



**Cavan Town Council & Cavan County Council**

# County Cavan Retail Strategy 2008-2014

**Planning Department  
Cavan County Council  
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## **Chapter 1**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The 'Cavan County Retail Strategy 2008 – 2014 is an update and review of the 'Cavan Town Council and County Cavan Retailing Strategy 2002'. It has been prepared in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005) issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. County Cavan has experienced a number of changes since the previous strategy was adopted in 2002, including significant population increases in all of the nine larger towns.

The aim of the strategy is to ensure a healthy and vibrant retail atmosphere in County Cavan, through retail policies which are framed within the context of national and regional plans, strategies and guidelines; while considering current retailing trends and estimated future retail floor space requirements for 2008 to 2014.

The Strategy focuses on the nine larger urban centres in the county, which are Cavan, Bailieborough, Ballyconnell, Ballyjamesduff, Belturbet, Cootehill, Kingscourt, Mullagh and Virginia.

### **1.1 Retail Hierarchy**

The retail hierarchy for the county has been established through examination of the retail functions of the 9 large towns, their general size and population and is consistent with the settlement strategy for the county. This will be outlined in full in future sections.

### **1.2 Preparation of the Retail Strategy**

The strategy is the culmination of a consultative process involving retail consumer surveys and retailers' surveys in the nine study towns. Trends, opinions and suggestions for the main retailing towns in County Cavan and national, regional and local policy were comprehensively examined. An

examination of the size and variety of retail units in each of the nine towns was undertaken using both a desk top and field work strategy.

Policy recommendations aim to improve town retailing throughout the county.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Retail Strategy**

The purpose of the retail strategy is to implement the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities issues by the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government January 2005.

### **1.4 Public Consultation**

The Retail Strategy has been prepared in response to submissions received during the second public consultation phase of the Cavan County Development Plan 2008 – 2014 and Cavan Town and Environs Development Plan 2008 – 2014. This 'Retail Strategy' was adopted along with the aforementioned Development Plans and should be read in conjunction with them.

## Chapter 2

### Planning Policy Context

#### 2.0 Introduction

County Cavan is located in a strategic position nationally with strong socio-economic and physical links with Northern Ireland. In a predominantly rural county, Cavan Town is the principle town. Eight other medium to large towns provide the main retailing services to their respective hinterlands.

The 2002 County Cavan Retail Strategy was prepared in response to the Retail Planning Guidelines 2000. The following review and update has been prepared in accordance with the revised **Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005** and should be read in conjunction with the Cavan County Development Plan 2008 - 2014 and Cavan Town and Environs Development Plans 2008 – 2014.

The County Cavan Retail Strategy must be viewed in a national, regional and local context. The most relevant national strategies and guidelines are as follows:

- National Spatial Strategy (2002-2020); *People, Places and Potential*
- Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region (2004); and
- Retail Planning Guidelines (2005).

In the local context of County Cavan, the Retail Strategy is informed by the following:

- Cavan County Development Plan 2003 – 2009 (including Local Area Plans and Village Plans) and relevant variations.
- Cavan Town and Environs Development Plan 2003 – 2009
  - Variation No.1 (2007) to the Cavan Town and Environs Development Plan 2003 – 2009 incorporating the Cavan Town and Environs Integrated Framework Plan 2020, Transportation Study and Cavan Urban Design Framework



- Cavan County Development Plan 2008 – 2014 (including Local Area Plans, Small Town and Village Plans);
- Cavan Town and Environs Development Plan 2008 – 2014

## 2.1 The Retail Planning Guidelines 2005

The Retail Planning Guidelines provide a comprehensive framework to guide local authorities in preparing development plans, assessing applications for planning permission and guiding retailers and developers in formulating development proposal. Retail functions reflect four broad tiers of urban development. Cavan Town is defined in the third tier of towns. Third tier centres are described as providing urban anchors for a rural economy which is undergoing rapid change.

In a strategic context, County Cavan is required to prepare “a more general statement of strategic intentions and future policy”. A “broad assessment of requirements for additional development reflecting the local evidence of market interest and the need to provide good opportunities for retail provision to serve the main population centres in the county ought to be sufficient in order to formulate appropriate policies and criteria for dealing with new development proposals”.

The matters which are to be included in all future development plans for Counties and Cities are:

Table 2.1

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confirm the retail hierarchy, the role of centres and the size of the main town centres;</li> <li>2. Define the boundaries of the core shopping area of town centres;</li> <li>3. A broad assessment of the requirement for additional retail floor space;</li> <li>4. Strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail developments;</li> <li>5. Preparation of policies and action initiatives to encourage the improvement of town centres;</li> <li>6. Identification of criteria for the assessment of retail developments.</li> </ol>
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DoEHLG (2005) 'Retail Planning Guidelines'. p12

## **2.2 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region (2004)**

County Cavan is located in the Border Region along with Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Monaghan and Louth. The BRG identify Cavan Town as performing important administrative, retailing and employment functions for its substantial catchment. It is located on a national transport corridor (N3 – Dublin to Enniskillen – Sligo and the N55 Athlone-Cavan-Dundalk). The Regional Planning Guidelines have identified an achievable growth of 16,000 for Cavan town by 2020 and recent figures released by the Border Regional Authority show that it is on target to reaching the population. Cavan Town as a hub will act as a catalyst for achieving economic growth in the county, becoming a crossroads rather than having a peripheral position.

The Guidelines identify the importance of the retail sector as an employer and its contribution to the economy of the region. Shopping areas are considered crucial for the vibrancy and sustainability of settlements. High quality strategically located retailing is considered important in the Hubs, medium and small sized towns requiring growing retail centres (BRG p.71). The Guidelines identify cross border competition, where retail centres in Northern Ireland compete with counties in the Republic of Ireland offering favourable pricing. (BRG p.72).

Bailieborough and Cootehill are identified as 'medium sized towns for urban strengthening' and are recognised for their important role in driving the development of a particular spatial component. Ballyconnell, Belturbet, Kingscourt and Mullagh are identified as 'small sized towns for urban strengthening' which perform an important local role. Ballyjamesduff and Virginia are identified as 'towns for consolidating' as they have experienced high levels of population growth and where self sufficiency is necessary.

### **2.3 National Spatial Strategy**

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is a 20 year planning framework for the achievement of a more balanced regional development. Its focus is on people, on places and on building communities. The NSS identifies Cavan Town as a 'hub' town. Such towns are 'Strategic urban centres that support, and are supported by the Gateway, and reach out to wider rural areas of the Region' which the Regional Planning Guidelines are targeting for significant levels of growth'. Cavan Town has experienced an increase of 29% in population growth which is the highest level in the identified hubs and gateways of the Border Region (see Chapter 3).

The NSS provides for a focus on utilising the network of towns in County Cavan and strengthening their ability to provide a wide range of service functions for their hinterland and act as local economic engines.<sup>1</sup> It also refers to importance of the rural village in sustaining rural communities and although not specifically examined in this Retail Strategy, Cavan County Council recognises the role of these villages which has been addressed in the Cavan County Development Plan.

### **2.4 National Development Plan 2007 – 2014**

Hubs have benefited from investment under the National Development Plan and *Transport 21*; however this must be partnered with local vision, leadership and the attraction of private investment. Good planning and urban renewal initiatives have transformed the central areas of Hub towns through significant private investment in retailing and commercial activities (pg. 75).

### **2.5 Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland (1997)**

This strategy recognises the need for good spatial planning and the inclusion of sustainability concerns in urban and built environment policies. In relation to retail development, it discusses current development trends. Out of town retail

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.irishspatialstrategy.ie/docs/word/The%20NSS%20and%20Cavan.doc>

centres seek to locate where there is maximum accessibility, which create their own sphere of influence but also potentially threaten the viability of town centres (pg. 27).

The challenge for high movement activities such as retail development is to achieve a suitable scale of development which is located in areas with maximum accessibility to public transport that reduce the growth in transport demand but also serve the requirements of the community.

## **2.6 Development Plans and Local Area Plans**

These provide a framework in which development proposals can be considered. It is a policy of Cavan County Council reiterated through such plans to ensure the consolidation and strengthening of town cores. In all of the 9 larger towns in the county the development and creation of vibrant and active town cores with strong retail functions is a priority.

## **2.7 Cavan Town and Environs 2020 Integrated Framework Plan**

Cavan County Council adopted the Cavan Town and Environs 2020 Integrated Framework Plan, Transportation Study and Urban Design Framework which provide a broad vision for the future development of Cavan Town and Environs. The plan framework integrates existing and future land uses, including housing, shopping, employment activities and amenities; incorporates the principles of sustainability; invigorates the town centre; provides the basis for the close integration of development with sustainable transportation modes; and places a strong emphasis on quality of life issues.

The Transportation Study and Urban Design Framework examine travel in the area and the built form, open space and urban regeneration possibilities. The documents are symbiotic with a combined vision to provide a framework for a unique and sustainable town, with a balanced range of functions, facilities and amenities, building on its present strengths of its people, enterprise and natural

assets while meeting the needs of the whole community who live, work and visit the area.

As identified in the Cavan Town and Environs 2020 Integrated Framework Plan, it is necessary to accommodate the additional retail development required in a way which is efficient, equitable and sustainable with the optimum location in terms of accessibility to all sections of society and of a scale which allows the continued prosperity of traditional town centres and existing retail centres. This can only be achieved if strategic retail policies and proposals are incorporated in the development plan system.

## **2.8 Local Area Plans for Bailieborough, Virginia, Ballyjamesduff, Kingscourt, Cootehill, Ballyconnell, Belturbet and Mullagh**

The Cavan County Development Plan contains a series of Local Area Plans for the towns listed above. These documents contain general policies on urban design for retail development and ensure development that is consistent with Retail Planning Guidelines and sufficient range to cater to the catchment area.

## Chapter 3

### Population and Future Retail Requirement

#### 3.1 Population

County Cavan has experienced a significant population growth since the last census in 2002, a four year period. Many of the towns and villages of the county showed significant increases in population and it is envisaged that growth will continue.

The 2006 Census of population records a population of 64,003 which is an increase of 13.2%, this growth is significantly higher than that recorded for the state (8.2%) as well as for the Border Region (8.3%) as a whole, indicating a stronger than average level of growth.<sup>2</sup>

This section looks at the population of the county and its main towns.

Table3.1

County, Region or State	2002	2006	% Change 2002 - 2006
<b>Cavan</b>	56,546	64,003	13.2
<b>Border Region</b>	432,534	468,375	8.3
<b>State</b>	3,917,203	4,239,848	8.2

Source: Census of Population 2006; Volume One

A larger proportion of this growth is due to in migration to the County. In the four year period 2002 – 2006 there were 3,329 people born in County Cavan and 2,089 deaths giving a natural increase of 1,240 people. In the same period there was a net migration (inward less outward) of 6,217 people.

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<sup>2</sup>For the purposes of the Border Regional Guidelines and National Spatial Strategy, Cavan is in the Border Region along with **Fermanagh, Monaghan, Meath, Westmeath**, Leitrim and **Longford**.

<i>Population 2002</i>	<i>Population 2006</i>	<i>Natural Increase</i>	<i>% of Population Increase</i>	<i>Increase by net in- migration</i>	<i>% of Population</i>
56546	64003	1,240	16.6	6217	83.4

Source: Derived from Census of Population.

### 3.2 Population Growth in Context of Border Region

County Cavan had the highest growth rate in the Border region.

Table 2.2

<b>Counties</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>% Change 2002 - 2006</b>
<b>Donegal</b>	137,575	147,264	7
<b>Cavan</b>	56,546	64,003	13.2
<b>Sligo</b>	58,200	60,894	4.6
<b>Leitrim</b>	25,799	28,950	12.2
<b>Monaghan</b>	52,593	55,997	6.5
<b>Louth</b>	101,821	111,267	9.3
<b>State</b>	3,917,203	4,239,848	8.2

### 3.3 Regional Population Projections

In May 2005, the CSO produced 'Regional Population Projections 2006 – 2021' these calculated an average annual increase of 1.2% for the Border Region which would increase Cavan's population up to 71,256 by 2015 an increase of 11.3%.

These figures were revised in the Border Regional Authorities paper; 'National and Regional Population Projections 2006 – 2020; Border Regional Authority Review and update 2007'. By this update, the population of County Cavan is estimated to grow, as outlined in the table below, to 80,836 by 2020. These revised projections indicate continued growth which will slow towards 2020.

<b>Regional Population projections: Border Regional Guidelines 2007</b>				
<b>County</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2020</b>
	N/A	9.9 %	8.8 %	5.5 %
<b>Cavan County Council</b>	64,003	70,345	76,557	80,836

Table 2.3

Source: Cavan County Council Housing Strategy and Border Regional Authority Population Projections 2007.

### 3.4 Projections based on 2006 census

Should Cavan's existing growth trend continue (which based on the 2006 census of population is 3.3% per year), the population of the county would be 85,724 by 2020. Given Cavan's strong growth relative to the rest of the border region, the high levels of in migration and continued development of towns, this scenario is one that is likely to occur.

### 3.5 County Population Projection

County Cavan has shown strong population growth which will continue into the future. The Border Regional Authorities 2007 population projections indicate continued but slower levels of growth. It is considered that their revised population projections which would give Cavan County a population of over 75,000 by the end of this plan period are realistic, considering the continued high levels of house construction, in migration and population growth it is likely the population will be circa 76,000 by the end of the plan period.

Table 2.4

<b>Current Population</b>	<b>Population 2015 1.2% annual growth</b>	<b>Population 2015 based on 2007 regional projections</b>	<b>Population 2015 3.3% annual growth</b>	<b>Projected population For County Cavan 2015</b>
64,003	71,256	75,315 <sup>3</sup>	85,724	76,000

<sup>3</sup> Based on growth of 1242 persons per year from 2011 to 2016



### 3.6 Demographic Profile

As indicated by the table above though Cavan remains a predominately rural County there has been a significant increase in urbanisation of the county. The percentage of Cavan's population living in urban areas has risen from 16.8% in 2002 up to 26.4% in 2006. This is a significant change given the level of urbanisation in the Border region has increased by 1.5 % and in the state as a whole by 1.1%. Continued development of towns indicates that this trend towards increased urbanisation is likely to continue.

	<b>Aggregate Town Area</b>	<b>Aggregate Rural Area</b>	<b>Percentage of Population in Aggregate Town Area</b>
<b>Cavan 2002</b>	9,502	47,044	16.8
<b>State 2002</b>	2,334,282	1,133,507	59.6
<b>Border Region 2002</b>	143,858	288,676	33.3
<b>Cavan 2006</b>	16,913	47,090	26.4
<b>State 2006</b>	2,574,313	1,665,535	60.7
<b>Border Region 2006</b>	163,123	305,252	34.8

With the increased urbanisation of the county increased need for retail will follow.

### 3.7 Population of the main Towns

<b>Town</b>	<b>Population 2002</b>	<b>Population 2006</b>	<b>% Population growth 2002 – 2006</b>
Cavan Town	6,098	7,883	29.3%
Bailieborough	1660	1966	18.4%
Cotehill	1744	1892	8.5%
Kingscourt	1307	1748	33.7%
Virginia	1093	1734	58.6%
Ballyjamesduff	871	1690	94%
Belturbet	1295	1411	8.9%
Ballyconnell	572	747	30.6%
Mullagh	479	679	41.8%

The significant population increases in all of the towns has been coupled with increased levels of development including residential and retail. Many of the larger towns listed below have seen the development of larger chain store retail outlets and increases in comparison retail activity. However, as these towns have grown and developed similarly so have larger towns and cities and towns in neighbouring counties. There has been an increased draw to such towns and cities for higher order comparison goods and in more recent times for convenience goods as people recognise the advantages of travelling further for weekly shopping trips at cheaper prices and greater variety which is becoming available outside the county. With this in mind the Planning Authority wishes to see the Retail Offer in the county strengthened in order to retain retail spend within the county which in the medium and long term is much more sustainable.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Retail Hierarchy**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

The retail hierarchy is based on the settlement strategy as established in the Cavan County, Cavan Town and Cavan Town and Environs Development Plans 2008 – 2014. These plans established Cavan as the principal town, main service provider and administrative centre of the county. The Settlement Strategy took account of the NSS and the Border Regional Planning Guidelines (BRPGs) which highlighted the importance of balanced regional development and the role that towns and villages play. The BRPGs identified specific roles/functions for certain towns and villages. The hierarchy also takes account of the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

The hierarchy is not meant as a comment on importance but rather an identification of the level of services provision and/or actual size. The retail strategy recognises the primacy of Cavan Town but also the importance of the larger towns in the county.

#### **4.1 Retail Hierarchy**

Cavan Town is the largest town and administrative centre for Cavan providing an extensive range of services and an ever growing variety of retail goods. The 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities' identifies Cavan Town as a third tier town in the retail hierarchy of the state.

A number of the other large towns in the county are consistent with an outline of fourth tier towns.

The retail planning guidelines state;

“The fourth tier of the hierarchy comprises a large number of small towns in the 1,500 to 5,000 population category.--- (providing) basic convenience shopping, either in small supermarkets or convenience shops and in some

cases, lower order comparison shopping such as hardware, pharmaceutical products and clothes.”<sup>4</sup>

Bailieborough, Cootehill, Kingscourt, Virginia and Ballyjamesduff are consistent with this definition. Belturbet, Ballyconnell and Mullagh also have important service and retail functions in their areas.

The retail hierarchy of the county is based on the previous and places Cavan Town as the primary town.

<b>Town</b>	<b>Hierarchy in context of State</b>	<b>Hierarchy in context of county</b>
Cavan Town	identified as a third tier town in the Retail Planning Guidelines	First Tier
Bailieborough Cootehill Kingscourt Virginia Ballyjamesduff	Consistent with the definition of fourth tier towns in the Retail Planning Guidelines.	Second Tier
Belturbet Ballyconnell Mullagh	Have both convenience and limited comparison retail providers. These are growing towns that have seen significant increase in retail activity.	Third Tier

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<sup>4</sup> Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities, p. 4.

## 4.2 Nine Larger towns Settlement Hierarchy in Context of Population and Border Regional Guidelines

### 4.2.1 Cavan Town

Table 2.10

	Town	Classification under the Border Regional Guidelines	Population 2002	Population 2006	% Population Growth 2002-2006
Principal Town	Cavan	<b>Hub</b> ; Strategic urban centres, that support, and are supported by the Gateway, and reach out to wider rural areas of the Region which the RPG's are targeting for significant levels of growth.  Population Target of 16,000 by 2020	6,098	7,883*	29.3

\*The zoned area identified as Cavan Town and Environs covers a wider area than that referred to in the Census of population. Based on research conducted by the Planning Authority the population is estimated to be circa 10,000.

Cavan Town is the administrative centre for the county and the largest town. It provides an extensive range of services to the county and has been identified as a Hub town in the NSS and BRG.

### 4.2.2 Larger Towns (population 1,500 – 2,000)

These are large towns in the County with populations over 1,500 and under 2,000. These towns offer a wide variety of services such as health, education, and professional as well as providing retail and employment for a wide hinterland. They have an important function in terms of balanced county level growth and are regionally important as part of an overall strategy for balanced regional growth and as support for hubs, gateways and strategically significant

settlements and routes. These towns are regarded as development centres with an emphasis on the consolidation of town cores and strengthening of town core retail and service functions. It is essential that provision of support services such as employment and community facilities should accompany future growth and development. These towns have experienced significant levels of population growth. In the case of Cootehill this growth has occurred in the environs, the town council area has experienced population decline in both the 2002 and again in the 2006 census of population. Cootehill is thus unique in the county for this population profile. These towns have good potential for further growth and development but there is a need for consolidation and strengthening of town cores, especially in the case of Cootehill. These towns have a range of classifications in the BRPGs.

	<b>Town</b>	<b>Classification under the Border Regional Guidelines</b>	<b>Population 2002</b>	<b>Population 2006</b>	<b>% Population Growth 2002-2006</b>
Larger Town <sup>5</sup>	Bailieborough	<b>Medium sized town for Urban Strengthening;</b> Towns of between 1,500 and 5,000 which are in need of urban strengthening, and which would perform an important role in driving the development of a particular spatial component, either individually or in groups.	1660	1966	18.4
Larger Town	Cootehill	<b>Medium sized town for Urban Strengthening;</b> Towns of between 1,500 and 5,000 which are in need of urban strengthening, and which would perform an important role in driving	1744	1892	8.5

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<sup>5</sup> Established as medium sized towns in the BRPG these towns, in the context of County Cavan are identified as Larger Towns

		the development of a particular spatial component, either individually or in groups			
Larger Town	Kingscourt	<b>Small sized town for Urban Strengthening;</b> Key towns in a local context, which have been identified as in need of urban strengthening and which would perform an important local role. They also tend to be in peripheral areas.	1307	1748	33.7
Larger Town	Virginia	<b>Towns for Consolidation;</b> Towns that have recently experienced high levels of population growth, or which are in the commuter belt, where more measured growth would be in context with its setting, and where self sufficiency is necessary.	1093	1734	58.6
Larger Town	Ballyjamesduff	<b>Towns for Consolidation;</b> Towns that have recently experienced high levels of population growth, or which are in the commuter belt, where more measured growth would be in context with its setting, and where self sufficiency is necessary.	871	1690	94

#### 4.2.3 Medium Sized Towns

These are towns with a similar service provision and county level importance as the identified larger towns. They have populations of under 1,500 and have been identified as small sized towns for urban strengthening; this is notwithstanding the identification of Kingscourt as same. These towns have good development potential with an emphasis on the provision of essential services, provision of employment opportunities and improvement of retail function. These towns are important at a local level and are in strategic locations proximate to the Greater Dublin Area and to Northern Ireland and situated on National Roads.

Table 2.12

	Town	Classification under the Border Regional Guidelines	Population 2002	Population 2006	% Population Growth 2002-2006
Large - Medium Town	Belturbet	<b>Small sized town for Urban Strengthening;</b> Key towns in a local context, which have been identified as in need of urban strengthening and which would perform an important local role. They also tend to be in peripheral areas.	1295	1411	8.9
Medium Town	Ballyconnell	<b>Small sized town for Urban Strengthening;</b> Key towns in a local context, which have been identified as in need of urban strengthening and which would perform an important local role. They also tend to be in peripheral areas.	572	747	30.6
Medium Town	Mullagh	<b>Small sized town for Urban Strengthening;</b> Key towns in a local context, which have been identified as in need of urban strengthening and which would perform an important local role. They also tend to be in peripheral areas.	479	679	41.8



### 4.3 Nine Towns in Context of Retail Provision

#### June, 2008

##### Gross Floor space

The following towns have been surveyed:						
	<b>Total Comparison</b>	<b>Total Convenience</b>	<b>Total Bulky Goods</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Total Floor Space</b>
<b>Ballyconnell</b>	1105	1730	913	1683	-	<b>5431</b>
<b>Belturbet</b>	1287	1906	5539	2994	444	<b>12170</b>
<b>Kingscourt</b>	2024	2599	5274	1633	573	<b>12103</b>
<b>Bailieborough</b>	3156	3241	3345	1011		<b>10753</b>
<b>Ballyjamesduff</b>	931	1446	3639	691	2000	<b>8707</b>
<b>Virginia</b>	2166	2882	2703	2075	2507	<b>12333</b>
<b>Mullagh</b>	454	670	580	-	684	<b>2388</b>
<b>Cootehill</b>	4361	4419	4008	1375	163	<b>14326</b>
<b>Cavan Town</b>	13186	9260	23022	8562	6600	<b>54030</b>

##### Total of Towns in County

	<b>28670</b>	<b>28153</b>	<b>49024</b>	<b>20024</b>	<b>6371</b>	<b>132241</b>
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#### June, 2008

##### Net Floor space

The following towns have been surveyed:						
	<b>Total Comparison</b>	<b>Total Convenience</b>	<b>Total Bulky Goods</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Total Floor Space</b>
<b>Ballyconnell</b>	884	1384	730	1346		<b>4345</b>
<b>Belturbet</b>	1030	1525	4431	2395	355	<b>9736</b>
<b>Kingscourt</b>	1619	2079	4220	1306	458	<b>9682</b>
<b>Bailieborough</b>	2525	2593	2676	809		<b>8602</b>
<b>Ballyjamesduff</b>	745	1157	2911	553	1600	<b>6966</b>
<b>Virginia</b>	1733	2306	2162	1660	2006	<b>9866</b>
<b>Mullagh</b>	363	536	464		547	<b>1910</b>
<b>Cootehill</b>	3489	3535	3207	1100	130	<b>11461</b>
<b>Cavan Town</b>	10549	7408	18418	6850	5280	<b>43224</b>

##### Total of Towns in County

	<b>22936</b>	<b>22522</b>	<b>39219</b>	<b>16019</b>	<b>5097</b>	<b>105793</b>
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### 4.4 Future Retail Requirements

The Retail Planning Guidelines 2005, as amended indicate that County Cavan is not obliged to undertake a detailed Retail Strategy. In undertaken a general

Retail Strategy, a broad assessment of the requirement for additional retail floor space is required.

The following estimate of project retail need aims to provide a broad indication of the need for future retail in general terms. It is considered to be a general guide only for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is uncertain how much of the retail floor space which has been permitted will actually be built. Developers and landowners tend to compete for the attentions of retail investors, with the result that only a select number of retail permissions will actually progress onwards to the implementation stage. Secondly, it is equally uncertain how some of the proposed units will eventually come to be occupied. For example, in the case of new district and neighbourhood centres, it is quite possible that many of the units will be assigned to non-retail uses which do not fall within the categories of convenience and comparison goods considered in this report. Thirdly, the lack of definitive sources on turnover information points to the need for extreme caution in the use of retail statistical assessments.

The Health Checks to follow will indicate a need for further retail development in all towns based on findings from a survey conducted amongst Retailers and Consumers which indicate a level of leakages from all towns (to varying degrees). The Health Checks also identify a deficit in retail provision in the nine larger towns. Leakages from Cavan Town are relatively minor but the identified population target of 16,000 by 2020 necessitate the further development of this towns retail provision and there are high levels of leakage relating to shopping for Clothes and Footwear, commonly a town core shopping function. It is not considered necessary to quantify the retail requirement in each of the towns. The following estimated projected floor space requirements are based on a study conducted by Cavan County Council in 2006 and adjusted upwards to reflect population increases and continued strong residential development.

## Convenience

	2006-2011	2011-2016	2016-2021	Total
Cavan Town	2,000	2,000	2,000	6,000
Other Large Towns	500	500	700	1700
	2500	2500	2700	7700

## Comparison (including bulky goods)

	2006-2011	2011-2016	2016-2021	Total
Cavan Town	6000	9000	13000	28000
Other Large Towns	700	1000	1500	3200
Total	7,000	9,000	15,000	31,000

These estimates are meant as a guideline and do not indicate upper or lower limits.

Based on the estimated floor space requirements County Cavan is attracting sufficient developer interest to provide new retail facilities in the county.

However, with respect to the estimated additional need for retail floor space in the county indicated above, this does not account for the levels of deficit that exist in all towns which based on returns from research is significant, over 50% of shoppers in Cavan Town consider retail offer to be unsatisfactory. Anecdotal evidence suggest there is significant leakage to towns outside of the county and region, these findings are reflected in research carried out in all of the nine larger towns. The estimated projected future floor space requirements should not be regarded as prescriptive but should be seen as providing broad guidance on retail need over the next number of years.

## 4.5 Conclusions

The increase in population in all of the nine towns along with significant levels of development results in a need for strong policies to encourage the further development of these towns while ensuring that future development occurs in a sustainable and well planned fashion. A retail hierarchy has been established prioritising Cavan Town within the County and as a regionally significant 'Hub' Town. The following sections examine the towns individually and culminated in a policy and action response which seeks to ensure the future long term sustainable development of these towns.

# Chapter 5

## Health Check

### 5.0 Introduction

The Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005, as amended states “In order for town centre’s to achieve their full potential and continually improve as retail destinations it will be appropriate and necessary for planning authorities to adopt a pro-active role in enhancing vitality and viability of their centre” (page 9).

To achieve this it is necessary to measure the Vitality and Viability of Town Centres, in this case, this was achieved thorough a Health Check of the nine town cores. The methodology employed was a combination of the following;

- Questionnaire distributed to retailers and consumers.
- Planning search establishing growth and changes in retail in each of the town centres since 2002.
- Survey of floor space and number of retail units in each of the towns.

To ensure consistence the same methodology was used in each of the centres As stated in the Retail Planning Guidelines (page 10) the outcome of the Health Check will indicate both area of weakness and opportunity and will inform a response that will aim to make better use of each centre’s resources and potential, as well as, to address major deficiencies.

### 5.1 Health Check

Health Checks essentially measure the ‘Vitality and ‘Viability’ of a town core.

A healthy town centre should have a balance of a number of qualities;

- Attractions
- Accessibility
- Amenity
- Action

The following table defines these qualities;

Quality	Definition
<b>Attractions</b>	These underpin a town and comprise the range and diversity of shopping and other activities which draw in customers and visitors.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Successful centres need both to be accessible to the surrounding catchments area via a good road network and public transport facilities, and to encompass good local linkages between car parks, public transport stops and the various attractions within the centre.
<b>Amenity</b>	A healthy town centre should be a pleasant place to be in. It should be attractive in terms of environmental quality and urban design, safe, and it should have a distinct identity or image.
<b>Action</b>	To function effectively as a viable commercial centre things need to happen. Development and improvement projects should be implemented efficiently; there should be regular and effective cleaning and maintenance and there should be coordinated town centre management initiatives to promote the continued improvement of the centre.

Source: The Retail Planning Guidelines 2005; page 45

## 5.2 Cavan Town

### 5.2.1 Introduction

The main conclusions that can be drawn from the following Health Check is that Cavan Town which was identified as a 'Third Tier Level Two' town in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2005, can now be considered a 'Level One Third Tier' town with retail provision in line with other such towns, this is mainly due to a number of out of town and edge of town retail parks in the town. There is a clear need to strengthen the town core of Cavan Town and several town core locations are

indicated in the conclusion of the Cavan Town Health Check. Considering Cavan Town's identity as a Hub town and the target population growth of 16,000 by 2020 there is a need to expand the retailing functions of the town.

### **5.2.2 Profile**

Cavan town is the principle town in the county and, as such, is the administrative, employment and cultural centre of the county. It is a service provider for a wide catchment and has a support role in relation to the eight other large towns in the county. Cavan has been identified as a Hub town in the National Spatial Strategy 2002 and Border Regional Guidelines 2004. It was identified as a level two third tier town under the Retail Planning Guidelines 2005, as amended but more recent retail developments puts it more in line with a level one third tier town. It continues to experience strong population and is currently on target to achieving the NSS population target of 16,000 by 2020. In assessing the attractions of each town, as part of the Health Check, both the 'range and diversity of shopping and other activities which draw in customers and visitors' were considered, as well as, people's attitude to them.

Two questionnaires were distributed, the first amongst retailers in Cavan town and the second amongst a selection of the population of the county.

The following section looks at the vitality and viability of Cavan Town under the qualities that make a healthy town; Attractions, Accessibility and Amenity. This in essence is a health check for the town.

### **5.2.3 Market Interest**

Market interest in the town is strong and has remained steady, there have been a number of large scale retail developments mainly on the outskirts of the town. The town has experienced an increase in the construction of new retail premises including edge of centre and out of centre retail parks. These retail parks are home to large chain retail outlets such as Argos and Furniture Village, as well as, stores such as Woodies, Homemakers, Supervalu etc.

Cavan Retail Park and Lakeland Retail Park located on the Dublin Road. The town core itself has also seen the establishment of new retail premises including several newly built and currently unoccupied premises.

## **5.2.4 Health Check**

### **1. Attractions**

These underpin a town and comprise the range and diversity of shopping and other activities which draw in customers and visitors. Cavan Town has an excellent range and diversity of both retail and other activities that draw people to the town and make it a pleasant place in which to live and work. Education facilities range from pre-school to further education facilities. Recreation, social and entertainment facilities are on par with other larger towns and include the county GAA grounds (Breffini Park), sports complex, golf club, theatre, cinema and numerous restaurants and public houses. Most recently a specially built state of the art county library has been constructed to add to the already impressive architectural quality of Farnham Street.

The town is enlivened during the year by festivals and parades including the 'St. Patrick's Day Parade and Summer Festival.

In terms of retail, Cavan Town has a great variety and diversity of both comparison and convenience retail premises catering to a wide catchment area and acting as a support for the other larger towns in the county. Retail activity in Cavan has increased significantly in the past 5 to 10 years.

#### *Attractions - Retail Activity*

How active a town is one of its attractions, a very active town for example draws potential shoppers. In the survey conducted amongst consumers it was found that the majority of respondents shopped in Cavan town between once a day (28%) and once a week (46%). This suggests a high level of activity in Cavan Town with the majority of respondents shopping in the town at least once a week. Retail activity has increased significantly in Cavan Town over the past five to ten years. The pattern of retail development has transformed Cavan Town. The

retail parks act as a draw for the surrounding catchment area bringing consumers into the Cavan Town from, as far as, Monaghan, Clones, Longford, Navan and Enniskillen,<sup>6</sup>. However, as indicated in the consumer survey they also draw some shoppers from the town centre because parking at these newly established retail parks is readily available and free, and goods are available in these stores that may not be available in the town centre.

To establish the range and diversity of retail activity in Cavan Town a question in the consumer questionnaire asked respondents to identify where they do their convenience<sup>7</sup> and comparison/luxury goods shopping. The findings indicate that there is a high level of activity in relation to convenience goods shopping with relatively little leakage to other towns or counties. There were marginally fewer people doing their main/weekly convenience goods shop in Cavan Town, some shoppers went to Enniskillen. The amount of leakage to Enniskillen can generally be considered to be at a level that is in line with health competition which in itself is vital to the health of a town centre.

Respondents were also asked where they shopped for Comparison or luxury goods and food items. Several categories were given these were;

- i. Clothes and Footwear
- ii. Cosmetics and Goods for Personal Care
- iii. Medical and Pharmaceutical Products
- iv. Books, Newspapers, Magazines
- v. Household/Appliances and Equipment
- vi. Furniture
- vii. D.I.Y.
- viii. Other

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<sup>6</sup> Based on Retailer Survey conducted amongst retailers in Cavan Town in January 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Convenience shopping refers to the purchase of food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, tobacco, non-durable household goods.

Comparison goods include; clothing and footwear, furniture and furnishings, educational and recreation equipment, books, newspapers and magazines etc.



Commonly respondents, in each category, named more than one town as places where they would purchase comparison goods (this is the case in all towns). Indicating a willingness to 'shop around' that is not evident in the convenience goods category where an element of 'shop loyalty' and convenience of location appear to outweigh willingness to travel for bargains, specific brand names etc. There is evidence of greater leakages from Cavan Town in relation to comparison shopping. This appears to be the result of a desire for greater choice, brand names or shops not available in Cavan Town and bargain hunting. These leakages were strongest in terms of shopping for clothes and footwear with almost 50% of shoppers willing to go to Dublin for clothes and footwear and 19% to Navan.

Dublin was the most common destination for the purchase of comparison goods for Cavan Shoppers, next to Dublin were Navan and Enniskillen. There were relatively low percentages of shoppers purchasing comparison goods in other towns in the county.

#### *Attractions - Variety of Retail*

A vibrant, healthy town requires a variety of retail types again retail variety attracts potential shoppers to a town. As Cavan town is the principle town in the county servicing and sustaining a wide rural hinterland, it is important that it has a good mix of convenience, comparison and bulky goods. According to a retail survey conducted in January 2008 there are 127 Comparison and Bulky goods retailers in Cavan Town and 39 convenience goods retailers, this does not include vacant properties or proposed developments. Total net convenience is 7,408 Square metres total net comparison is 10,549 Square metres, total bulky goods is gross 1,8418 square metres. As expected, the town has significantly larger numbers of and total floor space for Comparison, Convenience and Bulky Goods of the nine larger towns.

In the consumer questionnaire, respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the variety of retail in Cavan town just over 50% of respondents stated they

were not satisfied. This is a significant percentage considering Cavan Town's role as the principle town in the county and its strategically and regionally significant status as a Hub town. This is a clear indication of retail deficits in Cavan Town. Findings from the consumer questionnaire identified a need for a greater number and variety of shops many respondents wanted more 'High Street' and 'Brand Name' shops. A large portion of respondents identified a need for more clothes shops.

"Would like to see more clothes shops and gift shops in the town and a few more larger shops that would attract more people to the town and make it more lively. At the moment it is a town where people come in, do their shopping and leave." (Consumer Survey)

This is in keeping with the findings from the retail activity section which indicates a greater level of leakage in the clothes/footwear category. The nature of this type of shopping makes a significant contribution to the vibrancy of a town. The need for a greater variety of retail outlets was identified as well as a need for a shopping centre in the town. There was a general feeling that Cavan Town did not attract shoppers as a destination in itself as some town centres do for example for browsing, lunch as a meeting area. Generally respondents felt that it was a town you went to for a specific purpose and then left, findings from the consumer survey indicated that this was due to a lack of attractions in the town's centre and the draw of out of centre and edge of centre retail parks such as Cavan Retail Park and Lakeland Retail Park. For example one respondent suggested the Local Authority should;

"Look at keeping business in the heart of the town, giving the town centre a buzz enticing people into the town centre."

#### *Attractions - Commercial atmosphere*

Respondents in both the customer and retailer questionnaire were asked to rate Cavan town out of 5 for Commercial Atmosphere. When all scores were collated it was found that Cavan Town scored 57% for commercial atmosphere, indicating

general satisfaction with same. The issues which came to light are consistent with the previous sections indicating a need to 'liven' up the town core - "Not enough café culture, sheltered areas, browsing, socialising." (Consumer questionnaire). The need for a greater variety of retail especially clothes shops. The draw of out of centre retail parks was identified in this section also with the subsequent increase in travel by car also identified.

"Shops very far apart, you need a car to travel from one retail park to another" (Consumer Survey).

Respondents felt that the out of centre Retail Parks has negatively affected the town core drawing consumers away and making it less lively and active.

There were also many positive comments about the improvement in the variety of retail in the town. A number of comments were made about shopping outside of the town centre.

Some respondents compared Cavan negatively to other towns or stated that people travel to other towns due to lack of retail in Cavan.

"It is necessary for people to travel to other towns." (Consumer survey)

"Bigger names/better outlets --- saves travelling to the bigger cities to shop" (Consumer survey)

## **2. Amenity**

A healthy town centre should be a pleasant place to be in. It should be attractive in terms of environmental quality and urban design, safe, and it should have a distinct identity or image. In other words a successful town is a pleasant and attractive town a place in which people wish to shop, to work and in some cases to live.

In the consumer and retailer survey both shoppers and retailers were asked to rate Cavan Town out of 5 under a number of headings. Where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor. The headings are indicated in the table below. The results were collated and translated into percentages (commercial atmosphere has been dealt with under attractions).

Category	Score	Out of	%
Cleanliness	450	595	76%
Town Amenity*	328	595	55%
Streetscape**	348	595	58%
Commercial Atmosphere***	339.5	595	57%

\* The amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting & seating) and planting.

\*\* Shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings & streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets.

\*\*\* Is there a lot of activity in terms of shopping, is the town core lively or a bit dead.

Cavan Town score highest for cleanliness (76%) and a number of respondents in the consumer survey commented on how clean the town was. There were a few negative comments concerning litter these comments generally relate to litter as a result of takeaways and night time activity.

Cavan scored almost 60% for Streetscape; this refers to the appearance of shop fronts, the quality and appearance of buildings and streetscapes and the general appearance of the streetscape. Respondents in the consumer survey generally were very happy with planting around the town, this would include planting at the town square and hanging baskets in many locations in the town centre. It was also commented that the seating area at the newly built library is a great asset to the town.

A number of respondents in the consumer survey commented on the lack of bins in some areas, 'there are not enough bins around', 'car parks are in need of more 'bins''. They also commented that lighting in some areas was not good – "lighting is very poor on Town Hall Street", "side streets need improved lighting". A number of respondents in both the consumer and retailer survey were dissatisfied with the town square, specifically with the monument of a mock dolmen made in the shape of hands, "Market square could do with revamp", "Fountain at the post office is an issue", "create a nicer area in the centre of the town and do something about the appearance of the fountain."

Respondents in the retailer survey commented on the need for more or improve public open spaces and amenity areas in the town. Cavan River was identified as being unsightly and there was an identified need for meeting or congregation areas for all age groups. A number of respondents felt there was a need for improvement of shop fronts though there were positive comments about shop fronts also; “Town centre now dominated by apartments and non-descript shop fronts some shop fronts are poor.” “Need more park areas for kids and areas for adults.” “Very little public spaces in town except market square.

There were also positive comments about the appearance of the town. “Town is amongst the tidiest due to Council's pride in keeping it clean” and many positive comments in relation to planting around the town.

### **3. *Accessibility***

Cavan Town is located on the national transport (N3) route Enniskillen to Dublin. It is easily accessed from any part of the county by a series of national, regional and local road networks. The east and southern by-pass for the town was completed in 2006 and has helped to alleviate through-traffic in Cavan Town which was major cause of congestion. There are some sections of the town that are not as easily accessible due to topographical and other constraints. While parts of Cavan Town have experienced significant levels of development other areas have been slower to develop.

The town is operating, as a, successful centre in terms of accessibility to existing public transport stops, car parks, and the various attraction including retail parks, cinema, theatres, football pitches etc.

Cavan town is well served by public and private transport operators. There is an excellent hourly bus service to Dublin, also serving Virginia, Kells and Navan. Public transport is also available from Cavan to Galway, Donegal, Sligo, Longford, Belfast and Athlone. Private Bus operators also provide a wide range of flexible services into Cavan Town. There is some local provision of public transport to towns such as Belturbet.

The town has several surface car parks which meet the parking demands of the retail and commercial outlets in the town. Pay parking is in operation in the town and there is one multi storey car park in the town located near Tesco which has approximately 400 car spaces. There is also one underground car park located under Dunnes Stores off Thomas Ashe Street, which accommodates 160 cars. There are some 1,462 spaces available centrally in Cavan Town. Additional to these there are car parks available at all retail parks.

In the consumer survey a significant 72% of respondents felt that facilities for parking in the town are good. The survey that was conducted amongst retailers was consistent with these findings, it indicated that 43% thought car access to their premises were satisfactory, 8% thought they were very good and 15% stated they were excellent. 33% felt it was poor indicating general satisfaction with vehicular access with pockets of poor access around the town.

One of the issues identified from the survey of consumers was a lack of drop off points for quick stops in the town; the post office was specifically mentioned as a location needing a drop off point.

Respondents also identified a need for parking for people with disabilities and that there was insufficient parking for people living and working in the town. Vehicular linkages to and within the town are generally good, 93% of those surveyed in the Consumer survey accessed retail by private car. This indicates poor usage of pedestrian and cycle facilities and the survey also identified problems with facilities for people with disabilities.

In the consumer survey 50% of respondents thought cycle facilities were poor and 34% thought there were none. Just 5% identified them as good.

Several respondents in the consumer questionnaire commented on the lack of cycle lanes and places to park and lock bicycles. Respondents commented that it was dangerous to cycle in the town.

Attitudes to pedestrian facilities were more positive though it is clear they need improving 48% of respondents thought they were good, 45% thought they were poor and 4% felt there were none at all.

A retailer survey conducted amongst retailers in the town identified that in general respondents were satisfied with pedestrian and cyclist access. 50% of respondents were satisfied with pedestrian and cyclists, 20% thought they were very good and 18% thought they were excellent and 13% thought they were good. However, it must be noted that in this survey pedestrian and cyclists were not identified as separate categories.

A number of comments were made in the consumer questionnaire with relation to the condition of the footpaths in the town. Some respondents felt that footpaths were adequate within the town but poor further from the town centre, it was suggested that there was a need for footpaths leading to the schools located in the environs of the town.

“Facilities are fine until you go outside town, from town is ok but access to primary or secondary schools on foot is poor i.e. Loreto , St. Pats from out Killykeen, Farnham way.”

Respondents also commented that footpaths were inadequate for the needs of wheelchair users and the visually and physically impaired. Similar to the consumer survey, respondents in the survey of retailers indicated dissatisfaction with footpaths in the town and identified a number of areas where footpaths were particularly bad or that required provision of footpaths. “Footpaths can be very rough. For wheelchair access, there are a lot of 'lips' on path and when mounting path which could cause injury and leaves it very hard to manage a wheelchair.” However, there were a number of positive comments in relation to footpaths in both surveys, confined mainly to footpaths in the town core.

The consumer questionnaire asked if shoppers had any difficulty in accessing retail for a stated number of reasons or for any other reason. 67% of respondents had problems accessing retail in Cavan town.

42% of those surveyed had problems accessing retail due to parking. The problem with parking appeared to be mainly at peak times, weekends and busy times of the year. Almost 12% had problems due to lack of or poor facilities for people with disabilities. The other main problems with accessing the town centre were due to traffic congestion, this was identified as being mainly at weekends

and due to building works. "Traffic can be bad at certain times --- particularly at weekends. Road works or building developments cause traffic problems which puts you off going into town" (Consumer survey).

Other respondents commented that it was difficult to cross the road in some places and more pedestrian crossings are needed, "Not enough pedestrian / pelican crossings, hard to cross at the roundabout."

### **5.2.5 Conclusions**

- Very active town in terms of everyday convenience shopping lacking in comparison good shopping and evidence of leakage from town core to out of centre retail parks.
- People are most likely to shop in other towns for clothes and shoes than any other product and will mainly shop in Dublin. Dublin, Enniskillen and Navan are the main other towns which people will shop in instead of Cavan Town.
- There is general satisfaction with the Commercial atmosphere in the town though there is an identified need for uses that will bring more activity to the town this include retail, cafes, amenity areas and meeting places.
- The town is most lively at weekends at holidays and least lively in evenings..
- Out of centre retail parks are drawing consumers out of the town core and affecting the liveliness of the town.
- Retail parks at the edge and outside of the town core are drawing consumers from the town core and impacting on the vitality and viability of the town core.
- People also travel to other towns for a greater variety of retail or for specific brand names/shops.
- Cavan Town is clean and generally attractive with good planting in many areas but lacks amenity space and the town square is considered unattractive. Despite being considered litter free it requires more bins in some areas and better lighting. The new county library and specifically



benches and amenity space in front of it is considered an asset to the town.

- Cavan Town is a very accessible town for car users though it can become congested at peak times and at weekends and holidays. The town is located on a national route with a good public transport service. It is also serviced by a number of private operators. There is some evidence of congestion but this is limited to peak hours and busy times of the year. Some areas of town have untapped potential due to poor vehicular linkages.
- There is no public transport available in the town. Cycle facilities are poor. Footpaths are generally good but some areas are poor especially in the environs of the town.
- There is good availability of car parking spaces, though peak hours and holidays result in problems finding spaces. The availability of readily available and easily accessible car parking spaces in out of centre retail parks attracts consumers.
- Facilities for people with disabilities, elderly and parents with prams appear to be poor, though a closer examination of these issues would give a clearer picture.
- Cavan is a clean town and reasonable accessibility by car to all retail units; however, there are some inaccessible areas. There were a number of comments made on the need to improve footpaths or provide footpaths and pedestrian crossings in some parts of town. Other comments suggested the need for drop off points and a need for parking and access for people with disabilities. Other comments identified a need for traffic calming in some parts of town e.g. approach roads.
- There was general dissatisfaction with the provision of cycle facilities and cycle provision.
- Some shop fronts and buildings were identified as needing improvement. More meeting spaces required – more public open space for children and adults.

- Integrated Framework Plan provides an overarching framework for the development of Cavan Town and Environs until 2020. It includes a Transportation Study which focused on pedestrian and cyclist accessibility to the town centre and permeability, appropriate routing and management of motorised traffic including deliveries, facilitation of public transport including a public transport hub, car parking requirements, management and locations, potential pedestrianisation of sections of the town centre, and transport vision for key development areas within the town centre. In the environs area, key transport issues are assessed, traffic management proposals on the existing road network, particularly at key junctions that will enhance the flow of traffic, yet also cater for the needs of slow modes; identification of potential new access or relief routes to new development areas and the town centre; feasibility of public transport services being developed to serve the entire urban area; traffic management measures to be adopted to improve the safety and general environment of the N3 between the Ballinagh Road junction and the Kilmore Hotel junction.

### **5.3 Ballyjamesduff**

#### **5.3.1 Introduction**

The main conclusions that can be drawn from the following Health Check is the need for development of the retail function of Ballyjamesduff to ensure there is adequate provision of retail to facilitate the significant and rapid population increase of 94% from 2002 – 2006. An important aim is to tap the potential of the town core through redevelopment of undeveloped sites, underused and vacant buildings in the town core while enabling the town to meet its potential. The location of this town in close proximity to Virginia and relatively close to Cavan Town ensures access to the retail provisions of these towns.

### **5.3.2 Profile**

Ballyjamesduff is identified as a larger town in the Cavan County Development Plan 2008 – 2014, settlement strategy. In the retail hierarchy it is identified as a fourth tier town consistent with the definition of fourth tier towns in the 'Retail Guidelines; for Planning Authorities';

“The fourth tier of the hierarchy comprises a large number of small towns in the 1,500 to 5,000 population category. (They) provide basic convenience shopping, either in small supermarkets or convenience shops and in some cases, lower order comparison shopping such as hardware, pharmaceutical products and clothes.”

Ballyjamesduff has experienced huge levels of growth in the past ten years. The town has seen a 94% population increase from the 2002 to the 2006 census, growing from 871 persons to 1,690 persons. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region and the National Spatial Strategy identified Ballyjamesduff as 'Town for Consolidation' such towns are

“Towns that have experienced high levels of population growth, or which are in the commuter belt, where more measured growth would be in context with its setting, and where self sufficiency is necessary.”

Ballyjamesduff is located to the east of the county in relatively close proximity to the Greater Dublin Area. The town has experienced the greatest population increase of the nine towns, experiencing a 94% increase between 2002 and 2006.

The town is one of the larger towns, sixth in terms of actual population size. It has the second lowest floor space for both convenience and comparison goods.

#### *Market Interest*

The town has experienced relatively little retail development and has a number of underused and vacant buildings and sites in and adjacent to the town core which has retail potential. Since 2002 there have been a small number of retail units constructed in the town core but these have all been small scale mainly convenience retail units. There are currently two applications for larger scale

retail units that were granted by Cavan County Council, both of which have been appealed to An Bord Pleanala. One development comprises of a supermarket and 8 smaller retail units with a total retail floor space of circa 2,000 square metres. The second development would comprise of 1 supermarket and 11 retail units/spaces comprising a total retail floor space of circa 2,000 square metres. These applications would represent a significant development in Ballyjamesduff should they be granted by An Bord Pleanala and indicate growing market interest in the town.

### **5.3.3 Health Check**

#### **1. Attractions**

Ballyjamesduff serves a wide rural hinterland and is an important employment and service provider for its area. Ballyjamesduff emerged as a market town with a distinctive planned urban form focused around the double diamond still evident in the town centre. The double diamond, wide central streets and market square with the refurbished market house and statue of Percy French lend this town a unique and distinct urban form, lying in and expanding out towards its rural hinterlands.

The town is home to the County Museum which hosts a number of art and historic exhibitions and is a tourist attraction in the town. There is a newly built children's playground adjacent to the museum. Ballyjamesduff hosts a regional mart and is a major employment provider for the local area. The town also has a GAA Pitch, Community Hall, and tennis courts. The town has both primary and post primary schools. However, the town has experienced rapid and significant population increase and service provision currently lag behind requirements.

#### *Attractions - Retail Activity*

This section examines how active Ballyjamesduff is. In a survey conducted amongst consumers, respondents were asked how many times a week they shopped in Ballyjamesduff Town. Most respondents shopped in Ballyjamesduff

between once a day and once a week, indicating that the town is, at least, somewhat active.

To establish the range and diversity of retail activity in Ballyjamesduff a question in the consumer questionnaire asked respondents to identify where they do their convenience<sup>8</sup> and comparison/luxury goods shopping.

The responses indicated a level of leakage for convenience goods shopping to other towns. In the case of everyday shopping, respondents shopped in Ballyjamesduff or Cavan Town and in the case of main/weekly shopping, respondents shopped in Ballyjamesduff, Cavan Town or Virginia. This indicates that leakage of convenience shopping from Ballyjamesduff remains within the county. Given the rural nature of this town and its close proximity to Virginia and Cavan Town a level of leakage is expected. However, the town could benefit from more convenience food outlets.

Respondents were then asked where they shopped for luxury or non food items. Several categories were given so that a better indication of where shoppers travelled for goods was gained.

The categories given were;

- i. Clothes and Footwear
- ii. Cosmetics and Goods for Personal Care
- iii. Medical and Pharmaceutical Products
- iv. Books, Newspapers, Magazines
- v. Household/Appliances and Equipment
- vi. Furniture
- vii. D.I.Y.
- viii. Other

Ballyjamesduff has a low representation of comparison type goods. Previously the town's low population, rural nature, close proximity to Virginia and at an easy

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<sup>8</sup> Convenience shopping refers to the purchase of food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, tobacco, non-durable household goods.

Comparison goods include; clothing and footwear, furniture and furnishings, educational and recreation equipment, books, newspapers and magazines etc.

distance to Cavan Town meant that retail provision was adequate for its needs. However, the town has doubled in size in a short space of time and retail development has, as yet, not equalled population increase.

There is evidence of a high level of leakage for all categories. Respondents did not shop for Clothes and Footwear, Household Appliances and Equipment, and furniture in Ballyjamesduff. They mainly shopped in Navan, Dublin and Cavan. Respondents did shop for Cosmetics and Goods for Personal Care, Medical and Pharmaceutical Products, Books, Newspapers, Magazines and DIY products in Ballyjamesduff, but they also named other towns mostly Cavan and also Dublin.

### *Variety of Retail*

A vibrant, healthy town requires a variety of retail types. According to a retail survey conducted in January 2008 there are 20 Comparison and Bulky goods retailers in Ballyjamesduff and 12 convenience goods retailers, this does not include vacant properties or proposed developments. Total net convenience is 1,157 square metres, total net comparison is 745 square metres, total bulky goods is gross 2,911 square metres, the eight least in the county.

In the consumer questionnaire, respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the variety of retail in Ballyjamesduff. Slightly more people were satisfied with the variety of retail than were dissatisfied with it. However, comments made, indicate that while people are happy with retail provision there is an identified need for a greater variety and provision of certain goods currently not provided. "There is a greater opportunities for retail development in the town centre that can cater to a growing population." (Consumer Survey)

### *Commercial Atmosphere*

Respondents in both the customer and retailer questionnaire were asked to rate Ballyjamesduff Town out of 5 for Commercial Atmosphere. When all scores were collated it was found that Ballyjamesduff Town scored 54% for commercial atmosphere, indicating general satisfaction with commercial atmosphere but improvements are needed, "The explosion in population seems to be keeping

commercial activity alive in the town, however non-national workers in the town tend not to support local shops. The agricultural mart in the town draws people from the surrounding county as well as other counties which create extra business in the town and it is vital to the town.”

## **2. Amenity**

Creating sustainable town centres is achieved by combining the elements necessary for an economically successful town centre with those elements that make a place pleasant to live and work in. In identifying such elements it is the opinion of those living in the town which gives the best impression of its amenity value.

In the consumer and retailer survey both shoppers and retailers were asked to rate Ballyjamesduff out of 5 under a number of headings. Where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor. The headings are indicated in the table below. The results were collated and translated into percentages (commercial atmosphere has been dealt with under attractions).

	Score	Out of	%
Cleanliness	27	60	45%
Town Amenity*	34	60	56%
Streetscape**	33	60	55%
Commercial Atmosphere***	34	60	56%

\* The amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting & seating) and planting.

\*\* Shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings & streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets.

\*\*\* Is there a lot of activity in terms of shopping, is the town core lively or a bit dead.

Ballyjamesduff scored lowest for cleanliness. The town scored over 50% for Town amenity, streetscape and commercial atmosphere, indicating general satisfaction with the town but a sense that improvements are needed. A number of comments were positive while others suggested improvements or were

negative - "A little done, a lot to do, some of the town lights on the Main Street, have not worked for over 5 years." (Consumer survey).

### **3. Accessibility**

Ballyjamesduff is easily accessible to most parts of the county through a network of regional and local roads. It is in relative close proximity to Virginia which is on the N3 national route to Dublin and Enniskillen. The town is served by both public and private transport- buses, taxis and coaches. The town itself retains much of its planned origins and its generally compact form means that the most of the town is within walking distance of the town core, education, recreational, retail and other services and resources. In the consumer questionnaire respondents were asked their opinion on cycle, pedestrian and parking facilities. Respondents stated either that there were no cycle facilities or that they were poor. Respondents felt that cycle facilities in the town would be beneficial;

"It would be very beneficial in the town, the streets are wide enough for a cycle path and it would free up the town if people (living in housing estates surrounding the town) had access to cycle facilities." (Retailers Survey)

With relation to pedestrian facilities respondents felt they were good, though improvements were suggested in some comments;

"Could benefit from a pelican crossing or the like in the centre of town."  
(Consumer survey)

In the retailers questionnaire distributed amongst retailers in the town, in terms of pedestrian and cyclist access 11% thought they were poor, 33% thought they were satisfactory, 44% felt they were very good while 11% thought they were excellent.

Most respondents in the consumer questionnaire thought Ballyjamesduff had good parking facilities.

Respondents were asked if they had any difficulty in accessing retail for a stated number of reasons or for any other reason. All respondents who said they had difficulty accessing retail said that it was because of the distance from it. Some respondents lived on the edge of the town while others lived a few miles from the



town centre. "Increased access/linkages needed to the town centre from the edge of Ballyjamesduff especially in the housing estates on the Virginia Road to reduce the need to use private cars" (Consumer survey).

In the retailer's questionnaire distributed amongst retailers in the town, respondents were asked to rate access to their premises. In terms of access by car 33% of respondents felt it was poor, 44% felt it was satisfactory, 11% thought it was very good and 11% thought it was excellent.

When asked about Public transport 77% of respondents felt it was poor.

People were satisfied with the quantity of car parking spaces in the town, 33% said they were poor and 67% felt they were satisfactory.

#### **5.3.4 Conclusions**

- Ballyjamesduff has experienced rapid population growth, doubling in size in a short space of time. This increase makes it consistent in size to Fourth Tier towns in terms of the Retail Planning Guidelines, 2005; however, retail provision remains that of a smaller town.
- It is consistent with the description of fourth tier town consistent in the 'Retail Guidelines; for Planning Authorities.
- The town has a number of underused and vacant buildings and sites in and adjacent to the town core which have retail potential. There are currently two applications for larger scale retail units that were granted by Cavan County Council and both have been appealed to An Bord Pleanala.
- Market interest in Ballyjamesduff has been lacking until recently, there are two significant applications which have been granted by Cavan County Council but have been appealed to An Bord Pleanala, indicating increased market interest in the town.
- There is a level of leakage for convenience goods shopping to Cavan Town and Virginia. Given the rural nature of this town and its close proximity to Virginia and Cavan Town a level of leakage is expected. However, the town could benefit from more convenience food outlets.

- Ballyjamesduff has a low representation of comparison type goods. The town has doubled in size in a short space of time and retail development has, as yet, not equalled population increase. However, the town benefits from its proximity to Virginia and easy distance to Cavan Town where comparison goods not available in Ballyjamesduff are available.
- There is evidence of a high level of leakage for all categories.
- There are a number of underused and vacant properties in and adjacent to the town core.
- General satisfaction with commercial atmosphere in the town but feeling that this is a rural type town and that the population growth has affected commercial atmosphere.
- There is dissatisfaction with cleanliness and a need for improvements in amenity and streetscape.
- There is an identified need for a greater variety of retail types as lack of choice makes people travel to other towns. The town's proximity to Virginia and Cavan Town means that it can benefit from the growth in their retail provision of higher order goods.
- Parking and pedestrian facilities are considered to be good in the town while cycling facilities are poor.
- Vehicular access is good in general, though improved linkages from some edge of town residential developments is required.
- The town is easily accessible via a network of Regional and National Roads while public transport is considered to be poor.

## **5.4 Bailieborough**

### **5.4.1 Profile**

Bailieborough town is located in the east of the County. It originated in the plantation period and developed a strong Presbyterian heritage; it is a market town benefiting from its pivotal location.

The town structure is influenced by local topography dominated by the Town Lough. The urban design structure of the town has maintained its original form with the wide Main Street, geometric street layout and regular property frontages. It is one of County Cavan's major towns with a retail function that serves the surrounding community. Bailieborough is identified as a 'Medium Size Town for Urban Strengthening' in the Border Regional Guidelines in 2004 'Towns with a population of between 1,500 and 5,000 which are in need of urban strengthening, and which would perform an important role in driving the development of a particular spatial component, either individually or in groups....' p.48.

Bailieborough has a population that is consistent with 4<sup>th</sup> tier towns as identified in the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

#### **5.4.2 Market Interest**

In terms of market interest in the town, there has been limited but steady improvement in the retail and commercial provision of the town. This interest appears to be increasing.

From examining a list of retail developments granted in Bailieborough from 2002-2008, it is clear that there were various new retail developments in the back lands to the north east of Main Street. These new retail developments will allow the amalgamation and regeneration of back lands to the rear of Main Street. Cavan County Council will ensure this area has clear linkages with the traditional town core. Planning permission has been granted for a large Tesco store with 4243m<sup>2</sup> of gross floor space selling mainly food and some non-food goods. A large mixed use development which will include 786m<sup>2</sup> of retail in 13 units is proposed for Thomas Street. From examining the planning permissions it is obvious that the town core will be strengthened with many new and proposed retail units. Cavan County Council is committed to maintaining and enhancing the town core of Bailieborough. The town core will remain the focal retail centre for convenience and comparison goods. In the County Development Plan the existing town core has been expanded to the north east to allow the

redevelopment of backlands which will aim to incorporate new commercial and retail uses.

The retail and services function of Bailieborough are mainly confined to the Town Core. The existing retail and services provision are commensurate with a town of its present size. There is a potential capacity for further retail and service development in the Town Core. Such developments would prove to be generators of Town Core renewal.

### **5.4.3 Health Check**

#### **1. Attractions**

Bailieborough has a range of both retail and other activities that draw people to the town. The service employment sector within Bailieborough is essential to the vitality of the Town. Employment opportunities within the Town comprise mainly of Lakeland Dairies, Bailieborough Foods Limited, Flair International and Terra Limited. There is potential in tourism and leisure sections arising from the cultural and natural assets. Bailieborough contains many attractions including schools, hotels & pubs, restaurants, community centre and swimming pool. Retail activity is located within the town core, with newer development on the Kingscourt Road.

#### *Attractions – Retail Activity*

To establish the range and diversity of retail activity in Bailieborough a question in the consumer questionnaire asked respondents to identify where they do their convenience<sup>9</sup> and comparison/luxury goods shopping. All respondents did their everyday shopping in either Bailieborough or their main grocery shopping in Bailieborough or Cavan Town. This indicates little or low levels of leakage in terms of convenience goods from the town.

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<sup>9</sup> Convenience shopping refers to the purchase of food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, tobacco, non-durable household goods.

Comparison goods include; clothing and footwear, furniture and furnishings, educational and recreation equipment, books, newspapers and magazines etc.

Respondents were then asked where they shopped for luxury or non food items. Several categories were given so that a better indication of where shoppers travelled for goods was gained.

The categories given were;

- i. Clothes and Footwear
- ii. Cosmetics and Goods for Personal Care
- iii. Medical and Pharmaceutical Products
- iv. Books, Newspapers, Magazines
- v. Household/Appliances and Equipment
- vi. Furniture
- vii. D.I.Y.
- viii. Other

There are a variety of comparison goods shops in Bailieborough, however, the findings indicated a level of leakage from the town. No respondent identified Bailieborough as a town in which they would purchase clothes & footwear or furniture but in every other category shoppers named Bailieborough as one of the towns in which they would buy other comparison goods products. Alternative locations for shopping were mainly Dublin, Navan, Drogheda and also Cavan Town.

According to the 'Retailers Survey', Bailieborough attracts customers from the rural area surrounding the town, within a 10 mile radius, Virginia, Cavan, Kingscourt, Mullagh, Kells, Cootehill, Dublin, Ashbourne, Sherlock, Navan, Meath, Monaghan, and Moynalty. The reasons provided for this attraction relate to specific product ranges, product type or stock and quality of goods and services – 'maybe because we are traditional style butcher with our own abattoir and meats come from surrounding farms' and 'we are the only Clarke's Children shoes Stockists in County Cavan'.

#### *Variety of Retail*

A vibrant, healthy town requires a variety of retail types. As Bailieborough is a major town in the county serving a rural hinterland, it is important that it has a

good mix of convenience, comparison and bulky goods with a healthy commercial atmosphere. It is the second largest town in the county, in terms of population, with the third largest amount of both comparison and convenience floor space, Cavan Town and Cootehill have more.

According to a retail survey conducted in January 2008 there are 15 convenience retailers, 32 comparison retailers and 3 bulky goods retailers in Bailieborough Town, this does not include 7 vacant properties. Total net convenience is 2,593 square metres, total net comparison is 2,525 square metres, and total bulky goods is net 3,207 square metres.

In the consumer survey, respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the variety of retail in Bailieborough. All respondents stated they were not satisfied. It is clear that while Bailieborough has a mix of retail types it is not adequate for its needs.

#### *Commercial atmosphere*

Respondents in both the customer and retailer questionnaire were asked to rate Bailieborough town out of 5 for Commercial Atmosphere (i.e. the activity in terms of shopping- is the town lively or is it relatively quiet). When all scores were collated it was found that Bailieborough scored 56% for commercial atmosphere, indicating relative satisfaction with commercial atmosphere but improvements are needed.

## **2. Amenity**

Creating sustainable town centres is achieved by combining the elements necessary for an economically successful town centre with those elements that make a place pleasant to live and work in. In identifying such elements it is the opinion of those living in the town which gives the best impression of its amenity value.

In the consumer and retailer survey both shoppers and retailers were asked to rate Bailieborough Town out of 5 under a number of headings. Where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor. The headings are indicated in the table below. The

results were collated and translated into percentages (commercial atmosphere has been dealt with under attractions).

	Score	Out of	%
Cleanliness	27	60	45%
Town Amenity*	34	60	56%
Streetscape**	33	60	55%
Commercial Atmosphere***	34	60	56%
	128	240	53%

\* The amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting & seating) and planting.

\*\* Shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings & streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets.

\*\*\* Is there a lot of activity in terms of shopping, is the town core lively or a bit dead.

**Note: These scores include findings from the retailers survey conducted amongst retailers in Bailieborough.**

Bailieborough Town scored lowest for cleanliness (45%) which is an important factor in a town which attracts a large number of visitors.

Town amenity which is the amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting and seating) and planting scored next highest with 56% indicating relative satisfaction.

Streetscape also scored 55%; this includes 'shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings and streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets'.

### **3. Accessibility**

The Town of Bailieborough is located on the Regional road R165, R178 and the R191 also pass through the Town Core. There are a series of local access roads. Bus Eireann provides a public transport services and several private bus and taxis operate in Bailieborough.

Bailieborough Town and its environs continue to experience development in terms of new housing, community facilities and industry.

Respondents were asked how far they travelled to get to Bailieborough, they travelled 1-2 miles or 5 – 10 miles.

The Consumer survey revealed that all respondents travelled to Bailieborough by private car. Respondents were asked if they were satisfied with pedestrian, cycling and parking facilities in Bailieborough.

Respondents either stated that there were none or that cycle facilities were poor. All respondents thought that pedestrian and parking facilities were good in Bailieborough.

When asked if there was any difficulty accessing retail, no difficulty was stated.

The Retailers Survey identified a rating for car, pedestrian and cyclist, public transport and service access to premises. 56% of respondents to the Retailers Survey identified access to their premises by car as poor, 38% considered it satisfactory, and 6% considered it to be excellent. 13% of retailers considered pedestrian and cyclist access to their premises as poor, 63% rated it as satisfactory, and 6% felt it was very good.

#### **5.4.4 Conclusion**

- This is the second largest town in the county, in terms of population with the third greatest amount of both convenience and comparison floor space. It is consistent with the description of a fourth tier town in the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities
- There is evidence of leakage in terms of some types of comparison goods, though the variety of retail is good relative to other towns, there is dissatisfaction with the variety in the town. This indicates the people have the desire to shop here.
- The town centre is very active with a number of cafes and an excellent library however; there is a lack of civic space in the town.
- Fairly steady market interest in the town with a recent application for a large scale retail development behind Main Street which will provide connections to Main Street and enhance the town core.



- There is dissatisfaction with cleanliness in the town but general satisfaction with town amenity, streetscape and commercial atmosphere.
- Cycle facilities are poor while parking facilities and pedestrian facilities are satisfactory.
- Shops attract customers from other towns including Virginia, Cavan, Cootehill, Navan, Monaghan and Kells.

## **5.5 Belturbet**

### **5.5.1 Profile**

Belturbet town is located north west of Cavan Town near the border with County Fermanagh. The town lies on the N-3 Cavan to Enniskillen national route. Belturbet sits overlooking the River Erne which continues to be a valued asset to the town and offers a fine urban setting. It is one of County Cavan's major towns with a retail function that serves the surrounding community. Belturbet is identified as a 'small size town for urban strengthening' in the Border Regional Guidelines in 2004:

'Key towns in a local context, which have been identified as in need of urban strengthening and which would perform an important local role....' p.49.

Belturbet has a population of and service provision that is almost on a par with 4<sup>th</sup> tier towns as identified in the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

### **5.5.2 Market Interest**

There has been relatively minor retail development in Belturbet since 2002; this is a town with moderate levels of growth. There are a number of new applications for retail units but all are small scale mainly one off units except for a development including five individual retail units which remain unoccupied. Evidence, currently suggests that market interest in Belturbet remains low relative to other larger towns.

### **5.5.3 Health Checks**

#### ***1. Attractions***

Belturbet has a range of both retail and other activities that draw people to the town. It has an important service employment sector with other employment opportunities within the town and in the Belturbet Business Park on the edge of the town. These activities including the town's prominent position overlooking the River Erne, in the Lough Oughter Lake complex and strong urban setting draw people to the town, making it a pleasant place in which to live and work. A Riverside park runs along the Erne from the bridge towards the railway line. There are a number of National Monuments as well as structures of historical importance.

Belturbet has a well developed urban structure with a decided grid pattern of road systems. The bulk of the town is located on the rising land overlooking the bridge on the south bank. The central square or Diamond includes the Town Hall with the Church of Ireland sited alongside the former Town Fort nearby.

#### *Attractions - Retail Activity*

This section examines how active Belturbet is. In a survey conducted amongst consumer's respondents were asked how many times a week they shopped in Belturbet Town. Most respondents shopped in Belturbet once a day. This indicates that the town is, at least, somewhat active. However, considering that most large/main shopping occurs less frequently than once a day the indication is that shoppers travel further for most of their shopping

There are a number of long established retailers in Belturbet town core area. Between 2002 and 2006 Census, Belturbet town experienced an increase in population of 7.7%, which indicates a continued but moderate growth relative to other larger towns in the county.

Retail development is found predominately in the town core, though some limited new developments are found on the edge of the town including the Erne Hill Shopping Centre.

Due to the physical nature of the town centre, larger retail units have not developed in the town core and consequently the Erne Hill Shopping Centre has been developed.

Shoppers were asked where they do their convenience and comparison or luxury goods shopping. The responses indicated a high level of leakage for all goods from this town. Shoppers did their convenience goods shopping in a combination of Belturbet, Cavan Town and Enniskillen.

Respondents were then asked where they shopped for luxury or non food items. Several categories were given so that a better indication of where shoppers travelled for goods was gained.

The categories given were;

- i. Clothes and Footwear
- ii. Cosmetics and Goods for Personal Care
- iii. Medical and Pharmaceutical Products
- iv. Books, Newspapers, Magazines
- v. Household/Appliances and Equipment
- vi. Furniture
- vii. D.I.Y.
- viii. Other

The results indicated a high level of leakage from this town for comparison goods with shoppers not naming Belturbet as one of the towns in which they would purchase Clothes and Footwear, Cosmetics and Goods for Personal Care and Household Appliances and Equipment. Alternative destinations for purchase of comparison goods were mainly Enniskillen and Cavan but also Newry and Belfast.

The findings indicate that while respondents do shop for convenience goods in Belturbet there are leakages to Cavan Town and Enniskillen.

The Retailers Survey revealed that 71% of retailers had agreed that competition has increased over recent years. 29% specifically stated that convenience retailers outside the town centre were the source of this competition; others

stated that other towns/city retailers such as Cavan town and others in Northern Ireland where the source of competition.

#### *Attractions - Variety of Retail*

A vibrant, healthy town requires a variety of retail types. As Belturbet town is a major town in the county serving a rural hinterland, it is important that it has a good mix of convenience, comparison and bulky goods with a healthy commercial atmosphere. According to a retail survey conducted in January 2008 there are 11 Convenience retailers, 13 Comparison retailers and 8 Bulky goods retailers in Belturbet Town. This does not include 13 vacant properties or an estimated 5 proposed retail developments. Total net convenience is 1,525 square metres, total net comparison is 1,030 square metres, and total bulky goods is gross 4,431 square metres. Belturbet is the third smallest, in terms of population growth and has experienced moderate growth. In terms of the amount of actual comparison and convenience floor space, it can be ranked sixth in the county which is in line with its population size. In the consumer survey, respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the variety of retail in Belturbet. Respondents generally identified a need for greater variety of retail: 'Need more choice particularly luxury goods e.g. clothes, shoes etc.'

#### *Attractions - Commercial atmosphere*

Respondents in both the customer and retailer questionnaire were asked to rate Belturbet town out of 5 for Commercial Atmosphere (i.e. the activity in terms of shopping, is the town lively or is it relatively quiet). When all scores were collated it was found that Belturbet Town scored 54% for commercial atmosphere, indicating general satisfaction with commercial atmosphere but improvements are needed 'Need more variety of shops to prevent leakage to other towns such as Enniskillen e.g. more clothes shops, brand names' (retailer survey).

## 2. Amenity

Creating sustainable town centres is achieved by combining the elements necessary for an economically successful town centre with those elements that make a place pleasant to live and work in. In identifying such elements it is the opinion of those living in the town which gives the best impression of its amenity value.

In the consumer and retailer survey both shoppers and retailers were asked to rate Belturbet Town out of 5 under a number of headings. Where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor. The headings are indicated in the table below. The results were collated and translated into percentages (commercial atmosphere has been dealt with under attractions).

	Score	Out of	%
Cleanliness	43	50	86%
Town Amenity*	37	50	74%
Streetscape**	31	50	62%
Commercial Atmosphere***	27	50	54%
	138	200	69%

\* The amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting & seating) and planting.

\*\* Shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings & streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets.

\*\*\* Is there a lot of activity in terms of shopping, is the town core lively or a bit dead.

**Note: These scores include findings from the retailers survey conducted amongst retailers in Belturbet.**

Belturbet Town scored highest for cleanliness (86%) which is an important factor in a town which attracts a large number of visitors.

Town amenity which is the amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting and seating) and planting scored next highest with 74%, indicating the pleasant nature of the town.

‘Too much street furniture outside Gilbrides shop on the diamond, this could be an attractive public space but is cluttered by bins, signs etc.’

Streetscape also scored well at 62%, this includes ‘shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings and streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets’.

### **3. Accessibility**

Belturbet Town is located on the national transport (N3) route Enniskillen to Dublin. Retail is easily accessed from any part of the county by a series of national, regional and local roads.

A number of development led link roads have been identified at various sites in the town – such as Creeny area to the Noghan area; Kilconny area to the Noghan area; Creeny area to the Corporation lands. The completion of the Belturbet by pass route will also be facilitated during this plan period (see Development Plan)

Public transport (Bus Eireann) is available from Ballyconnell to Belturbet to Cavan. Private bus operators and taxis provide a wide range of flexible services into the town.

The Consumer survey identified how far respondents travelled to get to Belturbet. It identified that half of respondents lived in the town and the remainder lived between 1 and 5 miles from the town. When asked ‘how they travelled to Belturbet’, it identified that all used private car.

The town has one car park to the rear of the Diamond/ Belturbet library. There is on-street car-parking in Belturbet; there is also a car park behind the Post Office. Respondents to the Retailers and Consumer Survey were asked if they were satisfied with pedestrian, cycling and parking facilities in Belturbet.

The Consumer Survey identified the response in relation to parking in the town.

The majority of respondents felt that parking in Belturbet is good and one respondent felt it was poor with more car parking spaces being required.

57% of respondents to the Retailers Survey identified access to their premises by car as poor, 29% identified it as satisfactory, and 14% identified car access as

excellent. 29% of retailers considered pedestrian and cyclist access to their premises as poor, 57% considered it satisfactory, and 14% considered it very good.

The Consumers Survey identified that respondents either stated that there were none or that cycle facilities were poor. One respondent commented that;

“Cyclists should not be allowed on rural roads with no hard shoulder”

The Consumer Survey identified that 50% of respondents felt that pedestrian facilities were poor and 50% felt they were adequate. Specific comments include, ‘Busy Main Street- difficult to get across, poor facilities around schools, need pedestrian crossings at school.’ 43% of retailers considered public transport access to their premises as poor, 43% satisfactory and 14% very good. 71% of respondents to the Retailers Survey considered service access as poor, 14% considered to be satisfactory, and 14% very good. 86% of respondents felt that there was a poor amount of car parking spaces in Belturbet, and 14% considered it to be a satisfactory amount.

#### **5.5.4 Conclusion**

- This town sits on the N3 national route – Dublin to Enniskillen, traffic congestion in the town can be severe at times.
- Belturbet is the third smallest, in terms of population growth and has experienced moderate growth. In terms of the amount of actual comparison and convenience floor space, it can be ranked sixth in the county which is in line with its population size.
- High level of leakages for comparison goods shopping and moderate levels for convenience, mainly to Northern Ireland (Enniskillen) and Cavan Town.
- This is a town with moderate levels of growth in both population and retail development. There are a number of new applications for retail units but are small scale mainly one off units or groups of individual small units.
- Identified need for a greater variety of retail in this town.

- Due to the physical nature of the town centre, larger retail units have not developed in the town core and consequently the Erne Hill Shopping Centre has been developed.
- Town scored moderately well for commercial atmosphere 54% and very well in all other categories namely Cleanliness 86% Town amenity 74% and Streetscape 62%. This indicates that the town is attractive and clean with excellent amenity but has poor commercial atmosphere.
- Retail function will be improved with the completion of the Belturbet bypass route.
- Access to some premises on Main Street by car is poor. Pedestrian access in general is adequate, though poor in some areas. Cycle facilities are poor.

## **5.6 Cootehill**

### **5.6.1 Introduction**

Cootehill is identified as a larger town in the Cavan County Development Plan 2008 – 2014, settlement strategy. It is consistent with the description of a fourth tier town in the ‘Retail Guidelines; for Planning Authorities’;

“The fourth tier of the hierarchy comprises a large number of small towns in the 1,500 to 5,000 population category. (They) provide basic convenience shopping, either in small supermarkets or convenience shops and in some cases, lower order comparison shopping such as hardware, pharmaceutical products and clothes.”

The town has a unique population profile in the county. While the environs of Cootehill has experienced significant population increases, Cootehill Urban has experienced population decreases.

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region and the National Spatial Strategy identified Cootehill as being a ‘Medium Sized Town for Urban Strengthening’, such towns are;



“Towns with a population of between 1500 and 5,000 which are in need of urban strengthening, and which would perform an important role in driving the development of a particular spatial component, either individually or in groups’.<sup>10</sup>

### **5.6.2 Market Interest**

From examining planning permissions between 2002 and 2008, it is clear that the retail function of Cootehill is confined mainly to the Town Core.

The Local Area Plan for Cootehill has identified potential capacity for further retail and service development in the Town Core. Such developments would prove to be generators of Town Core renewal and regeneration.

### **5.6.3 Health Check**

#### **1. Attractions**

Cootehill has a strong urban form centred around a cruciform street pattern. The town has a rich and varied history and the remnants of this gives the town a unique and interesting character. There are a number of buildings of historic and cultural importance including Bellamont House, Gatelodges and Demesne. Along with a plethora of historic buildings and structures, Cootehill has a number of cultural assets including a specially built library, GAA grounds uniquely placed in the centre of the town, both primary and post primary schools and natural assets including Dromore Lough, Bellamont Forest and Dromore Loughs which are NHA's. While Cootehill serves a wide catchment area and is an important service provider in its locality, the town centre has seen some decline in recent times. This is somewhat off set by significant population growth in the environs which has enlivened parts of the town and has, despite population decline in the town centre, led to overall population increase for Cootehill Town.

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<sup>10</sup> Border Regional Authority (2004) Border Regional Guidelines; Section 4, P. 48

### *Attractions - Retail Activity*

In the survey conducted amongst consumers all respondents shopped in Cootehill once a week. All respondents lived at least one mile from the town and not greater than 10 miles and travelled to the town by private car. While there would seem to be a good level of retail activity for a town of this size, the decline of the town centre has seen a corresponding decline in retail activity

To establish the range and diversity of retail activity in Cootehill Town a question in the consumer questionnaire asked respondents to identify where they do their convenience<sup>11</sup> and comparison/luxury goods shopping.

The findings indicate that Cootehill has a good provision of convenience goods outlets although there are leakages to other towns. The provision of comparison and luxury goods is limited but is consistent with a town of this size. In terms of retail activity Cootehill is a relatively vibrant town which has seen a level of decline in recent years and would benefit from revitalisation and development of the town core.

### *Variety of Retail*

A vibrant, healthy town requires a variety of retail types. According to a retail survey conducted in January 2008 there are 38 Comparison and 2 Bulky goods retailers in Cootehill and 20 convenience goods retailers. This does not include vacant properties or proposed developments. Total net convenience is 3,535 square metres, total net comparison is 3,489 Square metres, and total bulky goods is gross 3,207 square metres. Additional to these there is 1,375 square metres of vacant or 11 units of potential future retail space in the town and 163 square metres (3 retail units) of proposed retail space. The town is the third largest town in the county in terms of population and possesses the second largest overall floor space in both convenience and comparison retail.

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<sup>11</sup> Convenience shopping refers to the purchase of food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, tobacco, non-durable household goods.

Comparison goods include; clothing and footwear, furniture and furnishings, educational and recreation equipment, books, newspapers and magazines etc.

In the consumer questionnaire, respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the variety of retail in Cootehill. All respondents were dissatisfied with the variety of retail in Cootehill. Comments that were made indicate that respondents wished to see a greater variety or number of all retail types in the town. “Reduce the number of pubs in the town & provide for more variety of shops, e.g. Heatons, Woodies”. (Consumer questionnaire)

*Attractions - Commercial atmosphere*

Respondents in both the customer and retailer questionnaire were asked to rate Cootehill Town out of 5 for Commercial Atmosphere. When all scores were collated it was found that Cootehill Town scored 60% for commercial atmosphere, indicating satisfaction with commercial atmosphere.

**2. Amenity**

Creating sustainable town centres is achieved by combining the elements necessary for an economically successful town centre with those elements that make a place pleasant to live and work in. In identifying such elements it is the opinion of those living in the town which gives the best impression of its amenity value.

In the consumer and retailer survey both shoppers and retailers were asked to rate Cootehill out of 5 under a number of headings. Where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor. The headings are indicated in the table below. The results were collated and translated into percentages (commercial atmosphere has been dealt with under attractions).

	Score	Out of	%
Cleanliness	45.5	65	70%
Town Amenity*	29	65	45%
Streetscape**	39	65	60%
Commercial Atmosphere***	39	65	60%

\* The amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting & seating) and planting.

\*\* Shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings & streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets.

\*\*\* Is there a lot of activity in terms of shopping, is the town core lively or a bit dead.

Cootehill scored high for all categories except for Town Amenity. While people are happy with the cleanliness of the town and its general appearance they are dissatisfied with town amenity.

### **3. Accessibility**

Cootehill is adjacent to the Monaghan border in the north east of the county. It is easily accessible to most parts of the east of the county including Cavan Town through a network of regional and local roads. The town is served by both public and private transport through buses, taxis and coaches. The town itself retains much of its planned origins and its generally compact form means that all parts of the town are easily accessible to the town core, education, recreational, retail and other services and resources. The outskirts of the town has developed at a faster pace than the town core which has experienced some decline. As indicated in the consumer questionnaire most respondents accessed the town by private car.

Respondents were asked their opinion on cycle facilities- respondents felt they were poor or that there were none, comments made indicate that residents of Cootehill do use bicycles on a regular basis.

“A lot of cyclists in town - no facilities”

“Need a footpath out to the edge of town for cycling (to Errigal)”

Most respondents thought pedestrian facilities were good.

“Only one in Cootehill - cars can park right beside it- makes it difficult to see any pedestrians”.

In the retailer’s questionnaire distributed amongst retailers in the town In terms of pedestrian and cyclist access, 90% of respondents thought they were very good or excellent.

Half of the respondents felt parking was poor in Cootehill and half thought that they were good.

“There should be more traffic calming measures on the Main Street to slow down the cars, in order to allow you to reverse out on to the street safely.” (Retailers Survey)

Respondents were asked if they had any difficulty in accessing retail for a stated number of reasons or for any other reason. Most respondents had no problem with access however; one respondent had problems accessing retail due to poor or lack of parking.

In the retailer’s questionnaire distributed amongst retailers in the town respondents were asked to rate access to their premises. In terms of access by car 30% of respondents felt it was poor, 10% felt it was satisfactory, 30% thought it was very good and 30% thought it was excellent.

When asked about Public transport 70% of respondents felt they were poor. People were satisfied with the quantity of car parking spaces in the town, 30% said they were poor and 70% felt they were satisfactory or very good.

#### **5.6.4 Conclusions**

- Cootehill is on the Monaghan border and has experienced a decline in population in the town core, however, significant population increases in the Environs means overall population growth.
- Decline of the town centre, Cootehill would benefit from further development of the town centre, redevelopment of derelict or empty buildings as well as underutilised areas of the town.
- There is evidence of leakages from Cootehill, leakages are mainly to Cavan Town. This is to be expected for a town of this size, particularly for products such as furniture and it is positive that such leakages occur within the county. However, leakages of convenience goods and other more common type goods such as cosmetics, clothes and footwear should not be significant for a town of this size.
- The town has been identified in the Border Regional Guidelines as a ‘Medium Sized Town for Urban Strengthening’

## **5.7 Ballyconnell**

### **5.7.1 Profile**

Ballyconnell is situated in the west of County Cavan close to the border with County Fermanagh. It is located on the Woodford River, which is part of the Shannon-Erne Waterway at the crossroads of the N87 (Belturbet to Enniskillen Road) and the R205 (Derrylin to Ballinamore Road).

As a border town, it is identified as a 'Small Sized Town for Urban Strengthening' in the Border Regional Guidelines in 2004. Such towns are:

'Key towns in a local context, which have been identified as in need of urban strengthening and which would perform an important local role. They also tend to be in peripheral areas'.

### **5.7.2 Market Interest**

Ballyconnell is a medium sized town in the Cavan County Development Plan, 2008-2014 settlement hierarchy. It has both convenience and limited comparison retail providers. It is a growing town that has seen significant increase in retail activity over the last decade. There have been a number of small residential units constructed in Ballyconnell since 2002 indicating steady market interest in the town which is consistent with a town of this size.

Ballyconnell has the second smallest population of the nine larger towns but is seventh in terms of the total amount of comparison and convenience with Ballyjamesduff and Mullagh having less. There are a number of long established retailers in Ballyconnell town core, however, in recent times; other retail developments have sprung up outside this traditional core area.

There is a supermarket on the existing built up area and the Quinn Group warehouses, five retail/commercial units have been built, as well as, a garage and filling station. Market interest in Ballyconnell is thus considered to be healthy for a town of its size.

### 5.7.3 Health Check

#### 1. Attractions

Ballyconnell has a range of both retail and other activities that draw people to the town. The town originally developed as a crossing point on the Woodford River. The town itself is characterised by attractive and continuous building frontages with a mix of building heights and colours. The buildings on the Main Street are typical of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century market towns and are mainly two storey commercial/residential premises.

'Attractions' include the Woodford River, restaurants, the Slieve Russell Hotel, bank, schools, churches, GAA pitch, Ballyconnell House and Gate lodge and Ballyconnell Bridge.

The Woodford River which is part of the Shannon-Erne Waterway flows in a north-east direction through the town. The river is located in a High Landscape Area which branches out to include Annagh Lake, to the east of the Town. Annagh Woods are located to the east of the Town and a walking route runs around the woods and along the river as far as the bridge on the National Road. The river is a place of public use and enjoyment and holds a strong footing within the leisure industry context.

#### *Attractions – Retail Activity*

This section examines how active Ballyconnell is, how active a town is makes it less or more attractive. In a survey conducted amongst consumers, respondents were asked how many times a week they shopped in Ballyconnell.

Most respondents shopped in Ballyconnell once a day indicating some retail activity in the town.

According to the 'Retailers Survey', Ballyconnell attracts consumers from the surrounding catchment including Derrylin, Swanlinbar, Ballinamore, Belturbet, Bawnboy, and Glangevlin.

All retailers stated that competition had increased over recent years. 40% of retailers stated that competition came from 'retailers outside the town centre',

stating 'Supervalu and Londis specifically and low cost selling from supermarkets' and 'The multi-stores of Asda, Lidl and Tesco'.

60% of retailers stated that competition came from 'other town/cities retailers', stating Enniskillen, Northern Ireland and Cavan Town in general as the specific areas. One retailer stated that 'Enniskillen has become as competitive as ever again'.

To establish the range and diversity of retail activity in Ballyconnell a question in the consumer questionnaire asked respondents where they do their convenience and comparison or luxury goods shopping.

Respondents shopped for convenience good shopping mainly in Ballyconnell but also in Cavan, Enniskillen, Blacklion and Killeshandra. This indicates some leakages but in line with healthy competition.

Respondents were then asked where they shopped for luxury or non food items. Several categories were given so that a better indication of where shoppers travelled for goods was gained.

The categories given were;

- i. Clothes and Footwear
- ii. Cosmetics and Goods for Personal Care
- iii. Medical and Pharmaceutical Products
- iv. Books, Newspapers, Magazines
- v. Household/Appliances and Equipment
- vi. Furniture
- vii. D.I.Y.
- viii. Other

Ballyconnell has a range of comparison goods retailers which are consistent with a town of its size. There is evidence of a high level of leakages from this town to other towns but considering the town's size, it is within or close to a level that can be considered healthy competition. However, the leakages appear to be to towns outside of the county. Since Cavan Town is approximately thirty minutes from Ballyconnell this indicates a need to strengthen the retail provision of Cavan



Town as a provider of services such as retail to other towns and villages in the county. Respondents did not name Ballyconnell as a town in which they would purchase Clothes and Footwear, Household Appliances and Equipment, Furniture and DIY goods. The most common alternative destination for shoppers from Ballyconnell was Enniskillen and Cavan Town but also Longford, Dublin and Sligo.

#### *Attractions - Variety of Retail*

A vibrant, healthy town requires a variety of retail types. According to a retail survey conducted in January 2008 there are 8 Convenience retailers, 15 Comparison retailers and 1 Bulky goods retailer in Ballyconnell Town, though this does not include 9 vacant properties. Total net convenience is estimated to be 1,384 square metres, total gross comparison is 884 square metres, and total bulky goods is 730 gross square metres. Ballyconnell has the second smallest population of the nine larger towns but is seventh in terms of the total amount of comparison and convenience with Ballyjamesduff and Mullagh having less. Market interest in Ballyconnell is thus considered to be healthy for a town of its size.

In the consumer survey, respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the variety of retail in Ballyconnell. Half of the respondents were satisfied with the variety of retail and half were not satisfied. Comments include, "It needs shoe store, boutique and maybe better supermarket with better selection than what is there already."

#### *Commercial atmosphere*

Respondents in both the customer and retailer questionnaire were asked to rate Ballyconnell town out of 5 for Commercial Atmosphere (i.e. the activity in terms of shopping, is the town lively or is it relatively quiet). When all scores were collated it was found that Ballyconnell Town scored 67% for commercial atmosphere, indicating general satisfaction with commercial atmosphere

## 2. Amenity

Creating sustainable town centres is achieved by combining the elements necessary for an economically successful town centre with those elements that make a place pleasant to live and work in. In identifying such elements it is the opinion of those living in the town which gives the best impression of its amenity value.

In the consumer and retailer survey both shoppers and retailers were asked to rate Ballyconnell Town out of 5 under a number of headings. Where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor. The headings are indicated in the table below. The results were collated and translated into percentages (commercial atmosphere has been dealt with under attractions).

	Score	Out of	%
Cleanliness	29	40	72%
Town Amenity*	26	40	65%
Streetscape**	26	40	65%
Commercial Atmosphere***	27	40	67%
	108	160	67%

\* The amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting & seating) and planting.

\*\* Shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings & streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets.

\*\*\* Is there a lot of activity in terms of shopping, is the town core lively or poor commercially.

**Note: These scores include findings from the retailers survey conducted amongst retailers in Ballyconnell.**

Ballyconnell Town score highest for cleanliness (72%) which is an important factor in a town which attracts a large number of visitors. Town amenity which is the amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting and seating) and planting scored next highest with 65%, indicating the pleasant nature of the town. Streetscape also scored well at 65%, this

includes 'shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings and streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets'.

### **3. Accessibility**

Ballyconnell Town is located on the national secondary route (N3) route Enniskillen to Dublin. Retail is easily accessed from any part of the county by a series of national, regional and local roads. It is also accessible via waterways. The County Development Plan, 2008-2014 (Ballyconnell Local Area Plan) states that: It is essential that traffic is managed so as to minimise future congestion, in order;

- That commercial services, which centre around Main Street, Bridge Street, and Church Street develop sufficiently to serve the future population.
- That the residential amenities of properties on the Main Street, Bridge Street and Church Street are protected.
- That existing road space throughout the Town functions effectively for all road users, pedestrians and people with disabilities.

Public Transport (Bus Eireann) is available from Ballyconnell to Belturbet to Cavan. Private bus operators and taxis provide a wide range of flexible services into the town. The town has one car park located beside the GAA pitch. There is on-street car-parking in Ballyconnell; No 'parking restrictions' are in operation. Respondents to the Retailers and Consumer Survey were asked if they were satisfied with pedestrian, cycling and parking facilities in Ballyconnell.

Respondents to the 'Consumer Survey' had difficulty accessing retail due to poor or no parking and distance from the town.

Most respondents to the Consumer Survey either stated that there were no cycle facilities or that they had no opinion about cycle facilities. One respondent thought they were good. Half of the respondents thought that pedestrian facilities were good; the remaining either had no opinion or felt they were poor.

The Consumer Survey identified the response in relation to parking in the town. Half of the respondents felt parking was poor in Ballyconnell and the remaining thought it was good or had no opinion. 80% of respondents to the Retailers

Survey identified access to their premises by car as poor, while 20% felt it was very good.

60% of Retailers in Ballyconnell felt that pedestrian access in Ballyconnell was poor, 20% indicated that it was satisfactory, and 20% indicated that it was very good. 60% of respondents felt that public transport access was poor, 20% felt it was satisfactory and 30% felt it was very good. Service Access was rated as 80% poor, and 20% satisfactory. 80% of respondents felt that quantity of car parking spaces was poor, and 20% felt that it was satisfactory.

#### **5.7.4 Conclusions**

- Ballyconnell is the western most of the larger towns and is located close to the border with Fermanagh.
- It is identified in the Border Regional Guidelines as a small size town for urban strengthening and has the second smallest population of the nine larger towns with the third lowest total floor space for both comparison and convenience.
- It is an important service provider in the west of the county.
- There is leakage from the town for some types of comparison goods mainly to Cavan Town and Enniskillen.
- Half of the respondents in the survey of consumers were satisfied with retail in the town.
- The town scored well for Commercial Atmosphere (72%), Town Amenity (65%), Streetscape (65%), and Commercial Atmosphere (67%).
- Lack of parking emerged as an issue and 80% of retailers indicated a problem with service access and access by car for shoppers to their premises.

## **5.8 Kingscourt**

### **5.8.1 Profile**

Kingscourt town is located in the east of the County on the border with County Meath. The town was founded by Mervyn Pratt and later by Rev. Joseph Pratt. It has a distinctive planned street layout. 'Kingscourt' is named from 1690 when King James held court for one night in Cormey Castle (now Cabra Castle) on his way to the Battle of the Boyne. Physical development has been restricted to the east of the town due to steep topography.

Kingscourt has developed primarily along Main Street and Church Street and more recently along the roads leading to Bailieborough, Mullagh and Carrickmacross.

The town has experienced a significant population growth of 33.7%. The Regional Planning Guidelines (Border Regional Authority, 2004) identify Kingscourt as a 'medium sized town for urban strengthening'. Such towns are: 'Towns with a population of between 1,500 and 5,000 which are in need of urban strengthening, and which would perform an important role in driving the development of a particular spatial component, either individually or in groups' Kingscourt has a population and service provision that is almost on a par with 4<sup>th</sup> tier towns

### **5.8.2 Market Interest**

Due to the physical nature and physical constraints of the town centre, larger retail units have not developed in the town core. However the town is served by some chain stores such as Centra and Supervalu as well as long established local retailers. However, some of the larger convenience chain stores are represented in the town and there are indications of a growing market interest in locating to Kingscourt.

### **5.8.3 Health Check**

#### **1. Attractions**

Kingscourt has a range of both retail and other activities that draw people to the town. The town has developed as one of the major towns of the County and has a strong industrial base, retail and service sector. The town is characterised by a wide Main Street with some extensions to the east and west, with an attractive and continuous building frontage with a mix of building heights and colours. The buildings on Main Street and Church Street are typical of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century market towns and are mainly two-storey with commercial and residential uses. The Town Core has a variety of retail uses, banking and professional services, restaurants and public houses. In recent times, other retail developments have sprung up outside the traditional core area. The main attractions include schools, churches, GAA football pitch, Dun a Rí Forest Park, pubs and hotel. Retail activity has confined primarily to the town core, with some limited comparison or bulky retail at the edge of the town core.

#### *Attractions - Retail Activity*

There are a number of long established retailers in the Kingscourt town core area, with some retail/commercial additions on the edge of the town. Between 2002 and 2006 Census, Kingscourt town experienced an increase in population of 33.7%, which indicates a continued growth, which is almost three times the average county growth.

To ascertain where people do their everyday convenience shopping, weekly shopping and comparison or luxury goods shopping respondents were asked where they purchase certain types of goods. While respondents shopped for everyday convenience goods in Kingscourt they did their main grocery shopping in Dundalk. This indicates some level of activity in the town, but willingness for shoppers to travel further afield.

Respondents were then asked where they shopped for luxury or non food items. Several categories were given so that a better indication of where shoppers travelled for goods was gained.

The categories given were;

- i. Clothes and Footwear
- ii. Cosmetics and Goods for Personal Care
- iii. Medical and Pharmaceutical Products
- iv. Books, Newspapers, Magazines
- v. Household/Appliances and Equipment
- vi. Furniture
- vii. D.I.Y.
- viii. Other

The findings indicate a high level of leakage from the town for all comparison goods except for Medical & Pharmaceutical products. The other identified shopping destinations were Dundalk, Drogheda and Dublin.

Some new developments have taken place in the town such as renovations to existing retail units and conversion of non-retail premises to a retail uses. There are also some new proposals for retail developments.

According to the Retailers Survey Kingscourt attracts consumers from the surrounding catchment such as Bailieborough, Shercock, Kells, Nobber, Meath Hill, Ardee, Carrickmacross, Drumcondrath, and Moynalty. The reasons stated for this attraction were passing trade, people from other towns working locally, and wedding parties attending Cabra Castle. The Retailers Survey revealed that 70% of retailers had agreed that competition has increased over recent years. 10% stated that competition had remained the same. 10% had not stated whether competition has changed over the years.

10% of retailers stated that convenience retailers 'outside the town centre' were the source of this competition (with Lidl given as an example); 20% stated that 'other towns/city retailers' such as 'larger towns with bigger retail outlets' and 'Carrickmacross and Ardee', 'other' competition identified was from 'within Kingscourt';

20% of Respondents stated that comparison competition came from 'retailers outside of town centre', with one respondent stating that 'all people shop in larger towns now'. 40% of retailers stated competition from comparison retailers 'other

town/cities retailers', giving examples of 'McNally's Pharmacy', 'Supervalu' and naming towns such as Navan, Dundalk, Casual Traders, Drogheda, Carrickmacross, Blanchardstown and Dublin.

#### *Attractions - Variety of Retail*

A vibrant, healthy town requires a variety of retail types. As Kingscourt town is a major town in the county serving a rural hinterland, it is important that it has a good mix of convenience, comparison and bulky goods with a healthy commercial atmosphere.

According to a retail survey conducted in January 2008 there are 20 convenience retailers, 23 comparison retailers and 7 bulky goods retailers in Kingscourt Town. This does not include 9 vacant properties with potential for retail development in the future, or an estimated 11 proposed retail developments. Total net convenience is 2,079 square metres, total net comparison is 1,619 square metres, and total bulky goods is net 4,220 square metres. The town is the fourth largest town in terms of population with the fifth greatest amount of total convenience and comparison floor space.

#### *Attractions - Commercial atmosphere*

Respondents in both the customer and retailer questionnaire were asked to rate Kingscourt town out of 5 for Commercial Atmosphere (i.e. the activity in terms of shopping, is the town lively or is it relatively quiet). When all scores were collated it was found that Kingscourt Town scored 42% for commercial atmosphere, indicating dissatisfaction with commercial atmosphere but improvements are needed.

## **2. Amenity**

Creating sustainable town centres is achieved by combining the elements necessary for an economically successful town centre with those elements that make a place pleasant to live and work in. In identifying such elements it is the



opinion of those living in the town which gives the best impression of its amenity value.

In the consumer and retailer survey both shoppers and retailers were asked to rate Kingscourt Town out of 5 under a number of headings. Where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor. The headings are indicated in the table below. The results were collated and translated into percentages (commercial atmosphere has been dealt with under attractions).

	Score	Out of	%
Cleanliness	17	55	31%
Town Amenity*	22	55	40%
Streetscape**	22	55	40%
Commercial Atmosphere***	23	55	42%
	84	220	38%

\* The amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting & seating) and planting.

\*\* Shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings & streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets.

\*\*\* Is there a lot of activity in terms of shopping, is the town core lively or a bit dead.

**Note: These scores include findings from the retailers survey conducted amongst retailers in Kingscourt.**

Kingscourt Town scored least well for cleanliness (31%) which is an important factor in a town which attracts a large number of visitors.

Town amenity which is the amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting and seating) and planting scored next highest with 40%.

Streetscape also scored 40%; this includes 'shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings and streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets'.

### **3. Accessibility**

Kingscourt Town is accessed by regional and local access roads. The town is served by public transport with frequent Bus Eireann routes in operation. The town is also accessed by local taxis.

The Regional Planning Guidelines identify the reopening of the Kingscourt to Navan rail link as a 'strategic linking corridor' and identify it as an objective for the Border Region.

The Cavan County Development Plan, 2008-2014 also contains a specific objective stating that 'Developments near the rail line must not prejudice the proper redevelopment of the rail link in a physical context'.

Respondents to the Retailers and Consumer Survey were asked if they were satisfied with pedestrian, cycling and parking facilities in Kingscourt. All respondents to the Consumer Survey lived in the town and travelled on foot to Kingscourt. All respondents identified cycle facilities as being poor. All respondents to the Consumer Survey identified pedestrian facilities as being poor. 20% of retailers considered pedestrian and cyclist access to their premises as poor, 60% considered it satisfactory, and 20% considered it very good. All respondents to the Consumer Survey identified parking as being poor in Kingscourt. 40% of respondents to the Retailers Survey identified access to their premises by car as poor, 60% however were satisfied.

Respondents either had no difficulty or identified parking as a difficulty in accessing retail. 40% of retailers considered public transport access to their premises as poor, and 50% were satisfied. This includes disabled access and 20% of retailers rate this as poor. 30% of respondents to the Retailers Survey considered service access as poor, and 70% considered it to be satisfactory. 80% of respondents felt that there was a poor amount of car parking spaces in Kingscourt, and 20% considered the amount to be satisfactory.

#### **5.8.4 Conclusions**

- Located in the east of the county on the border with Meath, Kingscourt has experienced significant growth and is identified in the BRPG as a medium sized town for urban strengthening.
- Evidence of leakage to towns outside of the county for comparison goods mainly Dundalk, Drogheda and Dublin.
- The town is the fourth largest town in terms of population with the fifth greatest amount of total convenience and comparison floor space.
- The Town did not score well for Cleanliness, Town Amenity, Streetscape and Commercial Atmosphere.
- There are a number of vacant or underused premises along Main Street which have retail potential.
- Car parking emerged as an issue for the town

### **5.9 Virginia**

#### **5.9.1 Profile**

Virginia is identified as a larger town in the Cavan County Development Plan, 2008 – 2014 settlement strategy. In the retail hierarchy it is identified as a fourth tier town consistent with the definition of fourth tier towns in the ‘Retail Guidelines; for Planning Authorities’;

“The fourth tier of the hierarchy comprises a large number of small towns in the 1,500 to 5,000 population category. (They) provide basic convenience shopping, either in small supermarkets or convenience shops and in some cases, lower order comparison shopping such as hardware, pharmaceutical products and clothes.”

Virginia has developed extensively in the last decade; it has experienced high levels of population increase since 1996 and corresponding to high levels of development. The town has expanded around a linear street pattern on the national (N3) running from Cavan to Dublin. The town’s physical development is

somewhat restricted to the south by Lough Ramor and to the north by the proposed Virginia by-pass corridor, pushing development to the east and west. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region and the National Spatial Strategy identified Virginia as being a ‘town for Consolidating’. Such towns are; “Towns that have recently experienced high levels of population growth, or which are in the commuter belt, where more measured growth would be in context with its setting, and where self sufficiency is necessary”.<sup>12</sup>

### **5.9.2 Market Interest**

There is a healthy and continuing market Interest in the town with a significant retail development in the town core, on the Ballyjamesduff road recently completed and evidence of interest in the development of further large scale retail developments.

### **5.9.3 Health Checks**

#### ***1. Attractions***

Virginia has a strong urban form centred on a linear street layout with the Main Street giving the town a strong anchor around which the rest of the town has grown. The N3 national route Dublin to Cavan runs through the town. Virginia is an attractive town with a number of historic buildings and attractions drawing visitors to the town. Sited on the shores of Lough Ramor, Virginia has a number of hotels, restaurants, a caravan park, a nine hole gold course, woodland walks and the Ramor Theatre which hosts events throughout the year. The town also hosts a number of festivals and fairs, the Virginia Street Fair, Virginia Agricultural Show and the Virginia Pumpkin Festival. As well as tourist and visitor attractions the town is well served by education, social and other services essential for a growing town. There are both primary and post primary education facilities, a Health Centre, and Football Pitch. Virginia serves a wide hinterland and its population growth, existing attractions and newly developed shopping area makes it an attractive location for those living in and outside of the county.

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<sup>12</sup> Border Regional Authority (2004) Border Regional Guidelines; Section 4, P. 48

### *Attractions - Retail Activity*

In the survey conducted amongst consumers respondents shopped in Virginia either once a day or once a week. All respondents lived at least one mile from the town and not greater than 5 miles and all travelled by private car.

To establish the range and diversity of retail activity in Virginia Town a question in the consumer questionnaire asked respondents to identify where they do their convenience<sup>13</sup> and comparison/luxury goods shopping.

The findings indicate a low level of leakage from Virginia in terms of convenience shopping, while the majority of shoppers do conduct both their everyday and main grocery shopping in the town, they also named Bailieborough and Cavan as towns in which they shopped for convenience goods. The level of leakage is consistent with a level that can be considered healthy competition.

Respondents were then asked where they shopped for comparison or luxury goods and food items. Several categories were given these were;

- i. Clothes and Footwear
- ii. Cosmetics and Goods for Personal Care
- iii. Medical and Pharmaceutical Products
- iv. Books, Newspapers, Magazines
- v. Household/Appliances and Equipment
- vi. Furniture
- vii. D.I.Y.
- viii. Other

There was evidence of leakages to other towns for some products namely Clothes and Footwear, Household Appliances and Equipment, Furniture and DIY goods. Alternative locations for shopping were Cavan Town, Dublin, and Navan. The findings above indicate a level of leakage to other towns in and outside the county; this would be strongly influenced by the close proximity of Navan and

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<sup>13</sup> Convenience shopping refers to the purchase of food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, tobacco, non-durable household goods.

Comparison goods include; clothing and footwear, furniture and furnishings, educational and recreation equipment, books, newspapers and magazines etc.

relative close proximity of Dublin. Virginia has a good provision of convenience goods outlets which has been added to recently with the Eurospar development on the Ballyjamesduff road, although the questionnaires indicated leakages to other towns these do not appear to be significant. The provision of Comparison and Luxury Goods are good for a town of its size. A certain level of leakage to other towns is to be expected, especially given Virginia's position on the N3 making Cavan, Dublin, Navan, etc. easily accessible from the town both by private car and public transport which is well represented in the town.

#### *Attractions - Variety of Retail*

A vibrant, healthy town requires a variety of retail types. According to a retail survey conducted in January 2008 there are 22 Comparison, 14 Bulky goods retailers in Virginia and 8 convenience goods retailers. This does not include vacant properties or proposed developments. Total net convenience floorspace is 2,306 Square metres, total net comparison is 1,733 Square metres, and total bulky goods is gross 2,162 square metres. Additional to these, there is 1,660 square metres of vacant and 2,006 square metres of proposed retail space.

Virginia is the fifth largest town in terms of population and has the fourth greatest amount of total comparison and convenience floor space.

In the consumer questionnaire, respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the variety of retail in Virginia. Most respondents were dissatisfied;

#### *Commercial atmosphere*

Respondents in both the customer and retailer questionnaire were asked to rate Virginia Town out of 5 for Commercial Atmosphere. When all scores were collated it was found that Virginia Town scored 50% for commercial atmosphere, indicating general satisfaction with commercial atmosphere .

## **2. Amenity**

Creating sustainable town centres is achieved by juxtaposing the elements necessary for an economically successful town centre with those elements that make a place pleasant to live and work in. In identifying such elements it is the opinion of those living in the town which gives the best impression of its amenity value.

In the consumer and retailer survey both shoppers and retailers were asked to rate Virginia out of 5 under a number of headings. Where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor. The headings are indicated in the table below. The results were collated and translated into percentages (commercial atmosphere has been dealt with under attractions).

	Score	Out of	%
Cleanliness	55	85	65%
Town Amenity*	40	85	47%
Streetscape**	50	85	59%
Commercial Atmosphere***	43	85	50%

\* The amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting & seating) and planting.

\*\* Shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings & streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets.

\*\*\* Is there a lot of activity in terms of shopping, is the town core lively or a bit dead.

Virginia scored high for all categories except for Town Amenity. While people are happy with the cleanliness of the town and its general appearance they are dissatisfied with town amenity. "Litter outside takeaways can be very bad with overflowing bins. Some buildings along the main street have been allowed to get into disrepair which spoils the whole streetscape."

## **3. Accessibility**

Virginia town is on the N3 National Primary Route - Dublin to Cavan and linking Virginia to many parts of the county. The town is well served by an hourly bus Eireann services to Dublin and Cavan. Virginia is easily accessible to most parts

of county Cavan via a network of national, regional and local roads. The town itself retains its original linear layout and its compact form means many parts of the core of this town are in walking distance from each other. Vehicular access is adequate, however due to its position on the N3 and its continued growth and development this is a busy, bustling town with high levels of traffic.

Respondents were asked their opinion on cycle facilities and they felt that facilities were poor or that there were none,

Most respondents thought pedestrian facilities were good and the remaining thought that they were poor.

In the retailers questionnaire distributed amongst retailers in the town In terms of pedestrian and cyclist access, most respondents felt they were satisfactory to excellent.

Most respondents in the consumer questionnaire felt parking was good while the remaining though it was poor.

More public car parking required

‘Two hour parking has improved situation slightly’.

Respondents to the retailer survey were less satisfied, almost 60% of respondents thought parking was poor, and the remainder stated it was satisfactory. There were numerous comments in relation to the need for improved parking. “The parking in the town centre is not two hour parking which does not allow for women attending certain business such as hair and beauty where appointments take longer and therefore cause people to go elsewhere, therefore bad. Knock on effect for other business, changed to 3 hours, would be an improvement.”

Respondents in the consumer questionnaire were asked if they had any difficulty in accessing retail for a stated number of reasons or for any other reason. All those who stated a reason said it was due to parking. In the retailer’s questionnaire distributed amongst retailers in the town, respondents were asked to rate access to their premises. In terms of access by car 47% of the respondents felt it was poor, 6% felt it was satisfactory, 23% thought it was very good and 23% thought it was excellent.



When asked about public transport 29% of respondents felt it was poor, 53% felt it was satisfactory, 6% thought it was good and 12% felt it was excellent.

#### **5.9.4 Conclusions**

- This town is in a strategic location on the N3 between Dublin and Cavan, there is strong market interest in the town with a large retail development on the Ballyjamesduff road.
- The town is considered very clean with a good streetscape but town amenity and commercial atmosphere are not considered as good.
- Parking is identified as a major problem in this town.
- There is leakage of comparison goods shopping to Dublin and Navan which is influenced by an excellent road network and public transport system to these towns.

#### **5.10 Mullagh**

##### **5.10.1 Profile**

Mullagh is located in the south east of County Cavan, near to the border with County Meath. The town lies on R-194-0, close to the main Cavan – Dublin national route, the N3.

Mullagh is associated with the birth place of Saint Killian a 7<sup>th</sup> century saint. Mullagh originated as a local market town for the surrounding agricultural community and has retained its service and retail function. The town is a planned village with a wide central Main Street and has experienced significant development due to its strategic location adjacent to the Greater Dublin Area. In the previous Cavan County Development Plan 2003 – 2009, Mullagh was classed as a small town. The National Spatial Strategy and Border Regional Guidelines identified the town as being a ‘Small Sized Town for Urban Strengthening’ in line with a number of the other larger towns in the county. A Local Area Plan was produced and adopted for the town and it is now classed as a larger town.

Mullagh experienced a 42% growth in population between 2002 – 2006 (Census, 2006); however in terms of its population it is still the smallest of the ‘larger towns’.

### **5.10.2 Market Interest**

Mullagh is identifiable as a growing town that has seen an increase in retail activity. There are a number of small scale retail developments (547 square metres net floor space) proposed for Mullagh, which given the current floor space quantity are significant in the context of the town. There are a total of four comparison goods retailers, five convenience goods retailers and three bulky goods retailers.

### **5.10.3 Health Checks**

#### ***1. Attractions***

Mullagh has a number of attractions which include both retail and other activities that draw people to the town. Wellman’s International, local agriculture and services provided within the town core constitute important local employment opportunities.

Saint Killian’s Heritage Centre is an important attraction in the town. Edwin Carolan Memorial Park provides a leisure and amenity facility for the town and the Fair Green amenity areas are valuable assets within the Town Core. The Moynalty River flows in a south east direction from Mullagh Lake through the Town. Mullagh Lake is also an important amenity area and is a potential tourist attraction for the town. Though it is a growing town, Mullagh maintains a unique rural character. Mullagh Walk takes in stunning views of the lake and the surrounding countryside and Killian’s Lodge Hotel is located in the town centre. There are a number of Protected Structures of note in Mullagh such as St. Killian’s Roman Catholic Church and others located on Main Street.

### *Attractions - Retail Activity*

This section examines how active Mullagh is, the more active a town the more attractive it is. There are a number of long established retailers and some new additions in Mullagh town core area. Between 2002 and 2006 Census, Mullagh town experienced an increase in population of 42% which indicates a substantial growth relative to other larger towns in other parts of the county. Centra is the first larger scale convenience retail unit to have developed in this town due to the relatively small nature of this town. 50% of Retailers were surveyed in Mullagh, however no data was returned from the Consumer Survey in relation to this town. There are a number of convenience retailers including butchers, a supermarket and small stores including an off-licence. There are four comparison goods retailers and three bulky goods stores which carry agricultural supplies and auto parts.

### *Variety of Retail*

A vibrant, healthy town requires a variety of retail types. As Mullagh is becoming a larger town in the county and serves a rural hinterland, it is important that it has a good mix of convenience, comparison and bulky goods with a healthy commercial atmosphere. According to a retail floor space survey conducted in April 2008 there are 5 convenience retailers, 4 comparison retailers and 3 bulky goods retailers in Mullagh, however there are an estimated 7 proposed retail developments. Total net convenience is estimated as 536 square metres, total net comparison is estimated as 363 square metres and total net bulky goods is estimated as 464 square metres. It is the smallest town in population and total convenience and comparison floor space.

### *Commercial Atmosphere*

Respondents to the Retailer's Survey were asked to rate Mullagh out of 5 (where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent) for Commercial Atmosphere (i.e. the activity in terms of shopping, is the town lively or is it relatively quiet). It was found that Mullagh scored 47% for commercial atmosphere, indicating that improvements are

needed “A big retail store would be a great draw for people to Mullagh” (Comments from the Retailer’s Survey). The need for a small bank, building society or cash point in the town has been highlighted, as people travel away from Mullagh to gain access to these services. A greater variety of retail is required in Mullagh “More shops such as men’s clothes, video shop, shoe shop or internet café” (Comments from the Retailer’s Survey).

50% of convenience retailers stated that competition has come from retailers outside Mullagh, and 33% of comparison goods competition comes from retailers outside Mullagh. Some convenience goods retailers have stated that new shops in the town are a source of competition as they stock similar goods. The type of goods purchased has changed (e.g. increase in off-licence sales since the smoking ban and an increase in healthy eating) especially with the large increase in population. Other retailers have renovated their retail units and others have no room to expand.

The Retailer’s Survey revealed that customers come to Mullagh from Moynalty, Virginia, Kells, Carlanstown, Bailieborough and Navan for cost reasons, type of goods available and due to a customer base built up over many years.

## ***2. Amenity***

Creating sustainable town centres is achieved by combining the elements necessary for an economically successful town centre with those elements that make a place pleasant to live and work in. In identifying such elements it is the opinion of those living in, working in or visiting the town which give the best impression of its amenity value.

In the Retailer’s Survey, retailers were asked to rate Mullagh out of 5 under a number of headings (where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor). The headings are indicated in the table below (commercial atmosphere has been dealt with under attractions).

	%
Cleanliness	73%
Town Amenity*	53%
Streetscape**	63%
Commercial Atmosphere***	47%
	59%

\* The amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting & seating) and planting.

\*\* Shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings & streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets.

\*\*\* Is there a lot of activity in terms of shopping, is the town core lively or a bit dead.

Mullagh's highest score was for cleanliness (73%) which is an important factor in a town to attract consumers and visitors. Streetscape scored relatively well at 63%, this includes 'shop fronts, quality and appearance of buildings and streetscape and general appearance of town core and streets'.

Town amenity which is the amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture (e.g. lighting and seating) and planting scored next highest with 53%, indicating the relative satisfaction with the amenity in the town. "Improved street lighting is needed on roads out of town and improved footpaths" (Comments from the Retailer's Survey). "With the influx of residents from Dublin (due to house prices) in recent year, more amenities are needed". The overall score for Mullagh as rated by Retailers in the town is 59%.

### **3. Accessibility**

Mullagh is located on a Regional Route R-194. Retail is accessed via regional and local roads. There are no public transport (Bus Eireann) services to Mullagh, however these services can be accessed from the National Route N3. Private bus operators and taxis provide a wide range of flexible services into the town. There is on-street car-parking in Mullagh and a car-parking is available beside Centra.

The Retailer's Survey identified how access was rated in Mullagh in terms of car, pedestrian, cyclist, and public transport. These were rated as poor, satisfactory, very good or excellent. The Survey also identified the quality of service access (i.e. deliveries) in the town and the quantity of car-parking spaces in the town. Access via car was rated as 66% poor or satisfactory and 33% excellent. 33% rated access for pedestrians and cyclists as excellent and 50% stated that it was satisfactory or very good. 83% stated that public transport access was poor and 17% stated that it was satisfactory. 17% rated service delivery access as poor, 66% stated that it was satisfactory or very good and 17% rated it as excellent. The quantity of car parking spaces was rated as 84% poor or satisfactory and 17% stated that it was excellent.

#### **5.10.4 Conclusion**

- This is the smallest of the nine larger towns, in the previous County Development Plan 2003 – 2009, Mullagh was classified as a small town. The National Spatial Strategy and Border Regional Guidelines identified the town as being a 'Small Sized Town for Urban Strengthening' in line with a number of the other larger towns in the county. A Local Area Plan was produced and adopted for the town and it is now classed as a larger town.
- It retains a lot of its rural nature with significant capacity for development in the backlands.
- The town scored well for cleanliness and streetscape, moderately for Town amenity and poorly for commercial atmosphere.

## Chapter Six

### Policies, Actions and Criteria for Assessing Future Retail Development

#### 6.0 Introduction

The function of this chapter is to provide a policy response and recommendations to ensure the improvements and ongoing sustainable development of town cores. It also seeks to provide guidelines regarding the assessment of future planning applications for retail development.

#### 6.1 Criteria for Assessing Future Retail Development

All applications for significant retail development should be assessed against a range of criteria. The 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities' identify five key objectives

1. Ensure that all development plans incorporate policies and proposals of retail development
2. Facilitate a competitive and healthy environment for the retail industry of the future.
3. Promote forms of development which are easily accessible particularly by public transport – in a location which encourages multi- purpose shopping business and leisure trips on the same journey.
4. Support the continuing role of town and district centres.
5. Presumption against large retail centres located adjacent to or close to existing, new or planned national roads/networks.

Source: Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005)

The priority in this retail strategy is the further development of the retail function of the nine larger towns, with Cavan Town as a priority, but to do so in a way that strengthen and supports the role of town centres and does not detract from them.

#### 6.2 The Sequential Test

The Regional Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities states that;

“As far as possible new development is to be sited within town centres or, if no sites are available, immediately on the edge of town centres with a presumption against development elsewhere, except where district or neighbourhood centres are being provided to meet neighbourhood needs. A full appraisal of the retail development potential of sites both in the town centre and on the edge of town centres should be undertaken.”<sup>14</sup>

This essentially, is a Sequential Test; based on the Regional Planning Guidelines the Planning Authority requires that;

- All applications for new retail developments must be accompanied by a sequential test, where deemed necessary by the Planning Authority.
- The preferred location for new retail development is with a town centre (or district or major village centre).
- Where it is not possible to provide the form and scale of development required on site within a town centre then consideration can be given to a site on the edge of the town centre, to encourage one journey for several purposes. An edge of centre site refers to a site which is within easy and convenient walking distance (typically 300 – 400 metres from the edge of the prime shopping area) from the primary shopping core of a town centre.
- The developer must assess the size, availability, accessibility and feasibility of developing site/s firstly within and then at the edge of town centres before out of centre sites can be considered. They must demonstrate that there are no town centre or edge of centre sites which are suitable, viable and available.

### **6.3 General Policies**

- Rather than making absolute predictions for future retail requirement each application for retail development will be assessed on its own merits having regard to the contents of a retail impact assessment for same.

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<sup>14</sup> Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (2005) Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities, page 18.



- Sites suggested for development must be capable of being accessed and serviced and should be viable for the proposed use and likely to become available within a reasonable period of time.
- Applications for new retail development must comply with the appropriate Development Plan or any Local Area Plan in force as well as the Retail Planning Guidelines 2005, as amended.
- New retail developments must not adversely detract from the vitality and viability of existing town cores and must link effectively with them both in terms of pedestrian and vehicular access, as well as, in terms of scale and appearance.
- Applications for new large-scale out of town retail developments, will be accompanied by a transport assessment showing how trips to and from the proposed development might affect the road network and public transport links. If the proposed development warrants an environmental impact assessment, the transport assessment should form part of the EIS.

### **6.3.1 Retail Warehousing**

Applications for retail parks and retail warehousing will be required to assess the likely impact on the existing town centres for the towns in which it is situated. A description of the target market and catchment area will be required in order to assess this. If a number of retail warehousing elements are existing/ proposed in an area, the cumulative impact of these must be assessed. Full details of the types of goods to be sold should be described in the application. Details should include whether the goods fit into the category of comparison or bulky goods as described in the Retail Planning Guidelines.

### **6.3.2 Service Stations**

New petrol stations and refurbished existing stations will be required to have a high standard of overall design and architectural layout to ensure an attractive development that integrates with and complements or enhances its surroundings.

The forecourt canopy should be integrated into the overall design and sited so that it does not dominate the surrounding buildings.

Petrol filling stations must be located on the outskirts of a town/village but inside the 50km or 60km speed limits. The preferred location is on the near side of the roadway on the way out of town.

The essential purpose of petrol stations is to provide facilities for the sale of fuels for vehicles. The Council however recognises the more intensive role of petrol stations in recent times, and the expansion from merely fuel depots to the provision of a wide range of convenience and other goods and services.

Applications for planning permission for such developments should contain the following:

- Detailed proposals for the service station will be required, including method of disposal of wastewater from carwash areas, traffic management, surface water outlet and oil interceptors etc. The development shall be designed and operated in such a manner that it does not adversely affect existing road drainage in the area.
- High quality design and material content. Advertising material should be restricted to a minimum and no lighting shall be installed so as to cause glare or interference to any user of an adjacent public road.
- Standard petrol station canopies may be required to be replaced with more sympathetic canopies designed to the satisfaction of the Council, such as light steel and glass or slated roofs with little or no attached signage.
- Strident and multiple colouring should be avoided and will be discouraged. The size and colour should be such as to take cognisance of its setting and location in the landscape.
- Any associated shop shall remain secondary to the use as a petrol filling station and any retail element shall clearly demonstrate that it would not affect the existing retail development in the town centre.

- The provision of deli counters shall comply with relevant standards from Water Services and Environment Section in relation to grease traps etc.

### **6.3.3 Shop front Design**

Shop fronts are one of the most important elements in determining the character, quality and image of retail streets in County Cavan. In order to increase the attractiveness of the towns and villages in the County, the Council will promote a dual approach to shop front design:

1. Protecting traditional and original shop fronts
2. Encouraging high quality contemporary shop front design.

The following will be considered in the assessment of new shop fronts and alterations of existing shop fronts:

- The design of shop fronts should reflect the scale and proportions of existing streetscape.
- Existing remaining traditional shop fronts shall be retained and are considered as an important element of a town or villages streetscape.
- Design, colour scheme and signage proposals should accompany all planning applications for replacement of shop fronts and new shop fronts.
- Signage must be compatible with existing streetscape. The use of timber, stone, glass and steel are encouraged.
- Contemporary shop fronts are encouraged provided they are designed to traditional principles of scale, proportion and detailing.
- Appearance and proportions of original shop fronts shall be retained.

### **6.3.4 Advertising Signs**

Advertising signs should be designed as an integral part of the shop front and will not be permitted to dominate the façade or interfere with windows or other features or detailing on the building.

The following are encouraged:

- Traditional painted sign-writing signs using appropriate colour schemes.
- The use of solid block individual lettering affixed directly to facades.

- Light fixtures should be of modest form and size and not cause a traffic hazard.
- The use of traditional timber or wrought iron hanging signs, with painted or enamelled finishes. Signs shall be of a limited size and projection and limited to a maximum of one sign for each façade.

The following are not permitted

- Use of plastic, PVS, Perspex and neon signs or lettering or detailing on any exterior.
- Internally illuminated box fascia signs.
- Internally illuminated projecting signs, whether fixed or hanging.
- Provision of multiple signs whether small or large, which would cause visual clutter on buildings or within the streetscape of a town or village

### **6.3.5 Fast Food Outlets/Take Aways**

The cumulative impact of a number of take away restaurants in any particular area will be considered in the assessment of any application. Impacts such as noise, litter, disturbance and traffic, will also be taken into consideration. The Planning Authority will control the opening hours of take aways.

## **6.4 Individual Towns**

This section identifies specific actions and policies which apply to each of the nine larger towns.

### **6.4.1 Cavan Town**

The main aim for Cavan Town is to strengthen its role as the principle town in the county and to work towards achieving a sustainable growth of 16,000 by 2020. The findings from the Health Check indicate a clear need to strengthen and ensure the development of the town core. There is a requirement for more retail, amenity areas, meeting places, cafes and a redevelopment of the town square.

This town has a support role filling some of the retail deficits that are common in smaller town providing higher end retail.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>General Action</b>	<b>Specific Action</b>
Strengthen and develop the town core	Identification of town core areas suitable for retail development	Identification of lands East of Main Street as of development potential. Identification of a Masterplan for area bordered by Thomas Ashe Street, Town Hall Street, Farnham Street and Main Street.
Provide amenity areas, meeting points.	Improve attractiveness of town core provide amenity areas	Provision of civic space as part of Masterplan on main street. Identification of Greenlough as a Masterplan requiring provision of amenity spaces. Development of Abbeylands as a civic space with development potential. Redevelopment of town square.
Improve accessibility of the town core	Ensure town core is accessible to all	Provide cycle facilities. Provide footpaths on outskirts of town.

Development of undeveloped zoned land in the environs of the town	Ensure the sequential development of the town by ensuring areas in the environs are available for development	Provision of link roads to inaccessible lands. Masterplans to ensure cohesive development of larger undeveloped areas.
Ensuring lands are available at other locations , as necessary, to ensure retail and commercial development of town having regards to its Hub Status.	Ensuring lands are available at other locations to provide retail warehousing, neighbourhood centres to serve edge of town neighbourhoods this will be more vital as the town grows in size.	Consider Specific Objectives in some areas. Zone Mixed Use/Peripheral to allow development of limited commercial/retail should a need be established.

#### 6.4.2 Bailieborough

This is the second largest town in terms of population and has an important function along with Virginia as the main service providers in the east of the County. Both towns have a support function in terms of other towns and villages in the east and have a role in the provision of higher order comparison goods. This is an active town with the potential for further growth. It is a pleasant town which has the potential to develop a greater variety of retail provision. A proactive approach should be taken towards the development of the retail function of the town with an emphasis on developing and consolidating the town core function. Strict adherence to the Sequential Test rule will be required when considering edge of centre and out of centre sites. Currently, no out of centre sites have been identified as suitable for retail provision, as sufficient capacity remains in the town core and on limited edge of core areas to meet present and future needs.

Aim	General Action	Specific Action
Encourage further development of retail potential of town core.	Ensure the availability of lands for retail development.	Expand Town Core to enhance retail potential.
Enhance function as one of the major towns along with Virginia in the east with a support role for other towns and villages in the east.	Enhance retail potential of the town by ensuring the identification of sufficient lands for present and future needs.	<p>Identification of a Masterplan to the rear of Main Street in Town core.</p> <p>Identification of Mixed use zoning on edge of town centre area behind and to the east of main street which has retail potential.</p> <p>Identification of Mixed Use zoning on edge of town to the south east of Main Street which has retail potential.</p>

### 6.4.3 Ballyconnell

This is the most western town in the county and serves an important support function for its rural hinterland and more westerly smaller towns. It is on the border with Fermanagh and is in easy distance of Enniskillen. The evidence of leakage from this town indicates a draw to Enniskillen but also to Cavan Town. The findings from the consumer and retailers survey indicated satisfaction with most aspects of the town. However, half of respondents in the consumer survey were not satisfied with the variety of retail and results of both surveys indicate a need for parking in the town. The town is the second smallest in terms of population with the third lowest retail floor space for both comparison and convenience. Evidence indicates that it is functioning successfully for a town of

its size and that further retail development can be accommodated in the town core area if expanded.

Aim	General Action	Specific Action
<p>Encourage development of retail potential.</p> <p>Address issues of access to retail premises.</p>	<p>Ensure the availability of lands for retail development.</p> <p>Ensure the provision of car parking spaces.</p>	<p>Expand Town Core to facilitate development of retail function.</p> <p>Encourage the redevelopment of underused and vacant buildings and sites in the town core with retail potential.</p> <p>Require new developments to provide car parking spaces to facilitate access.</p>

#### 6.4.4 Ballyjamesduff

This town has grown from a very rural town to the sixth largest town in the county in a short space of time. It is identified as a Town for Consolidation in the BRG where more measured growth would be in context with its setting. The town has the second lowest retail floor space in the county with just Mullagh having less. The priority with this town is the consolidation and strengthening of its town core, as well as, the sustainable development of the retail potential of the town. In this town, retail developments are considered to be best suited to the town core which retains significant capacity for further such development and which has been expanded to facilitate this. Strict adherence to the sequential approach is required and out of centre sites will generally be considered unsuitable.



<b>Aim</b>	<b>General Action</b>	<b>Specific Action</b>
Develop retail potential of Town Core.	To bring town in line with status as a Fourth Tier town in the Retail Planning Guidelines and so provision meets growing demand due to population increase.	The Town Core of Ballyjamesduff has been expanded to enable further retail development. A Masterplan has been identified on undeveloped land in the town core to enable co-ordinated development of these lands. The need to redevelop underused and vacant buildings and sites in the town core is highlighted.
Develop retail potential of Town Core	To ensure that there is the availability of edge of centre lands with retail potential to enable further sustainable growth of the town.	Identification of an edge of centre site which has been zoned 'Mixed Use' and which has retail as well as other use potential. This area is in easy walking distance from the town core and is adjacent to the former council landfill on the Lishenry Road.
Retain character of town.	To ensure that the town remains a pleasant place to live, work and shop in and retains its connection	Retain layout of town core – double diamond. Ensure protection of Market House and Town

	with its historic past.	Square.
Improve accessibility within town.	Ensure residents have easy access to services and encourage travelling other than by car.	Require new developments to provide vehicular and pedestrian access to the town core, recreation and community services. Encourage the improvement of cycle and pedestrian facilities.

#### 6.4.5 Belturbet

This is one of the counties western towns in relative close proximity to Cavan Town and on the N3 National Route – Dublin to Enniskillen. The town has experienced moderate levels of growth, in terms of population, relative to the other eight towns in the county which have all experienced strong growth. This town has an attractive setting sitting on the River Erne with Turbet Island as an attractive and unique feature with strong amenity value. The towns position on the N3 results in heavy traffic and severe congestion at peak times. A bypass is planned for the town and this will bring significant improvements to the town core. The priority will be the consolidation and improvement of the town core both generally and in terms of its retail function. A proactive approach should be taken to the reuse of residential, vacant or underutilised buildings in the town core.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>General Action</b>	<b>Specific Action</b>
Encourage further development of retail potential of town core.	Ensure the availability of lands for retail development.	Expand Town Core to provide further retail capacity. Identification of two Masterplan areas in the town core which will

		provide access to the town core .
Provision of car parking spaces.	Provision of car parking spaces in the town core.	Masterplans in town core are required to provide car parking space.
Improvement of commercial activity.	Address traffic congestion. Enhance potential of town core.	Facilitate the construction of the By-pass. Encourage the redevelopment of underutilised and vacant buildings in the town core. The change of use of residential buildings on Main Street to retail will generally be considered acceptable.
Improve access to town core .	Improve pedestrian & cycling access.	New developments will be required to provide adequate pedestrian and cycling access to and within the town core, as well as, to community, recreational and social facilities, as appropriate.

#### 6.4.6 Cootehil

Cootehill is on the Monaghan border, it has a unique population profile with decline in the centre of the town (town core and surrounding areas) and significant growth in the environs which resulted in overall growth for the town.

This profile indicates a strong need to strengthen the retail offer and develop the town core of Cootehill.

The town is the third largest town in the county in terms of population and the second largest overall floor space in both convenience and comparison retail. The town has the potential to develop its retail function further and there is significant capacity with the town core to do so. The town is attractive and scored well for cleanliness, streetscape and commercial atmosphere but poorly for Town Amenity.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>General Action</b>	<b>Specific Action</b>
Address population decline in centre of Cootehill	Encourage population growth and redevelopment of town core.	Identification of two Masterplan areas in the town core to encourage the development of underused backlands area for both residential and retail purposes.
Encourage further development of retail potential.	Ensure the availability of lands for retail development in the town.	Expand Town Core to provide for capacity for growth. Identification of edge of town Masterplan in the east of the town which is primarily residential but has limited retail potential to serve local population.
Improve Town Amenity.	Seek to improve and increase the amount and quality of open/public space, quality of footpaths, street furniture	Masterplan areas identified in town core are required to provide good quality public open space and linkages to the town

	etc.	core to make them accessible to all.
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#### 6.4.7 Kingscourt

Kingscourt is located to the east of the county on the border with Meath; it has experienced significant population growth and is identified in the BRPG as a medium sized town for urban strengthening. There is evidence of high to moderate levels of leakage from the town. It has significant capacity for High Street retail development within the town core and on edge of centre areas. There are a number of vacant and underused premises along the Main Street and capacity within backland areas with access deficits.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>General Action</b>	<b>Specific Action</b>
Encourage strengthening and development of town core.	Enable further development of towns retail function.	Identification of two Masterplans in town core to enable development of underused backland areas. Encourage reuse of underused and vacant premises and sites in the town core for High Street retail purposes. The change of use of residential premises in the town core for retail purposes will generally be considered appropriate.
Encouragement Improvement of overall	To improve town amenity and streetscape.	High quality, well designed development in

appearance of town core.		the town core is required and innovative, modern shop front design is encouraged. All significant new developments must provide linkages to the town core and social and community facilities to create a cohesive and well planned town layout.
Ensure the availability of lands for retail development.	Ensure the existing and significant future retail potential of this town is realised by identifying edge of centre sites with retail potential.	Identification of suitable Mixed Use areas which has retail, as well as, other use potential.

#### **6.4.8 Mullagh**

Mullagh is the smallest of the nine larger towns and was classified as a small town in the previous Development Plan 2003 – 2009. It has experienced rapid growth and retains much of its rural nature with the main street remaining relatively unchanged. Much of the recent development has occurred on roads leading out of the town. The priority will be to ensure that the core of the town is developed in a well planned and sustainable fashion to ensure the cohesive, sequential and co-ordinated growth of this town.

Given the size of this town, the relatively recent growth and the significant capacity within the backlands of Main Street it is considered appropriate that retail development will be confined to the town core.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>General Action</b>	<b>Specific Action</b>
Enable the consolidation and further development of Mullagh town core.	Ensure access to backlands to encourage further growth to occur in town core.	Facilitate development of identified 'new' streets in backlands of Mullagh.
Seek improvement of town amenity.	Ensure maintenance of unique character and special features of Mullagh.	Unique layout and streetscape of Main Street to be maintained. Preservation of open spaces and amenity areas in the town core.

#### **6.4.9 Virginia**

This town is a very active and attractive town sitting on the banks of Lough Ramor. There is strong and continued market interest in the town. The town is in a strategic location on the N3 and has an important support role for its rural hinterland and, along with Bailieborough, for towns in the east of Cavan. The town has significant capacity for retail in the backlands of the town core and other areas. This town has been identified in the BRPG as a town for consolidation. The priority will be in developing and consolidating the town core specifically, in this case, in terms of its retail functions.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>General Action</b>	<b>Specific Action</b>
Encourage further development of retail potential.	Ensure the availability of lands for retail development.	Expand Town Core to ensure that Identification of two Masterplan areas in town core which will ensure the development of underused backland areas.

Seek to enhance the attractiveness of Virginia.	Seek the Improvement of Town Amenity and Commercial Atmosphere.	Require Masterplans identified in town core to provide civic spaces as well as access to the town core.
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