

9.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

9.1 Quality Of Design

Urban environmental quality is as much a product of building design as of spatial differentiation. Protecting the visual quality and amenity of towns requires attention not only to the upgrading of the existing streetscape but, importantly, the design of any new buildings which it is proposed to insert into the urban fabric.

The infill of vacant sites represents a key issue in the Study Area. Given the scale of the redevelopment proposed, any new development will have a major impact on the urban environmental quality and visual amenity. In order to achieve a high quality of infill and new development, in particular on the major opportunity sites whose impact will be greatest, the Local Authority will be pro-active in providing guidance to the development in the form of urban design guidelines and site development briefs for identified sub-areas.

These guidelines should include:

- bulk and scale;
- the need to maintain the existing scale of buildings;
- the need to maintain a reasonable scale and rhythm of small units to the street;
- use of ground floor;
- facade articulation;
- roofscape;
- providing continuous lining to public realm;
- material and details;
- permeability;
- access to the waterfront; and
- interface with the car.

It is proposed that a detailed urban design brief will be prepared for the sub-areas subsequent to the completion of this plan.

The proposed Steering Group would advise the Planning Authority in relation to any action plan. (See Section 10). The objective should be to tailor the objectives and strategies identified in the Integrated Area Plan to target public sector investment in tandem with private sector investment which may be stimulated as a result of designation for urban renewal incentives.

In particular, the Action Plan would propose:

- Methods of providing a better solution to the access/visibility problems at Main Street and Back Street, through the provision of improved traffic signals and road markings.
- Propose traffic calming measures in the commercial centre of the town, such as shared surfaces and road resurfacing.
- Suggest opportunities for the provision of additional car parking spaces in the town.
- Target public sector investment on the upgrading of the public domain.

9.2 Action Plans

The Integrated Area Plan has identified key areas where public sector involvement/investment is required to overcome structural and infrastructural problems, in particular, in relation to: accessibility, amenity works and the quality of the public domain. It is proposed that the Planning Authority would prepare a targeted action area plan for the town centre, which would include detailed proposals for proposed environmental upgrading works and road improvements. The preparation of action area plans will provide an opportunity to bridge a gap between the strategic guidance provided by the Integrated Area Plan and the practical implementation of proposals, particularly, in relation to proposed public sector investment.