the town. To date these reports have focused on the existing town (ie. pre 2000 developments - the southern watershed) rather than on the lands to the north of the town council boundary where the new development is taking place.

Comment:

It will be desirable to formulate an overall strategy for the entire Cobh area including northern and southern watersheds as far as the Tay road. This may involve the provision of a new trunk sewer along the Tay road. This would enable strategic guidance to be given to developers in the provision of new sewerage collection systems and encourage the provision of separate systems.

Telecommunications:

Cork County Council propose to implement the regional broadband programme to facilitate the delivery of broadband to Cobh. It is the intention to provide a wireless broadband capacity to the town.

Energy: Electricity, Gas,

EPA (2002) Environment in Focus

In 2000 there were 1,682,221 vehicles including 1,319,250 private cars in Ireland. Applying this on a pro rata basis to Cobh this would mean that there are approximately 4,000 vehicles, including 3,300 cars in Cobh.

The following table for the country as a whole on mode of transport to work highlights the role played by private cars:

| Cardriver Pedest | Car pass enger Working from home | Motor cycle Other | Bus | Train | Dart | Cycle/ 5% |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| 54.1% | 8.6% | 0.8% | 6.9% | 1.6% | 13.3% | 9.7% |

As can be seen Private car transport accounts for c.63% of journey modes to work.

Ireland's Total final energy consumption rose from 6.23 MTOE in 1980 to 10.61 MTOE in 2000 and Ireland's Total Primary Energy Requirement, which is the energy of all energy consumed, including that consumed for energy transformation purposes (electricity generation, oil refining, briquette production) was 14MTOE in 2000. The most substantial increase in this consumption was in transport. Of the five principle sectors of energy use, Industry, residential, transport, agriculture and services transport has become the largest and fastest growing use of energy in Ireland.

Fuel inputs into electricity generation went from 3.8MTOE in 1994 to 4.9MTOE in 2000. This is around 35% of Total Primary Energy Consumption. However of those 4.9MTOE energy inputs in 2000 no less than 59% were “lost” in the generation process and a further 14.8% was “lost” in the transmission process. In effect for every one TOE of electricity that is delivered to the consumer 3 TOE are required to produce and deliver it. In 2000 the main sources of energy were:

1. Oil: 56.7%
2. Natural Gas: 21.7%
3. Coal: 14.2%
4. Peat: 5.6%
5. Renewal energy: 1.8%

Given that such a substantial proportion of Irelands energy consumption goes to the production of electricity and that such a small proportion comes from renewable sources there are obvious implications for sustainable energy use.

Cobh is served by the ESB 10 Kv line and Bord Gais gas pipeline.

Comment:

In the light of the growing energy usage by cars it is desirable to ensure proper and sustainable planning that encourages other modes of transport. This is particularly relevant given Cobh’s charming narrow streets, amenity and suitability for pedestrianisation and pedestrian priority. It is also desirable to encourage the use of cycles.