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Managing Ireland's Visual Amenity

**An Evaluation of Visual Impact Assessment Practice and Local
Authority Management Policies for the Visual Amenity in Ireland**

Volume 2 of 2

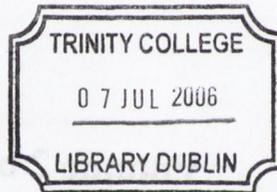
Submitted as fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD by research to
Trinity College, Dublin

William Patrick Prendergast

April, 2005

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THESIS
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**APPENDIX A – Three-stage checklist techniques for describing
existing visual resources (Smardon *et al*, 1986)**

VISUAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

1. **Identify Community Visual Resource Values** - Describe and define the general character of the existing area and document visual resources and/or visually sensitive land including:

- State parks, State forest preserves, municipal parks, etc.;
- Wild, scenic or recreational water bodies designated by a state government agency;
- Publicly or privately operated recreational facilities;
- Publicly or privately operated areas (including areas used for recreation) primarily devoted to conservation or the preservation of natural environmental features;
- Hiking or ski-touring trails designated as such by a State or municipal government agency;
- Architectural structures and sites of traditional importance;
- Historical or archaeological sites designated as such by the national register or State register of historic places;
- Parkways, highways or scenic overlooks and vistas designated as such by the national register or State register of historic places;
- Important urban landscapes including visual corridors, monuments, sculptures, landscape plantings, and urban "green space";
- Important architectural elements and structures representing community style and neighbourhood character.

2. **Public Participation:**

- Notify the public of the proposed inventory process and its purpose.
- Conduct a survey of local resident/viewer perceptions. The results of the survey should indicate a preliminary consensus of the public's perceptions and values regarding its visual resources.
 - a) Identify positive visual attractions;
 - b) Identify visual detractions or "misfits" (car dumps, gravel pits, waste disposal areas, and so forth);
- Conduct public meeting(s) to inform residents of the public's perceptions and values regarding its visual resources.
- Adopt the municipal visual resource inventory.
- Formalise community visual standards through creation of sign ordinances, architectural board of review's adopted standards, and other appropriate techniques.

3. **Establish "Critical Areas of Environmental Concern"**

Special visual resources that are considered highly valued by the community and are sensitive to change may be established as Critical Areas of Environmental Concern. Thereafter, any action which takes place within, partially within, or adjacent to critical areas would receive a fully co-ordinated environmental review process.

PRACTICAL VISUAL CRITERIA

Agency decision makers can protect the visual character and quality of a project and its environmental setting by early consideration of the general siting and design criteria listed below. Municipalities and agencies may wish to use these suggested criteria as a base, adding their own criteria to reflect local community values.

- Locate new facilities where they are intrinsically suitable to their visual environment.
- Insure that agency decisions prevent the exposure or creation of visual misfits (such as car dumps or waste disposal areas adjacent to scenic vistas) unless visual mitigation measures are adequate.
- Wherever possible protect the visual privacy of residential sites.
- Actively preserve future access to public viewing points.
- Emphasise shared infrastructure space for public utilities.
- In areas of high scenic quality, avoid commercial advertising, overhead utility service, and other man-made distractions.
- Avoid development on steep slopes.
- Take special care to enhance the visual quality of the physical entranceway to a community. The entranceway, usually a public roadway, sets the tone of the perceived visual expectation of the community.
- Protect the integrity of visually important building facades by utilising legal means to transfer development rights.
- Promptly remove, refurbish, or replace abandoned facilities.
- Be aware that visual spaces can be important as physical objects. In this sense, air pollution can affect the visual quality of important spaces by obscuring or diminishing views.
- Ensure that transmission line corridors are not silhouetted against the skyline and traverse slopes in a diagonal rather than perpendicular basis.
- As appropriate, either remove existing vegetation along travel corridors in order to create or enhance views or vistas, or retain existing vegetation along travel corridors to enhance the natural character.
- Consider all possible mitigation measures. Use vegetation, landforms, or structural techniques to screen visually intrusive characteristics of a proposed development.
- Enhance views to bodies of water.
- Avoid adverse visual effects caused by the introduction of materials, colours, and/or forms incompatible with the surrounding landscape.

CHECKLIST TO IDENTIFY VISUAL IMPACTS

PART 1

1. Is the proposed development within or close to a Critical Area of Environmental Concern? Yes No

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

2. Area around the proposed development site can be identified by one or more of the following terms:
- | | Within | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | ¼ Mile* | 1 Mile* |
| Essentially underdeveloped | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forested | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agricultural | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Suburban residential | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Industrial | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commercial | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Urban | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| River, Lake, Pond | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cliffs, Overlooks | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Designated open space | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Flat | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hilly | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mountains | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. Are there visually similar developments within:
- | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Adjacent to | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1 Mile* | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Miles* | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Miles* | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

* Distances from the proposed development site are provided for assistance only. Substitute other distances as appropriate.

DEGREE OF PROJECT VISIBILITY

4. Will the proposed development be visible from outside the limits of the development site? Yes No
5. The proposed development may be visible from
- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Site or structure on the national register or State register of historic places | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Palisades | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| State or county park | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parkway | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Interstate route | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| State Highway | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| County road | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local Road | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bridge | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Railroad | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Existing residences | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Existing public facility | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Adjacent property owners | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Designated scenic vistas | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other _____ | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
6. Will the proposed development eliminate, block, partially screen, or detract from views or vistas known to be important to the area? Yes No
7. Is the visibility of the proposed development seasonal? For example, screened by summer foliage etc, but visible during autumn, winter or spring? Yes No
- If yes which season(s) is the proposed development visible? Spring Summer Autumn Winter

8. How many linear feet of frontage along a public thoroughfare does the proposed development occupy? _____ feet
9. Will the proposed development open new access to, or create new scenic views or vistas? Yes No
10. Does the proposed development plan to:
- a) Maintain existing screening? Yes No
- b) Introduce new screening to minimise visibility of the proposed development? Yes No
- If yes, is screening:
- Vegetative
 - Structural

VIEWING CONTEXT

11. Viewers will likely be in which of the following situations when the proposed development is visible to them?

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Frequency</i>			
	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Holidays & Weekends</i>	<i>Seasonally</i>
Travel to and from work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involved in recreational activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Routine travel by residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At a residence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At a work-site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VISUAL COMPATIBILITY

12. Are the visual characteristics of the proposed development obviously different from those of the surrounding area? Yes No

If yes, the visual difference is because of

Type of development

Design style

Size (including length, width, height, number of structures, etc.)

Coloration

Condition of surroundings

Construction materials

Other _____

13. Is there local opposition to the proposed development entirely, or in part, because of visual aspects? Yes No
14. Is there public support for the proposed development because of its visual qualities? Yes No

PART 2

Apply the following series of questions to help determine the importance of each visual impact. These include:

1. What is the probability of the visual impact occurring?
2. What will the duration of the visual impact be?
3. Is the nature of the visual impact irreversible, and will the visual character of the community be permanently altered?
4. Can the visual impacts be controlled?
5. Is there a regional or state-wide consequence of this visual impact?
6. Will the potential visual impact be detrimental to local goals and values?

The answers to these questions will indicate whether or not the potential impact is important.

**APPENDIX B – Draft Questionnaire on Visual Impact
Assessment used for the Pilot Survey**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON CURRENT PRACTICE FOR COMPILING
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS WITHIN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENTS IN IRELAND**

Administrative Information

Name of Development: _____

New Facility: Yes No Extension to Existing Facility: Yes No

Annex: 1 2 Project Category: _____

Main contractor for EIS: _____ Address: _____

Main contractor for VIA: _____ Address: _____

Baseline Study:

Visual Analysis

Likely Zone of visual Influence (ZVI) identified? Yes No

- ZVI to the site Yes No

- ZVI from the site Yes No

Principal Viewpoints (public & private) identified? Yes No

Sensitivity Analysis

Sensitive Receptors identified? Yes No

Landscape receptors identified? Yes No

Visual receptors identified? (Residents, visitors, others) Yes No

Types Yes No Numbers Yes No Duration of viewing Yes No

Landscape Analysis

Character areas identified? Yes No

Landscape condition identified? Yes No

Landscape aesthetic quality assessed? Yes No

Landscape sensitivity to change assessed? Yes No

Identification of Potential Impacts:

Methodology used to identify landscape & visual impacts?
Yes No

Extent of landscape & visual impacts estimated? Yes No

Duration of landscape & visual impacts estimated? Yes No

Magnitude of landscape & visual impacts estimated? Yes No

"Worst case" scenario identified? Yes No

Different viewpoints chosen for visual assessment? Yes No

Different seasons chosen for visual assessment? Yes No

Different project life-cycle times assessed? Yes No

Construction Operation Decommissioning Re-Instatement

Indirect landscape & visual impacts identified? Yes No

Off site landscape & visual impacts identified? Yes No

**APPENDIX C - Development Categories for which
Environmental Impact Statements were submitted in Ireland
during 1997, 1998 and 1999**

DEVELOPMENT CATEGORIES FOR WHICH ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS WERE SUBMITTED IN IRELAND DURING 1997, 1998 & 1999					
CATEGORY	DEVELOPMENT TYPE	1997	1998	1999	EISs per Category
2.1	AGRICULTURE				
2.1.c.i	Afforestation	708			1
2.1.c.ii	Land reclamation		834		1
2.1.e	Piggeries	588, 628, 639, 659, 676, 680, 688, 703, 706, 716, 735,	753, 760, 771, 773, 793, 813, 814, 864, 919, 920, 921, 967, 968, 978, 999	809, 847, 853, 855, 918,	35
2.2	EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY				
2.2.b	Drilling		942		1
2.2.c	Minerals		790		1
2.2.d	Stone / Sand / Gravel	594, 616, 653, 679, 692, 712, 717, 718, 724, 742, 743, 959, 977, 980, 1012	741, 758, 769, 785, 790, 791, 794, 796, 810, 872, 895, 898, 902, 928, 940, 960, 985, 994	857, 863, 866, 868, 903, 908, 926, 946, 1014	42
2.2.i	Cement Manufacture	714, 739, 879			3
2.3	ENERGY				
2.3.a	Electricity Production	713, 729, 730, 734, 738, 896	745, 749, 750, 751, 755, 800, 801, 867, 897, 901		16
2.3.b	Electricity Cables	549			1
2.4	PROCESSING OF METALS				
2.4.b	Non-ferrous	880			1
2.4.d	Surface treatment	691, 695, 875	746, 886		5
2.5	GLASS MANUFACTURE				

2.6	CHEMICAL INDUSTRY				
2.6.a	Chemicals	700, 709	765		3
2.6.b	Pharmaceuticals	733	772, 906, 930		4
2.6.c.ii	Storage Chemicals	726			1
2.7	FOOD INDUSTRY				
2.7.a	Oils & fats	662, 678			2
2.7.c	Dairy products	707			1
2.7.d	Brewing		757		1
2.8	TEXTILE, LEATHER, WOOL AND PAPER INDUSTRIES				
2.9	RUBBER INDUSTRY				
2.10	INFRASTRUCTURE				
2.10.a	Industrial Estate	673, 697, 699, 725, 792	752, 763, 775, 781, 787, 816, 865, 900	805, 858	15
2.10.b	Urban Developments	618, 632, 640, 651, 652, 657, 658, 661, 667, 672, 674, 675, 681, 683, 684, 685, 690, 694, 715, 719, 720, 721, 727, 728, 740, 823, 876, 877, 878, 929, 932, 933	748, 754, 761, 762, 767, 768, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 782, 784, 788, 797, 812, 815, 817, 818, 820, 821, 870, 873, 882, 883, 884, 885, 887, 889, 890, 891, 899, 909, 910, 923, 924, 931, 937, 952, 956, 958, 961, 965, 1015, 1016	798, 819, 822, 871, 874, 893, 894, 917, 927, 934	87
2.10.d.i	New road	671, 689, 701	936, 943		5
2.10.d.ii	Bridge		799		1
2.10.d.iii	Harbour		840, 938		2

2.10.e	Flood relief	636, 638, 649, 650			4
2.10.g	Railway	648			1
2.10.j	Marina	693, 722			2
2.11	OTHER				
2.11.a	Hotel / holiday village	661, 702	748, 756, 786, 789, 860		7
2.11.c	Waste disposal	574, 641, 642, 668, 710, 711, 744	731, 732, 759, 783, 795, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 842, 845, 846, 925, 939		32
2.11.d	Waste water treatment	630, 656, 677, 682, 704	764, 766, 770, 774, 941		10
2.12	MODIFICATION TO PART 1 DEVELOPMENT				
2.12.a		705			1
2.12.c.ii	Medical implant manufacture	881			1

APPENDIX D - Ranking of Counties by Population Density

RANKING OF COUNTIES BY POPULATION DENSITY

Population statistics for the 1996 Central Statistics Office (CSO) census of Ireland were used. These census data included the new local authorities in County Dublin (Fingal, Dublin South & Dun Laoghaire Rathdown) as well as the five County Boroughs (cities). An anomaly was observed in the local authority areas sourced from Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) (see area for Cork Co. Borough) so CSO area data were used for calculating the population density. Thereafter the counties were ranked with respect to population density, and the five highest and five lowest ranked counties were selected for the study (highlighted in bold in Table D1).

Table D1 Counties and County Boroughs ranked by population density

LOCAL AUTHORITY NAME	AREA SQ KM	AREA SQ KM	POPULATION CENSUS 1996	POPULATION DENSITY	RANKING
	<i>OSI</i>	<i>CSO</i>	<i>CSO</i>		
Dublin Co. Borough	113.77	118.28	481854	4073.8	1
Cork Co. Borough	395.93	39.38	127187	3229.7	2
Limerick Co. Borough	20.33	20.87	52039	2493.5	3
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown		126.34	189999	1503.9	4
Galway Co. Borough	44.67	50.43	57241	1135.1	5
Waterford Co. Borough	41.59	41.03	42540	1036.8	6
South Dublin		223.53	218728	978.5	7
Fingal		454.69	167683	368.8	8
Louth	823.05	824.20	92166	111.8	9
Kildare	1694.26	1695.56	134992	79.6	10
Wicklow	2025.57	2027.35	102683	50.6	11
Meath	2344.93	2344.54	109732	46.8	12
Carlow	896.57	896.63	41616	46.4	13
Wexford	2365.56	2366.07	104371	44.1	14
Limerick	2756.04	2735.68	113003	41.3	15
Monaghan	1294.59	1295.46	51313	39.6	16
Cork	7505.44	7438.61	293323	39.4	17
Kilkenny	2071.78	2073.33	75336	36.3	18
Westmeath	1838.99	1838.89	63314	34.4	19
Tipperary South Riding		2258.80	75514	33.4	20
Laois	1719.54	1720.34	52945	30.8	21
Sligo	1836.87	1835.86	55821	30.4	22
Offaly	2000.85	2001.30	59117	29.5	23
Waterford	1857.75	1816.09	52140	28.7	24
Tipperary North Riding		2046.80	58021	28.3	25
Longford	1091.27	1091.27	30166	27.6	26
Cavan	1931.93	1932.03	52944	27.4	27
Clare	3449.15	3448.18	94006	27.3	28
Donegal	4862.10	4840.38	129994	26.9	29
Kerry	4815.07	4792.15	126130	26.3	30
Galway	6150.46	6048.45	131613	21.8	31
Roscommon	2548.08	2548.29	51975	20.4	32
Mayo	5589.27	5560.80	111524	20.1	33
Leitrim	1588.74	1589.95	25057	15.8	34

APPENDIX E - Ranking of Counties by Tourism Density

RANKING OF COUNTIES BY TOURISM DENSITY

Tourism statistics for the year 2000 were received from Bord Fáilte Ireland, which were not segregated for the new County Councils in County Dublin (Fingal, Dublin South & Dun Laoghaire Rathdown) or the five County Boroughs (cities). The areas of the Counties were sourced from the central Statistics Office (CSO) and the number of tourists per kilometre was calculated. Thereafter the counties were ranked with respect to the tourism density, and the five highest and five lowest ranked counties were selected for the study.

Table E1 **Counties ranked by tourism density**

LOCAL AUTHORITY NAME	AREA SQ KM (CSO)	TOURISM 2000 (Bord Fáilte)	TOURISM DENSITY	RANKING
Dublin (total area)	922.84	3433000	3720.0	1
Kerry	4792.15	1220000	254.6	2
Waterford	1857.12	447000	240.7	3
Galway + Co. Borough	6098.88	1119000	183.5	4
Clare	3448.18	615000	178.4	5
Wexford	2366.07	414000	175.0	6
Cork + Co. Borough	7477.99	1264000	169.0	7
Kilkenny	2073.33	333000	160.6	8
Limerick	2776.91	438000	157.7	9
Wicklow	2027.35	294000	145.0	10
Louth	824.20	108000	131.0	11
Sligo	1835.86	206000	112.2	12
Tipperary South Riding	2258.80	214000	94.7	13
Kildare	1695.56	160000	94.4	14
Carlow	896.63	71000	79.2	15
Westmeath	1838.89	137000	74.5	16
Mayo	5560.80	360000	64.7	17
Donegal	4840.38	292000	60.3	18
Cavan	1932.03	108000	55.9	19
Meath	2344.54	103000	43.9	20
Leitrim	1589.95	50000	31.4	21
Monaghan	1295.46	40000	30.9	22
Longford	1091.27	33000	30.2	23
Offaly	2001.30	60000	30.0	24
Laois	1720.34	45000	26.2	25
Roscommon	2548.29	65000	25.5	26
Tipperary North Riding	2046.80	42000	20.5	27

**APPENDIX F - Questionnaire on Visual Impact Assessment
used for Environmental Impact Statements on Pig Rearing
Installations**

Visual Impact Assessments within Environmental Impact Statements in Ireland

Administrative Information

Name of Development: _____

Address: _____

New Facility: Extension to Existing Facility: Investment: IR£____Million

Date assessed: July 2000 Application to EPA for an IPC licence Yes No

Main contractor for EIS: _____ Address: _____

Main contractor for VIA: _____ Address: _____

Potential visual impacts identified

Methodology used

- Scoping Yes No
- Descriptive Yes No
- Tabular matrix Yes No

Likely visual impacts identified? Yes No

- Visibility of structures? Yes No
- Potential from water body eutrophication? Yes No
- Other (please specify) _____ Yes No

Indirect or cumulative visual impacts identified? Yes No

Geographic extent of visual impacts quantified

Extent of visual impacts estimated? Yes No

Duration of visual impacts estimated? Yes No

Likely Zone of visual Influence (ZVI) identified? Yes No

Public viewpoints identified? Yes No

Private viewpoints identified? Yes No

Principal viewpoints selected? Yes No

Principal viewpoint selection agreed with local authority? Yes No

Viewpoints identified in the County Development Plan discussed Yes No

Nature and magnitude of visual impacts quantified

Techniques Used:

- Artists Impressions Yes No
- Perspective Sketches Yes No
- Cross Sections Yes No
- Longitudinal Sections Yes No
- Map Overlays Yes No
- Photographs Yes No
- Photographs of similar Developments Yes No
- Aerial Photographs Yes No
- Photomontage Yes No
- Physical models Yes No
- Virtual models Yes No

Nature and magnitude:

Total Floor area of development	_____m ²			
Heights of structures	_____			
Nature of visual impacts estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Magnitude of visual impacts estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impacts during different seasons estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impacts during different project lifecycle estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact of worst case scenario estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limitations of predictions or estimates acknowledged?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biases used in presentation?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree of realism achieved	Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>

Mitigation:

Mitigation proposed to reduce magnitude of impacts?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site levels adequate to reduce visual impact?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site level modified to reduce visual impact?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alternatives compared?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sites	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Layouts	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structural forms, materials & external finishes	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colours	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground modelling proposed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planting proposed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mitigation measures proposed during all stages of development?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance criteria of mitigation measures provided?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring or post-auditing of mitigation proposed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors evaluated

Landscape receptors identified	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscape sensitivity to change estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual receptors identified?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within distance of site _____m	Nearest resident	_____m		
Residents <input type="checkbox"/>	commuters <input type="checkbox"/>	visitors <input type="checkbox"/>	others <input type="checkbox"/>	
Numbers of receptors estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Duration of viewing estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensitivity of each impact estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Significance of visual impacts on the overall visual amenity evaluated

Designated areas identified?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscape aesthetic quality evaluated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Magnitude of visual impacts ranked?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensitivity of visual impacts ranked?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significance of visual impacts evaluated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**APPENDIX G - Questionnaire on Visual Impact Assessment
used for Environmental Impact Statements on Quarrying of
Stone, Sand or Gravel**

Visual Impact Assessments within Environmental Impact Statements in Ireland

Administrative Information

Name of Development: _____

Address: _____

New Quarry: Extension to Existing Quarry:

Date assessed: _____ Application to EPA for an IPC licence: Yes No

Main contractor for EIS: _____ Address: _____

Main contractor for VIA: _____ Address: _____

Potential visual impacts identified

Methodology used

- Scoping Yes No
- Descriptive Yes No
- Tabular matrix Yes No

Likely visual impacts identified?

- Visibility of surface workings? Yes No
- Visibility of surface plant? Yes No
- Visibility of dust adjacent to site and transport roads? Yes No
- Visibility of character due to intensity & nature of development? Yes No
- Other (please specify) _____ Yes No

Geographic extent of visual impacts quantified

- Extent of visual impacts estimated? Yes No
- Duration of visual impacts estimated? Yes No
- Likely Zone of visual Influence (ZVI) identified? Yes No
- Public viewpoints identified? Yes No
- Private viewpoints identified? Yes No
- Principal viewpoints selected? Yes No
- Principal viewpoint selection agreed with local authority? Yes No
- Viewpoints identified in the CDP discussed Yes No

Nature and magnitude of visual impacts quantified

Techniques Used:

- Artists Impressions Yes No
- Perspective Sketches Yes No
- Cross or Longitudinal Sections Yes No
- Maps / Overlays Yes No
- Photographs of views Yes No
- Photographs of similar Developments Yes No
- Aerial Photographs Yes No
- Photomontage Yes No
- Physical models Yes No

Virtual models	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Nature and magnitude:</u>				
Area of development				m ²
Heights of structures				
Nature of visual impacts estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Magnitude of visual impacts estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impacts during different seasons estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impacts during different project lifecycle estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact of worst case scenario estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limitations of predictions or estimates acknowledged?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biases used in presentation?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree of realism achieved	Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Mitigation:</u>				
Mitigation proposed to reduce magnitude of impacts?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site levels adequate to reduce visual impact?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site level modified to reduce visual impact?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alternatives compared?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sites	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Layouts	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structural forms, materials & external finishes	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colours	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground modelling proposed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planting proposed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mitigation measures during all stages of development?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance criteria of mitigation measures provided?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring or post-auditing of mitigation proposed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors evaluated				
Landscape receptors identified	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscape sensitivity to change estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual receptors identified?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within distance of site _____m Nearest resident _____m Number of Residents _____				
Residents <input type="checkbox"/>	commuters <input type="checkbox"/>	visitors <input type="checkbox"/>	others <input type="checkbox"/>	
Numbers of receptors estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Duration of viewing estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensitivity of each impact estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significance of visual impacts on the overall visual amenity evaluated				
Designated areas identified?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscape aesthetic quality evaluated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Magnitude of visual impacts ranked?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensitivity of visual impacts ranked?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significance of visual impacts evaluated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**APPENDIX H - Questionnaire on Visual Impact Assessment
used for Environmental Impact Statements on Urban
Developments**

Visual Impact Assessments within Environmental Impact Statements in Ireland

Administrative Information

Date assessed: _____

Name of Development: _____

Address: _____

Main contractor for EIS: _____ Address: _____

Main contractor for VIA: _____ Address: _____

Potential visual impacts identified

Methodology used

- Scoping Yes No
- Descriptive Yes No
- Tabular matrix Yes No

Likely visual impacts identified?

- Visibility of new structures? Yes No
- Visibility of new access roads? Yes No
- Visibility of new telecommunication / power lines Yes No
- Visibility of new Lighting? Yes No
- Visibility of potential for litter? Yes No
- Visual impacts due to removal of site vegetation? Yes No
- Change of views due to landscaping proposals? Yes No
- Other (please specify) _____ Yes No

Geographic extent of visual impacts quantified

- Extent of visual impacts estimated? Yes No
- Duration of visual impacts estimated? Yes No
- Likely Zone of visual Influence (ZVI) identified? Yes No
- Public viewpoints identified? Yes No
- Private viewpoints identified? Yes No
- Principal viewpoints selected? Yes No
- Principal viewpoint selection agreed with local authority? Yes No
- Viewpoints identified in the CDP discussed Yes No

Nature and magnitude of visual impacts quantified

Techniques Used:

- Artists Impressions Yes No
- Perspective Sketches Yes No
- Cross or Longitudinal Sections Yes No
- Maps / Overlays Yes No
- Photographs of views Yes No
- Photographs of similar Developments Yes No
- Aerial Photographs Yes No
- Photomontage Yes No
- Physical models Yes No

Virtual models	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nature and magnitude:				
Area of development	_____ m ²			
Heights of structures	_____			
Nature of visual impacts estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Magnitude of visual impacts estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impacts during different seasons estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impacts during different project lifecycle estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact of worst case scenario estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limitations of predictions or estimates acknowledged?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biases used in presentation?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree of realism achieved	Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mitigation:				
Mitigation proposed to reduce magnitude of impacts?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site levels adequate to reduce visual impact?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site level modified to reduce visual impact?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alternatives compared?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sites	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Layouts	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structural forms, materials & external finishes	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colours	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground modelling proposed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planting proposed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mitigation measures proposed during all stages of development?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance criteria of mitigation measures provided?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring or post-auditing of mitigation proposed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors evaluated				
Landscape receptors identified	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscape sensitivity to change estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual receptors identified?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within distance of site _____m	Nearest resident	_____m	Number of Residents	_____
Residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	commuters	<input type="checkbox"/>	visitors
Numbers of receptors estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Duration of viewing estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensitivity of each impact estimated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significance of visual impacts on the overall visual amenity evaluated				
Designated areas identified?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscape aesthetic quality evaluated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Magnitude of visual impacts ranked?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensitivity of visual impacts ranked?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significance of visual impacts evaluated?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX J – Questionnaire used for Interviews

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

Organisation Name: _____ Date: _____

Introductory Comments:

- *Permission to record? - Minimises misinterpretations & allows me to listen more carefully.*
- *Your views will be treated as confidential - personal views - only used in aggregate form.*
- *Description of project*
 - ❖ *Phase 1 - examined VIA within EIAs (Piggeries, quarries & urban developments) 1997 - 1999.*
 - ❖ *Phase 2 - examine policies for the Visual Environment at Local Authority level*
 - *Part A - Local government planning departments – responsible for protecting & enhancing*
 - *Part B - Environmental & Community Groups interested in the visual environment*
 - *Part C - Design Professionals (Architects, Engineers & Landscape Architects)*
 - *Part D - Environmental spokespersons for the political parties*
- *Very little research on visual environmental policy & small amount on VIA for EIS preparation*

COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

1. Do you play a part in the **preparation/consultation** of local authority County Development Plans? (*Landscape Assessment Studies, LUTS Plans, Landscape Area Plans, Environmental Plans for towns, Local Area Plans*) other than the Heritage Appraisal of County Development Plans
2. County Development Plans are increasingly designating views for **visual protection**
 - Point views and linear views (to and from)
 - Views perceived as views of the rural landscape, Urban views
3. Designation of land **restricts on uses and developments** by the landowner. Should they be compensated for these restrictions or grant aided to develop alternative uses?

VISUAL POLICIES WITHIN COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

4. Planning departments in local authorities have a range of **strategies for protecting** the visual environment?
 - Refusing permission for inappropriate designs, (design guides).
 - Restrictions on developments and imposition of conditions on form, siting, layout, colour, texture and height in
 - a. Conservation Areas (SACs, SPAs, NHAs, etc).
 - b. Architectural Conservation Areas
 - c. Areas zoned for amenity.
 - Protected Buildings Register.
 - Local authority Tree Protection Orders & Felling Licences by the Forest Service.

5. **Strategies for enhancing** the visual environment by local authorities are less coherent and responsibility is split between numerous departments (environment, roads, planning, waste, etc)
 - Derelict Sites register
 - Village and Urban Renewal Schemes & Tax Incentive Schemes
 - Incentive schemes to improve building facades, floodlighting, etc
 - Prettifying - planting flowers, shrubs and trees in public areas,
 - Forest Service Neighbour-wood scheme for community Groups and Local Authorities
 - Tidy Towns and Golden Mile competitions.
 - Litter collection schemes – frequency of rubbish bin collections.
 - Along roads and railways
 - Landfills, Halting Sites, Scrap metal yards, etc

6. **Assessing effectiveness** of these policies and strategies is not as strong as it could be.
 - Variations of County Development Plans during life of plan
 - Review and publication of new draft plan every 5/6 years
 - Reporting for EU grants normally have a CBA focus
 - Much more use of private consultants to prepare studies as backup for policies
 - Little use of research establishments to conduct surveys on success of particular aspects

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS (visual impact focus)

7. The EPA “Advice Notes on Current Practice” lists the factors likely to have a significant impact on the environment, which should be assessed by each category of development. Their current usage is low, so will scoping improve compliance, or are other mechanisms required? The **importance of visual** within all the environmental factors examined under an EIA seems to be low as indicated by the results of the EIS survey. Why do you think this is the case?

8. Do Local Authorities have adequate expertise to **evaluate EIAs** from the visual perspective?
 - Is there sufficient information to make a decision?
 - Is the information supplied biased in favour of the development?

11. **Trees and forests** play an important role by providing positive landscape elements, which screen adverse visual impacts, and fragment large views into separate prospects and vistas.
 - Operation of TPOs in urban areas generally restricted to substantial groups rather than individual trees. Database of individual trees in urban areas may be necessary
 - The Forest Service has now assumed the planning function for all forestry nationally and issue felling licences. There are loopholes in felling control – OK if diseased.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

12. If you had the power to change anything within your organisation’s visual environmental policy or practice, what would it be?

Final Comments:

- *Is there anything relevant, which I have missed and should have asked?*
- *Summary of discussion to be supplied soon to ensure no misinterpretations*
- *Thanks very much for your time.*

**APPENDIX K - Summaries of Interviews of Planning
Authorities**

Planning Authority 1

Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current Development Plan adopted in 1999, so revision not due until 2005. ▪ CAAS were commissioned to produce a report entitled “Criteria for the Evaluation of Landscape Quality” (1997) to establish a methodology for deciding visual designations for the landscape. Study used visual absorption capacity of landscape (using terrain shape, tall vegetation, and existing development) to classify areas into 5 zones of visual sensitivity. This is different from what the title suggests – identifying the criteria, which contribute to make or improve landscape quality (urgently needed) ▪ Workshops and discussions with councillors ▪ In-house policy formulation and research ▪ Currently doing a series of community plans across the county (#####, #####, ##### and #####). Slightly different types of public consultations, and the brief includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Educating people about planning - how they can participate, and how their participation matters b) Forming a community plan c) Protecting the environment d) Housing in the environment ▪ Recently presented a draft community plan with views and prospects in it to which there was a strong reaction, because of the potential restrictions to landowners resulting from the views and prospects. Community sub-group lobbied strongly to have them taken out of the plan. Decided to have an overall policy to preserve views and prospects without stating what views and prospects they were. Subsequently, there was an objection that they were not explicitly defined. Community meeting voted 50/50 on the issue so the adopted community plan will not list the views and prospects. This community plan will be used as the basis for producing a local area plan and the planning department will now end up putting in the views and prospects without the guidance of the community plan. ▪ “Planning for Real” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Week 1 - the community provide their ideas on a parish plan b) Week 2 - community split into groups (housing, infrastructure, economic development, built and natural environment) to prioritise the ideas collected in week 1. Disagreement between housing group and the built and natural environment group as to which group should be assigned views and prospects for prioritising. ▪ Local Area Plan included in CDP for ##### area. Explicitly stated in CDP that the Local Area Plan takes precedence over the CDP if a conflict arises in policy, objectives, or guidelines. ▪ The designation of land as an SAC or a protected view which ultimately restricts planning options for landowners is becoming a big issue
<p>Development Plan – protection (visual)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scenic Routes – policy of Planning Authority to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Require those seeking to carry out a development in the environs of a scenic route to demonstrate that there will be

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) no obstruction or degradation of the views towards and from visually vulnerable features and b) significant alterations to the appearance or character of these areas. b) To preserve views and prospects from scenic routes as outlined in map# of CDP. c) To consider the protection of geological features proposed for protection by the Geological Survey of Ireland. ▪ Renewable Energy Development – policy of Planning Authority to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Permit the development of renewable resources in locations where such development will not have an undue visual or environmental impact b) Lessen the visual impact of the overall development by requiring that the power lines between the points of generation and the sub-stations should be underground where possible. ▪ Amenities – objective of the council to protect, provide and upgrade the amenities of the county ▪ Record of Protected Structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A review of all listed buildings and structures, including those proposed for listing is planned for 2000 using all the data received during the 1999 review of the CDP. Intention to vary CDP to include a more extensive list of items to be preserved. b) Objective of CDP to seek the preservation of the 105 items listed in the CDP (megalithic tombs, hill-forts, cairns & barrows, churches, crosses, early cross-slabs, castles & tower houses, country houses, bridges, and miscellaneous) ▪ Trees for Preservation – 100 groups of trees listed which the Planning Authority considers worthy of preservation for their overall amenity value, on public and private lands.
<p>Development Plan – enhancement (visual)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 135 derelict sites listed in CDP (principally located in towns and villages) under terms of Derelict Sites Act 1990. Ruined buildings in rural areas not considered as derelict sites as they are not deemed to detract from their landscape quality (does not apply to buildings which would be capable of being rendered habitable by carrying out reasonable works of repair and refurbishment). ▪ The Planning Authority recognises that these areas are damaging to the environmental quality of the areas in which they are located and that their removal and improvement are desirable so it intends to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Implement the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act 1990 b) Prepare improvement plans and design briefs for the larger derelict areas c) Make use of its' own building programme as far as possible to carry out improvements to derelict areas. ▪ Amenities – objective of the council to protect, provide and upgrade the amenities of the county, and in particular to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide a viewing area at ##### b) Provide public recreational facilities at the dump site at ##### when restored c) Upgrade the amenity area at lake #####
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visual policies have evolved over time, and those included in the current plan would have evolved from previous plans - no idea what criteria were used to identify views and prospects and scenic routes in the past, however they have been revised

	<p>numerous times and have stood the test of time since the 1960's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CAAS were contracted to conduct a study to establish a methodology for deciding visual designations for the landscape, which were largely adopted in the 1999 CDP. 5 zones of visual sensitivity defined and first 4 indicated on Map # in CDP (last zone for degraded not indicated – location info not available or too sensitive to show on map?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Vulnerable – very distinctive features with a very low capacity to absorb new development without significant alterations of existing landscape character over an extended area. f) Sensitive – Distinctive character with some capacity to absorb a limited range of appropriate new developments while sustaining its' existing character g) Normal – Common character type with potential to absorb a wide range of new developments h) Robust – Areas of existing development and infrastructure – new development reinforces existing desirable land use patterns i) Degraded – breakdown of natural processes or pollution (cut-over bogs, old mineral waste areas) ▪ CAAS Report very important, but some points need noting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Report lists 9 Broad Leaved Forests in the Vulnerable Zone, which are not included in the CDP list of vulnerable features (omission by mistake?) 3. Report lists (coastlines, promontories, headlands, estuaries, lake shores, banks of large rivers, hill & mountain tops, and ridgelines (water catchments / watershed boundaries) of conspicuous features in the landscape (eye strongly drawn to water/ land/ sky boundary) 4. Report stated that a high resolution was required for character area boundaries to facilitate development control at site specific scales of interpretation, but used CORINE dataset which only has a dot resolution of 25 hectares (many times more than field sizes in County #####) 5. Report initially casts doubt on legal status of previous visual designations for landscape, but then lists 10 scenic routes at end of report without providing the criteria how they were chosen. 6. Methodology to produce lists of features for each CORINE classification within the Report not stated, but assumed to be by identifying them using the CORINE dataset (dot resolution only 25Ha). If this was the criteria used there may be many important lakes, forests, etc in County, which were not identified. It would have been better to provide a list of the criteria used to choose features for inclusion in the zones and a map showing their locations 7. Settlements listed for the robust zone do not include #####, #####, #####, #####, ##### and #####. Methodology used to identify them suspect as a result. 8. Construction sites put into Degraded rather than Robust zone – once the construction is completed they should fall within existing developments i.e. robust zone. 9. Shorelines of lakes and large rivers included in vulnerable zone, but did not specify the distance of the zone from the
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	<p>feature (200m, 500m or 1Km?). Also seemed to only consider the landward side of the feature and missed the side towards the water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### was one of about 6 counties, which pre-empted the requirement to produce a landscape assessment, which only came in with the PDA 2000, by having one done in 1997. Planners recognise the long-term benefit of having a more systematic way of putting value on landscape to permit planning applications to be evaluated using a more consistent and transparent methodology. ▪ Only 10 scenic routes listed in the CAAS Report but 32 listed in the CDP ▪ Implication 8 of Statistical Review - ##### has numerous assets, not least its' natural and man-made environment. In making maximum use of such resources, and in order to generate sustainable economic growth and social development the preservation and conservation of the environment is critical. ▪ Vision 17 for County – Communities will be enabled to participate to as great an extent as possible in the determination of their own futures and that of their people (1st use of participation rather than consultation noted).
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Genesis of the areas designated in the CDP is from a landscape assessment conducted by CAAS in 1997. Much correspondence between areas (vulnerable and sensitive) identified in the CAAS report and views and prospects designated in previous CDPs. ▪ Visual designations focus on lines and areas rather than point locations. ▪ Haven't heard of views been mentioned in an urban context before. Not aware if any urban views were included in the CDP – separate DPs for ##### and ##### – view of the cathedral in ##### would be an urban view. New building going up on the way into #####, which is blocking the view of the spire, so granting permission in that case might have been a mistake. ▪ In the process of framing conservation areas under the PDA 2000 within urban areas at present to include significant streetscapes and architectural areas. Areas will be defined by the conservation officer on the basis of architectural quality, architectural rarity and the quality of streetscapes ▪ Development control Sections within planning departments operate a range of strategies for protecting the visual environment, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Visually vulnerable areas – require to be shown that proposed developments would not impinge in any significant way upon the character, integrity or uniformity of the landscape when viewed from such locations and from surrounding areas. Particular attention must be given to the preservation of the character and distinctiveness of these areas as viewed to and from scenic routes and the environs of archaeological and historic areas. b) Visually sensitive areas – to require that proposed developments demonstrate a high standard of site selection, siting layout, design selection of materials and finishes. Applications for permission in these areas may also be required to consider ecological, archaeological, water quality and noise factors in so far as it affects the preservation of the amenities of the area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) In areas not designated as either visually vulnerable or visually sensitive to have regard to the capacity of the landscape to absorb new developments and generally to prohibit developments which would damage these areas. d) In visually vulnerable and visually sensitive areas to have regard to the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural land uses when considering the appropriateness or otherwise of proposed buildings. e) To prohibit developments located between the road and the sea in areas indicated as visually vulnerable on map # in the CDP unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The development is not visible from the public road, & ii) The development is not obtrusive in views from the seashore. f) To ensure that trees and groups of trees of high amenity value, or which perform an important urban design function are retained, and that where removal of trees is necessary in the interest of public safety, or development, to require that suitable replanting takes place. The Planning Authority considers that trees listed in Part 3 of the CDP are of significant value to the environment, and will ensure that such trees are protected where necessary. g) To prohibit development, which would interfere with views from roads designated as scenic routes on Map # of the CDP? h) To prohibit development, which would be obtrusive in views from those lakes listed in Appendix # of the CDP ▪ County council produced a design guide for one-off houses in rural areas. One-off houses are the biggest drain on development control resources, so the guide tells people what to do.
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategies for enhancing the visual environment are scattered among many departments, and are somewhat less coherent. ▪ Council just taken on an architect to draw up the plans for village and urban renewal schemes. She is semi-attached to the planning department, so planners have an input into the design of these schemes. Some public participation in the design of these schemes via community development groups. ▪ 4 weeks to prepare a 5 year strategy for village and urban renewal schemes so no community participation was possible ▪ Lots of flowers make people happy and can potentially hide a lot. Modern bedding plants around heritage buildings can detract from the overall ambiance. Flowers should fit the setting and getting the balance correct is important
<p>Visual Environment Strategies – assessing effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have not conducted pavement surveys of locals on success or otherwise of village and urban renewal schemes ▪ Have not provided research grants to local 3rd level institutions to conduct surveys on the council's behalf ▪ Looking to local community groups to set up structures where they can voluntarily evaluate schemes or plans. Trying to put the responsibility back to the local community.
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ County seems to get more than their fair share of EISs (3 to 6 per year). ▪ EISs mainly dealt with internally by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Conservation officer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Council architect c) Heritage officer d) Planners – visual impacts ▪ Referred to Dúchas for their views on flora and fauna also ▪ EIA requested even when the development is less than the threshold set when the potential impact of the development on adjacent uses/areas of environmental/archaeological importance is significant
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EISs not sent to outside consultants because of the statutory timescale, which precludes commissioning another report, unless there was a glaring hole or something highly suspicious in the information supplied. ▪ In-house procedures used to scope EISs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Use local knowledge / professional experience b) Refer the proposal to other departments of the council c) Refer the proposal to prescribed authorities ▪ Do not have a standardised approach for VIA ▪ The case officer (qualified planner) must read the EIS and usually the senior executive planner for the Development Control Section. There is no minimum standard.
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Materials used in modern housing in the rural area are not sustainable - plastic used a lot instead of natural materials. ▪ County wanted ##### to provide a tool for examining one-off housing in rural areas, which is a big issue now, but they suggested <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Afforestation, which will be big issue in the medium term since there are lots of grants going through and decisions being made now which will impact in about 5 years time. b) Wind-farming - very restrictive policy at present in County so difficult to give permissions for wind-farms in the current plan. Some senior members of council are pre-disposed towards wind-farms in the right place. Scenic evaluation policies in County are very constraining and need to be re-evaluated not to ban all development, but to promote good developments sensitively located. ▪ Consistency of planning decisions needed at national level (An Bord Pleanála). Wind-farm development for County was granted on the basis of the national policy promoting sustainable energy, but similar development in Cork was refused with no reference to the national policy. The only difference seems to have been that two different Bord members dealt with the cases.

Planning Authority 2

Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land-Use and Transport Study (LUTS) Plan (1978) and LUTS Review (1991) provided overall blueprints for all strategic planning in ##### City <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Over a 20 year period, rather than short term plans as provided by successive Development Plans b) Regionally by examining the needs of the ##### city and its hinterland ▪ New LUTS Plan (20 years) now being prepared ▪ ##### owned major land banks within the ##### which allowed them to control and plan development more effectively ▪ The current development plan (1998) was a review of the previous plan. The plans are re-drafted every 6 years, with different people preparing it each time, so the process is somewhat different each time. ▪ Now starting the process to prepare the new Development Plan under the PDA 2000 which will come into force in 2004. ▪ Landscape assessment required to be conducted for Development plans prepared under the new Act (PDA 2000). ##### hoping to use the ##### to provide this information rather than start from scratch. People imagine landscape assessment as a rural thing. ▪ Local Agenda 21 Strategy for ##### being developed at present seeking to secure a balance between environmental protection and socio-economic development and minimising consumption of land and fossil fuels. ▪ Local Area Action Plans prepared for a number of areas which feed into the Development Plan i.e. #####, ##### Plan, ##### Development Plan, ##### landscape Plan ▪ ##### Local Area Plan to provide framework for Integrated Area Plan
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing Protection Areas have been designated within ##### to ensure that housing is not lost to other purposes (land currently being used as residential, or last used for residential use is retained for residential use). ▪ Following land-use zones available to prevent or restrict development in certain areas. Very limited green resources left, so condition of planting more trees used to compensate for developing in these areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 5 categories of land on which development may be restricted or prevented for amenity reasons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Visually important land providing the setting for a landmark building Ⓡ Land with amenity value which has potential for development as open space Ⓡ Areas with existing woodland or significant tree groups or areas with potential for new woodland Ⓡ Areas which provide a habitat for wild flora and fauna Ⓡ Private gardens which are scenically located b) Sports grounds c) Public open space d) Ridge Protection zones mainly ##### ▪ Land-use zones were originally identified in the early 1980's ▪ Much development outside ##### especially on #####.

	<p>Objective in sub-regional plans to limit development in certain areas, but were eroded over time due to pressure from developers and small-scale political input.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing protection measures include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Database of listed buildings originally set up in the 1960's and revised since then sporadically by planners. Contains certain gaps reflecting the preferences of those involved in the past. Every owner and occupier recently notified of the listing under the protected structures legislation. Only recently employed a conservation officer who is keen to make a significant number of additions. This may take the form of designating conservation areas, but more resources required to conduct survey to identify these areas. Draft guidelines on conservation areas from Dúchas have not been finalised yet. Hoping to expand the listed building list in the new plan. b) Conservation areas would be useful to prohibit demolition of buildings of importance, not listed, but visually on their own not considered very important, but as part of a terrace might be collectively significant. c) Designated archaeological zone in the large central area of the city corresponding to the old medieval city. d) Development control conditions on planning applications, i.e. development control policies on what should happen if you have a site with trees on it and how you should look after them. e) Tree preservation orders – nine within the existing plan – reasonably good record on protecting trees in the city (i.e. the ##### Ridge). Recently lost a significant stand of 50 beech trees that did not have a protection order and Bord Pleanála overturned our decision. We were somewhat culpable by not having a tree preservation order in place. The existence of preservation orders can be very useful in modifying the layout of the plan and retaining trees. Did not have to use any of the powers under the preservation order, but its' existence signified a recognition of value, so not starting from scratch. ▪ No existing database of listed individual trees
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If possible enhance the dominance of vegetation rather than buildings on the prominent slopes and ridges in the Ridge Protection Zones. Need for maintenance of tree plantings mentioned, though not elaborated on.
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visually sensitive areas were identified during the 1980's and 1990's. No set criteria were used to identify them, they evolved over time by recognising their visual potential. ▪ There are no listed views in the current plan, but that might change in the new plan resulting from the different studies (landscape assessment?) going on at the moment. ▪ Likely to use the Heritage Council's "Heritage Appraisal for Development Plans", which should assist the awareness of visual issues, such as identifying heritage buildings where views to and from them need to be protected. Arguments for refusing permission or placing conditions on developments are strengthened if these issues are listed in the Plan. ▪ ##### of ##### currently being done by consultants attempting to identify areas which have potential for ##### and includes a visual appraisal, might be useful to identify

	<p>important views to be included in the new plan. These studies are required to persuade non-planners of the importance of these issues. A copy of the report might be available in 2001 after the council sanctions it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 categories of amenity area defined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Visually important land providing the setting for a landmark building b) Land with amenity value which has potential for development as open space c) Areas with existing woodland or significant tree groups, or areas with potential for new woodland d) Areas which provide a habitat for wild flora and fauna e) Private gardens which are scenically located ▪ Protection policies for development on the northern and southern ridges identified under the ##### review to maintain green appearance.
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many things that affect the visual amenity are outside #####, particularly on #####. Objectives in sub-regional plans to limit development in these areas, but some have been eroded over time under pressure from the city expanding. Objectives in new sub-regional plan would be to limit development along the ##### and promote development along the railway line ▪ Expanding the ##### not really a solution. The ##### is very relevant to visual aspects, but not very relevant to other issues. If the ##### was expanded the ##### would be likely to develop the area, but within the ## trying to limit development. ▪ Currently refusing up to 20 developments on visual grounds because of their impact on the skyline or important views. ▪ Impacts on views on special amenity are non-compensatory if refused, but more clarity is needed on what constitutes a “view of special amenity” within the Development Plan
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Derelict sites register in the planning dept and the Derelict Sites Act is used. Mixed success rates to date. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Try to encourage people to redevelop sites b) Chase people to recover levies to apply pressure for re-development. c) Must examine why it is derelict - principally because of ownership situation. Have helped owners to clear title to property by acquiring property under the Act and then selling it back to the owner with its title cleared with a condition that it should be re-developed within a set time period. Visual would not have been the main reason for the action, more an economic one. d) Also acquired properties in ##### area that were then sold on to developers and used competitions to come up with good development proposals. We were dealing with it more as a conservation area, without explicitly saying it was because of adverse visual aspects. ▪ Urban renewal schemes used fairly extensively, mainly in #### to upgrade areas of #####, to upgrade the underlying character, put in pedestrian zones, and increase business activity in the area, etc. ▪ Much participation by the business people in upgraded areas to provide input into the design and co-operate and to ensure the works run smoothly. Co-operation by businesses can take a few forms:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Levy put on new developments towards environmental and amenity improvement b) Support by ‘doing’ from traders during upgrading of existing streets by promoting the scheme (i.e. living over the shop tax incentive) c) New European scheme where a group of business people can contribute towards upgrading of their area ▪ Initial plan for the School of ##### was to use a black granite façade (alien to #####), but the architects eventually agreed under duress to use vernacular stone, sandstone and limestone (paler than normal). This sandstone and limestone can create a chemical reaction between them (did not know it at the time). ▪ New wonderful scheme for ##### Street designed by Beth Gali, but granite (non native) is being used. ▪ Currently a lot of stone on sites which has been dumped, but with restrictions on landfill, it might be used in the future.
<p>Visual Environment Strategies – assessing effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor urban renewal schemes via monitoring group by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Feedback from monitoring group b) Traffic counts c) Pedestrian counts d) Property values and property rent surveys ▪ Questionnaire surveys not done. Perhaps some of the other Departments would not be as happy to have their work assessed in that way, but engineering, planning and design could benefit from it ▪ Very important to do an appraisal of success of materials used. Getting more used to doing it with European projects ▪ Have used “public rounds” on the type of paving used. A guideline was produced jointly by the engineering, planning and architectural departments to try to have a unified approach on particular materials and use simple rather than elaborate materials (i.e. Victorian bollards). Some entrenched views, some successes, but still room for improvement. ▪ Long and tortuous public participation process to get agreement with the ##### Street scheme, and we had to re-assess the way it was done. Initial preference was to use large black stone paving, but it was too expensive. Eventually decided on limestone (traditional material in #####) for edging of footpaths and concrete paving in the same shape as the old limestone paving. Successful replication of the old in a simple way.
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Original 2Ha threshold for mandatory EIA for urban developments was ludicrous. It has been reduced recently, but still many developments under the threshold where significant visual impact is likely. 2Ha is very large in the context of centre city, but quite small in a rural context. EIS thresholds for developments in urban areas need to be totally re-examined. Existing regulations seem to be geared to rural environment (birds, special areas of conservation, etc.) but not the urban environment. Existing regulations could be amended slightly to bring in qualitative thresholds, where if there is potential for any significant impact an EIS should be necessary. This would back up requests for EIS when under existing threshold levels. ▪ Have requested further information for visual assessment of a development proposal where significant visual impact was considered likely.
<p>Environmental Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approximately 3-4 EISs submitted in ##### per year

<p>Statements – information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EISs are mainly dealt with in-house (well endowed internally with technical advice): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Visual assessments by planners b) Engineers c) Qualified horticulturalist in the Parks Dept who provides assistance with trees and landscaping d) Traffic section to comment on traffic figures in an EIS e) We do refer our files to the architects' dept but they don't play a very big role. It is interesting that some local authorities employ architects in the development control section where they are actively involved with planning applications. f) Conservation officer will deal with visual issues of protected structures in future. We need another conservation officer immediately – currently being pulled from all sides (development control, protected structures, grants, etc.) g) Statutory bodies also automatically involved ▪ Have taken on consultants on very rare occasions to assess information in a specialist area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) One case at the moment in the retail area to verify the adequacy of what has been submitted. b) Also done for architectural issues for specialist structural advice ▪ Some local authorities have tended to loose their Forward Planning Sections due to the increase in planning applications during the 1990's. However, ##### is one of the few local authorities where forward planning has been given considerable importance (##### are a case in point), so a few less in Forward Planning Section than in Development Control Section. Understaffing of planning Department does not seem to be an issue.
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Team approach is important. Engineers have their ways of doing things (i.e. roads where aesthetics did not come into it). All major infra-structural works would benefit if there were some input from the architects and planners at design stage, rather than later. But, "Better local government" currently instituting a re-organisation of local authorities by putting a manager (not necessarily technical) in charge of each department. This may even adversely affect the situation, where improvements of the last few years might be lost.

Planning Authority 3

Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-house process for preparing the draft for the 1999 Development Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Establish a team well in advance of formal exposure to councillors Ⓡ Start with examination of revisions to the existing Development Plan Ⓡ Carry out a series of consultations, formally and informally Ⓡ Discuss available information with councillors Ⓡ Preparation of 1999 Plan telescoped into 1 year - reduced number of consultations possible ▪ 2000 PDA formalises the procedure a) statutory process for preparation of the draft Development Plan b) groups to be consulted are identified c) sets a maximum period. ▪ 2000 PDA also introduces landscape conservation areas, and architectural conservation areas which have visual implications for the future ▪ Heritage Council have developed a technique of heritage appraisal, and a retrospective analysis of 1999 Plan has identified strengths and weaknesses - no listed views or prospects, will be addressed next time. At the time of drafting the current Plan the interpretation was that views included landscape and not urban settings ▪ Preparation of next Plan will start with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Vision and strategy statement for ##### on which the draft Development Plan will be based Ⓡ document all the changes which have occurred since the 1999 Plan was adopted (external & internal environment, legislation, policy changes) Ⓡ Subdividing ##### into 5 areas with separate area managers and planning teams to do a SWOT analysis to identify local issues
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conservation areas in Chapter #, 1999 City Development Plan ▪ Landscape conservation areas (introduced in the 2000 PDA) likely to be based on views - will generate analysis of the urban scene at a micro level ▪ Next Plan will have a formal method to survey views to be protected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Urban vistas like the classical Georgian ##### Ⓡ Landscape settings - #####, view towards #####, view of ##### along #####, #####, etc ▪ Protected views are a useful means for controlling development, and are not subject to compensation.
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During re-development LA can reward developer by being generous with conditions if certain enhancements carried out ▪ Power and money have come together in urban renewal schemes where a combination of a Local Area Plan and Public Private Partnerships have transformed areas - #####, Docklands, #####, #####, etc. Original schemes were tied to tax incentives which stimulated investment, but newer schemes in the suburbs have limited funding sourced mainly from ##### coffers ▪ Tourism an important driver for enhancement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Positives stimulated by formal tourist interests, Bord Fáilte & ##### Tourism - improvement of #####, improvements around visitor attractions (#####) paving, lighting, access for tour buses, etc. Very little direct interest from local hoteliers. Ⓡ Direct transfer of funds to assist LA enhancement initiatives - Business interests may not realise that they can effect an improvement in their environment via tax deductible schemes, employees also benefit - mechanism needs to be publicised. i.e. Docklands have provided a lot indirectly to tourism by providing a lovely walk along the quays. Ⓡ in some Integrated Area Plans - ##### - develop ##### route from ##### through the ##### through ##### towards #####, try to improve ##### area Ⓡ in preparations for opening new ##### in 2002 - examining needs of access via ##### Street - what will they see, space to congregate, parking for buses, access from bus park to new entrance Ⓡ Negatives generally left to the ##### to resolve i.e. tour busses in ##### Street, etc.
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No specific policy for the visual environment in the Development Plan - elements contained as part of an overall within the sustainable development policy. ▪ Dynamic tension between planners and architects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ <i>Architects</i> - feel that they can design themselves out of any corner by enhancing the beauty of the design and making it more acceptable. They have a belief in their own ability that they can create something so beautiful that it will fit any setting. Ⓡ <i>Planners</i> - view the ##### somewhat like a film set with a complete ##### ambience. Planners take a more public viewpoint that some things are inviolate and should not be touched. Architects rarely reach the same conclusion. ▪ EIA is targeting these base values which are inviolate
<p>Visual Environment Strategy - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protection mostly achieved under development control measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ <i>Listed Buildings</i> - The setting of the listed building is nearly as important as the building itself Ⓡ <i>Reducing height</i> - is the main mitigation measure available for reducing negative visual impacts in ##### ▪ Urban views and prospects could be one of the key elements in the new Development Plan - way of looking at the city, setting of listed buildings, urban vistas like the #####
<p>Visual Environment Strategy - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Urban and village Renewal schemes</i> - e.g. ##### Street, ##### Street, etc. ▪ <i>Funding under Urbane</i> - ##### & ##### finished, ##### now starting - some buildings consciously designed to give a visual lift to the area. Not just replacing ##### with ##### housing, but including an attractive main street is an integral part ▪ <i>Tidy Districts</i> oriented towards the suburbs - local communities and Parks Dept work together to improve street cleaning and tidy up odd corners. ▪ <i>Small amenity schemes</i> (~ 20) primarily for suburban areas (#####) entirely visual amenity enhancement. Largely being designed externally, some by RIAI competitions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Derelict Sites</i> - legislation very weak - have to be in a very bad condition before LA can invoke an action, property owner has to be given a chance to tidy it up, does not necessarily get rid of the eyesore. ▪ <i>Advertising hoardings</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ many are established (over 5 years) but unauthorised Ⓜ possible under new legislation to order the removal without having to pay compensation - hoardings on ##### have still not been removed even though it was an objective within 1999 Plan. Ⓜ Compensation for enforced removal of advertising hoardings will more than likely include loss of income - hoardings on ##### are very intrusive, but ##### has consistently refused to do anything about it contrary to public policy, due to enormous revenue it derives - LA loath to pay compensation based on rental income ▪ <i>Compulsory purchase</i> - greatest strength of LA. Trying to entice ##### to move elsewhere, but purchase price was high due to activity (eyesore but prosperous) so ##### had the power but not the money to carry out its wishes. Eventually exercised power to a) collate all the different land parcels, and b) a threat to landowners who are sitting on sites that the LA will take them over and make them available for re-development (##### & ##### sites). ▪ 2000 PDA provides for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ extra planning control measures beyond protection (positive intervention - enhancement) but limited to landscape and architectural conservation areas, but element of compensation still present, remains to be seen if planning authorities have resources to implement fully. Pity that positive intervention and conservation areas are linked - might be areas where enhancement power would be needed outside designated conservation areas. Ⓜ LA to take contributions from developers for non-service issues (visual enhancement of local area, which also improves property values) i.e. ##### Street - current amounts are only gestures. ▪ Business Association promoting American idea of business improvement districts where businesses pay a little bit extra above the rates for specified benefits within a defined area - impacts mainly on the service departments. Some concerns about equality of service across different areas of #####. ##### will provide a basic level of service (safe & clean), but mechanism should be available to provide more if required.
<p>Visual Environment Strategies - assessing effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formal monitoring of Integrated Area Plans (IAP) is conducted as a requirement for receiving EU funding - post mortem on actual versus expected achievements. ▪ Defects of current system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ No formal revisiting of projects to see how they work in practice - planners might revisit projects they were personally involved with, but not a systematic evaluation that feeds back into future policy. Ⓜ No analysis of visual improvements carried out yet - potential to gather wealth of information from small surveys of people's enjoyment of visual enhancement of eyesores

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Could potentially be a great motivator to drive enhancement schemes ▪ In general terms a good idea, and corresponds to two key elements of the reform process for better local government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Assess value for money in a more systematic way Ⓜ Evaluate customer satisfaction - customer surveys on quality of service
<p>Environmental Impact Statements - Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collective examination of plans lodged - if potential for significant impacts then can request one if not originally submitted. Experience needed to make a judgement of when to request an EIS. ▪ Area based thresholds should be re-considered in the light of proposed developments at #####, ##### Site and ##### in ##### Street - other measure of significance is needed other than area. Difficulty if a development is sub-threshold but would have a significant impact, then current system falls down. A small quarry could do enormous damage visually, but a large one could have very little visual impact. Visual impact cannot be measured objectively - should be emphasised in words and should be strong emphasis on other qualities other than area based. Should acknowledge the importance of visual impact in a form of words - cannot determine a threshold value for visual impact. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ ##### was chosen for its visual impact but it was not even approaching the threshold value triggering the necessity for preparing an EIS (acquire court ruling with respect to threshold values) Ⓜ ##### development was sub threshold - application lodged without an EIS and refused, appealed to An Bord Pleanála who requested an EIS - issue was so stark that did not need to labour the issue - if is very likely that you are going to refuse it, what value is there going to the extra expense of preparing an EIS Ⓜ ##### Site - European Court ruled that an EIS should have been submitted ▪ Developers tend to err on the cautious side and prepare an EIS anyway ▪ Many EISs submitted are greater than the threshold values but don't have significant environmental effects ▪ Would prefer if EIS flagged impacts which are expected to be significant and dealt with those in great detail
<p>Environmental Impact Statements - information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EISs are an elaboration of what planners were supposed to be doing anyway. It formalises the process by providing a more scientific measure, which also allows public participation. ▪ Scoping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Regulations provide a checklist of impact which should be taken into account which are used to decide whether they are likely to be significant or not with respect to particular development proposals. Ⓜ Experience of assessing EISs is also used Ⓜ Puts planners in a compromising position to ensure that all impacts likely to be significant are identified at an early stage. ▪ EIS for ##### prepared professionally but very seriously deficient with respect to traffic and visual impact assessment. LAs may need to set up independent studies in parallel for

	<p>developments expected to have significant impacts which can be cross referenced later to determine sufficiency and adequacy of EIS information submitted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Serious questions asked of traffic figures supplied - employed own consultants to evaluate them - figures were not robust. Ⓜ Not very happy with selection of viewpoints - specified about 50 new viewpoints and specified in technical terms the types of images wanted for the new viewpoints. Own study identified this list of viewpoints not taken in the original EIS, which were subsequently requested. Some problems with photomontages supplied. ▪ Problems in current EIA process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ <i>Commissioning consultants</i> - might be better if an EIS consultant was to conduct a scoping study (2 - 3 days) first to assess the feasibility of the project before commissioning an architect to draw up detailed designs. Currently architects are first commissioned to prepare designs for the proposed development, and then an EIA consultant is commissioned to prepare an EIS for the chosen design. EIA seems to be 'post hoc' and does not seem to be integrated into the design process. Ⓜ <i>Standard</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EISs are supposed to be objective, yet rarely see a good one even though they are prepared by professional consultants. Consultants may not get very many more jobs if they are more frank. - EISs received by ##### are very professionally produced. Ⓜ <i>Viable alternatives</i> - are not proposed. Attempt to cloak the proposed design by mitigating measures, and play down significance of impacts. This puts the EIA consultant in an embarrassing position. Some consultants do not take on commissions, which are fatally flawed, because their credibility is on the line, and they can retain their objectivity by refusing a commission. Ⓜ <i>Value systems are sometimes suspect</i> - "moderately negative" can correspond to something being nearly a total disaster
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A - LA having the resources and power to pay compensation for positive action ▪ B - Better understanding of quality in design by developers and architects

Planning Authority 4

Issues	Comments
Development Plan - preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 year process to prepare the draft for the 1998 Development Plan (diagram provided). First attempt to focus on new #####. ▪ Team of 2 conducting a landscape assessment of the complete county for the next revision of the Development Plan. Hybrid methodology being used (draft guidelines - DOE, Landscape Assessment Guidance - Countryside Commission UK, Pilot Study on Landscape Characterisation in County Clare - Heritage Council April 2000) ▪ Landscape assessment will identify areas with a carrying capacity (potential for development) ▪ Landscape assessment team are using "Heritage Appraisal of Development Plans; A Methodology for Planning Authorities" by the Heritage Council to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the 1998 Development Plan.
Development Plan - protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whole sections about protection in 1998 Development Plan ▪ Amenity areas and views identified in 1998 Development Plan are - conservation areas, proposed NHAs, protection of views, roads objective to preserve views - survey conducted by DLR to identify scenic routes
Development Plan - enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only sentences here and there about enhancement in 1998 Development Plan, although did identify a few eyesores to be dealt with ▪ Since 1998 Development Plan, DLR has moved towards putting enhancement in writing ▪ Survey between ##### and ##### identified derelict sites on map - encourage redevelopment, but only contact owner if site within specific area plan
Visual Environment Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy for the visual environment is within the policy for sustainable development in the 1998 Development Plan - non specific for visual environment ▪ Becoming increasingly aware of the importance of urban design, particularly at local plan and integrated area plan level ▪ Moving away from setting standards and trying to protect what we have towards a qualitative assessment for developments trying to create attractive, liveable environments for the future. List of 30 qualitative things.
Visual Environment Strategy - protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2300 protected structures, small grants to renovate protected structures ▪ Need better communication between developers and planners. Pushing the need to get developers and planners together to brainstorm an agreed vision for major developments ▪ Conflict between a) streetscape model (planners preference) and b) internal mall model (developers preference) because a) does not attract same rental
Visual Environment Strategy - enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encouraging good quality modern architecture which does not detract from the ##### ambience, e.g. ##### over ##### ▪ Proposal to pave over ##### to make a Plaza & sculpture park ▪ Hide ##### building by wrapping a new apartment block around it - decision at development control level ▪ Removing litter or derelict cars are responsibility of environmental services Dept - integrated 3 year anti litter programme at present. Landscaping responsibility of Parks Dept.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Village and urban renewal schemes. List within 1998 Development Plan for renewal during life of plan. Local community groups are involved, but can be differences of opinion at local level.
Visual Environment Strategies - assessing effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessing success of scheme and value for money not done to date - would be an interesting thing to do. Not done in any formal way, more reactive to questions from councillors. ▪ Village and urban renewal schemes seem to be successful.
Environmental Impact Statements - information sufficiency and validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A number of planners and engineers have done 1 year environmental impact assessment courses (UCD) ▪ EIS getting more and more wordy - going through legal requirements rather than concentrating on the most important points. Threat of litigation makes people stick to the letter of the law to protect themselves even if it is not optimum as regards making a good decision. ▪ Consultants preparing EISs very reluctant to use format where each impact would be dealt with in sequence instead of dealing with all impacts under the headings of baseline study, identify potential impacts, amelioration measures, assess significance. ▪ Other departments asked for their input - water, sewerage & roads. Parks Dept might also comment on landscaping proposals ▪ Photomontage is the most useful method for assessing visual impacts where situation before and after development can be compared. Photomontages should be checked with lodged plans to ensure information is not biased (case cited of tallest elevations further back missing) ▪ Would not grant a development which relied on the future growth of trees to hide it and make it acceptable ▪ Have contracted outside experts to check validity of roads & traffic information, have not yet but might in future look for help conducting retail assessments.
Suggested most important improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stronger emphasis on urban design at local plan level and for village and urban renewal schemes

Information taken from the website

Issues	Comments
Environmental Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidelines for sustainable development published ▪ 3 year Environmental Science graduate internship programme began 1999 ▪ Environmental Partnership Fund 1999 ▪ Encourage recycling of waste
Visual Environment Strategy - protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrated anti litter Programme 1999 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Phase 1 - 3 new litter wardens appointed Ⓜ Phase 2 - Anti litter campaign Ⓜ Phase 3 - Schools education programme, including environmental projects
Visual Environment Strategy - enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tidy Districts competition ▪ 2000 acres of open space and parks for passive and active recreational activities are maintained by the Parks Dept ▪ Abandoned cars removal scheme ▪ Beach cleaning programme on popular bathing beaches ▪ Accumulations of offensive materials are investigated by Environmental Health Officers on the Council's behalf

Planning Authority 5

Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current CDP 1999–2004 – new CDP due in 2005 - review process includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Preliminary Work – background work of due to start in October 2002 over the following 12 months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Population studies ➤ Land-use studies ➤ Landscape assessment - produced by Brady Shipman Martin for the 1999 CDP – areas identified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Landscape character – 7 characters types identified - coastal, estuary, river valley/canal, #####/#####, high agriculture, low agriculture, rolling hills and trees ○ Spatial blocks – 16 spatial blocks identified – sensitivity related to areas within spatial blocks ➤ Arising from landscape assessment development panel produced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guidelines for Rural Development - covers one-off housing in rural areas – already approved by County Council and going to print fairly soon – also covers structures of buildings ○ Guideline for Residential Developments – being printed for internal circulation at present – for housing development > 20 or 50 houses - intended for architects, developers and planners to give guidance on acceptable design standards – includes backs of houses, open spaces, vegetation (function and visual aspect) ➤ Brainstorming on where existing CDP falls down – try to identify areas where special studies might be needed – divided into 4 area teams (development control and local forward planning like village improvements) and 1 strategic team (CDP and countryside strategic focus) b) Statutory Process – closely choreographed – once begin process will not have time for any background work – due to start in September 2003 ▪ Local Area Plans (LAPs) - visual content greater as you get down to smaller scale – area action plans to be replaced by LAPs in new Act – statutory process for production => inflexible timescale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Village of ##### – already completed - public participation very good <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ LAP on display in village for ~ 6 weeks ➤ Two evening meetings with locals – ask questions and give views ➤ Written submissions accepted and used for final modifications b) ## LAP - prepared in partnership under SEMPA stewardship ▪ SAAO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ##### - Management Plan for SAAO area developed under LAP process - prepared in partnership under SEMPA stewardship - strategy to ensure conservation and preservation of areas of outstanding natural beauty and the sustainable tourist and recreational use of natural assets

	<p>within the SAAO.</p> <p>b) ##### Valley - prepared to protect the area of the #####</p> <p>c) ##### Estuary / ##### – SAAO proposed</p>
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development Control – sections within planning Departments have responsibility for and good control of protection of elements of the environment (built and natural) requiring preservation and conservation ▪ Designations for protection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Zone G – to protect and improve high amenity areas and to prohibit development not directly related to those areas amenity potential or their use for agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High amenity Areas - coastal zone, river valleys (#####, #####, ##### and #####) and ##### Hill areas – no houses will be permitted between sea and adjoining roads – single dwellings if (2 conditions) + site suitability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consideration if located in sensitive area ○ Development will not give rise to visual intrusion ○ Development will not interfere with any view or prospect of special amenity value which it is necessary to preserve ▪ Sensitive Areas - areas adjacent to high amenity areas – contain some of the qualities of high amenity areas, but to a lesser degree – development difficult to integrate and may have a detrimental effect on landscape quality in high amenity areas b) Zone H – Green Belt - protecting and enhancing the open nature of lands between urban areas in order to a) limit development growth into the countryside over the long term and b) provide a visual break between urban areas – want to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retain attractive landscapes ▪ Provide buffer areas between urban and agricultural land uses ▪ Provide access by urban population for sport and recreation <p>Urban forestry not permitted in areas indicated as green belts in 1993 CDP, nor in green belt between ##### and the ##### (very small specific areas with very definite character which planners felt would not be enhanced with additional forestry, such as conifers) – green belts extended by 20 or 30 times in the 1999 CDP- urban forestry acceptable in extended areas of green belt</p> c) Zone RV1 – to protect and enhance the special physical and social character of rural villages and provide and/or improve village facilities to serve local needs in accordance with approved Action Area Plans and subject to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conservation Areas - designated in ##### - ##### Terrace, ##### terrace, and St. ##### Terrace ▪ Record of Protected Structures - extended powers under P&D Act 2000 to protect structures listed in the RPS – review of policies and objectives planned for next review of CDP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) List 1 – 69 structures listed to secure preservation b) List 2 – 566 structures listed to consider preservation in the event of a planning application being submitted ▪ Trees of Special Amenity Value – many objectives all over the County to retain and protect existing mature trees, for example:

	<p>a) ##### – to retain the existing mature trees in ##### village b) ##### – retain the impressive tree lined approach from ##### as an important visual element in the town</p> <p>But no list of protected trees included in 1999 CDP - have no teeth really unless there is a TPO as the legal backing behind it – would have to be taken into account in event of planning application, but no power to prevent someone chopping trees down</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tree Protection Orders – trees, groups of trees or woodlands, which are important landscape features should be protected by management agreements, or Tree Protection Orders. Tree bonds will be used where appropriate - limited use in ##### compared to much more use in ##### – no difference between TPO on privately or publicly owned trees
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancement Policy - less coherent than it could be, no comprehensive policy towards upgrading – maybe should look at policy to get rid of negative features (litter, etc) as well as protecting the positive features ▪ Enhancement Function - responsibility scattered between many Departments – limited budget to spend on improving public spaces, such as Urban and Village renewal schemes ▪ Village Renewal Scheme – scheduled for ##### ▪ Architectural Conservation Areas – provision under new P&D Act 2000 to designate architectural conservation areas - then have powers to upgrade area – first one will probably be ##### village - ▪ Derelict Sites – Have not personally used DS Act for last 15 years, but felt there was good potential there for using it (applying fines to stimulate re-development / refurbishment)
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design of Open Spaces – objective to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Seek design to be visually and functionally accessible to the maximum number of dwellings within the residential area b) Retain existing natural features (important stand of mature trees) and provide open space in this vicinity to ensure it's visual setting and protection c) Council may require planting of saplings or tree seedlings or other plants as condition of permission ▪ Sustainable Development Policies (p95) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Preserving outstanding landscapes and protecting sensitive landscapes b) Protecting and enhancing the natural environment ▪ Sustainable Urban Land Use Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To provide, protect and enhance high quality urban facilities including health, educational, social, commercial and recreational b) To conserve and improve the identity and character of ##### towns and villages ▪ Naming of Estates – council will require the use of meaningful local names in bilingual format, or in Irish alone for naming housing estates
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Views and Prospects – 13 prospects (areas) designated in CDP (no map included in CDP document, so unsure if any scenic views designated) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Difficulty getting permission in these areas in the first place, and onus on planning authority to take more cognisance of the impact of the development proposal to ensure that the view is not compromised => assessment more rigorous -

	<p>Views and prospects in old CDP reviewed during Brady Shipman Martin Landscape Assessment – many originate in ‘93 and ‘83 CDPs - some extra ones included in 1999 CDP</p> <p>b) Prevent development which would block or interfere with a view which is considered to be of special amenity value, or special interest to preserve prominent landscapes or areas of special amenity value or special interest</p>
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Derelict Sites – no list provided in 1999 CDP ▪ SAAO – objective to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reduce number of masts on ##### mountain to minimum necessary b) Severe restriction of advertising structures in ##### ▪ Indicative Forest Strategy - in discussions with Forest Service to produce IFS for ##### – planning control for forestry moved from Planning Authorities to the Forest Service – planning control for forestry expected to be tighter (certain kinds of planting, etc) – Forest Service has produced very good a) guidelines for Forestry and the Landscape, and b) a Code of best Forest Practice ▪ Quality of Landscaping and Open Spaces – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A high standard of landscaping is integral to the success of higher density residential development. Detailed landscaping proposals including specifications must be submitted with all planning applications. Evaluations of these proposals will form an integral part of the assessment of the quality of the scheme. Provisions of the design guide must be followed. b) Trying to improve quality at the moment - lot of bad practice in the past where developers were granted planning permission and allowed to put in landscape plans afterwards on the condition that there should be a landscape plan - Last Variation of CDP introduced requirement to have landscape plans submitted with planning application - we feel that landscaping is an integral part of the planning process - the overall visual amenity cannot be left till afterwards - Current Variation of the CDP requires that landscape plans have to be prepared by qualified persons - remains to be seen how it will stand up ▪ Quality of Layout and Design - Planners wish to improve quality of urban design - Design of most large developments is done by architects now <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The quality of the residential environment will be paramount in the assessment of applications for higher density schemes. The proposed design guide will form the basis for assessing quality. Permission will be refused for schemes which do not demonstrate a high standard of layout and design b) Could not request only qualified persons (architect) to prepare building designs - could find yourself on sticky ground - would have to be decided at national level – if only architects could submit plans for planning permission then some will make their living signing other people’s work – putting their professional competence on line – architect to examine to improve design quality ▪ Streams in Culverts - sometimes a lot of pressure from residents to culvert streams - people in Ireland too concerned with who is going to drown in stream - streams and canals in the Netherlands used for recreation (skating in winter) - might be better to put green area around streams and make into a lake –

<p>Visual Environment Strategies – assessing effectiveness</p>	<p>make a positive landscape feature within the development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primary Aim – spending a lot of money producing reports, but not achieving primary aim of modifying designs to fit the environment – seem to be applying more resource to landscaping to hide existing designs – design quality should be more important than mitigating measures such as screening – landscaping could take 20 years before it is fully mature
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of EISs – only 3 to 5 received per year in ##### - ▪ Scoping procedure – consultation between developer & Planning Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Developers ask for advice b) Possibly a face to face meeting to identify what is important c) Sometimes developers draft something and planners comment on it d) Planning Department supplies scoping result in writing – letter back indicating the crucial issues
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EIS Quality - considerable variation in quality of EISs - some realistically assess the impacts - have never seen an EIS that said no to the development project – getting very bulky and most of content is rubbish – format better if restricted to include a) methodology used, b) results achieved, c) conclusions - ##### ##### example in ##### Re-Development discussed where objectors did not have access to site used helicopter to try to predict if buildings would have been visible from green area in ##### – location of helicopter incorrect so whole case went under ▪ Evaluate EIS Quality – sometimes some of the information is quite misleading – may need to send it back for extra information / more details – had to go back for details on photomontages on two major developments (##### re-development and Landfill in #####). Photomontages can be very useful but they need to be treated with care (went out to look at site from viewpoints and did not resemble images in photomontages) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Internally - circulate to drainage, roads, transport, etc for assessment b) Externally – to prescribed authorities such as Dúchas and others
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DID NOT ASK LAST QUESTION “WHAT IS BIGGEST THREAT TO VISUAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE COUNTY”

Planning Authority 6

Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current CDP adopted in 1997. Have already started the formal review procedure. New Plan due for adoption in Jan 2003. ▪ No re-survey of views and prospects in the last few CDPs. Original based on the Foras Forbartha Inventory of Outstanding Landscapes in 1977. This time a fundamental review of the landscape classifications will be conducted. Consultants employed to carry out a landscape assessment in accordance with the draft guidelines for Landscape and landscape assessment (DoELG, 2000). The guidelines set down criteria to identify visual units, etc, but a lot of views within the current CDP would be well known views. Views are generally of areas that are unspoilt, and as yet no streetscapes. Thinks some urban views were examined in ##### but unsure if they were inserted in current CDP. ▪ Current CDP does not contain any scenic routes, which will be re-examined in the review. The whole basis of the review would be so that we can prevent inappropriate development in scenic areas and along scenic routes. ▪ Maybe the landscape assessment should examine existing views to determine the extent to which they have been altered or our development control conditions have been unsuccessful. ▪ Current CDP has two land-use zoning classifications of 'high scenic amenity' and 'outstanding scenic amenity' based on their visual characteristics, which apply development control conditions. Under pressure to change the conditions applied to permissions. The number of land-use zonings is expected to rise resulting from the fundamental review. ▪ Just completed 8 weeks consultation during the CDP review – discussed landscape. There will be more specific consultations on landscape during the landscape assessment process – members want more consultation on landscape. Participation is via the community Fora set up under the County Enterprise Development Boards (~300 community groups represented). ▪ Heritage Council conducted a heritage appraisal of the current CDP, results of which will feed back to the policy development staff.
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cannot do much with the areas, which have been spoilt in the past, so our focus is to put all our resources into protecting areas that are still pristine. ▪ DID NOT HAVE A COPY OF THE 1997 or 2003 CDPs TO EXTRACT POLICIES FOR PROTECTION
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scattered between different departments and not well defined. ▪ Improve communication between departments might help here – new heritage and conservation officers have a function in raising in-house awareness. ▪ Derelict sites listed in the CDP ▪ DID NOT HAVE A COPY OF THE 1997 or 2003 CDPs TO EXTRACT POLICIES FOR ENHANCEMENT
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No specific policy for the visual aspect of landscape within current CDP. Little references in different areas, but nothing coherent. Hope that new landscape assessment will be a fundamental review of how we look at landscape and how we protect it.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DID NOT HAVE A COPY OF THE 1997 or 2003 CDPs TO EXTRACT VISUAL POLICIES
Visual Environment Strategy – protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DID NOT HAVE A COPY OF THE 1997 or 2003 CDPs TO EXTRACT PROTECTION POLICIES FOR THE VISUAL ENVIRONMENT
Visual Environment Strategy – enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Old derelict cars are removed by the Environment Department ▪ Wardens are active on programmes for minimising litter. ▪ Environmental Department also active in planting shrubs and flowers.
Visual Environment Strategies – assessing effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would consider giving research grants to local third level universities and institutes to carry out surveys of the local public to evaluate the success of village and urban renewal schemes ▪ No surveys of public opinion conducted on ‘how successful do you think this village renewal scheme was’ and ‘value for money on materials used’ ▪ Village and urban renewal schemes are as much community development projects as they are the planning Authority’s so the architects involved would be in constant contact with the community during design and implementation of the project – a lot of feedback this way ▪ Community grant scheme now on an electoral area basis (6 for County #####), so communities should be far more involved in the future. They administer these amenity funds for the County Council by prioritising what has to be done.
Environmental Impact Statements – Thresholds triggering preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visual impacts can be significant in each of the 3 development categories examined (piggeries, quarries and urban developments)
Environmental Impact Statements – information sufficiency and validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EISs vetted by senior planning staff, because they have a better knowledge of the issues. ▪ Sometimes other Departments also have a say – one currently for a quarry, which the Environment Department would be involved in – though ultimately the Planning Department is responsible. ▪ Some prescribed authorities are good for making submissions on EISs, and others are not. The Heritage Council has one person handling applications nationally, and An Taisce normally is good for responding. Dúchas will normally always respond, but there can be differences between the national response from Dúchas and the response from the local Dúchas representative (normally have to go with view from Dúchas HQ). Always anxious to talk to the local representatives however. Some of these groups are snowed under with EISs coming in from all counties. ▪ No facility currently within ##### County Council to allow planners a year off to complete post-grad diplomas or masters in environmental science ▪ Not a great range of part-time courses available here locally. NUI Galway has one in rural development, which runs over weekends, but none in the EIA area. ▪ Issues are either overlooked in the EIS or issues where we have asked, “why didn’t you try this?” These are issues that you would not expect consultants to overlook, but it happens quite regularly. Have enlisted consultants to advise us. ▪ EISs are biased really. As long as the EIA is being prepared by the client, it is going to be biased on paper
Suggested most	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One-off housing is the biggest problem within the County for

important improvement	<p>the visual environment. 60% of all residential applications in ##### during 2000 were for one-off housing, and we have a very low refusal rate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Gone to our councillors with the review of the CDP and they are going to try to water it down as much as possible. What chance have we in arguing our case when Counties Meath, Kildare and Wicklow are breaching the strategic guidelines▪ This is a major educational issue. We need to educate people.▪ Many people recognise that our villages are in decline (no schools or vets, etc.) but no in depth examination as to what is causing it. People do not want to live in villages. With cars it is not a big issue to live in the country.▪ Don't think that the NSS is going to address this issue at all. Maybe regional guidelines are needed, but to what extent are councillors going to heed regional guidelines?▪ Much debate also recently about wind-farms, but hopefully the landscape assessment is going to identify preferred locations within the county for turbines. Applications for wind-farms in the past have always tended to be in the high amenity areas. Also need to examine how many of these turbines are needed nationally over the next 5 years, applications coming in from all quarters at the moment.
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Planning Authority 7

Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1999 Development Plan - next due 2004 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ predominantly prepared in-house - some aspects by consultants Ⓜ all background information collected & surveys completed Ⓜ public participation (novel at time, now required under 2000 P&D Act) - consulted at early stage with interest groups, public bodies & residents Ⓜ background policy papers which correlated with chapters of Plan Ⓜ each chapter brought separately to the council at different stages ▪ No SWOT analysis done on 1991 Plan because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ different economic climate so 1991 Plan not relevant to new situation Ⓜ rapid economic development within the city since 1991, so second development Plan came in era of economic buoyancy, substantial growth, so payback time for environmental and amenity issues Ⓜ pre-empted current retail policies - did not advocate large retail outlets outside the city centre - it worked Ⓜ very pro development and very protectionist towards the city centre ▪ <i>Local Area Plans</i> - 4 prepared - #####, #####, #####, ##### <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Opening up large areas of agricultural land for development Ⓜ Rural area where nobody living previously except in one-off houses Ⓜ Policy to increase population from 2-300 to about 10,000 Ⓜ Does not really deal with visual aspects - mainly deals with zoning for residential and provision of services (preserve lands for schools, rights of way to links areas with pathways) Ⓜ Policy to acquire land within area of local area Plans ▪ <i>Landscape Assessment</i> - policy document contains definition and methodology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ more pitched at rural landscapes and does not appear to have an application in urban areas Ⓜ community & psychological significance not factored in Ⓜ much more scientifically based Ⓜ contains assessments on flora, fauna, landscape, mountains, rivers, etc Ⓜ May have areas that cannot fit into it on a scientific basis because they are not significant enough Ⓜ Features may be significant to locals, but may not be significant nationally or regionally
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some additional lands zoned for recreational amenity in 1999 Plan ▪ G Zone - areas of high visual amenity with either of following characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Elevated areas Ⓜ Adjacent to sensitive areas i.e. SAC along the #####

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Have potential for amenity and recreation in the future i.e. east of ##### ▪ Also defined village envelopes where development will be allowed, such as #####, #####, etc. ▪ No areas specifically designated for visual protection within 1999 Plan ▪ <i>Landscape Views</i> - Many listed (linear rather than point views) mainly oriented towards the bay. Surveyed on the ground between the Plans on legacy views contained in 1991 Plan (views area fairly constant) to ensure they were still there and that Planning dept not proscribing development in line with them. Most views correlate with landscapes where planning restrictions apply - some low profile developments allowed. Characteristics were elevated sites which had a view of the bay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Views were <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Self determining in some way Ⓡ Would not be obscured Ⓡ Probably on land where not encouraging development ▪ <i>Urban Views</i> - None listed in 1999 Plan - all buildings quite low (5 stories max) and architectural heritages area warranting protection of streetscape ▪ <i>Building Height</i> - height of buildings enforced via maximum site coverage index - ratio of 2 for city centre so can almost pre-empt how high buildings can be - have a mindset on what are the highest buildings, and maintain it - developers not currently putting pressure on the height limit - developments going down underground rather than up (excavations now economic, previously not) ▪ <i>Tree Survey</i> - survey carried out of trees in #### but specimens may not be significant nationally, but important locally
Development Plan - enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No eyesores identified in Plan
Visual Environment Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ more focussed on #### built environment - peripheral agricultural high amenity areas don't get many planning applications by virtue of their zoning ▪ 1999 Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ general policy for protecting the visual amenity - planning dept deals with the specifics - generally tied to areas designated as sensitive - action via zoning as opposed to specific visual policy (Lough #####) Ⓡ specific policy for environmentally sensitive areas and transition zones between agricultural and residential areas - reduction in density for both areas - restrictions begin to apply in the transition zones Ⓡ No visual policy for industrial zones which are fairly flat Ⓡ NHA and SAC included ▪ <i>Areas of high visual amenity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Elevated location in ##### close to the ##### foothills Ⓡ ##### - ##### road area ▪ <i>Recreational Amenity Areas</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ only buildings with low aspect to minimise impact Ⓡ only building associated with use ▪ General proposal to complement natural landscape areas
Visual Environment Strategy - protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Zoning</i> - via development control section in planning dept. Identify different land plots for different types of development and policy within 1999 Plan is to assist development within

	<p>these areas - lands with the highest amenity would be selected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Encroachment</i> - deal with it at planning application stage - restrict height levels along boundaries of sensitive areas ▪ <i>Listed Structures</i> - 600 structures included in 1999 Plan ▪ <i>Retain Fabric of Buildings</i> - within any viable usage
<p>Visual Environment Strategy - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Eyesores</i> - would have been dealt with under urban renewal schemes ▪ <i>Urban Renewal Schemes</i> - would have dealt with a lot of the dereliction and obsolescence between the ##### and the ##### during the last 10 years - needed a quality visual improvement from a spatial viewpoint - mix of residential complexes, hotels and retail outlets developed during three 5 year grant schemes through the Dept. of Finance - most successful and quickest take off ▪ <i>Heritage Initiative Scheme</i> - 5 year plan to plant a forest along the river valley as far as ##### - long term plan to enhance visual and natural heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ have to acquire the land first Ⓜ forest park amenity not an operational forest (except nursery preparing stock for future planting around #####) Ⓜ living park with multiple use amenity areas - walkways through park to link up adjacent residential areas, play areas, nurseries, interpretative centre Ⓜ native species only & will remove existing non-native plants Ⓜ Management group already formed between residents, Coillte, nature conservationists and the corporation ▪ <i>Planting</i> - 15,000 trees planted in ##### during the last two years ▪ <i>Riverside Walks</i> - ▪ Encourage developments to face onto amenity areas and to be of a high design standard ▪ Public areas should have some sort of civic significance
<p>Visual Environment Strategies - assessing effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
<p>Environmental Impact Statements - Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ visual assessment is not important for piggery developments ▪ visual assessment is important for quarry developments due to scale and location in unspoilt terrain ▪ visual assessment is important for urban developments but small scale in ##### with 5 storey limit
<p>Environmental Impact Statements - information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only 1 EIS received in ##### per year - one in preparation now for ##### enhancement scheme ▪ Usefulness of EISs are debatable - much of the information would be requested in development control anyway ▪ EISs very important for Wind farms where visual aspect is pivotal ▪ <i>Sufficiency</i> - scale much smaller than ##### with lower roofing protected by policy - don't get developments which are significantly different and need sophisticated techniques to assess the visual aspect - sophisticated techniques may be required more in the industrial area to assess the proposed incinerator. Planners should be able to discern themselves whether something has been omitted from site visits. EIS for ##### Plant did not have supporting visuals even though the visual aspects were significant and one of the major contentions with the local residents (altering whole aspect of #####)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ models would have to be produced for developments within ##### as well as the text Ⓡ photomontages & cross sections ▪ <i>Validity -</i> ▪ <i>Second opinion</i> Ⓡ Not received enough EISs to have mat specific difficulties in the past Ⓡ Very low profile city so significance of expected projects should be easier to assess than some of the major developments in ##### Ⓡ outlandish proposal for ##### to infill a section of the ## outside the #### to form a linear folk park with high rise towers - second opinion might be required for something of this nature
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some key sites for development within ##### (size, location, visual significance & baseline situation with respect to architecture & archaeology) - council needs parameters in terms of a design brief for developers to optimise potential of these sites Ⓡ #### - very large significant site which will be the extension of ##### Ⓡ Post Office site - ▪ Need to examine 600 listed structures to identify streetscapes with potential for protection by creating conservation areas - could then proscribe the modifications allowed or supply design descriptions i.e. the ##### - try to come up with a plan for uniformity of renovations (porches) ▪ Not successful to make whole #### a conservation areas in the 1999 Plan where wanted to apply a specific design guideline to protect and perpetuate a ##### character (try to bring out heritage & visual together i.e. old city wall in #####). ▪ Proposal for 2000 PDA (not accepted) to improve design quality by ensuring that people submitting applications were qualified architects

Planning Authority 8

Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning Department processes all planning applications within county except UDCs of #####, ##### and #####. Technical assistance is provided to ##### and ##### ▪ Current Development Plan adopted in December 1996. One of the current aims of the County Development Plan is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To protect, conserve and enhance the environmental quality ▪ Preparation of new Development Plan (under the PDA 2000) starting in autumn 2001 with intention of having it adopted in December 2003. Results of following studies will feed into preparation of new Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Currently conducting studies in 5 electoral divisions (ED) to prepare 20-year strategies. LUTS plans produced for ##### and ##### already. The other 3 EDs are rural, so slightly different approach, where the focus is landscape (because these EDs contain some prime landscape areas) rather than land-use and transportation. Engaged consultants to conduct studies, and they have sub-contracted consultants to do landscape assessments. One for ##### ED already prepared and ### and ##### EDs due to finish by October 2002. b) Currently organising an experimental development plan in the ##### / ##### area where the local village has set up their own steering group for preparing the plan. Invited locals representing each sector (farming, fishing, rural coastal area, tourism, commercial, residential, etc). Questionnaire survey conducted (mail drop to every house). Results of study will feed through to a Local Area Plan. Cannot commit the same resources again so will have to streamline the methodology. ▪ In the past local authority planning departments consisted of development control departments now buried in ~140 planning decisions a week. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Forward planning section only established in ##### 3 years ago. 3 planners already, with provision for 6. Forward planning needs people who have DC experience, but are stepped back from the daily operation to develop links into other departments and plan out policy. b) No architects in ##### up to a few years ago, but now are. c) Also have a Heritage Officer d) Also have two or three community liaison officers e) Also have an Internet officer now assisting web-based services. f) There needs to be cross fertilisation between different departments (development control, forward planning, architecture, engineering, etc) to improve knowledge and policies. ▪ Major difficulty of how to engage the public at times. Spend a lot of money putting adverts in the paper, on local radio, and holding meetings in the local area, but generally we do not get a response until you publish something. Idea for public participation is to get people's views at the start, but when you publish something people get upset that they have not been consulted.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning departments are being consulted much more on all developments in their areas by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Village and urban renewal schemes were previously the local area engineer's bailiwick, but are now designed by an architect (none 3 years ago) in DC and planners are more involved, so communication better. b) The Part 10 procedure of the planning regulations requires local authorities to refer their own development proposals (houses, roads, car parks, etc) to the planning department to ensure that the proposal does not contravene the Development Plan. This allows planners to consider a range of other issues (landscaping, traffic zones, separation of pedestrians from traffic, vehicular movement, etc) that may not have happened in the past.
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two categories of zoning for amenity in ##### <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prime Special Amenity Area – virtual non-development zone with a few exceptions a) it has to be a family member and it can only be a replacement house, b) exempted developments under section 4 of the PDA 1963, and c) ##### / ##### area of ##### until public sewerage system is available b) Secondary Special Amenity Area – considered a lesser category where development is only allowed with specific requirements for landscaping and design of buildings. Onus is on the developer to show why the development should be granted. This zone gave ##### the leverage to operate a policy of “we are not stopping development, but we have major reservations about the form of development” (i.e. house clad in stone). ▪ Land-use zone for “conservation areas” used to provide basis to apply conditions for development in locally significant areas ▪ Land-use zone of “wilderness areas” also used for unspoilt upland areas ▪ List of protected views (mainly linear in coastal areas) included in the 1996 Development Plan for the first time. Mainly tourist routes identified in a non-scientific way in conjunction with Bord Fáilte by a) travelling the county over previous 5 years, and b) using local knowledge ▪ Relied on the amenity zonings rather than the views and prospects in previous Plans to apply conditions or restrictions to development proposals ▪ Major revision of zonings in 1996 Plan to resolve anomalies and glaring inconsistencies in the previous plan. Source of old zonings from first development Plan (1968) and from outstanding landscapes identified by An Foras Forbartha. Examples of inconsistencies include a) one side of a mountain zoned but the other half not, b) ##### not zoned, even though most people would identify it as an attractive area, and c) ##### un-zoned. This significant extension of the zonings in 1996 was contrary to the trend in other counties. ▪ Just brought out a new policy (introduced as an amendment into the current plan), which restricts holiday home development in the open countryside. Most of the holiday home pressure was in land zoned for amenity, and the only second homes allowed in amenity areas in the open countryside are renovation of old derelict houses (house must be considered habitable by CoCo). Has significantly cut the numbers of

	<p>applications, and ##### refusing ~ 40% of applications in these areas. Permissions should be weighted towards locals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Everybody wants to build a house in the country. No great desire to live in towns and villages, because the facilities are not there, so we must try to make towns and villages more attractive places for people to live.
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey of derelict Sites and buildings conducted in 1991 established a Derelict Sites Register. ▪ Environmental studies already conducted for some towns and being conducted for other towns.
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (8.1) Zone of “Wilderness Areas” for mountain uplands. It will be the policy of the Planning Authority to secure the retention of these vulnerable landscapes and to encourage the relevant national and European agencies to introduce schemes, which will assist in providing sustainability and the preservation of these landscapes. Was able to refuse a wind-farm on an un-zoned hill site overlooking ##### due to the significance of the hill to the town on the basis of 8.1. ▪ (8.2) It is the policy of the Planning Authority to protect these areas of high amenity and to prevent them being spoilt by unsuitable, poorly designed, and badly located development. There are two categories. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Areas of Prime Special Amenity – exempted developments only allowed, subject to stringent conditions on siting, layout, levels, design, materials, colour, and landscaping. b) Areas of Secondary Special Amenity – development control policy will be concerned with the effect of any proposed development on the visual amenity of the area. Developments will be subject to siting, levels and design (traditional form using indigenous materials), and retain existing planting and boundary features consistent with the preservation of the natural beauty. ▪ (8.3) It is the policy of the Planning Authority to conserve the views and prospects as defined in Map No. #. There is a need to protect and conserve views and prospects adjoining public roads throughout the county. In conserving views, it is not proposed that this should give rise to the prohibition of development along these routes but development, where permitted, should not seriously hinder or obstruct these views and should be designed and located to minimise their impact. The views identified on map # are linear rather than point views generally associated with the coast ▪ There is a body of councillors in ##### who appreciate that the tourism industry is bigger than agriculture, which must be preserved and ##### landscape is the tourism attraction ▪ There are areas in #####, which are un-zoned. Similar areas in other counties would be zoned high amenity areas, but in the context of ##### coastal zone they do not rate highly comparatively, so have to be realistic. ▪ Agricultural Policy (7.2) - The Planning Authority will also require that agricultural buildings throughout the county, but particularly in areas of special amenity be designed, located and constructed in a manner, which will reduce their visual and environmental impact. ▪ Forestry Policy (7.4) – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The edge of afforestation should relate to landscape features and not to contours or straight lines. The shape of

the forest or of planted areas should be adapted to the topographical grain of the area.

- b) Geometrical shapes, particularly on upland slopes, should be avoided.
- c) The use of alternative and a mixture of species should be incorporated and interspersed throughout the planted area
- d) The convergence of the forest edge and the skyline should be avoided.
- e) Planted areas should be planted a sufficient distance from public roads so as not to impede views, particularly in amenity areas, or adversely affect the maintenance of the public road.
- f) The development of viewing areas within the forests shall also be encouraged by the Planning Authority.

▪ **Design Guidelines for Buildings in the Rural Area (Appendix H)**

- a) Not sited in a manner as to dominate the landscape
- b) Existing mature and established planting to be retained
- c) Dwellings should not be located on the skyline, waterline or in prominent locations
- d) Scale (rectangular) and materials of traditional house form preferred, such as
 - Location, size and proportion of the windows
 - Traditional roof verge/arge
 - Robust chimney capping and haunching
- e) Finishes to be simple, neutral in tone, colour and texture, except where the dominant natural materials make use of other materials where appropriate. The use of stone cladding, non-traditional type stone and brickwork should be avoided.
- f) The use of stone walls where they are prevalent is desirable to plastered block work. The conservation of existing hedgerows, stone walls and ditches should be sought.
- g) Landscaping using native species and mounding in exposed locations is encouraged to minimise (visual?) impact of the development.

▪ **Urban Development Plans (list of 6 towns)**

- a) To further improve the visual appearance of the town, the Planning Authority is in the course of preparing an Environmental study of the town. This study will identify a programme of actions, both long and short term, for visual and environmental improvement in the town and will act as a guidance document for any potential developer and the Planning Authority in assessing development proposals.
- b) Development control policy will be concerned with the effect of any proposed development on the visual amenity of the area. No development will be permitted which would be seriously injurious to the amenities or natural beauty of these areas.
- c) There are a number of sites remaining (identified in a survey of derelict sites and buildings) in a visually unsatisfactory condition, and it will be the policy of the Planning Authority to actively encourage the renovation and renewal of such buildings during the Plan period. Recommendations of the environmental study will be of assistance to guide development proposals.
- d) The Council considers it desirable to locate new industrial

	<p>development outside ##### town centre, in order to protect the physical and visual amenity of the town.</p> <p>e) It will be the Council's policy to protect the scenic amenity of ##### from intrusive development of any form and to preserve the existing uninterrupted views and vistas both into and from the town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximum height restrictions operate around ##### for new buildings and structures.
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cannot put a restriction on residential development over the 200m contour because there are people living at the 500m and 600m contours in ##### ▪ Register of Protected Structures ▪ Operation of DC policies within the planning system
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Put money into getting access to a river for example, putting in footpaths, putting overhead cables into new roads rather than prettifying with village and urban renewal schemes ▪ Schemes are designed by the architect in consultation with local community groups and the planning department, and once the scheme is agreed it is transferred to the Area Engineer for implementation, but the architect would have a say in the materials to be used. A lot of the argument and decision-making is about the materials. ▪ Have a priority system where some money is allocated to each of the 176 villages and towns in the county over the life of the Development Plan. ▪ No scientific (systematic) means of identifying areas for enhancement
<p>Visual Environment Strategies – assessing effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have not conducted street surveys of locals on success of village or urban renewal schemes ▪ Have involved local development associations around the county in the design of village and urban renewal schemes by the architect going out and discussing the schemes with them. Normally get more positive reactions than negative. ▪ Some village and urban renewal schemes did not meet expectations of locals. What they perceived as improvement and what we perceived as improvement sometimes were not the same. Their view of renewal was rebuild rather than refurbish, so part of the process was education. ▪ Architect became aware of what materials did and didn't work during the three year lifespan of the project ▪ Have engaged both the IT in #####, and ##### to do two separate studies on how we deal with customers (how people, who were granted or refused planning permission, perceived they were dealt with by the Planning Department. Do not think the results were published, but useful in-house. ▪ Have built up a database of every voluntary group in the county, put them on a mailing list and they are now represented into the county strategy through their own nominees.
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of EIAs received by ##### very varied. Only one, one year and other years 4 or 5. ▪ Difficult to develop expertise in dealing with small numbers of EIAs. Have had to conduct major research of first wind-farm development proposal in ##### back in the early 1990's. ▪ Very jaundiced personal view of the Irish EIA system because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) If developer is spending £100,000 he is not asking for a negative result. Have never yet seen an EIA, which said, "This development should not be granted". They always

	<p>say, "They should be granted".</p> <p>b) EIA can dominate entire focus of planning process, and relevant planning considerations are often not considered. Is this proper planning and development or proper sustainable development any more? (##### – nobody asking the right questions, was the ##### in the correct location? Was the ##### appropriate? Everybody got wrapped up in issues such as re-routing River #####, noise, etc, issues irrelevant to consideration of a planning application). EIA going to extreme of giving a plethora of information irrelevant to a decision.</p> <p>c) Effectively we can now end up with 3 EIAs – developers', local authority's' and third party objectors'. In Swiss EIA system, a fee is paid to the local authority and they produce one independent EIA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A number of EIAs do not address the main issues. ▪ It is an advocacy system and you can get two consultants coming to different conclusions from the same set of figures. ▪ EIAs generally dealt with by senior staff of local authority
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have to be very careful where validity of information is in question. You may suspect the information is false, biased or misleading, but unless you have premise for it, it is your problem. ▪ Have to be careful about the extra information you may want to request. Generally you can get away with any information request you want, but you are only supposed to ask for information relevant to the application and in considering the decision. There is a legal issue in what can be requested (yellow book 1977?). If in a situation of unease with the information supplied, if it doesn't stack up, then get a second opinion. ▪ Have engaged consultants to assess an EIA received (#####). Have no hesitation in engaging consultants, because many EIAs can ultimately become oral hearings or even judicial reviews, so you have got to know your stuff. Consultants engaged to assess the EIA for the ##### had a lot of questions for the developer on the EIA submitted. ▪ People preparing EIAs seem to think bulk is what it is all about (borne out by national trend). EIAs in ##### are getting slimmer because have informed developers that planning department does not want bulky documents.
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forestation is the most significant because; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) It completely changes the contours and colour of the landscape b) Viewpoint distance is the major factor in many cases – there is no view (landscape) driving down a road where forestry is only 10 feet from the boundaries, and can be for a long time so scale can be significant. c) Mistakes made in the past because if the planning department did not respond to applications by a certain date you automatically got permission without it being specifically granted. d) Requirement to have 10% to 15% deciduous is irrelevant. A mix of evergreen conifers might be better ▪ One-off housing is less significant because <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Housing in rural Ireland has been a feature of the landscape for well over 100 years (Ordnance map of 1896 – houses

	<p>dotted all over the landscape).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">b) There is an educational issue where we need to change people's ideas on the theory of a house and of landscape. Need to educate people to improve sustainability by retaining old features, applying good design and enhancing landscapec) It is less problematic if you deal with it in a proper way – houses in rural area for a) people who need to live there, and b) who are from the rural area and want to remain living in it.d) People should live in towns and villages where possible, but not all the people. Not everybody wants to live in a village.e) People go to huge expense to replace old boundary features they have removed. Need to educate attitude of retaining old features. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Wind-farms are also less significant because<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Contours or colour of hill are not changed by the addition of 10 or 20 projectilesb) They are prominent in places where I never dreamed they would be because the structure is so high (60m).c) Until government policy (The price for selling on electricity is forcing them up the hills) changes we cannot get them off the hills. <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Viewpoint distance is the major factor in many cases
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Planning Authority 9

Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Last Development Plan adopted in 2000 (copy already provided) - New Plan due 2006 ▪ Process described by previous ordinance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Advertise preparation of the Plan Ⓜ Public participation Ⓜ Comments Ⓜ Employ Consultant Ⓜ Draft Document Ⓜ Applied by Council ▪ No landscape assessment carried out to date - very new approach for development planning - still in infancy - will develop with revisions of Plan ▪ Legislation coming from central government has not been integrated well enough at LA level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Now have NSS to explain Ireland development strategy. Now in second phase with the NDP - once it has been revised a few times it will become the accepted norm - still some way to go. Ⓜ Seem to be a missing planning level (regional) between national and local government levels where intermediate policies have not been developed Ⓜ Local government will take longer to learn and adopt the process - do not move as fast typically - most organisations take time to adopt change (accept new processes) when they are set in their ways
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protection is certainly lacking - much more will have to be done to protect surroundings of amenity areas - do enforce certain things at planning permission stage ▪ No specific categories to protect amenity areas - still lacking in criteria in how to identify amenity areas - unfortunately the planning process is very 'ad hoc' - up to specific planners which over long term is not a good policy - need to be more specific with guidelines because different planners feelings will result in different decisions - LA needs to develop specific policies
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Archaeological amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Rock of ##### - has history of having a residential development very close to it. Must be some way of improving the situation with Forward Planning - but no formal action yet in that regard Ⓜ History of planning situation has a huge impact on amenity areas like that - very difficult to turn back precedent - but it might be necessary in some cases. LA will have to use the powers they already have to bring them to bear on the problem Ⓜ Politics involved when significant changes where existing laws are applied more rigorously - tends to be a stumbling block - community that is already living there does not want to be moved Ⓜ Now have designated areas around national monuments in, which can limit developments in the future, but unfortunately not there in the past, so some already seriously damaged.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No eyesores identified in the 2000 Plan - have to be rectified in the future
Visual Environment Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2000 Plan refers to visual amenities, but nothing which deals specifically with protection of the landscape ▪ Very scattered function between the different departments - engineering environment, Parks, Planning, etc.
Visual Environment Strategy - protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Forward Planning</i> - smaller portion of planning staff previously assigned to forward planning in Ireland, but new structures starting to correct this imbalance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ® UK and RSA always had a 50/50 division between development control and forward planning ® Very important to be laying a groundwork for the future ▪ <i>Protection</i> - applied via planning control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ® refusals ® conditions on planning permissions granted ▪ <i>Enforcement</i> - Generally planning policy has always been to check <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ® normally followed up after development is completed, but lack of manpower results in only a partial check being carried out - very difficult to police specific conditions put on developments ® Check is non specific - not particularly the visual environment ® If contravene development limitations - likely to be found - but have to take owner to court which is a time consuming and expensive process
Visual Environment Strategy - enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Urban and Village Renewal</i> - in process of implementing programme announced this year by central government - should be bigger projects so going for one or two projects which are expected to make a major impact. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ® <i>Wirescape</i> - typically a huge problem in our area (easy to identify), but easy to fix by putting underground as part of these schemes and will have a huge impact ® <i>Recreational walkways along rivers</i> - close to or in villages
Visual Environment Strategies - assessing effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conducting a survey seems like a very detailed assessment ▪ Cannot comment on past history - but response of community should be a very good assessment of success of a project ▪ Have used surveys in RSA to assess effectiveness of projects, but not to assess a specific aspect i.e. the visual environment ▪ Project management requires an evaluation phase at end of project - typically that part is neglected (once money is spent then move on to the next project), but not ideal because problems always occur during a project - not enough being done so do not learn enough from project to project
Environmental Impact Statements - Thresholds triggering preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The requirement for conducting EIA is very 'ad hoc' and left to specific applications - more formal guidelines needed to assist these decisions. ▪ Would be more idealistic to require EIS if there is an expectation that a proposed development is likely to have significant impacts on environment - move from quantitative to qualitative criteria to specify if EIA is required ▪ The size of the proposed development and the sensitivity of the area should determine the need to carry out environmental assessment. ▪ South Africa requires EIS to be prepared for most applications for the last two years if there is any suspicion of the

	<p>environment being sensitive. Want to exclude EIA requirement for large residential developments in cities - would be up to the local council to decide whether EIA is required - comprehensive assessment that covers aesthetics as well.</p>
<p>Environmental Impact Statements - information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not in LA long enough to answer whether LA has expertise to evaluate if EISs have sufficient info - can come back with an answer if needed ▪ Planning curriculum includes a section on EISs so should have a basic knowledge - experience needed to build on basics ▪ Probably no guidelines on how it should be handled - might just be a case of typical applications are this size and that's what we'll accept as well. Need a measure to gauge the level for sufficiency and validity. Do not think there are any formal guidelines on that - guidelines would be useful - can use the EPA guidelines for developers and consultants preparing EISs, but produced in 1995 so now need to be revised ▪ One should be able to rely on the outcome of a report like an EIS ▪ LA has never contracted experts to check out info supplied in an EIS ▪ Have dealt with EISs which were not of the right quality in-house <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Would have been limited by funding to get own EIS conducted Ⓜ Might send it back with certain comments for revisions Ⓜ Have to rely on own ability to assess what is lacking and try to get some more input from the consultant, often paid off already and gone to the next project, so left with report which you know is below standard and have to deal with problem yourself - planner uses their professional ability to solve the problem ▪ Very difficult when receive an EIS which is obviously a low standard because it is formal in the way it is presented - so very hard to throw it out altogether - it has cost too much ▪ Other departments views are sought in an informal way and there can be a lack of communication between departments - in general all departments should be involved - in RSA the report is sent to all relevant departments for their comments
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Should be much more strict control on national heritage sites and local heritage sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Just areas marked on maps suggesting no development permitted here Ⓜ Enough knowledge available to identify these sites Ⓜ Nothing active done to protect them Ⓜ Especially with the quantity and kind of development occurring in Ireland now something has to be done now to protect these sites, otherwise it might be too late

Planning Authority 10

Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1997 Development Plan prepared in house, new Plan due in 2002. ▪ Preparation of 2002 Plan to be carried out by consultants. Results of following to be incorporated into 2002 Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Heritage officer conducted a SWOT analysis of 1997 Plan in house using the Heritage Council Appraisal methodology Ⓜ ##### to start Landscape Assessment in May 2001 - report due end 2001 / early 2002 ▪ Landscape assessment to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Include public consultation to establish local people's value on landscape Ⓜ provide guidelines on location of wind farms and afforestation to permit drafting of clear policies for these types of development Ⓜ Need to resurvey existing designated areas within 1997 Plan since they were derived from old An Foras Forbartha data Ⓜ high element of visual within character assessment, although no major image unit in #####, except ##### - significant local mountain
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Same development controls operated in (including state sponsored developments) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Ⓜ Areas of High Visual Amenity ▪ 28 Outstanding Views and Prospects designated for protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Areas sensitive to afforestation ▪ Areas and views taken from An Foras Forbartha - remained over a long period, not resurveyed in-house or re-examined by consultants in the recent past - being resurveyed during landscape assessment ▪ New developments in areas of conserved streetscapes are required to harmonise in size, height, form and in fenestration so that the essential character and quality is retained
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing policy - to acquire and clear derelict or obsolete property in towns ▪ Some eyesores requiring enhancement were identified in the 1997 Plan ▪ No strategic policy identifying what needs to be done & planned response.
<p>Development Plan – Village</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft development plan published for ##### (small municipality with distinctive architectural design features, pop = 346) ▪ Brief design guide prepared for development within village focussing on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Proportions of windows and doors Ⓜ Roof styles including dormer windows Ⓜ Decorative external finishes of stone & plaster ▪ Protected monuments and areas of archaeological interest include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ 5 sites with statutory protection under National Monuments Act Ⓜ 15 buildings within village of archaeological and historical interest included in listed buildings list in county

	<p>development Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Main and side streets included in conservation areas to protect streetscape ▪ Streetscape study planned to record distinctive architectural quality and character of the village ▪ Specific objectives include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Continuing to underground services Ⓜ Using the council's powers under the Derelict Sites Act 1990 to eliminate areas of dereliction in ##### Ⓜ Conduct a survey of significant trees and stands of trees along the river, ##### and ##### roads and in the vicinity of the Church of Ireland church for possible protection by a Tree Preservation Order. Ⓜ Encourage the removal of inappropriate plastic signage Ⓜ Continue to landscape and improve approach roads
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General policy within 1997 Plan to enhance and identify areas with development potential ▪ Policy for the preservation and enhancement of the following listed under section on visual amenity (2.11.7) in the Development Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ 6 areas of outstanding natural beauty and 21 areas of high visual amenity Ⓜ Protect from intrusive developments and enhance by removal of items of dereliction the 28 outstanding views and prospects designated Ⓜ Preservation of sound deciduous trees without excessively inhibiting development Ⓜ Preserve monuments and areas of archaeological interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 77 archaeological monuments identified ○ 6 areas of archaeological potential identified ○ 18 monuments of special archaeological interest identified Ⓜ Preserve buildings of archaeological or historical Interest (42 identified) Ⓜ Conserve character of significant streetscapes and limit the introduction of intrusive or incompatible buildings (8 identified) Ⓜ Renewal of derelict and obsolete areas
<p>Visual Environment Strategy - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Controlled by development planning section (understaffed) - development control focus and minimal forward planning. Unauthorised developments lacking resources so not as proactive as should be - stronger emphasis now on planning at national level, but resources still limited. Lack of regional planning ▪ <i>Homesteads in Rural Areas</i> - main daily function of planning dept - difficult to control in practice because CoCo policy to increase the population. Policy to consolidate in urban areas - big demand to own house in countryside (viewed as a reasonable expectation by local people) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ 1997 Plan has policies to control development in rural area and restrict development to people associated with agriculture in certain designated areas (2.11.7) Ⓜ has to be a social justification for providing house in the area Ⓜ look for high level of architectural design to reflect vernacular architecture of the area (draft building guidelines)

	<p>produced)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Generally, single storey houses more easily integrate with the landscape - tighter line taken in areas designated as visually sensitive Ⓡ Try to persuade people (preplanning meetings) to sensitively site house within site - not on top of drumlins (everyone wants height for a view). ▪ Difficulties with <i>Homesteads in Rural Areas</i> - Concentrated effort needed at national level to change attitudes, same problem in most rural counties. Very difficult to hold line, if adjoining county operates less restrictive policy - used to force down restrictions in own county. Difficult for politicians to defend policy if not consistent across counties. Ⓡ Some people preparing designs not qualified architects so quality of designs submitted is not good Ⓡ One of the biggest negative visual impact in rural area is cumulative effect of one-off residential developments - one is not the problem, it is the cumulative effect, but very difficult to say no on a case by case basis Ⓡ Difficult to change people's attitudes from wanting large houses using inappropriate sub-urban designs (arches, columns, etc) which do not fit the local rural landscape. Replace hedgerows with boundary wall, landscape gardens - all totally foreign to rural setting Ⓡ "Educating Rita" effect prominent where a small farmer wants £20K - £30K for a small site Ⓡ Buyers generally want the most visually sensitive site - for the view ▪ <i>Retention and augmentation of existing trees and hedgerows</i> - condition for new developments ▪ <i>Tree Preservation Orders</i> – Only in Town Plan for ##### to date, felling licences responsibility of Dept of Marine & Natural Resources - problem that local planning dept do not have a function in this respect ▪ <i>Streetscape</i> - ##### to maintain character of town ▪ <i>Inventory of Listed Structures</i> - 350 on list - now trying to identify owners ▪ <i>Enforcement</i> - big problem, no resources available for active enforcement. 2000 PDA changes enforcement procedures - LA retains fines collected, fines to be more substantial, LA must act when they receive a complaint
<p>Visual Environment Strategy - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Urban enhancement schemes</i> - in towns with cross border funding. Drivers for these schemes are mainly a) spending funds available b) benefit for local community, c) assist tourist interests or d) political. Work of voluntary community groups was underestimated in interview (i.e. Tidy Towns Committees & Development Groups) ▪ <i>Derelict sites</i> - do chase owners but not much else ▪ <i>Tourism</i> - ##### - an area in the county with a major tourist focus. Others include villages along the ##### waterway and coastal area. ▪ <i>Rural Renewal Scheme</i> - have about a year to spend available money ▪ <i>Floodlighting</i> - existing floodlighting cannot be controlled but policy against new schemes due to Ⓡ Light pollution affects view of sky at night in rural county

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Potential for disturbing archaeology when cabling archaeological sites for floodlighting and attracts teenagers at night for drinking sessions and raises potential for vandalism Ⓡ Light pollution affects biorhythms of birds and wildlife ▪ <i>Tidy Towns Competition</i> - great impact on rural towns ▪ <i>Town and Village Enhancement Scheme</i> - good community liaison. Owners contribute informally by doing their bit. ▪ <i>Golden Mile Competition</i> - geared to community groups to preserve a mile of rural road boundary (stone wall, hedgerow, earth bank, etc.) Trying to retain what is natural. Judged on 4 or 5 categories. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Safe stretch of road for walking Ⓡ Enhance styles, piers, gates, water-pumps, etc Ⓡ Maintained litter free Ⓡ Appreciate boundary for its wildlife value ▪ <i>Hedgerows</i> - ##### green image, very little agricultural improvement so existing small fields and network of hedgerows remain ▪ <i>Local Materials and Plants</i> - native tree species recommended - evergreen trees not to be planted - don't have resources to enforce. Guidelines being prepared for planting around rural housing. Colourful bedding plants not natural to area being planted - should give more thought to using native species. Nor using native stone or colours for paving in urban areas which does not knit in well with setting
<p>Visual Environment Strategies - assessing effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Street surveys not done to date due to understaffing, but would <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Encourage local community to become more involved Ⓡ Make community more appreciative of enhancement schemes ▪ Grants to conduct research to third level colleges not done to date - would consider it for the future i.e. tree planting may be subject to vandalism ▪ Would be prepared to involve local community at beginning of enhancement scheme to ask them. Sometimes time constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ What do you think the LA should do? Ⓡ Should the money be spent on trees or paving ▪ One CoCo hired an architect to conduct a survey of local community groups of whether paving colours previously used should be continued. Really got people to examine their towns - why only 3 paint colours had traditionally been used, why chimney stacks had been removed, etc. Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ unearthed a lot of local historical information Ⓡ developed a good community spirit Ⓡ established a good link between the LA and the community
<p>Environmental Impact Statements - Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most criteria triggering EIA are quantitative rather than qualitative - need to move to qualitative measures for predicting significant impacts - pressure from EU to incorporate more qualitative measures also - Ireland threatened with European Court over the manner in which we implemented thresholds
<p>Environmental Impact Statements - information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Few EIAs received in ##### - only 2 or 3 per year. LA inter dept group examine EIA. - No courses available locally to up-skill personnel ▪ Difficult to find against project because it disrupts a view, other arguments found to block projects (i.e. 5mm snail) - people just know that they do not want this scale of development

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visual impact assessment is important for urban developments, but less important for piggery developments outside visually sensitive areas. VIA is also important for quarry developments, but it depends on the sensitivity of the area in which the quarry is located. ▪ Very difficult to represent the reality of a project re visual impact - even with computerised models - even if you use 3D methods and produce many types of graphics it can be difficult to comprehend without going on site. ▪ Difficult to disentangle certain issues between EPA and LAs. Not entirely comfortable how EIA are currently dealt with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Generally, bulk of concern is for environmental factors which EPA is responsible (pollution potential), yet LA must adjudicate on adequacy of EIA Ⓜ EPA & LA are not involved in preparation of EIAs Ⓜ Developers producing EIAs - rarely see a negative EIA Ⓜ Public do not have the same level of input once EIA goes to EPA. ▪ National body required to assess sufficiency and adequacy of information supplied in EIAs? ▪ EIA process not achieving what was originally intended - Agenda 21 commitments should be built into it. Sustainable development should be the basis for assessing any environmental impact - only examines the short term effects from the physical development - external costs to the environment over the long term are not made clear.
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whole planning and development process based on protecting the public interest - planners standing in the breach applying conditions to protect the environment with little support from the public - Need to heighten public awareness and convert people to the concept of sustainable development - then broad support for planning measures ▪ Environmental protection is not high on the list of priorities in Ireland - need to work on this at national level.

Planning Authority 11

Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1998 Development Plan current - Process to prepare 2004 Plan just started ▪ In-house drafting process is informal - change due to management style of different ##### Managers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ® Previously submitted chapter by chapter to members ® 1998 Plan submitted as a complete document ▪ Little scope for change within 2004 Plan since all land within the ##### is already zoned. Focus now is on areas around ##### in the adjoining #####) ▪ Have tried two methods to change the situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ® Have submitted a proposal to DOE that the ##### should be extended - Minister has hinted that this is a non runner ® Joint transportation study to try to provide an overall appreciation of the problems for members in adjoining counties. Not successful because members were only interested in their own bailiwick
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1998 Plan contains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ® Designated amenity areas ® Landscape views from locations within the city towards the countryside. ® No urban views contained ▪ Designated areas and views derived from original Plan in early 1980's - have not been resurveyed. Landscape assessment being conducted to examine anomalies in boundaries of designated areas and resurvey landscape and urban views and prospects. ▪ May be difficulties getting members accepting new designations in 2004 Plan - pressure for development from landowners ▪ Resurvey of listed buildings register uses about 10 criteria to identify buildings which should be included ▪ Policy to encourage the preservation of trees, which a) are healthy and b) do not interfere with reasonable development. Policy to make tree preservation orders where required
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very little in 1998 Plan with respect to visual amenity ▪ Development Control Section good handle on protection of visual environment, but enhancement scattered among many departments and although much achieved, not towards any planned objective ▪ Consultants hired to investigate ##### image of ###. Two issues identified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ® ##### portrays perception of hard physical appearance (grid structure of street network, hard architectural lines) ® No defined area or plaza obvious as the centre (i.e. ##### Square) ▪ Very difficult to get members to discuss principles - much easier to deal with concrete issues. Marketing study beginning to make progress towards a long term plan - 5 architectural firms now contracted in a competition to prepare designs for a new ##### centre - much easier to present 3D perspectives and photomontages of results of competition to members for a decision. Have requested different treatments of designs for

	<p>colour and textures to test assimilation of new structures into existing streetscape.</p>
Visual Environment Strategy - protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Listed Building Register</i> - contains 400+ buildings. Only objections to 10, and likely only one will succeed, so substantially agreed with. Over 200 extra buildings already identified to be added to the register. ▪ <i>Special Areas of Conservation</i> - Marshy areas on banks of the river have been designated ▪ <i>Conservation Areas</i> - boundaries of sites of architectural (Georgian streetscape) and cultural importance (#####) to re-examined during landscape assessment ▪ <i>Wildlife Sanctuaries</i> - designate and manage in a sustainable manner in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service
Visual Environment Strategy - enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Urban renewal schemes</i> - activity in many areas, some community participation, mixed results ▪ <i>Obsolete Areas</i> - List of 15 areas designated and 12 proposed areas included in 1998 Plan. Policy of acquiring these areas to secure redevelopment. Have encouraged redevelopment to front onto the river to maximise its positive potential ▪ <i>Derelict Sites</i> - register of sites including market value maintained by the #####. Policy to secure redevelopment of >10 acres during the life of the 1998 Plan via the Derelict Sites Act (penalties for non development 3% to 10%) and Compulsory Acquisition ▪ <i>Tidy Districts / Best Shopping Street / Best Shop front</i> - policy to organise and encourage participation in competitions ▪ <i>Open Space Provision</i> - via zoning and development control
Visual Environment Strategies - assessing effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have not yet assessed effectiveness of enhancement schemes in the past - negative reaction expected. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Refurbished car park along ##### as a public park. Originally very successful, but now causing difficulties at night, surrounding wall a little too high to allow security to monitor Ⓡ Park around ##### purposely left open to the public to provide a park overlooking the river, and minimise vandalism / break-ins. Initially very successful, but staff cars being broken into recently - may require security cameras to reduce activity ▪ Planning departments under pressure due to increase in activity and staff shortages ▪ Difficulties contracting ##### to conduct surveys due to their insistence at ##### level in demanding full ownership rights and patents to research data - so little likelihood of contracting work there. ##### staff are permitted to conduct consultancy on a personal basis, but little attraction for this route
Environmental Impact Statements - Thresholds triggering preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
Environmental Impact Statements - information sufficiency and validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tend not to use them in planning decisions because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Produced under statutory obligation, but of little use, because generally supportive of whatever design submitted Ⓡ Use ambiguous language to hide difficulties ▪ Normally do not request re-submission of an EIS - Request a list of extra information instead outside the EIS process. Meeting between departments to scope out the information required

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EIA not achieving what originally intended - just producing documents arguing a supportive case for the original project design - so 'post hoc' ▪ In-house expertise to evaluate sufficiency and validity OK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Environmental science courses in ##### good in dealing with hard quantitative science issues, but not very good in providing information on soft policy issues. ### probably best on soft policy issues. Ⓜ ##### produces very good quality technicians ▪ Have not resorted yet to using consultants for a second opinion on information submitted in an EIS - tend not to use the EISs at all.
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change attitude of architects from designing structures which reflect their egos, to designing structures which a) match the surrounding architectural style and b) maximise quality of design within these constraints ▪ No condition on height of buildings currently within the city - not necessary in the past, but now have developers who have the investment backing and the potential to raise tenants for much larger structures than in the past. Need to examine height restriction for the future. ▪ Now have 16-floor development underway in Docks area. Area has potential to sustain a number of high-level structures.

Planning Authority 12

Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current County Development Plan is the 1997 CDP – pretty basic. New Draft Development Plan published in May 2002 under PDA 2000 and is much more comprehensive. Consultation process now underway. Write up consultation responses by Sept 2002, for discussion by council in the autumn and due for adoption between Jan to Jun 2003. ▪ Encouraged by DoELG under a separate guidance document (not PDA 2000 requirement) to do a Landscape assessment, but insufficient time or resources to complete one for this review of the CDP. Will do it in catch-up mode later. Draft CDP 2002 includes landscape policies and objectives. ▪ ##### is the second ##### in Ireland, so ##### budget and slim resources. Last 3 years DoELG throwing lots of tasks at Planning Authorities with no thought to resources or staffing. Have to prioritise workload. No time available to analyse and assess success of old CDP ▪ Heritage Council conducted a heritage appraisal of the 1997 CDP and also of the Draft CDP 2002 ▪ Peter Bacon Economic Profile and Strategy for #####. ▪ New Draft CDP prepared by temporary Forward Planning Section ▪ Borrowed many ideas from other Planning Authorities (I worked in Dublin and Clare before I came to #####) and tried to apply best practice in the Draft CDP 2002. ▪ No formal in-house procedures for the review process, other than statutory tasks and deadlines. Most of the work done in implementing the old plan over the last 3.5 years (since I came to #####) battle with councillors and the public on how we implemented the policies in the old CDP. Have developed approaches and thinking that were formalised in the new Plan. ▪ Councillors were familiar with the existing policies and how they were being implemented (brought into 3 council meetings over a 6 month period to explain before plan was reviewed), so there was a gradual acceptance as to why the ground rules were necessary and how we should play them, so councillors knew what they were getting in the new CDP. Read new plan through chapter by chapter – councillors are clever- could zero in on a word or a phrase ‘what do you mean by that?’ Give an explanation of the intention and then change wording to ensure interpretation correct. ▪ Very important to have a good working relationship with the Manager first, and then with the councillors – there is negotiation, but can achieve a lot. ▪ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process defined shall be carried out on the objectives under each section of the CDP and any amendments, which may be required following the public consultation phase.
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Example – multiple houses in rural countryside not acceptable – refusing houses everywhere – brought into 3 council meetings to explain – have developed a good modus operandi now where you win some and loose some, but decided to select the best locations in the county and defend them at all costs. Had to bring planning from a very low base in a short time period and

	<p>bring councillors and the public with us, so was a major shock to the system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High priority areas generally no development allowed, but can get an application (or refuse an application, or go for further information or representation from a councillor), from a legitimate local involved in agriculture (not a blow in) who wants son or daughter to live on the land – have developed a practice where planners will go out and identify a site to cause least visual impact + only single storey house allowed – very important to have the local councillor involved. Site initially picked by landowner is nearly always the worst from planning perspective – top of the hill, with a view of the lake which will stick out like a sore thumb and be seen for miles – now councillors very firmly on-board, and general acceptance by public that a site with a view of the lake is not on. Cannot really formalise this procedure in the CDP, but working very well. ▪ Example – landowner - ‘had to move house back up the hill because it would be sitting on the well’ – planner – ‘by moving up the hill your septic tank is going to run straight into your water supply, so eventually chose a site on the other side of the road down in a little valley. ▪ People these days have no problem building on top of a windswept hill overlooking 5 counties. Choose site on summers day and don’t realise they’ll get blown off the hill in winter. ▪ Mary McAleese case in Roscommon would have been refused in ##### because it was a high profile case and setting a precedent which would be difficult to argue out of later ▪ Planning is a democracy – it is not authoritarian – you win some and you loose some, but need to work with councillors and public to educate them why conditions are being imposed. ▪ Local Area Plan already produced for ###. Intended to produce Local Area Plans for #####, #####, #####, #####, and ##### within 2 years of adoption of 2002 CDP. ▪ Have identified the boundaries of towns and villages in the county in the 2002 CDP (field boundaries identified on 6” maps) within which we are encouraging people to build their houses. For example – much pressure to grant permissions in villages of ##### & ##### – now that boundaries of villages are defined we can relax conditions / encourage applications within the villages. Once the new CDP has been adopted the intention is to prepare Village policy Statements for the list of 32 villages, which will work through the community groups. ▪ Land within villages boundaries identified ahs been zoned residential within 2002 CDP
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To identify, preserve, protect and enhance where appropriate, the unique landscape character of ##### County, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest. (1.5.5) ▪ Ensure that quality underpins all forms of development. Develop and maintain a sense of place and local distinctiveness in established and newly developing areas. That the vitality and character of established town, village centres and rural areas are maintained. (1.5.6) ▪ Rural settlement – Speculative and sporadic development at sensitive rural landscapes, which are visually vulnerable, will

	<p>be discouraged. (P 30).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed developments shall, amongst other considerations, be assessed in terms of their design criteria and their visual impact in terms of the surrounding environment, including external treatment or landscape design of attendant open spaces (3.3.1.8) ▪ Policy for designated settlements – The Council will promote and encourage development in existing development by private, voluntary and co-operative groups where practical and appropriate through the following measures – the acquisition of derelict property where it can provide infill and/or reduce negative visual impact, particularly in or adjoining areas designated as being of high amenity or of high scenic value. (3.3.2.7 (c)). ▪ Policy for Rural Areas – Outside designated settlements and development envelopes (maps in appendix 1) there shall be a presumption against urban generated commuter development, ribbon development, development by persons who do not intend to use the dwelling as their primary residence, and unsustainable speculator driven residential units. In this respect applicants for permission for residential development in non-designated areas shall be required to submit a statement of sustainability, which shall form part of the assessment of the application for planning permission and in which shall be outlined (as well as others) a demonstration of the willingness and ability of the applicant and/or proposed resident to provide, at the expense of the developer, the services required to sustain the proposed development without detrimental impact on road safety, water quality, public health, views and prospects, landscape, environmental integrity and amenity (3.3.3.4 (e)). ▪ Tourism – The Planning Authority shall control development in protected areas (scenic views and prospects, ridge lines, broad zones of the lakes, European sites, etc), which has the potential to negatively impact on the scenic, heritage and cultural assets of the County (3.4.3.3). ▪ Waterways, Lakes and Rivers – Development shall be strictly controlled in the vicinity of the waterways and will not normally be permitted. Applications for such development shall be assessed in addition to normal planning criteria, in terms of its potential impact on the visual, recreational, ecological and environmental integrity of the area. (5.2.3.6) ▪ Waterways, Lakes and Rivers – The Council shall take whatever measures it considers necessary in order to protect, enhance and preserve the built and natural heritage of the ##### Canal and its associated structures. This shall include the natural setting of canal and its views and prospects (5.2.3.10). ▪ Views and Prospects and places and features of natural beauty or interest – It is the policy of the Council to protect and enhance the County’s landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects, and where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the existing local landscape. Proposed developments, which have a detrimental impact on the landscape will not normally be permitted. (5.2.4.3). ▪ Design Standards – generally, developers shall be required to retain hedgerows and mature trees on-site. If this is not possible, the developer may be required to replace trees removed and/or strengthen existing hedgerows.
<p>Visual Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identified areas and linear features in CDP 2002 for visual

<p>Strategy – protection</p>	<p>protection. Broad zones were not marked in the previous CDP, but were being applied by planners. Predecessor protected the high priority areas very well, so that in comparison to other counties these areas are still pristine. Most of the best linear features (scenic routes, rivers and canals) were identified in the previous CDP with arrows pointing in one direction only. Views in both directions are now protected (not only the view from the scenic route to the lake, but also the view from the lake back up the hill. Old CDP would not have permitted houses on lake side of road, but now not allowed on both sides, because view from lake will see houses strung along road whichever side they are located on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Broad Zones of the lakes (particularly Lough ##### and Lough #####). Not Kerry with high spectacular mountains, but very subtle landscape that can be damaged very easily. b) 28 scenic routes designated for protection – solid lines (top priority) and broken lines (intermittent views due to humps and hollows (height) along the road c) Major rivers and canals ▪ No criteria defined to identify views for designation – was based on the previous CDP and went out on a visual inspection driving the roads during the last 3.5 years and finding views that weren't previously protected. Although criteria are not provided the CDP contains an explanation why features are designated. ▪ Other sites, structures protected within the 2002 CDP are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) NHAs, & SACs (no SPAs in this area) b) Aquifer protection zone c) List of protected structures includes 29 listed structures and 20 mills of industrial archaeological interest. (p77) d) 11 Groups of trees (ref. 5.2.2.8). Council reserves the right to add to this list of protected trees over the period of the CDP. Policy of Council to protect all substantial areas of deciduous or mixed forests (ref. 5.2.2.9). e) 58 sites and monuments from the SMR ▪ Development control section of Planning Department operate many of the strategies for protecting the visual environment
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategies for enhancing visual environment are a bit scattered (engineering, environment & planning) and a bit less coherent. ▪ My opinion is that the planning department was originally to be the co-ordinating department – but planning subsumed under engineering for far too long so planning wasn't allowed near co-ordination. ▪ Much more acceptance now in Ireland of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Co-ordination role of Planning Department b) Advisory role of Planning Department on identifying sites and materials to be used, etc ▪ Now have an Environmental Directorate (derelict sites, etc), which the Planning Department is not on – so more work to be done. ▪ Communication is important between departments, but ##### is a small Authority so it is more possible. ▪ Other than in a few towns and villages there are not many eyesores left. ▪ Can achieve more by dealing with the local councillor and the local landowner, rather than going the official route of identifying derelict sites and going after somebody. Can

	<p>achieve a lot more in a rural community by going the unofficial route of negotiation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Example 1 – landowner with scrap metal site applies for permission for development on another piece of land – until cleans up scrap metal site won't consider application. b) Example 2 – identified site for amenity purposes and acquired land with help of a local councillor and then put in an amenity scheme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have put a lot of emphasis on the design and appearance of houses in the countryside - trying to move people away from bungalows and two storey houses with no design quality, Spanish arches, Dutch half hips, gables and balconies, dry dashed rendering, mock Grecian fluted columns, sameness, and Tudor brick houses. We had a major battle – who the hell do you think you are, it is my home, I want to design it my way, who are you to tell me I can't do what I want? Did slide show for councillors showing them exactly what was going on, what was bad, what was good – great acceptance of what trying to achieve, improvements now obvious ▪ Design guide (verbal format) included in the 2002 CDP – simple ground rules listed – comply with those and you'll get permission. People so anxious to get permission they are prepared to toe the line. Intention is to produce it in visual format later. If design of house is right, they can enhance landscapes – design concept should reflect vernacular tradition of the area – not trying to get sameness, but see a pattern to designs. Want to develop a design for a typical ##### house based on the traditions used by local builders. 80% of designs submitted are reasonably OK – told them to use local designs, modify them if you must, but maintain the link with tradition by incorporating local design touches. ▪ How can you insist on using architects when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) They are not available - only 2 architects in County (one till lately) doing about 10 – 20% of urban developments - certainly not used for rural housing. b) Book in shops called 'Plan a Home' designed by Irish architects of houses for Irish locations with influences from the vernacular, ~ 80% of designs were acceptable. Same group produced another book of designs for the 21st century most of which are totally unacceptable. c) Not going to pay an architect when people can get a guy for a third of the price to run it off on a CAD machine ▪ ##### is the last frontier in terms of rural Ireland – West coast way ahead in terms of development, cosmopolitan thinking, etc. ##### best asset in the past was that it was a backwater, which protected it from major developments.
<p>Visual Environment Strategies – assessing effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involvement of community groups in the past was low, but increasing all the time now involved with ~20% of community. Always an advantage to involve community groups in urban and environmental schemes. Sometimes they are doing some environmental scheme themselves and looking for money - give grant and develop kudos and contacts for sponsoring scheme. ▪ Example – We were refusing housing in #####, but their community group stated they needed housing to provide enough children to keep the school – so started granting permissions at this particular location – so community involvement was able to change our policy in this area

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have to make an effort to get out there, meeting with them, talking with them. We listen and prepare Town Plans or Village Plans, which will go back out to the community for consultation, but this demands a lot of time and if under pressure from development control system then insufficient staff to get out and meet them all. It may take another 5 to 10 years to get around to the other 80%. ▪ Always community involvement in preparing Local Area Plans and Village Policy Statements.
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### gets ~ 1 or 2 EISs a year ▪ Level of development in ##### is quite low – not getting huge developments like ##### in #####, and most of the development tends to be in the town areas anyway.
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Main problem is the time framework of the planning application limits an in depth analysis of the EIS submitted. Might have 2 to 3 days to make a decision, so really just scanning through them. Tend to zero in on target areas and consider the priorities yourself, because you know the location, so if it is visual you go straight to the visual. People spend weeks and months preparing EISs and planners are given a few days to assess them and make their decisions – the statutory deadline is the main problem. ▪ Time is not available to make sure everything is right ▪ EISs are produced by applicants, so they are biased anyway ▪ Main ones we get relate to piggeries where the Teagasc reports have lots of scientific information that we are not trained or skilled to analyse. These reports also tend to say the same over and over again with just the addresses changed. We had one two years ago at Lough ##### where the local fisheries representative got involved and tore the Teagasc report apart. I had a similar one recently, and I was able to refer to the methods used previously to question the information supplied and do the same. ▪ Can also be driven by how much the developer is prepared to pay – no I'm not going to give you €100,000 for a full assessment, but I'll give you €20,000. ▪ Planners would tend to zero in on visual impact straight away – planners would use other departments (roads, sanitary services) and the prescribed authorities for their views on other environmental factors such as flora, fauna, water quality, noise, air, climate, etc. Visual seems to give a context for everything else. We try to get appearance right. But not always successful. ▪ Old example – have some big eyesores here – industrial strip of units out the ##### road allowed to develop over the years, road and parking area surface only hardcore, front of site wide open to the road, it was built cheaply – not interested in spending money. We asked if they would plant trees and they roared laughing. Always get the odd cowboy who tries to force his way – one said to local politicians that I was trying to do him. All I'm looking for is very basic environmental and visual things that ant development should have. ▪ New example – new block of unit in between them now with landscaping, with a plinth wall and a railing, should look good in a few years. Rules now look for no palisade fencing. We want walls, railings and proper landscaping.
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪

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Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### CoCo Planning Dept. does not deal with the Urban Development Plans for #####, ####, and #####. Town Engineer deals with planning for these towns, and County Council gives architectural advice. ▪ CDP in operation at present was adopted in 1992 ▪ Currently carrying out a review of CDP under the PDA 2000 and involves a large consultation process. ▪ CAAS carrying out a landscape assessment as per the DoELG guidelines for landscape assessment - are involving planner responsible for each area in process. Would like to have the completed assessment by September, because have lots of wind-farm applications, useful to deal with those. CAAS not specifically tasked to come up with guidelines for wind-farms. ▪ Planning Department - snowed under - only 4 planners for the whole county during last 5 years trying to deal with 4000 applications – one South African and two English planners hired recently – good to have non nationals on the staff because they can bring new ideas.
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Views and prospects identified for protection in the current CDP would have originated from the first CDP in the 1960's and would have been upgraded over the years. ▪ Views and prospects originally identified using local knowledge. ▪ County ##### has every variety of landscape...very varied County...##### for example is absolutely stunning ▪ Some landscapes (views and prospects) not identified in the CDP does not mean there are not landscapes which are visually highly important to area ▪ Areas of Special Importance - Policy of Council to protect the areas of outstanding natural beauty shown on map 10 (3.10.9) – includes ~ 30% of area of county, predominantly coastal (not all), upland (not all) and main lake areas. ▪ Special Area Amenity Order – Council considering the preparation of an SAAO for the parishes of ##### and ##### and the lakes of Lough #####, Lough #####, Lough #####, Lough ##### and the ##### area. ▪ Areas of Special Recreational Importance – Policy of Council to protect the areas of special recreational importance shown on map 11 (3.10.10) – Includes large woods, sand dunes, beaches, and beaches of high amenity (not named and boundaries not indicated). Preamble also mentions sea and lakeshores, boating and fishing waters, and parkland, which are not indicated on map 11. ▪ Monuments of Archaeological Interest – Policy of Council to protect monuments of archaeological interest as far as its powers permit (3.10.11). It is the objective of the Council to protect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) National Monuments b) Monuments protected by preservation order c) Other sites of archaeological importance listed in Appendix 2 ▪ Buildings and Structures of Architectural and Historical Interest – Policy of Council to protect the buildings and structures of Architectural / Historical interest listed in

	<p>Appendix 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Removal of Beach Material – Policy of Council to strictly control unauthorised removal of beach sand / gravel / stones and prohibit such where necessary ▪ Trees and Woodlands – Policy of Council to encourage the retention and expansion of the existing trees / woodlands / forests of amenity value
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Derelict Sites Register – No info on how many sites listed? ▪ Have not tried to identify eyesores within designated views for enhancement, but would consider it
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### is a terrifically scenic County and has few scenic problems. Visual environment hugely important, but have much development pressure from wind-farms. ▪ Wind-farm on hills on right hand side of road to ##### can be seen from just one place on road between ##### and #####. They would be perfectly OK if they didn't break the skyline. If they were on the skyline they would only have a small colour contrast against the sky, but because they are halfway down into the landscape they break the skyline and are far more visible. ▪ Views and Prospects – It is the policy of the Council to preserve views and prospects throughout the County as far as its powers permit (3.10.8) ▪ Town and Village Improvement – It is the policy of the Council to encourage and improve the appearance of the towns and villages. (3.10.7)
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Views and Prospects (3.10.8) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) It is an objective of the Council to protect and preserve the views and prospects shown in map 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highly Scenic Views (important scenic routes) – single and both sides of road included – 23 routes shown ▪ Scenic Views (less important scenic routes) - single and both sides of the road included – 37 routes shown ▪ Viewing points (point location with indicated direction) -15 shown b) It is an objective of the Council where possible to improve the viewing potential by seeking the removal or lowering of walls, hedges or other structures and by establishing viewing points and car-parks in scale with the area c) It is an objective of the Council that no building development will normally be allowed in open views between the public road and the seashore, lakeshore or riverside. However, special consideration will be given to landowners for the provision of dwellings for themselves, or members of their families, on the family holding. d) It is an objective of the Council that the effects of any proposed development in the foreground of other views and prospects shall be considered, and development which would be obtrusive or incongruous on the landscape prohibited e) It is an objective of the Council to seek to remove all eyesores from the landscape such as abandoned cars, quarry scars and derelict buildings either directly or through negotiation with the owners concerned. ▪ Development control – applies conditions to permissions for development, which affect colours, tree planting, layout and siting, & building heights. – Not always successful – took

	<p>picture of dormer house just outside ##### perched on top of a hill on way down to #####– noticed by lots of people including Frank McDonald – with some planting and with some time everything will sort out – that is one I can't imagine even bringing it down off the hill. We don't aim to have developments on tops of hills or mountains, we do try not to break the skyline, but there are lots of examples of buildings on tops of hills around the county.</p>
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancement scattered between different Departments in County Council (environment, engineering, architecture, planning, etc) - no coherent policy ▪ Town and Village Improvement – preamble to policy and objective provides the following list for enhancement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Derelict sites and buildings b) Lack of care and maintenance of buildings and open spaces c) Lack of planting trees and shrubs d) Ill-defined and untidy approaches to the town or village e) Litter and rubbish f) New buildings of inappropriate design and materials g) Plastic and neon signs h) Advertisements i) Wirescape j) Traffic and uncontrolled parking of vehicles ▪ Forestry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It is an objective of the Council to encourage the Department to plant pockets and borders of non-conifer species to vary the visual appearance of plantations in the high amenity areas and also to ensure a habitat for a more varied flora and fauna. b) It is also an objective of the Council to seek consultation to ensure that forestry plantations: (3.10.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Do not remove important scenic views ➢ Do not detract from scenic areas ➢ Do not cut off rights of way ▪ Abandoned Cars – have locations around the county where people can bring their old cars and we collect them about twice a year. ▪ Derelict Sites Register – Mostly houses in ##### and in the towns and villages. Council acquire sites in the towns and villages and builds council housing on them ▪ Seaside Resort Scheme – huge take up, but not by locals, so not considered successful ▪ Village and Urban Renewal Schemes – Council prepares plan in consultation with local traders – plan implemented in public / private partnership – Council does paving, landscaping, street furniture & street lighting etc, and businesses refurbish shop fronts (council advises on colour schemes, etc).
<p>Visual Environment Strategies – assessing effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would be delighted to have time to conduct surveys on success of village and urban renewal schemes, but planning section too under pressure ▪ Did a coastal management scheme with an Taisce and got students from ##### to conduct surveys to identify the problems and what people thought ▪ The first project where we gave advice on colour schemes and gave some small grants towards doing up shop fronts, community got together and set up their own community development group – influence of feeling you can make a

	<p>difference and seeing things improve – empowering community to do it themselves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement scheme happening at present in market square – huge problems - people cannot park their cars in front of their own doors
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Four or five wind-farms in at present ▪ Also ask for EIS below the thresholds if we feel impacts are likely
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use outside expertise of the prescribed bodies by sending copies to Dúchas, the Fisheries Board, etc, although some are not good for making submissions – sometimes have lots of problems getting answers back ▪ Use expertise in other Departments in the County Council – environment, ▪ One planer completed post-grad Dip. in environmental science on part-time basis – no problem getting funding or getting time off for training in ##### but understaffing can limit options ▪ Have not contacted consultants to check information – only 8 weeks to make a decision, so no time for consultant to report back ▪ Have not contracted consultants to check accuracy of information in an EIS – would be nice if there was a national body to give advice – dissolution of An Foras Forbartha was the worst thing that ever happened. ▪ Very difficult for planners to scope EIA, even using the EPA guidelines, because there will always be something
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forestry – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Created such a massive impact, significantly bigger than expected b) Wrong type of trees in the wrong place c) Don't follow the contours, or didn't in the past, now a bit more sensitive d) Size requiring planning permission was 70 hectares now reduced to 50 Hectares, but still a huge area. ▪ Quarries – problem at the moment, suddenly they are massive to feed the current high rate of development

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Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Last Development Plan 1996 - New Plan due in 2002 - 1996 Plan included county and 6 towns - separate Plans for ##### and ##### UDCs ▪ 1996 Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ wrote to ~ 50 different agencies within the county (i.e. IFA, business groups, chambers of commerce, ##### men's association in London, Bishops conference in Maynooth, etc) asked if they wished to make a submission at early stage of preparing draft - ~ 50% response - definitely worthwhile - first time tried this approach - not required under the old Act, but now included in the 2000 PDA Ⓜ Prepared a series of discussion papers for the elected members (population & employment, traffic - national routes, etc.) ▪ 2002 Plan will conduct this consultation again - more formalised now with a wider list - Gardaí (local superintendent) & educational authorities now included - 1 year to complete consultation phase under 2000 PDA ▪ Employing planning students during summer to conduct series of community consultations in villages requesting views of locals on what they want for their local area / Village Plans - piloted in 2000 on 6 villages and hoping to complete another 8 villages in 2001 - information to be included in 2002 Plan at drafting stage
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of areas of high visual amenity for 1996 Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ 3 from previous Plan - #####, ##### & ##### Ⓜ Planner highly recommended 2 extra (##### & #####) as areas which warranted special development control Ⓜ No friction from locals about extending the areas ▪ Identification of listed views for 1996 Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Most from previous Plan Ⓜ Planner kept notebook of previous site visits recording views of ##### and ##### Ⓜ 4 District Engineers also contributed from good personal knowledge of their local areas (good feel for listed views in own areas) ▪ Did some surveys of county before 1996 Plan - few specific to protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Land use Ⓜ Building condition surveys Ⓜ Listed buildings - photographic survey Ⓜ Traffic - traffic counts Ⓜ Agriculture and rural resources - statistics Ⓜ Environment Ⓜ Housing ▪ Landscape assessment required under 2000 PDA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Unsure yet of best way of conducting - consultants versus in-house - regional basis versus county-wide basis - results will definitely feature in 2002 Plan Ⓜ ##### landscape quite unique - ~ 60,000HA of ### which is 40-50% of total land area of county - probably highest concentration of ##### in Ireland. ##### might be viewed

	<p>as featureless landscapes, but not in ##### - do not have dramatic landscapes - more rural in character</p> <p>Ⓡ Quite expensive and no special funding for it - if we feel that there should be landscape conservation areas then the research will be done - will be useful to identify landscape conservation areas and views.</p>
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific policy for listed views, NHAs, etc. in the 1996 Plan - whole section dealing with visual amenities - fair concentration on visual policy within 1996 Plan
<p>Visual Environment Strategy - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have mapped following areas for protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Bogs Ⓡ Woods & meadows Ⓡ Eskers Ⓡ Mountains ▪ <i>Listed Buildings</i> - register maintained ▪ <i>Tree Preservation Orders</i> - by LA on 3 forests, but felling licences dealt with by Dept. of Marine and Natural Resources – split responsibility? ▪ <i>Zoned Areas</i> - archaeological sites (SMR), National Heritage Areas, and Sites of Scientific Interest are zoned within the 1996 Plan including a band surrounding the designated area to phase in the protection controls (buildings unduly close to an NHA would be considered inappropriate) ▪ ##### <i>Conservation Area</i> - significant section in 1996 Plan - TCD conducted some research on the designation of a heritage zone around ##### prior to the preparation of the 1996 Plan - designated area included ##### (owned by an Taisce), the ##### and the monument site
<p>Visual Environment Strategy - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Derelict Sites</i> - New 1995 Act gives powers of compulsory purchase - have a derelict sites register - wrote to owners requesting re-development - some of the main towns have a 3% levy imposed by the housing Dept. if they are not re-developed - only used in small number of cases - identifying owners is a major problem - difficult to operate in practice ▪ <i>Compulsory purchase</i> - used only once in ##### in a case where there was a dangerous building ▪ <i>Litter</i> - try to persuade people & councillors, especially in rural county where people know one another - councillors can approach offenders to clean up problem i.e. building on square in ##### which was very unsightly - occupants moved to a different site on the instigation of the council - beautiful square now - a lot of persuasion rather than the courts ▪ <i>Urban Enhancement Schemes</i> - ##### & ##### <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ paving and urban landscaping Ⓡ Try to influence design - encouraging people to produce appropriate designs (for both rural and urban areas) Ⓡ Big emphasis on shop fronts over the years to raise awareness of retaining old style and minimising use of neon signs (i.e. #####) ▪ <i>Town Renewal Schemes</i> - recently launched - examines the core of certain towns and provides tax incentives to conserve the existing fabric of the town (shop fronts), grants for re-habitation rather than demolition - ##### CoCo consider it very important to retain existing fabric in towns

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Village Renewal Schemes</i> - very successful in ##### - consulted widely with 25 communities before 1996 Plan and had rolling programme to renew all 25 centres during life of Plan - small budget when funding spread over 25 centres - got a great reaction and achieved a lot - community have ownership of the projects - requirement for communities to contribute IR£1 for every IR£3 from public funds
<p>Visual Environment Strategies - assessing effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Village and Urban Renewal Schemes</i> - got good reaction from councillors and tidy towns associations - most were involved with the schemes. Generally regarded as a success, only problem was that it was spread over so many schemes rather than concentrating on 1 or 2 ▪ <i>Meetings with Community Groups</i> - for renewal schemes get a reaction on past schemes, warts and all. Response is normally pretty good - very worthwhile exercise
<p>Environmental Impact Statements - Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	
<p>Environmental Impact Statements - information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EIS supposed to be objective, thorough, rigorous and professional - supposed to give a statement of the significant environmental effects and the measures for mitigation - generally have confidence in the professionalism of people preparing EISs ▪ Most people do not appreciate the huge amount of work required to appraise an EIS - EIS now so complex that it is beyond the ability of the average person to assimilate all the information contained ▪ Planning decision by planners with the advice on EIS from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ consultants asked for a second opinion generally (on the content of an EIS) - no EIS can be written by one person, so no EIS can be assessed by one person Ⓜ All departments have their input - rely very much on their opinions Ⓜ Competent authorities (Dúchas, Bord Fáilte, etc.) often come back with an opinion which was missed by others ▪ EISs may fall down on not adequately covering all the topics required in the regulations - have requested extra information from developers ▪ Normally use the regulations when we are scoping what should be covered in an EIS - only 6 weeks to respond to a request - may call in expert advice ▪ No specific courses on EIA done, but part of the planning syllabus (##### - Environmental Engineering). Some engineers may have completed some environmental courses, also possibly some of the personnel of the Environmental Dept. No locally based courses. ▪ A lot of EISs may deal with issues (noise, dust, etc) where no expertise available in-house - some go for an EPA opinion when an IPC licence is required - if no expertise in-house then contract a consultant to evaluate sufficiency and validity of information submitted
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One-off houses in rural area - Rural land-use policy only way to resolve it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ The long-term effect is the problem - if we keep going what will be the result in 20 years? Ⓜ Huge issue - nationally ~ 33% of all houses are in the rural area - ##### closer to 50%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓜ 80% of water in ##### comes from the ground - have conservation zones where no new housing is permitted to protect water sourcesⓂ Much more attractive for the owner to build house a few miles into the countryside rather than buying one in a housing scheme in the town▪ Two sides to the problem<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓜ Degradation of the countryside - traffic, ground water, etcⓂ Lost opportunities in the villages - more sustainable and architecturally pleasing housing schemes, mixing young and old, availability of services, etc.▪ Sad to see the west of Ireland (Donegal & Kerry) despoiled with modern housing in the rural areas - some are needed but most are unjustifiable - should really be contributing to making nice villages with good architecture. If trend not halted then people will stop wanting to go to the West on holidays - it will get a reaction then because it will start hurting someone's pocket - hopefully it will not have gone that far before some action is taken by the Minister or Europe.
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Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Last Development Plan adopted in 1993 - new Plan now overdue - no UDCs so 1993 Plan covers everything in county - preparing new Plan under old Act because draft in preparation (review began in 1998) before 2000 PDA came into force - new provisions will come into force after this review ▪ Currently no local area Plans other than old Plan for development around ##### and ##### which has a tight zoning policy and a major focus on recreation (under review also at present) - ##### identified as an area which would benefit from a local are Plan - but planner staffing a problem ▪ Recently appointed a heritage officer who is producing a Heritage Plan (grant aided) as preparation for the new Plan ▪ New group of planners in ##### <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ® not locals - slowly building up information base ® all in Development Control - highest number of applications (2026 in 2000, 10% increase expected in 2001) in the ##### ® no planners in Forward Planning - planning function previously performed by engineers on a temporary basis ▪ Very unbalanced growth in county <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ® Strategy for housing developments is for 30% urban and 70% rural, but only 50% completion rates in each area ® Farms very fragmented small holdings where main occupation is growing sites not bullocks ® Line East-West at ##### <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - South has many one off sites as a ##### for ##### - North has tax incentives in a rural development programme, heritage council currently appraising this tax incentive scheme ® Line North / South through ##### - ##### - ##### <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less activity west of line - Many holiday homes and marinas east of line towards the ##### ▪ National Spatial Strategy now providing a focus west of #####
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Listed views</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ® 5 listed views in 1993 Plan (mostly to and from #####) - probably originally identified in first Plan ® planners now recording potential views for listing ® Views should be recorded on the 1:2500 or 6" to 1 mile maps ▪ <i>Designated areas of high visual amenity -</i> ▪ <i>Landscape assessment -</i> Lough ##### crying out for one
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Much potential for wind farms in ##### - Languid movement of blades have a soothing effect ▪ Although many agencies operating within the county in an uncoordinated way - they all have an effect
<p>Visual Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪

Strategy - protection	
Visual Environment Strategy - enhancement	▪
Visual Environment Strategies - assessing effectiveness	▪
Environmental Impact Statements - Thresholds triggering preparation	▪
Environmental Impact Statements - information sufficiency and validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roads and quarries would be the main ones in ##### ▪ EISs heavy on padding, little on information - would prefer 10 pages to thick report ▪ Second opinion needed in some cases, but time limitations restrict options ▪ Subscribe to CAAS - but they are also overworked - so not as helpful as could be
Suggested most important improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One off houses in the rural area with particular difficulties in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓜ Standards of design - architectural technicians - more training required Ⓜ Use of PVC for windows and doors

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Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current CDP 1998 – 2004 – bound photocopies from ##### ##### – should be on internet, but wasn't there when checked a month ago <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Introduction sets strategic context for the CDP, but visual amenity and design issues not mentioned in there currently – thinking of current development plan team (but new team in a months time?) might be to include something in next CDP because County is transforming from a rural agricultural area through sub-urban to an urban area without any strategic design ▪ Statutory Review Process - Don't have time during statutory review process, so better to have done some preparatory work beforehand. Currently have two studies with perspective on visual environment underway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Landscape Assessment – under DOE guidelines being prepared in-house – 13 characterisation areas identified – stages 2 and 3 still to be done to assess sensitivity and value - consultative process may entail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Most likely to send out results of landscape characterisation to interested groups (use contacts list from Planning Development Strategy consultative process, or contacts list from Parks Dept.) requesting input before a deadline – would first check if the groups were relevant to the landscape assessment process ➢ Could also post summary of characterisation on website and request email responses b) Views and prospects – Not just using a single approach of resurveying ones designated in last CDP, but also see if Landscape Assessment considers there is a view or prospect to be retained ▪ Reviewing Policies and objectives – just been completed & now with the Director – checks on views and prospects ongoing via development control – no identification of examples of successful or unsuccessful achievement of objectives (other than ##### example) – not happy to make conclusions that “view of mountains no longer exists because of the #####” (subjective statement), or that “this view of the mountains was degraded by the #####” (subjective comment on design quality of #####)
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preservation (H1) – Policy of council to protect the urban and rural environment and heritage by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Record of Protected Structures – Schedule 1 of CDP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List 1 – 62 structures – secure preservation ▪ List 2 – 326 structures – consider preservation in event of application for permission to alter, demolish or extend b) Conservation Areas (H2) – Residential accommodation in #####, #####, #####, ##### & ##### already designated c) Areas of Architectural Potential (H4) – #####, #####, #####, #####, ##### & ##### designated by Dúchas (?) d) Retention of Older Buildings (H5) – encourage

	<p>rehabilitation, renovation and re-use in preference to demolition and re-development - relaxation of development control measures in appropriate circumstances</p> <p>e) Trees and Woodlands – preserving those that form a significant feature in the landscape or are important in setting the character of area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TPOs – where necessary in the interests of amenity ▪ Listed - on Development Plan Maps for protection <p>f) Views & Prospects – of special amenity value or special interest</p> <p>▪ Land-Use Designations</p> <p>a) High Amenity Areas (G) – conserve existing character of areas of outstanding natural beauty and/or recreational value – ##### & ##### valleys – new developments not related to amenity or agriculture not permitted – intention to prepare an Upland Areas Management Plan (H19)</p> <p>b) Mountain Areas (H) - conserve existing character of areas of outstanding natural beauty and/or recreational value – ##### mountains - new developments not related to amenity or agriculture not permitted - low rise single storey only and below 120m contour (H17)</p> <p>c) Green Belts – protect special amenity value of countryside which provides a visual break between urban areas – new developments strictly controlled in these areas – 4 areas designated under Zone GB</p> <p>d) Areas of Special Amenity – intention to examine Zones G & H with a view to making SAAOs for all or part of them (H18)</p> <p>▪ Sensitive Area Designations</p> <p>a) NHAs – Proposed by Dúchas – 6 identified</p> <p>b) SACs – EU Habitat’s Directive – 1 identified – ##### ##### National Park</p> <p>c) SPAs – none located in County</p> <p>▪ SAAO – ##### made in 1990 – consider extending to border –proposal to create a ##### National Park jointly with ##### and #####</p> <p>▪ Development Control Section – sets out broad principles of design P70 – 72) – retaining landscape where possible</p>
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<p>▪ Enhancement Policy – Council policy to</p> <p>a) Promote designation of Heritage Town (H6)</p> <p>b) Continue to provide for improvement of existing towns, districts and local centres (H7)</p> <p>c) Derelict Sites - Implement provisions of Derelict Sites Act to prevent or remove injury to amenity from dereliction (H8)</p> <p>d) Obsolete Areas – Identify and secure re-development of (H9)</p> <p>e) Overhead Cables – electricity, telephone and TV cables wherever possible in the interests of visual amenity and public health (H12)</p> <p>f) Telecommunications Antennae – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoELG, 1996) as minimum standard (H13)</p> <p>g) Advertising Structures – restrict non-essential structures or any which would impact injuriously on amenity, built environment or road safety, and have unauthorised signs removed (H14)</p> <p>h) Renewable Energy – encourage development of renewable resources (in an environmentally acceptable manner) in</p>

	<p>support of national and international initiatives to limit emissions of greenhouses gases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Tree Planting – improve areas of poor environmental quality with significant tree planting and enhance visual appearance of small neglected areas with landscaping (H25) j) Litter Control – ensure public areas and areas visible from public places are maintained free of litter – council recognises that litter is a major environmental problem which significantly detracts from the visual quality of urban and rural areas, and has public health implications – intends to prepare a statutory Litter Management Plan – also continue to operate existing campaigns include Tidy Districts Award Scheme, School’s Anti Litter Competition, environmental Road show <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Village Renewal Scheme
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Views and Prospects - Protect views and prospects of special amenity value or special interests by evaluating development proposed in foreground (H27) – resurveyed for current CDP (checked to see if view remained of worthwhile merit) – no additions – properly classified into views and prospects - no urban views (check CDP map) – View of mountains from ##### was designated in last Plan, but ##### development obscured it (planning authority missed it) - to conclude that this view no longer exists because of the ##### is a subjective statement and people would argue with it. To assess that the view has been degraded means that you are making some assessment of the quality of design of the ##### and that is subjective as well. ▪ Policy to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prevent development which would block or interfere with a designated view b) Preserve designated prospects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scenic routes and public areas from which there are views worthy of protection are identified on the Development Plan Maps + intention to include view at ##### on ##### Motorway when completed ▪ Prospects - 12 listed in table 4.3 ▪ Design of Open Spaces ▪ Sustainable Development Policies ▪ Sustainable Urban Land Use Objectives ▪ Naming of Estates
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Views and Prospects
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Views & Prospects – improve viewing potential by seeking removal or lowering of walls, hedges or other structures and establishing viewing points ▪ SAAO ▪ Indicative Forest Strategy ▪ Quality of Landscaping and Open Spaces – ▪ Quality of Layout and Design ▪ Streams in Culverts
<p>Visual Environment Strategies – assessing effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primary Aim
<p>Environmental Impact Statements –</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of EISs ▪ Scoping procedure

Thresholds triggering preparation	
Environmental Impact Statements – information sufficiency and validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ EIS Quality▪ Evaluate EIS Quality
Suggested most important improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ DID NOT ASK QUESTION “WHAT IS BIGGEST THREAT TO VISUAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE COUNTY”

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Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None of 3 people interviewed were in the same County when review for the 1998 CDP was conducted ▪ Currently only 4 planners in Planning Department – expected to be substantially strengthened under “Better Local Government” – hoping to double personnel to 8 planners, to include a senior position in Planning for the first time - should help to raise profile of Planning within Local Authority. Hoping to have enough staff to do review for 2004 CDP internally. ▪ Have a Heritage Officer (not in Planning – most regrettable), and are short a Conservation Officer ▪ No forward planning section so performed on a temporary basis and done privately (consultants for #####), (community led Plans being prepared jointly by ##### for #####, ##### and #####). About to advertise ##### (consultants). ▪ Review process for CDP not a formal procedure, but includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review effectiveness of existing CDP vis-à-vis meeting the policies and objectives b) New issues (childcare guidelines, and new retail guidelines) need to be addressed within next CDP c) Survey & analysis of land-use designations (zoning of new land, and review of boundaries) d) Consult with other departments externally and internally e) Testing decisions to grant planning permissions against the objectives of the existing CDP – thought would be a paper on “Housing Development Issues” explaining all the issues, including visual impact issues to stimulate public debate ▪ Heritage Council’s methodology for Appraising Development Plans could also be used as part of review process, but not in this case ▪ Aware that DoELG Draft Guidelines for Landscape Assessment could also be useful to the review process – again not for 1998 CDP ▪ All designated areas and their boundaries should be re-examined as part of the review for the next CDP. Some concerns within the farming community about restrictions on land arising from designations.
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designated Areas (national). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) NHAs – 57 proposed sites listed in 1998 CDP (schedule 7) b) SACs – 6 sites listed in the 1998 CDP indicating field boundaries (schedule 15) c) SPA – 3 sites listed in the 1998 CDP (schedule 16) d) Nature Reserves – 1 site listed in 1998 CDP (schedule 8) ▪ Designated Areas (Local) - for protection of visual environment. Not aware of any re-survey of boundaries for these areas – largely a continuation of designations from previous CDPs, and much overlap with areas designated nationally. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) High Amenity Area – Lough ##### / River ##### (from ##### down to #####) (schedule 9). b) Areas of Scenic Importance – 6 listed in 1998 CDP (schedule 9) c) Views and Prospects – 7 areas listed in 1998 CDP – all

	<p>linear scenic routes with views protected in one direction only (schedule 10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Areas of Archaeological Potential – 11 settlements have areas identified as zones of archaeological potential by National Monuments Branch of the OPW (schedule 12) ▪ Areas of Historical and archaeological importance – 1 listed in 1998 CDP (schedule 13) ▪ Area of Recreational Importance - 1 listed in the 1998 CDP (schedule 17) ▪ Listed Sites & structures - 216 in 1998 CDP for preservation & protection (Schedule 11) - are protected by ACT. Lists also contained in Development Plans for ##### and #####, although are out of date at present. This will be priority for Conservation Officer once appointed to conduct survey in accordance with Dúchas guidelines. Dúchas doing national inventory (4 categories - international, national, regional & local importance) of structures for protection – ##### just completed – many in ##### not included in list in 1998 CDP. ▪ Town and Village Streetscapes – Policies and objectives (4.15) ▪ Trees – 40 groups of trees listed in 1998 CDP as worthy of preservation and protection (schedule 14). Surprised if TPOs exist for these groups of trees – so lesser form of protection by just listing in CDP. (No individual trees listed or covered by TPOs).
<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancement responsibilities scattered between different LA Departments. ▪ Local Agenda 21 – special emphasis will be made in this Plan to promote the renewal of obsolete areas, the provision of environmental services, and the preservation of amenities which include the built environment, natural features and quality landscapes (p4). ▪ Environment – the protection, conservation and enhancement of the County’s natural and built environment can make ##### a more attractive place to live, work, invest, shop and holiday (2.7.3).
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visual policies dispersed within the 1998 CDP – no specific visual policy - overlap between nature conservation and protection of visual environment. ▪ Protection - policies for visual environment are coherent and mainly operated by Planning Department ▪ Enhancement - no policy for visual environment – generally scattered between different Departments (Engineering, Roads, etc.) ▪ Guidelines for Landscape Assessment may improve this situation by identifying specific landscape policies for the future ▪ The surface character of any area, its topography, vegetation cover, field and hedgerow pattern determine to a considerable extent how obtrusive new development will be (4.8.2). ▪ Visual considerations for proposed developments (High Amenity Areas) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Should preferably be located in areas that cannot be seen from principal roads, viewing points, and navigable waters. b) Steep open slopes, hilltops, or prominent locations must be avoided c) Must not break the skyline as viewed from principal roads,

	<p>viewing points and navigable waters</p> <p>d) Must not break the waterline as viewed from principal roads, viewing points and navigable waters</p> <p>e) Whenever possible slopes and/or existing trees should be used as a backdrop or screen</p> <p>f) Must not be located as to block scenic views</p> <p>g) Must be integrated into existing landscape features, field boundaries, trees, landform, etc</p> <p>h) Should be located on old derelict habitation sites when possible</p> <p>i) Roads, driveways and surfaced areas must be located to make the minimum visual impact when viewed from principal roads, viewing points and navigable waters</p> <p>j) Buildings oriented to reduce their visual impact when viewed from principal roads, viewing points and navigable waters</p>
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High Amenity Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Council objective that development proposals in the high amenity areas should be located within existing towns and villages (#####, #####, #####, #####, #####, #####, #####, #####, #####, and #####) – boundaries of towns and villages not defined, but <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where population > 500 within 0.5 miles of settlement centre ▪ Where population < 500 within 0.25 miles of settlement centre ▪ For clusters of not less than 6 houses within boundaries of clusters b) Development outside settlements prohibited generally – applications for single houses on large sites suitably screened from lake/river or relevant viewing points may be considered. Onus on applicant to establish that the development will not be visually obtrusive. c) Conditions applied by development control relate to landscaping, use of materials, preference for long, low buildings in the rural area as the most suitable for the majority of locations, restrictions on siting in relation to elevated sites (4.17). d) Given the natural sloping topography of the area, it is considered critical that all development be set into the landscape so as to reduce its’ visual impact. e) Housing developments which are damaging, unsympathetic or detrimental to the visual quality of the landscape, and sporadic in location are to be avoided in this area. ▪ Areas of scenic importance – constraints not as restrictive ▪ Rural Areas – development should be in sympathy and harmony with the surrounding environment, and in respect to use and appearance. ▪ Design – to seek and promote high standards of design in all development proposals (3.6.2). ▪ Landfill Sites – Proposals will be evaluated to avoid visual intrusion and damage to the environment (3.6.9).
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement of Views – Planning Authority will encourage the improvement of views by lowering or removing hedges or walls (3.6.13). ▪ Tax incentive schemes – DoELG issued guidelines – local communities to put forward sites and buildings where

	<p>refurbishment is necessary – land is then designated for tax incentives – claim tax back over period of time – quite complicated – categories of use & schedule of repairs which are tax deductible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Village and Urban Renewal Schemes – DoELG provides grants to Local Authorities – last 5 year phase finishing, and new phase due to start. Currently operates outside the CDP, and Planning Department haven't been involved – don't have an Architect's Department, so run by small department in Engineering involved with FÁS schemes employed in local works. Hopefully Planning Department more directly involved in new phase. Many villages upgraded substantially during the last 5 years. Preparation of Community Plans and Local Area Action Plans should formalise the identification of schemes requiring grants in the future. ▪ Tidy Towns - pretty strong ethos in ##### – ##### won a number of times, and #####, #####, ##### and ##### have all performed well on occasions. Provides great incentive to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Form community groups b) Provide energy to identify & clean up eyesores and enhance local visual environment <p>Has not been as successful in larger urban areas, although ##### has done reasonably well over the years. Has been responsible for lots of schemes for street paving, undergrounding ESB wire networks, and tree and flowers planting.</p> ▪ Golden Mile – had not heard about it. ▪ Derelict Sites Act 1990 – to use the Act to encourage the development of sites in towns and villages (p26) ▪ Vacant Houses – will positively encourage the re-occupation of vacant houses in both urban and rural areas and encourage the rehabilitation, renovation and re-use of existing older buildings, as opposed to demolition and re-development. ▪ Design – a higher standard of design will be expected in all developments and especially in fragile and sensitive landscapes, where developments are visible over long distances. ▪ Disposal of Waste – statement provided (p53) – no policies of objectives on litter and its reduction.
<p>Visual Environment Strategies – assessing effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessing Priority & Success - Have not conducted any formal process of assessing success of village or urban renewal schemes, but these schemes are very much community based in their planning via local community groups (local Tidy Towns committee or a development association). ▪ Assessing Value for Money - Not aware of any formal assessments of schemes ▪ Village and Urban Renewal Schemes - run by Area Engineers – Planning Department not involved and may not be aware of assessments carried out – Institute of Technology available to conduct surveys and research, but unknown if used in the past - one of the difficulties with the visual area, because responsibility for it is scattered among different Local Authority Departments.
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider that visual impact would be significant for quarry and urban developments, but not for piggeries. ▪ Consider (form, texture and colour of development) not required and (identification of potential observers from views)

	<p>is a minimum expectation within VIA, rest of factors would be maximum expectation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of EISs received would be very small. ▪ Many EISs would be requested, even though didn't teach threshold. Criteria used to request an EIS if below threshold are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) If within an historic urban area / zone of archaeological importance b) If close to the threshold value c) If greater than threshold when accumulated with other development in the area ▪ Cannot remember reading EIS and requesting further information. ▪ Have employed consultants to assess large landfill site because didn't have in-house expertise in the Planning Department.
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – information sufficiency and validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planners for area within which the site falls and senior executive planner are responsible for reading EISs. ▪ Consultation with internal departments such as environment (fairly major input), engineering, roads, etc as necessary. ▪ Consultation with external agencies (EPA, Dúchas, etc.) very important because provide specialist knowledge not available in Planning Dept. ▪ Not aware of sending any planner on any courses covering EIA / EIS. UCD environmental course – every Friday for a year, so huge commitment to try to do that. Nothing available locally.
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual houses in Rural Area – much more applications for single houses and single rows of cottages in rural area than urban areas due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Houses in towns are too expensive b) Services not available on the ground in towns and villages to encourage people to develop within serviced centres. ▪ Anti Ribbon Development Objectives - not easy to implement strictly because locals want to live in the rural area, and local politics also a factor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Uneconomic provision and demand for public services. b) Urban generated housing. c) Increase in numbers of houses leading to loss of rural character. d) Increase in numbers of houses resulting in pollution risk. e) Loss of visual amenity by reason of individual rural houses being badly sited, or inappropriate designs to suit their location. ▪ Wind-Farms – currently have a number of applications, and also a number of permissions have been granted. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Permission in ##### on undulating countryside, rather than an elevated site, so should blend reasonably well into the landscape. b) Have seen one on elevated site up in Leitrim where the visual impact was quite severe – right across the hill and breaks the skyline very clearly. c) There is an urgent need for national guidelines for wind-farms and I think there is an intention to produce them by DoELG.

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Issues	Comments
<p>Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Forward planning (policy) section only established in 2002 b) Have been very much development driven and reactive in the past ▪ CDP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) 1999 CDP prepared by consultants (CAAS) under old Act. d) Contains a separate plan for each town and village which identifies urban / rural boundary ▪ Review Process – due to begin in late 2002 / early 2003 and to be completed by end 2004. Process not yet formulated nor agreed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No previous measurement of policy objectives, successful or not? – Community and Enterprise Section is introducing this analysis as part of the County Development Strategy – developing indicators against which to measure how policy objectives performed and to what extent they are working – indicators in the past related to how many applications were processed, approved, refused, & appealed rather than examining the percentage of permissions that complied with or did not comply with policy objectives ▪ Landscape Assessment - Scenic Landscape Evaluation completed by ##### for the 1999 CDP - different methodology to DoELG guidelines for Landscape Assessment - evaluation used landscape visual absorption capacity (using terrain shape, tall vegetation, and existing development) to classify areas into 5 zones of visual sensitivity (vulnerable, sensitive, normal, robust and degraded) - zones selected on basis of absorption capacity; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ High potential to absorb development - areas with enclosing topography, screening vegetation and/or existing developments ➤ Low potential to absorb development – areas of elevated topography, with low growing or sparse vegetation, and with little existing development <p>##### report included verbatim in CDP without local amendments by Planning Department (probably due to ##### production of CDP).</p> ▪ Local Area Plans (LAP) - formulation expected to improve public participation - plans prepared by County Council for communities – if communities going to regard LAP as document for development of their areas there must be participation – processes and objectives have to be realistic and followed through, so cannot be just a list of hopeful wishes – should be strategic documents which list possible projects without being prescriptive – People are sceptical about consultation process, because have been excluded in the past – need for capacity building phase at start of process to educate how to participate and what trying to achieve – if process is well facilitated can get some good ideas, planners trained and should have knowledge to filter out bad ideas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ##### just completed - very limited - restricted by time constraint of statutory 6 to 8 weeks for consultation (therefore little participation) – advert published before research or data collection phase so all data collection, community consultation and preparation of draft squeezed

	<p>into statutory period. Wasn't intended at start of process to need public meetings, but managed to hold 1 - meeting didn't address hopes and aspirations of community – not sure if LAP representative of community views – much learned from ##### project.</p> <p>b) ##### being done at present - same problem – advertised before data collection phase begun, let alone completed – drafted along same lines as ##### – draft now at least relevant to the current situation instead of referring to 1994 Plan – received comments via advertising and from 1 public meeting - much editing yet to produce first draft – process might be better if first draft prepared and published before advertising, and comments would relate to first draft –</p> <p>c) ##### – still to be done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Area Plan Process - improvements might include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prepare and publish first draft b) Advertise publication of first draft for comments c) Refinement and editing of first draft d) Further consultation e) Preparation of Final draft f) Final comments and final editing g) Plan formulation and adoption
<p>Development Plan - protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designation Areas for protection: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) NHAs - listed and identified on map in Appendix 2 b) SPAs - listed and identified on map in Appendix 2 c) SACs - listed and identified on map in Appendix 2 d) Areas of Scientific Interest - listed and identified on map in Appendix 2 e) National Monuments – identified on map in Appendix 2 ▪ Views and Prospects – no point views listed in CDP <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Scenic Routes - linear views (roads, walks and ridgelines) – 15 listed in Appendix 4 of CDP (seems that only 15 listed in ##### evaluation on scenic landscape report are included on map) - onus on applicant to demonstrate that there will be no obstruction or degradation of views, nor significant alterations to the appearance or character of sensitive areas ▪ Record of Protected Structures – (Appendix 5) – 204 structures listed in RPS in CDP – no information provided on when RPS was last revised – no information provided on success (renovations/refurbishments carried out) or failures (demolitions) of RPS during life of last CDP <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Council will seek to retain and preserve all structures listed in the CDP b) Council will work with property owners to find alternative appropriate uses for vacant listed buildings. ▪ Trees of Special Amenity Value - 17 TPOs listed in CDP – no other groups of trees warranting protection for their visual and ecological value are listed in CDP – most recent TPO made in 1983 leads to assumption that survey of important trees not conducted in last 16 years - no assessment of success or failure of TPOs ▪ Settlement Strategy - many small villages identified in CDP as preferred nodes for settlement to minimise ribbon development and single houses in the rural area – boundaries of villages identified to field boundary level – many of the nodes identified have sub-standard sewage disposal systems and water supply systems

<p>Development Plan - enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designations for enhancement: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Zone A1 – to provide for the preservation and improvement of the scenic and recreational amenity of the area, the preservation of views and prospects over the coastline, and the development of agriculture – only one small area designated A1 in whole County b) Zone A2 – to protect and improve rural amenity and provide for the development of agriculture c) Zone OS – to provide for open space amenity, recreational open space, and riverside amenity (which includes the preservation of footpaths, rights-of-way, trees and hedgerows) d) Zone R - Primarily residential and to protect and enhance the special physical and social character of town and village centres, and to improve infrastructure
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainable Development Strategy - Landscape Management (2.5) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) General Approach - Accommodate wide range of new and expanding land-uses (wind-farms, forestry, telecommunications & tourism) in balanced way using the following principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimise contrast – new developments and land-uses should seek to minimise abrupt transitions or high levels of contrast with existing landscape character and appearance of site & its environs ▪ Avoid Dominance – visual dominance of any development or land-use should be directly proportional to its public utility – monopolising effect only in exceptional circumstances ▪ Ensure Continuity – landscape change should be gradual and orderly so that continuity of character and identity is not disproportionately disrupted ▪ Nurture Distinctiveness – standardised and uniform forms, materials and designs are minimised in favour of those that have a clear connection to the existing cultural and natural character of the local area b) Upland Areas - development pressure from forestry (mainly), wind energy, telecommunications, and mineral extraction - draft Indicative Forestry Plan already produced – strategy needed which deals with all development pressures in an integrated way c) Coastal Areas - areas within the first seaward watershed (normally 3-5 Km inland, & wider areas around ##### and #####) – development pressure from holiday homes and tourism related developments (mainly), wind energy, Mari culture, and coastal protection works – seek to accommodate two conflicting needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect County’s most important and valuable tourism resource ▪ Ensure sufficient physical capacity to absorb and accommodate tourism needs ▪ Public Participation - Policies to protect and enhance the environment are quite subjective – different views on how to protect and enhance – got to have buy-in from everyone – still not much integration or community participation to give level of buy-in required. ##### has much more proactive participation by Local Authorities and Government – facilitated through

	<p>appointed consultants – process includes (not political):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Community consultation prior to project start to collect data b) Draft plan with reiterative consultations with community c) Establish steering committee through elected members <p>Public participation in Ireland not yet well developed - community and enterprise section (different building than planning) set up at beginning of 2002 should have role to improve community participation</p>
<p>Visual Environment Strategy – protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scenic Landscape Evaluation (Appendix 4) - 5 zones of visual sensitivity defined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Vulnerable – areas include coastline, banks of rivers, shorelines of lakes, skylines of upland areas, and all headlands and promontories – coastal area is defined in another section of the report as a band normally 3-5 Km inland from the coast - coastlines, rivers and lakes do not seem to include the water area adjacent to the shore or bank – very distinctive features with a very low capacity to absorb new development without significant alterations of existing landscape character over an extended area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development in environs must be shown not to impinge upon character, integrity or uniformity when viewed from the surroundings ➤ Particular attention to preservation of character and distinctiveness as viewed from scenic routes and environs of archaeological and historic sites b) Sensitive – areas include inter-tidal flats, coastal lagoons, agricultural lands with significant areas of natural vegetation, sparsely vegetated areas, beaches / dunes / sands, inland and salt marshes, bare rocks, transitional woodland scrub, broad leaved forest, peat bogs and natural grassland – surprising that no beaches / dunes / sands or bare rocks were listed along the length of the coastline - areas of distinctive character with some capacity to absorb a limited range of appropriate new developments while sustaining its' existing character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applications for development must demonstrate a very high standard of site selection, siting layout, selection of materials and finishes 2. May also be required to consider ecological, archaeological, water quality and noise factors c) Normal – areas include pasture land and coniferous plantations – planning authority will have regard to general restrictions on development such as (scenic routes, siting, road set backs, road widening plans, parking numbers, road and sewage disposal criteria) - common character type with potential to absorb a wide range of new developments d) Robust – areas include continuous urban fabric, discontinuous urban fabric, sports and leisure facilities, industrial and commercial units and airports – planning authority will have regard to densities, building lines, heights of structures, and design standards to ensure inherent character of towns and villages is maintained - areas of existing development and infrastructure – new development reinforces existing desirable land use patterns e) Degraded - breakdown of natural processes or pollution (cut-over bogs, old mineral waste areas) – new development to be encouraged to improve existing character of these areas

	<p>– seems to be identifying eyesores in need of enhancement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### Scenic Landscape Evaluation Report - some points need noting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Settlements listed in robust zone do not include 30 settlement nodes listed in CDP. 2. Construction sites put into Degraded Zone – once construction is completed they should fall within existing developments i.e. robust zone.
Visual Environment Strategy – enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning Authority - development control section has responsibility for protecting the built environment / heritage part of the environment - Environmental section - has responsibility for waste/rubbish/litter collection and management – seldom have input from environmental section to the planning function, even with EISs. Name of section more to distinguish difference of function ▪ Enhancement Policies or Functions – very little in CDP, less coherent than protection policies and functions ▪ Integration of LA functions - lack of integration between different sections due to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Environment possibly perceived differently in Ireland b) Different sections in different buildings not assisting communication
Visual Environment Strategies – assessing effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback and Analysis – very little resources to do formally ▪ Third Level – students employed by Heritage Association and County Council on Folklore Conservation Plan ▪ Urban Renewal Schemes – ##### – very positive informal feedback on the ##### project (lamp standards, flower baskets, advice for painting programme, paving, moving pump station, building a centrepiece, etc.) - generally seen as very popular
Environmental Impact Statements – Thresholds triggering preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of EISs - Receive only 1 a year - dealt with by senior planners – so difficult to develop in-house expertise – planners normally have a spatial segregation as well as a functional segregation ▪ VIA – not as important for piggeries (low profile buildings & location within landform) as for quarries and urban developments ▪ Sub-threshold EIA – required when <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Significant visual intrusion or impact is likely b) Site within SAC or heritage area ▪ Scoping procedure - statutory procedure, unless a potential impact is obviously inapplicable
Environmental Impact Statements – information sufficiency and validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VIA – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maximum expectation – includes identification of principal and protected views, identification of potential observers, evaluation of sensitivity of visual impacts and evaluation of significance of visual impacts b) Minimum expectation – rest of VIA information c) Probably rely on photomontages – possibly would be very subjective ▪ EIS Information Evaluation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Internally – sent to other sections within County Council for their input (roads, water & sewerage) b) Externally – sent out to statutory bodies for their comments ▪ Commissioning of EIS – by developer, but it should be a statement of fact, rather than a supporting case for a development proposal ▪ Developments likely to be very visual (mast on hill on skyline)

	<p>would require a) alternative siting and b) probably a design consideration also to ensure it fit into the landscape (not just masking it as a tree vernacular to the area) – Irish developers saying not as effective, but a lot of the difficulties can be overcome and there has to be compromise to fit into the landscape like other developments.</p>
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One-off Housing in the Rural Area - greater control needed – something I feel strongly about - less granting of permissions and more effective granting using alternative sitings – policies to control it are already in the CDP, but not being implemented sufficiently – policies cannot be so flexible that people can do anything they want – ##### Area Action Plan with specific policies for rural housing - best siting and best design to preserve the character of the area ▪ Wind-farms - 2 applications received and one I dealt with was halfway down the mountain (not on top breaking skyline), but even so was visible from different directions

**APPENDIX L - Summaries of Interviews of Design
Professionals**

Design Professional 1

Issues	Comments
Aims & Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not aware of a ##### policy on landscape or visual environment
Development Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development – led by developer in Ireland as opposed to being based on an environmental policy such as in the US and Australia where <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Developer has to talk to planners to find out what is intended for the site in question b) Developer submits plan which must mesh with plan of area which is environmentally led where planners actually plan the environment ▪ Conditions applied to planning permissions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Planning authorities apply different conditions – there are no national standards or there is no consolidated national landscape policy b) Ireland is a very new country (relatively), new to running a country – prosperous since the 1960’s – not good enough anymore to do what our parents did in terms of building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Parents built into folds in landscape, put wind block of trees to south west - physically & visually integrated into landscape ➢ Now can afford new houses – want to put them on the tops of hills so that everyone can see new house – don’t put trees around them – pumping services up to them to heat and water them, light pollution lighting up whole landscape at night - no more have to see them at night than during the day – wouldn’t see light if built into contours ➢ Need to re-learn what we have forgotten in terms of building into our own landscape ▪ National Landscape Policy – development of policy needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Baseline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Collection of baseline information to establish what is there already (what exists at this point in time) – don’t design anything until you understand the site and its surroundings, the visual envelope, the whole area – must visit the site and not just look at what the developer owns, but everything that is around it – if you understand that then you can start - assessment of site and area can be done in a day, so for the sake of ~ €500 you are actually building something which is visually integrated into the site / landscape – it is an objective assessment because basing design on real information ➢ The collection and assimilation of baseline information is key - whether the government does it and designers must conform to it at local level or the designer collect it themselves is immaterial – ideally should be collected at national level for consistency ➢ National landscape character assessment needed first to define the overall baseline – already exists in England – pilot study conducted in Clare for the Heritage Council ➢ Many organisations doing different things for different reasons at present – going off on all sorts of

	<p>different tangents - should be one national body collecting all the baseline information and making it available from one location – its about unity of design, if you don't have unity in the collection of baseline information you won't have unity in development control later on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) EPA collecting baseline information on water, air and noise ii) Heritage Council collecting some baseline information on heritage and landscape but haven't the resources to do the job themselves – feeling their way a bit - hoping to learn from the pilot characterisation in Clare iii) Dúchas are responsible for wildlife (flora & fauna), archaeology, and architecture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Trends – try to figure out the trends – what are the movements, where is it going based on current usages and current economic criteria c) Formulate policy – what should happen, where to start from and where to finish d) The need for landscape assessment is currently being driven by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Requirement to insert wind turbines into the landscape – Kerry done their own thing – no national consensus so proceeding on a piecemeal basis on a very narrow focus (to maximise numbers of windmills) ➤ Forest Service are also conducting Indicative Forest Strategies for each of the County Councils – identifying 3 categories (suitable, not suitable and has potential to be developed) – Forest Service have produced a very good “Best Practice Guidelines” for forestry – but have the last 40 years of monoculture to deal with so will take a while to sort the problem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Landscape Policy - sets guidelines and parameters for developing environment - local landscape policies based on it - local landscape policies should focus on local distinctiveness (different styles of housing, different arrangements of roads, different ways of building things from parish to parish) – Ireland would be a great place to look at in 50 years time if development was based on this kind of baseline information ▪ Forestry & Wind Turbines – why can't these come together and plan jointly so that there is a coordinated approach to native woodland with the wind turbines integrated into it – both operating on the same type of landscape (upland and marginal use for farming) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Not hiding one with the other but integrated into it in terms of pooling resources and management of the two resources b) Wind turbines do not need strong winds but a constant flow of wind, so could have breaks in the trees oriented along main wind direction to channel wind to the turbine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One-Off Housing – has been enough permissions in ##### in one 12 month period during boom of Celtic Tiger for one-off residential houses in the country to form a line from ##### to ##### (nearly 90 miles) – that's how much hedgerows lost...90 miles
Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Old storey in Ireland don't get enforcement at any level with

<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<p>anything</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design Process - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 3 important stages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collect baseline information ➤ Create good designs ➤ Integrate design into landscape b) Surrey is a good example in the UK – no building allowed on skyline and good integration into landscape – Hog’s Back ridge in Surrey about 30-35 miles south of London - has a road on top but road is built down into the ridge and then landscaped back to original appearance, so cannot see road or any cars driving along it – if look down from ridge can see some habitation, but much more present than can be seen because it is integrated into folds in the landscape, with trees, and landscaping specifically planned – not natural woodlands or natural landscape around it – no such thing as natural landscape anymore – no scars of roads, or pylons or poles visible c) Have a tradition of building without architects in Ireland – little house with a door in the middle and windows on either side – need to get away from the Spanish influence etc and re-examine old vernacular idea and developing it forward to meet modern needs – with a little bit of thought and a little bit of design input could be possible to build something that could improve quality of life (feel better about the place and take more ownership of it) - same with the landscape – need to re-examine how things were integrated in the past and learn from those ideas d) Don’t think a requirement can’t be introduced within planning that an architect must be used to improve designs – there are good architects and bad architects – architects shouldn’t lead projects because the architect is just focussed on the building (everything inside the footprint of the building and to a certain extent how the building appears from the outside – have no understanding or appreciation of how to integrate it into the site and the landscape – involved in practical concerns of how to get the car up to the door, how to get people into the house and then how they operate within the house – the questions architects should be asking (and maybe answering) are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Should a house be in this location? ➤ How should it be turned? - as opposed to parallel with the road and set back the same distance as existing houses ➤ What external colours should be used to integrate it correctly ➤ How big it should be in terms of height - as opposed to no two-storeys allowed e) Totally the reverse at the moment – architect expected not to ask these questions – house designed without architect according to current guidelines and integrating into landscape considered as an afterthought – landscape architects then brought in (at wrong time (should be at start rather than the end) to do their magic and get the design accepted by the planning system – focus is on acceptance for planning rather than designing something good for living
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Camouflage – very clever solution if applied correctly – but should only resort to this if all other design aspects have been exhausted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mobile phone masts - have used military camouflage colours in the past on mobile phone masts to fit them into woodland in a way which keeps the essential sightlines open to the road they serve – currently in process of replacing a piece of coniferous woodland left by the forestry board with deciduous woodland so that it will grow up around the mobile phone mast so that eventually you will not be able to recognise the mast b) Merck, Sharpe & Dome –camouflage used on the capacity expansion project – industry should never have been built in this location in the first place – another bad example of political interference in planning system – he got the military colour references and requested people supplying the external cladding (normally greys, whites and greens) to supply in a colour to his spec – now as the weather changes (fog, mist, lighting conditions) you can see some bits and other bits disappear into the Comeraghs behind it – one bit a yellow/brown (same as the heather on the hillside in winter) – big chimney done in a grey which disappears in dull conditions
<p>EIA / EIS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hiding - structures behind landscaping will always be more common than landscape integration – economic issue for developers ▪ EIS Preparation – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Saying it for years that developer should have to pay for it but it should not be done by the developer – should be done by independent third party (independent from the developer and the planners) to make an objective assessment & EIS available to both sides b) If EIA is developer led will not have a proper EIS at all, it will be biased towards the developer and won't get proper planning because developer is doing it for the money ▪ Publishing guidelines - not good enough <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Need to have a statutory requirement to ensure compliance b) Need to check them to ensure enforcement – old storey in Ireland don't get enforcement at any level with anything c) Change of attitude required to accept need for change – can be done very quickly (drink driving culture in 24 months) if political will and resources are provided – people accept change very quickly once it is put up to them to accept it – would be the same for EIA guidelines if people were told that they had to do it. ▪ Time & Resources – planning authorities don't have the resources (number of planners although increased is still inadequate) or the time (because the planning process is time scheduled) to examine EISs as closely as they should – read it in a day, make a decision and move on to the next one ▪ Self regulating environmental ideas are best – such as industry taking in water from a river or stream – intake normally upstream and outflow normally downstream – if ensure that outflow is upstream of intake then industry has to be careful that it doesn't pollute its own water supply

Design Professional 2

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased Interest in landscape during last few years due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Landscape characterisation as put forward by the Heritage Council (see Heritage Council’s report on their landscape conference in Tullamore, 1999) – different methodologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Guidelines for Landscape Assessment - DoELG in 2000 ➢ Heritage Council funded landscape characterisation of Co. Clare to pilot the concept ➢ ##### (ERA Maptec) & ##### (ERM) landscape character assessments of Counties Clare and Leitrim b) Heritage Council - Policy Paper on Ireland’s Landscape and the National Heritage ▪ Seascapes – sudden realisation that sensitive areas defined on land, but very little done for the marine area - next resource to be developed for wind-farms, aquaculture, marine defences, marinas, etc which could have significant visual impacts - Interreg Project started in 1999 to produce a methodology for seascape characterisation assessment similar to landscape characterisation – joint project between the Countryside Council for Wales, ##### & ##### – 5 landscape architectural practices given separate coastal sections and identified a common theme from 5 methodologies used - “Guide to Best Practice in Seascape Assessment” published in 2001 – fundamentals of the seascape area include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The effect of historic and cultural issues 2 The coast as an edge 3 Variability and dynamism 4 Difficulties of scale and distance 5 Principles of visual movement 6 Amenity functions and uses of the seashore 7 Functions and uses of the sea <p>Methodology includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Breaking coastal area into national, regional and local character types - local visual unit = area contained between two headlands b) 3 components of coastal area assessed – marine, coastal & hinterland c) 3 separate assessments conducted on each of 3 components <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Physical analysis ➢ Human activity analysis ➢ Visual characterisation d) Aim of assessment is to identify areas of high and low sensitivity for development to enhance planning information for the coastal area e) Not sure if this methodology has been applied to date ▪ Water and Landscape by Litton - may be useful source document
<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the European Landscape Convention but have not published any local policies with respect to landscape – Former President of ##### has contributed to the (UK) Landscape Institute’s “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment” ▪ Design Quality – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Interesting that most local authorities require that to submit

a planting plan or a landscape plan for a development application you must be suitably qualified. This typically means that you have a third level qualification in landscape architecture or horticulture – think impetus for change coming from Parks Department (talk to Parks Dept, South Dublin CoCo)

- b) Important for landscape architects to be brought in at the start of a project to contribute early to the EIA in order to identify the design constraints – economists on project team would identify their own constraints – landscape architects too often brought in at the end of a project to fix design errors and minimise litigation
- c) Check out book by Ian McHarg “Designs of Nature” published during 1970s – design strategy based on emerging computer technology proposed for complex sites where approach was to identify sensitive and non-sensitive areas of the site such as:
 - Landscape - buffer to protect sensitivity of ridgeline
 - Ecology – buffer zones along streams and rivers for wildlife
 - Archaeology – buffer zones provided for archaeological artefacts

Once all of these sensitive areas were shaded in on a map you were left with non-sensitive areas (potential for development) – design focussed on the non-sensitive areas first – simple, but effective – different sites could have different aspects to be examined including acoustics, contaminated ground, water areas – school of thought that this approach has focussed landscape architectural practice for last 30 years along environmental lines to the detriment of aesthetics

- **Visual Policy** - aspects with respect to development might include
 - a) **Skylines** are sensitive
 - b) **Camouflage** to reduce visual impact – mobile phone masts camouflaged as trees, inside signs on Shell petrol stations, well camouflaged on face of red-brick building on North Frederick Street, masts breaking skyline - Bad practice resulting from the pressure of demand for coverage for mobile phones and car parks - can get coverage in appropriate places by applying a range of design and siting principles to conceal – distinct difference between camouflage and hiding within another structure has design ethics issues because
 - People can be much more opposed when they become aware of an object hidden from view within familiar structures
 - Stakes raised by possible health risk in vicinity of mobile phone masts
 - c) **Enhancement** - using art decoration of waste incinerator in Vienna to such an extent that it is now a tourist attraction and structure becomes a landmark for locals – locals have grown quite fond of the twin towers at the pigeon house in Dublin (Laurel & Hardy) – they define the vertical from a significant portion of the city – probably would not get planning permission today – landmark buildings complicate the issues because they buck the trend

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landscape architecture – designing spaces for people – work underpinned by 4 areas technology, aesthetics, social and environmental ▪ Refer to Tom Turner’s Book “Landscape Planning & Environmental Impact Design” - 4 criteria clearly discussed with different design strategies for different sites such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Greenfield sites - conservative designs to conceal within landscape b) Brownfield sites – innovative designs such as glass wall permitting printing press to be viewed in the Irish Independent in City West c) Ridgeline – want to protect, so limit inappropriate buildings, landmark building may not be out of place d) Attitudes and conditioning towards spaces – lighthouse in a particular spot may be wonderful, but people might rebel against a wind-farm in the same position – underlying psychology present ▪ Potential for huge visual impact in the marine area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Scale of aquaculture cages enormous - continuous for miles along coast and only ~100m offshore for 500 to 1000m out to sea – no consideration for any other use of the bay – were people using the beaches anymore, or swimming in the area – fish farms are only temporary structures on 10 year licences b) Whole east coast of Ireland could have a picket fence of wind-farms along the Dodder and Arklow Banks – only 5Km offshore so will be very visible from the land – wind farms much more long term structure so view permanently changed? ▪ Irish Planning system - interesting that it uses concept of having to conceal or hide structures with vegetation screens - change is bad so we hide developments all the time (inherent conservatism) – whereas structures themselves can enhance a view by virtue of their design quality
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spike in Dublin – how do you do a visual impact assessment for a structure, which is meant to be seen from as much of the city as possible? -

Design Professional 3

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CDPs do not have a context, especially a visual context - difficult to do - similar situation across Europe – nobody has successfully articulated what it is because coming into aesthetics – are aesthetics intrinsic to any nationalities - French, Italians or the English?...not sure any of them have ▪ Cotswolds are preserved – any new development replicates what is there because nothing else allowed – that’s easy - freeze frame - not aesthetics ▪ Local Areas Plans – are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) allies for landscape architects because mostly fighting battle with developer, engineer or architect, but LAP documents development constraints – that avenue of trees is valuable and historic and has to be kept - so helps arguments for landscape architects – otherwise it is considered a nuisance and bulldozed b) Offer the most hope for the future – major step forward – every consultation built into it to get the wishes of the people recorded in advance of the developer becoming involved c) Not sure if they have any legal force – doesn’t have the strength of a CDP – don’t think planners and developers are bound by them ▪ Public Participation – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) ‘consultation’ is the wrong word because ‘participation’ scares them – democracy died in Ireland a long time ago – every initiative taken by governments is stacked with politicians to control it – time for society to question whether Ireland can afford the party political system since it has become so self serving that it is doing serious damage to the country – manoeuvrings of government largely to serve the party - rewarding people...ensuring continuity of party...species survival b) after a consultation process where feedback is collected it is important for the resulting report to include the suggestions from the floor and the responses to those suggestions thereby giving a sense of ownership by the public to participate in the process and accept the report c) developing a module system that could be used in all communities to assist participation d) Invited by the County Manager to participate on the CoCo panel for the ##### landfill as an independent member where we held an oral hearing to facilitate objectors in clarifying their concerns – CoCo had selected 3 potential sites and given funds to the local communities to conduct their own research and had a forum for each location (##### people very anti and didn’t take part and initially refused money for research) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ very poor attendance on day 1 – wonder if being boycotted ➤ setup in hall like a courtroom with two sides – panel behind long table – needed a round table to bring the two sides together ➤ group of ~10 came on second day but quickly into head

to head between chairman and residents – intervened to ask residents to put their statement that they were against the landfill on the public record and then began discussing around edges of problem to identify their concerns – a lot more productive – proposed to put in totally new dedicated road for the landfill to ensure continuous line of trucks did not travel on existing local roads

➤ What struck me was here was a rural community politely living their lives without a leader or resources when the might of the county council (with tremendous resources, numbers of people, facilities and backup and ultimately with government backing) descended on them with a proposal for a landfill for their area – people were being driven into a rat hole, but they weren't backing down – some people in CoCo eventually appreciated this perception – local authority has a job to do – using military style to get the job done and I suggested that information appeared to be used as a weapon to some extent (subsequently stressed in public that at no stage did I consider that the CoCo intended to withhold information) – opportunities existed to share a greater amount of information than was the case – even the hearing held during the day expected people to be able to drop the day job to attend – no mention if this date or time was convenient

- Governments tend to have lots of strategies, but many don't have any policies – they are doing things but don't have any idea why - CDPs need to have a clear policy setting out a commitment to landscape
- Local Authorities need to take more control of elements of the urban environment and quality is in the detail, so LAPs and community plans are very important
- Local Authorities need to take control of the rural environment – people going into the country to escape the urban environment, but bringing urban aspects with them (balustrades, redbrick walls, etc) which are out of place in the countryside – need to explain to people what they are unconsciously doing and they will understand – the design guides are a help in that regard
- CDP should set out
 - a) The street grid for extensions to urban areas
 - b) The expression of green spaceAnd developers should only be allowed to build houses into this plan – these two measures would transform urban aesthetics and landscape quality – society should never let a developer decide the road layout – because it subconsciously influences the connection to the urban area
- Church spires define landscapes for miles around all over Ireland – should recognise that a visual focal point (defining landmark) is needed for new urban areas – it may not be the church spire any longer, it might be the local mobile phone mast, but whatever is chosen as the focal point should then be designed to be aesthetically pleasing (phone mast like the Eiffel Tower, bank building) – need to identify keynote plots and decide to refuse planning or purchase plot until something building of substance proposed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children live in a very limited geographic area...home, school, shop...their familiar landscape for 90% of the year – what they see in that triangle will probably influence the quality of their life experience and their perception of the aesthetic – so if you have a sculpture, or plenty of nature, or cultural artefacts, or good quality architecture in the triangle children will develop a ‘sense of place’ and a ‘sense of quality’
<p>National Landscape Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed that there should be a national Landscape Policy in 1992 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Government should have some clear vision at the top that landscape is important – if general manager is serious about something then it will spread through the whole organisation, so commitment needed at the top to ensure impact is felt lower down b) Wrote to Ministers, European Commissioners, people across the EU and at the UN to try to generate support – replied that wasting my time c) Called a National Landscape Forum in 1995 to try to develop an articulation of what the Landscape Policy should be – For also in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 last one in Fota in 2001 focussed on top down and bottom up approaches with workshops on the interaction between the two – to be 1 day events in ##### from now on because too much time and effort and funding needed to run major national events ▪ Next forum to be “Housing Ireland Blighted Bliss” to discuss the aesthetic quality of what is happening in the country and in the city and to examine if there is a relationship between the two – what is so awful about suburbia that Irish people want to live in the countryside – a lot of merit in Eamonn O’Cuiv’s position – should be looking for ways of enabling people to live in the countryside rather than trying to force them into urban settings – European cities have historic aesthetic cores surrounded by donuts of bland ▪ 5 questions posed in proposed landscape policy still valid <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Why are some landscapes attractive and others less so? b) How can the situation be improved? c) What means should be employed to achieve this? d) Who should be charged with responsibility for same? e) Where should the finance come from? ▪ European Landscape Convention – proposed a landscape prize, so back to ranking landscapes – not sure it is going to have desired effect
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landscape characterisation - main measure being promoted in Ireland and across Europe <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Will help to provide a common language b) Will provide the information to supply a context for development c) Should help to lift the profile of landscape d) Sceptical because too much like a quick fix - we’ve done the characterisation so we don’t need to do any more – not going to solve everything e) Gets people to think in terms of ranking rather than the concept of the child’s familiar landscape ▪ Landscape Quality - is the important thing – the quality of the composite landscape including the natural heritage and the man-made heritage and getting the mix and balance correct –

	<p>like a good artist getting proportion, balance and perspective right</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) LAPs best hope of managing landscape quality in Ireland because need to get down to that level of detail b) Man with a shovel and 100 oak trees can transform a landscape for 100 years, but equally a man with a chainsaw can do the same c) Danger with any discussion on landscape quality is people continually focus on scenic landscape concept, the sublime landscapes (Killarney, Burren, Donegal, mountains) - European Landscape Convention proposed a landscape prize, so still ranking landscapes d) Went around ##### and took pictures of the detail, doorways, a door post, an archway, a tree, little pieces that support history – quality is in the detail – if a developer totally demolishes a street in which you were reared and you come back to your roots years later but if none of the old features have been incorporated into the new street then your roots have been severed – what does it cost to incorporate some old features into the new to maintain that link with the past and anchor the new development into the landscape? e) More information required as to what gives a quality landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EIA probably main driving force behind recent awareness of importance of landscape ▪ To improve the visual – series of formulae which can be applied to provide the desired effect – should be measures that can impact across the urban / rural divide – 5 to 10 pages including the ingredients to positively contribute towards the aesthetic of the landscape – need to be telling the developer at the beginning what is wanted at the end of the project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Should be a greater emphasis on potential enhancement measures, beyond just the building b) Establish target tree populations per types of land-use which would combine to give a target for the country – simple formula to assist planners (i.e. 50 mature trees or 500 young trees per hectare in urban areas to establish a canopy cover) – more limited in city centres - go a step further to look for a mix of young, adult and mature trees - the effect will be to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Save mature trees from indiscriminate felling by developers ➤ Contribute significantly towards local agenda 21 c) Something for green space where <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Areas suitable for elderly ➤ Areas suitable for young mothers with children – play areas ➤ Open spaces for young teenagers – flat area in the middle ➤ Contoured mounds with the trees planted on them (cannot play ball on the mound, so trees don't get vandalised) – don't obstruct natural walkways but facilitate them – do not plant rows of trees beside paths – landscaping of green should not happen after people have lived in the estate because customs will already have developed - no realisation that teenagers need
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	<p>someplace where they are not overlooked and not overheard because their discussions are important to them – part in parcel of growing up to be given a bit of space to develop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Nature reserve within the hectare in a secure compound, a private area where birds can nest e) One piece of sculpture, or public art f) Water features – developers, residents and local authorities favour putting streams in culverts, but have to educate and change attitudes to use water features as positive landscape features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Case in Liverpool or Manchester where residents requested and got palisade fencing around a canal, but kids got through it into the water and fencing obstructed rescue so kids drowned ➤ Case in ##### where stream beside apartment block and some owners wanted to keep it (series of waterfalls at the side of the building proposed) but developer refused – didn't want the hassle of someone seeing a rat by the stream so wanted to put it in a culvert and council went with the developer ➤ tied in with unwillingness of Irish communities to keep their areas clean because streams catch debris and nobody will clean communal areas – I don't own it attitude, let the council do it – but local authority budgets are abysmally low and will not stretch to maintenance (picking up litter and general clean-ups) of open spaces or streams – it is not seen as important and not seen as having a role in reducing vandalism or drug taking – Green spaces now associated with anti-social behaviour such that planners now require open spaces to be overlooked by windows as a passive policing measure
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Horticulturist by training – increasingly working as a landscape consultant and have participated in many EIAs ▪ Many people don't appreciate that EIS is just a statement of environmental impact – EIA process is an audit ▪ When commissioned to do an EIS I now say let me look at the CDP first and I'll give you a list of constraints for the proposed development – don't design a house until that's done – if you can get in early enough into the project team you can establish the constraints before design completed
<p>Development Projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ My experience is that landscape consultants are brought in at the end of projects “to pour the green sauce over the development” to try to undo / hide awful things built. However pouring a green sauce over a dull dinner doesn't make the dinner any better – it just hides it until you start eating it – case in Waterford where I went to look at the site and found a grove of 300 year old yew trees in the middle of the site where the architect's design proposed replacing them with buildings – only surveyors and landscape architects walk sites any more - whole scheme had to be re-designed 3 times because was obvious to put green space where yew grove was ▪ Need for more clear directions for green spaces – very important ingredient potentially in urban development – very little change since 1963....must have 10% of areas assigned as green space, but even that can be reduced by increased

	<p>densities – An Foras Forbartha made a start on it but they were disbanded (one of the major tragedies) – no real discussions today about the functions of green space (because the developer decides and doesn't want others affecting their right to decide)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People now have the capacity with big machines to totally alter or destroy a whole landscape – can move a small hill in a day with a digger – what is destruction and what is not destruction? – Italian landscape near Sienna known as 'Tuscan Crete' modern day farming flattened a scrub area of vegetation and termite hills into a wonderful rolling landscape which has become the symbolic landscape of Italy, but it is totally devoid of trees and shrubs and hedgerows so very susceptible to landslips because no vegetation to hold it and very infertile so can only take 1 grain crop every 3 years – landscape artificially created, totally unstable, very infertile, but highly aesthetic to some people – Italian cypress trees (not indigenous - imported from Greece) associated with buildings - classic sign of introduced exotics ▪ We are continually recycling our heritage, but why do we have to assume that old heritage is better than new heritage – can we not create new heritage? ▪ ##### and ##### are the two keynote buildings that define quality on ##### Street in ##### – superstores of 50 years ago that presented the face of commercial and retail activity in the municipality – provide a major contribution to the architectural core of the municipality – what contributions do the shopping centres (Liffey Valley or Wilton) of today make – very little – rather than putting modern shopping centres in the middle of large car parks why not build a keynote building with a decent façade facing out to the public road with a plaza in front of it and put the car park at the rear – would cost a bit more because forcing developers to put high quality facades on but more impressive building and would contribute to architectural and landscape quality – only happens on urban sites
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪

Design Professional 4

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Common Good - Irish and European definition for democracy (common good) are quite different <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Holland – leadership is given and people take hard decisions and say in the interest of the common good this is what we have to do (i.e. M Harney ban on coal in Dublin) b) Ireland – we should be allowed to do anything we want without any restrictions – Ireland must make the transition to define the common good – individual and collective common good can be quite different, but the collective common good should take precedence c) The fact that someone wants to but buy something (a development) has to be balanced against the common good – if it is better for the majority of people it should happen – Irish view common good in an individual way...if a development is not wanted by an individual them the rest can hump off...I’m going to put a stop to this – the developer and the local authority have been gauging the development for the last 6 months and think there is 98% support for it because everyone is getting something – but the 2% will object anyway so what’s the point – make the application and we’ll fight it out then d) Democracy is about a degree of compromise on both sides to achieve the common good – we have to balance it with individual rights ▪ Public Participation – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Debate takes place at forward planning stage in the rest of Europe – put the schools here the courthouse there and planning then goes ahead b) Great buzz about community consultation in England because the only person who has the right of appeal is the applicant – nobody else has the right of appeal – so community consultation becomes very important so that the community can buy into the project, because once the application goes in they don’t have a role c) Remove right of third party appeal in Ireland – you needn’t be an Irish citizen to make a planning appeal – anybody with the most frivolous objection can hold up a planning application - there are massive delays in the system and we have created an industry for architects and planners – can make a observation up to 5 years later and a significant number of objections are driven by compensation so that the appeal is withdrawn when the cheque changes hands – demolition of Ballymun towers delayed by a Belgian national on Irish social security d) Third party appeals during the development control process have replaced and inhibits effective participation in the forward planning process by the community e) Delays during low interest rates hurt developers and investors, but hurt a lot more when interests rates are high f) Education is very important – people need to understand the system before they can be encouraged to participate ▪ CDP preparation – ##### makes comments on CDPs as they are reviewed - Don’t think the average citizen participates –

	<p>landowners and property owners view them with great interest because of the impact they can have on their own interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Area Plans – very important – if there is effective local planning which includes 3D modelling - must be a genuine effort participate and to listen and once the community decides on a plan for the development of the community individual wants/objections can be overruled – community needs to listen to experts as well, their reasons and ideas are valid and their should be parity of esteem ▪ One-off Housing – anti groups are far more flexible than the pro group
<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Landscape Policy – if you are too prescriptive you just get 10 rules that are applied in a blank fashion – visual judgements not easy – tend to lean towards the familiar, but a new solution may be the best solution, but since we haven't seen it before it may not be recognised as the best solution – problem with framing policy is that it should not inhibit new and better ideas ▪ The visual impact of a piggery maybe the smallest elements of its impact
<p>Planning & Development System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cannot use inadequate architectural or visual quality as a reason for refusing permission for a building – public believe that to be the case, but ##### would strongly argue the opposite that these should be reasons for refusing planning permission – some people think that quality is very difficult to define, but we recognise it when we see it – Irish planning system does not recognise quality aspects of the built environment ▪ Proposal to register the title 'architect' – reasons are to create a market for the greater spread of architectural services ▪ Don't think the ##### would ever argue that all planning applications should be made by architects – however building quality is probably better if designed by an architect, and better still if designed by a good architect – there is a kind of architecture in Ireland 'planners architecture' that draws on current design fads and fits in, but is illiterate in an architectural sense – architectural rules are not understood such as classical architecture, Georgian architecture had rules, proportions and methodologies just as fixed as within any system, and they are not understood – you can look at buildings and say whoever designed that just doesn't understand how this building evolved, its proportions ▪ Educational programme 'shaping space' – designed for transition year students in second level – we all live and work in buildings so we cannot ignore them, so we should all have a grammar to understand them, understand the process of how they arrive, sometimes their visual appearance is not the real issue – it is more what are its functions, does it fit in or not, does it create light or kill it, is it the right building in the right place – now becoming more conscious of urban life, quality of life and saving the countryside - ▪ New planning Act 2000 has a complex regime of validating planning applications - 121 or 127 items to check – now a very complex process ▪ Enforcement - building regulations are not enforced outside major urban areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Has a major detrimental effect on building quality – ##### would argue that enforcement of building regulations are

	<p>largely ignored</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">b) ##### is about to a proposal to increase installation standards particularly at junctions which would have a positive effect on energy conservation, but outside developers in major urban centres they will not be applied because they will not be checkedc) Does anyone ever go out any check has the septic tank been built where it should have been built – is it doing what the planning application said it would do – is it working properly – no one checks <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Planning and Development system is a mess because<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Development control process is time limited (rightly so or we'd never get a decision), so soaks up nearly all resources in crisis management of system to ensure decisions given on timeb) Third party appeals have inhibited and replaced effective participation in the planning and development systemc) So much energy expended on the planning application, appeals and the consultation process that the bit left for creativity to provide architectural quality is smaller and smaller – when something drags on for a long time the vision gets frayed around the edges▪ Government Architectural Policy – produced by Dúchas in 1997 – originally aspirational but now adopted 6 architectural principles and 3 working groups to be established once Dúchas moves to DoELG<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Foster awareness of architecture and quality of built environment – we need to change people perception of buildingsb) Review third level education – providing resources for architectural education in schools is an issuec) Architectural aided schools project – did the teacher training centres – very good response but we don't have an ##### person to dedicate to the projectd) Formulate and put forward government actions to improve the understanding of the quality of architecturee) Planning and Development System is a key issue to be addressed to provide adequate building quality▪ Planning – Irish planning system not really planning, but putting bits together - one thing a new housing development should have is an identifiable civic centre, but what happens in Ireland is that the school, the health centre and the shopping centre are scattered throughout the development – need to encourage multiple uses of civic facilities such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) School in a newly developed area with no wall around the property to encourage its use as a community centre since none already existed – centre space was a multiform space used for rock concerts at the weekend, meetings for tenants during the weekb) Two storey school with a sliding partition across the second storey to encourage its multiple useIf you had integration with schools, to use them after hours – have all pieces and have money to make it happen but not putting them together▪ Developer – wants to build best possible environment because the houses will sell more quickly and possibly at a higher price – the larger developments with 2000 houses include
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	neighbourhood centres, but getting the systems to come in and take part is not easy
Environmental Impact Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Landscaping – does anyone go out to check that trees have been planted<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Has it been done according to the landscaping plan? - aspirational Vs actualb) Has it been maintained?c) Will it do in 5 years time what it was supposed to do?

Design Professional 5

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ #### Policy documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) None in Ireland dealing with visual environment b) Much work done on visual environment in UK – papers annually on the quality of rural landscape, its visual characteristics, etc c) Dept. of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2000, By Design, UK – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Principles of good design – approved for urban design ➢ Objectives – good form, must consider massing and scale ➢ Standards – not x and y, but sets out a check list of what should be considered ▪ Urban Design – achieving quality environment - using our visual perceptions to perceive quality – established in UK for 20 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ##### practice only one in Ireland at present providing dedicated design practice – in past architects and planners performed this function as part of their brief b) Masters in Urban Design started recently in UCD – undergrad degree in architecture or planning required mainly – may also accept civil engineers and landscape architects c) Architects deal with building design & planners deal with spatial policy – bit in the middle is urban design
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Common Good – ▪ Public Participation –
<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Settlement strategy – could be deeply embedded in a national landscape policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Fingal examined their policy in this regard a few years ago - low density (one house per 20 acres) or small hamlets of 3 to 4 houses – issues such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Dealing with waste water ➢ Designated sensitive landscape areas for no development ▪ Views – very difficult to be prescriptive about a view <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Cullen Gordon, 1961, The Concise Townscape – absolutely essential you get it - all about the visual environment of an urban area - discusses serial views – visual environment constantly changing as moving (walking, cycling, driving, public transport) – two visual options when moving along a street both left and right presenting different cues to keep your interest – not necessarily the plan of what was intended but how we experience the urban environment visually b) Yan Gale, Life between Buildings – how we experience the urban environment visually
<p>Development Control</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Problem - lies between the CDP (setting out policy) and development control (implementing policy) ▪ Improve building design by regulating architecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tried in Australia but removed it again 10-15 years ago – don't know reasons why it was removed b) Could be contentious - similar to licensing taxi men by government

	<p>c) Would agree with it generally speaking but I definitely think the solution to the built and natural environment is a multi-disciplinary approach, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Architect for building design➤ Landscape architect for immediate area design➤ Planner for policy issues such as settlement strategy➤ Urban Designer – improving the combined structure of places <p>▪ Land Consolidation – extremely important process in Europe, the Netherlands in particular, needs to consider introducing in Ireland</p>
Environmental Impact Statements	<p>▪ Landscaping –</p>

**APPENDIX M - Summaries of Interviews of Environmental
Groups**

Environmental Group 1

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Government – difficulties because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lack of willingness by DoELG to do anything that has serious teeth that cuts across subsidiarity and local authority – political reluctance to cut across little petty power that remains with local authorities (much weaker than many regional and local authorities in Europe) – direct collusion of interest between the main political parties to maintain the triumphalist system by which local councillor is the mediator between the planning applicant and the planning system – local councillors lobbied on behalf of individual planning applications rather than representing the wider public interest b) Failed in dealing with waste so incineration being rammed down everybody’s throat as part of a national strategy – 300,000 tons of waste in an illegal quarry where the quarry owner has both taken waste from the council and is supplying sand to the council – both without planning permission c) We only pay lip-service to subsidiarity in Ireland – we enact the European Directives but don’t provide the resources to put them into force - only works where the public authorities have the finances to implement policies as well – retain political power centrally in Ireland d) Don’t have funds to invest in small sewerage schemes for towns and villages – so it suits them to allow one-off housing in the countryside with dispersed septic tanks – lazy, short term economic issue e) Local authorities have very little discretionary funding since rates were abolished (still small commercial rates) - annual allocation of funds from central Govt consumed by normal administration – must apply to central exchequer for funding for schemes such as sewerage – major towns like Castlebar have completely substandard sewerage system – Bellmullet has hardly any sewerage system so it goes straight into the bay – massive backlog to deal with large towns, and no provision for smaller towns and villages ▪ Forward Planning – requested to participate by most local authorities at all levels from national plans down to Local Area Plans (LAPs) – ##### put a lot of effort and energy to this positive process where ideas can be submitted - forward planning teams are normally very pleased to receive a good submission from ##### or other environmental groups because they have useful information on landscape or natural heritage – process of reviewing CDP is positive because normally making positive recommendations (this is a high amenity area so don’t put development here) – landscape characterisations and heritage appraisals are valuable information to inform the system - system is a sham because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Strategic planning is a sham - CDPs do not have to take strategic planning guidelines into consideration (interpretation of ‘have regard to’ by Mr Justice Quirke in the Meath case)

- b) ##### did a wonderful study in Co Mayo (European funded to €150,000) to focus on small skill tourism distributed between a necklace of 5 or 6 villages with a lovely glossy report produced – result no effect whatsoever
- c) Mayo CDP 1992 was due to be reviewed in 1997, not done and never got required Ministerial extension – into the twilight zone once you cross the Shannon – DoELG doesn't care – they aren't going to intervene – they let local authorities muddle along
- d) DP for Kinsale has no list of protected structures – it mentions conservation principles, but it doesn't list buildings or notify the owners – significant number of councillors are auctioneers, estate agents, & publicans who have a vested interest in property in the town who should leave the room when this is being discussed
- e) **Designating Landscape or Architectural Conservation Areas** – are discretionary objectives, but local authorities do not have the staff or the resources to designate landscape or architectural conservation areas - there is no department in local authorities to designate the most important landscapes (national or international) in the country
- f) **Council of Europe's conventions** - for archaeology, architectural heritage and landscape (Florence Convention) – under architectural heritage there is a requirement for a national listing system – we haven't done that – Dúchas is only an advisory body, listing is the local authorities responsibility -
- g) Offaly CoCo about to rezone the 19th century house with parkland and monastic site in Durrow for high density housing, golf course and country club development – plan is to exploit the site like Carton – deal rigged in advance by Brian Cowen's brother who is an auctioneer previously involved with the developer – Durrow being done as a LAP by the local authority - site contains
- Textbook example of an esker
 - Monastic site is equivalent in importance to Clonmacnoise in terms of its size and historical association (only high cross surviving and a few other fragments) – geophysical survey has identified the contours of the dense cluster where the churches were and the outline of the oval shape of the monastic enclosure
 - Remains of the Anglo-Norman castle where Hugh de lacy was murdered (one of the key events of the Anglo-Norman conquest of the site)
 - Medieval Augustinian Abbey
 - Elizabethan and Georgian Houses after the Reformation
 - 19th century Tudor revival house which was burned in 1922, but rebuilt and restored and then left to ruin later - magnificent parkland landscape influenced by classical romantic painting of the period to make the view from the house look like a painting – planting trees to be enjoyed 100 years later when they matured – these demesnes are being attacked by country Club Hotels and Golf Courses developments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h) Demesnes have no adequate protection and are being targeted for development because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The size of the landholdings ➤ The prestige value of the land and its historical association which can be exploited by the developer – glossy brochures and high property prices ➤ Tourism value – tourism investment attracted to the authentic quality of landscape, architecture or cultural artefacts, which the tourism developments eventually destroy i) Contents of the CDP may be good, but what actually happens on the ground – Mayo CDP with areas of special scenic importance may give impression of good landscape protection, but what is happening is quite different ▪ Group Water Schemes - 37% of group water schemes are contaminated with a combination of agricultural fertilizers, and run-off from poorly designed sewerage systems and septic tanks - local authorities are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Writing off the existing massive investment and starting completely new schemes – huge additional cost b) Abandoning the existing infrastructure of piping & pumping equipment instead of cleaning up the mess
<p>Planning System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning Permission – is a rigged process because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Application process is negative because often reacting to bad development proposals b) P&D Act 2000 says councillors must comply with ‘the principles of proper planning and sustainable development’, but sustainable development is very under defined and out of date in Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland 1997 (Making Ireland’s Development Sustainable: Review, Assessment and Future Action 2002 – published since the interview) c) System of planning applications, decisions and refusals is basically a game by which no local authority will refuse more than a certain percentage of planning applications per year to give an impression of the existence of a planning system – it is a quota system – managers now monitor decisions and refusals – Mayo summon planners refusing too many applications to council meetings and they are asked to change their decisions – Kildare order them to change their minds d) Councillors can also intervene by using section 4’s (now called section 140) – councillors on one side of county would vote for a section 4 as a favour for a councillor in another part of county to confuse link to landowner / developer - mutual back scratching e) Manager will act as a stooge for the councillors and overturn planners report / refusal ▪ Local gurrier blowing up half a hill, guards and the army supervising his consignment of explosives every week, and he is supplying sand or gravel to the CoCo and nobody asks do you have planning permission – there is no regulation, procedure or legal obligation for the roads department to request that they are being dealing with a firm that has planning permission – need tax clearance certificates, professional indemnity, but you don’t need planning permission – half the quarries in the country are either completely illegal or have

	<p>been hugely extended without planning permission based on a random survey conducted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two tier planning system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Irish planning regulations and Irish law for normal applications b) Completely parallel and separate requirement to comply with European law for applications with EISs
<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### looks at developments from an integrated point of view rather than just one aspect such as visual ▪ Visual impacts from wind-farms, forestry and aquaculture can be huge - primary concern of aquaculture is water quality for marine life, but visual impact can be quite significant ▪ 2 or 3 houses on a hill in the rural area overlooking Lough Allen can have a much greater visual impact than some of the major categories of developments requiring EIS
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EIS is the data which is meant to be objective ▪ EIA is the assessment of the data for the planning authority which is meant to be comprehensive, but it isn't, it is rushed – ▪ Adequacy of EIS data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Planning authorities don't have people check EIS quality b) Planners don't have technical expertise in some of the specialised areas c) They rely on Dúchas (prescribed authorities) for advice, but <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ European Commission has found Dúchas to be negligent as a nature conservation authority ➢ Dúchas is itself understaffed ➢ Dúchas is under political pressure not to obstruct development ▪ Piggeries – tend not to have a major visual impact – low profile large buildings built into the landscape, rather than on tops of hills ▪ Quarries – can have massive visual impacts – ▪ Masonite – classical development with a high visual impact, so big earthen banks and trees to mitigate it, but interestingly the tree growth has been very disappointing – concerned whether pollution emissions affecting their growth ▪ Utter lack of confidence in the EPA – EPA guidelines defective because they don't properly address the European Directive – don't give enough guidance on the requirement for EIA for sub-threshold developments – European Commission has ruled that we are setting incorrect thresholds - procedural mishandling of EIA – process not achieving what was intended – certainly not achieving objective of encouraging public participation especially with introduction of €20 fee to participate (disincentive to participate in planning process – European Commission very un-impressed – finding against Irish Govt since the interview (reference??) - illusion that if your quarry is ? hectares you can get away without an EIS -

Environmental Group 2

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Participation – need to consider the opposite of participation which is very important – most members of the public don't participate, so the very few are left to comment on way too much and not having the time to do it and not being paid to do it – sometimes being asked to do some people's work for them ▪ ##### Surveys - area of surveys of coastal zone includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Core Area (minimum area – will always include this) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seaward side - the entire bay if it is a bay, or the immediate inshore until you get to open water ➤ Landward side - a minimum of 500m of hinterland b) If there are specific aspects, or larger project could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seaward side - could be up to 10 to 15Km out if part of the system, but depends on the shape of the coastline ➤ Landward side - the watershed of the direct inflows of streams – tend to take a line 5 to 6Km inshore which is usually the second road inland from the coast in Ireland ▪ ##### Surveys - includes visual aspects but question dropped later because there wasn't the interest, didn't get good answers for those questions and because people see water pollution and litter as far more important <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) go to the edge of low water, turn around and look back towards the shore and tell us what you see, what has changed since the last survey – do you see houses, isolated or in groups, caravans, anything that strikes the eye, a construction site – these questions dropped because they were not generating much feedback b) In a group setting you can - sit them down and ask them to be quiet for 2 minutes and write down what they hear get them to look in a particular direction and get them to write down what they see and what you like and don't like and the reasons why c) Litter is examined in great detail also <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When you are looking down the beach is it a) litter free, b) more or less litter free, c) moderately littered, or d) badly littered? – too much in the eye of the beholder, so changed to ➤ Count number of empty plastic bottles on 500m of beach ▪ Local authority enhancement function not always positive – people a) have not been trained visually, and b) have not been trained to respect the beauty of nature, resulting in negative ecological and visual effects – these cases of woe would not have happened if there was a proper public participation process – no participation for enhancement projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) When people get some spare money to beautify their property they quite often do stupid things – replace a hedgerow with a wall – a mistake ecologically and visually b) Bull Island – more designations than any other site in Ireland for protection, but someone in Dublin Corporation thought that the vista of the mudflats from the causeway needed enhancing, so they imported soil, and planted

	<p>flowers (lots of different colours) to improve the view – against all biodiversity principles (don't import seed to an island habitat) but they thought they were doing good</p> <p>c) Brittas Bay – had done some great work trying to channel tourists through the dune system to protect the dunes, but then they got some money and thought they could get some extra points towards their blue flag by putting in wheelchair access through the dunes – a tarmac pathway and a roundabout as a viewing area right in the centre of the dunes instead of at one end – what made it even worse was that they put big boulders and earth banks with shrubs on either side of the path...totally out of character with the dune habitat...a monstrosity – pathetic ecologically and visually</p>
<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Seascapes by Brady, Shipman & Martin – some very interesting guidelines - may be published - check with the Marine Institute b) BIM – have a visual policy published internally – well worth looking at – wouldn't agree with some things – put everything into rectangle & line up all the cages ▪ Nature's Beauty is not seen and appreciated – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Landscapes and nature are not important for Irish people – ask people to look at a wetland, marsh, bog and immediately a veil comes across...bad bog - Irish education system telepathically programmes kids to be unobservant – it is depressing – how often are primary school kids brought out to look at landscape and nature...never – East European kids much sharper visual awareness by bringing them out everyday on walks and do simple drawings of nature – getting them to sit on the grass and see how many different type of grass there is – it is nature observation and it trains the eye – Irish educational system does not do that so it is essential that we change it b) asking an awful lot of planners to protect and enhance the visual amenity when they have no visual training c) Civil engineering programme – nature and visual appreciation doesn't enter anywhere in the curriculum ▪ Can use enhancement measures to transform certain things, especially things that are big and ugly that will definitely stick out like sore thumbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Chipping cone in quarry converted in pieces of art b) Incinerator in city of Vienna c) Spike is sad because there is so much potential in this country using artists and designers to transform/enhance visual black spots d) On the road to Brno from Prague in Czech Republic – a group of large structures disguised as a group of giant German people beautifully painted with clever shadowing using an art competition – intended to dismantle it when competition finished but there was an outcry to retain them, so they left it ▪ Enormous Roadstone quarry in Arklow which is visually very intrusive with its own private harbour – it is really worth seeing
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪

Environmental Group 3

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ three sections dealing with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Wildlife <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Survey and designations of SACs, SPAs, & NHAs ➤ Issue of hunting licences ➤ Management of National Parks b) Archaeology –archaeological survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identified 120,000 archaeological sites from documentary evidence in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) – all local authorities have a record and maps for their areas ➤ Complete a field survey of these sites and then record them in the Record of Monuments in Places (RMP) ➤ > 700 sites designated as national monuments (of national importance) - ##### would have ownership or guardianship over certain monuments and are responsible for their maintenance ➤ Copy of published policy provided for archaeological section c) Architecture – deal with historic buildings roughly concentrated in urban areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) being conducted – survey of towns and properties to generate data from which properties are designated and publications produced – properties listed in the NIAH to be included in the local authority RPS ➤ Historic Properties in State are managed (protection, maintenance and presentation to the public) ▪ Archaeology defined as a broad time-span between the earliest Neolithic through to industrial archaeology of the 18th century (although there are some exceptions) – some cross-over between architecture and archaeology ▪ New idea to have one person dedicated to CDPs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) examining the archaeological objectives included in CDPs – trying to develop a template for archaeological content of CDPs b) only a concept at this stage, but trying to fit archaeology into landscape assessments being conducted by local authorities – develop a new way of examining archaeology rather than on a point location basis to examine interrelationship between groups of archaeological sites – trying to produce the information from within the landscape assessment process and then include it within CDPs – intended outcome would be lines on maps defining conservation areas from the archaeological perspective and to have an idea of the controls likely to apply for these areas listed in the CDP – nothing has changed really but the areas and the likely controls are more clearly illustrated – huge undertaking really – were to start in Louth but didn't go ahead – dealing with planners, heritage officers and conservation officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ significance of interfering with inter-visibility between adjacent monuments would be closely examined

<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development Control Process – dependent on planning departments in local authorities to refer planning applications which have an archaeological relevance (pretty good, but some failings) – Initial examination carried out by architect and archaeologist to refer onwards to relevant officer responsible for areas (4 to 6 counties), or propose no objection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) specific development application section to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Co-ordinate all planning applications received ➤ Log all responses ➤ Ensure a co-ordinated response (architecture, archaeology & wildlife) goes out to the planning authority b) Application referred if in the vicinity of a monument – cannot state 20m or 100m because in the vicinity of a ring fort is totally different to in the vicinity of an upstanding 4 storey castle – can be miles in the Boyne valley – it totally depends on the monument, but Westmeath planning authority uses 100m for all – need to educate and defining conservation areas within CDPs should also help c) Information in RMP archive used in assessing if a proposed development is going to have an impact on an archaeological monument d) Can comment on visual impacts that proposed developments might have on archaeological monuments – each application examined on own merit because of the amount of variation in monuments – visual aspects assessed include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inter-visibility between groups of monuments ➤ Views to and from the monument ➤ Views towards the monument from approach roads e) Methods used to minimise visual impacts include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Additional screening ➤ Redesign of structures to ensure they are non-invasive in sensitive areas i.e. visitor centre at Newgrange set into hill f) Try to ensure that an adequate area is set aside for the archaeological monument to preserve views to it and preserve its setting – endeavour to make sure that it is not part of the green space where playgrounds are located and landscaping is carried out ▪ Planning authorities are obliged to forward a copy of planning decisions to #####, so that we can determine if the conditions recommended by us were adopted and applied in the decision – doesn't happen as often as we would like, but are responsible for licensing of archaeologists – need an excavation license to carry out an archaeological dig – so a request may come through the licensing system which can confirm recommendations have been applied – generally dependent on communication with individual planners - no examination by archaeological section (generally and on a country by county basis) of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) What is the incidence of acceptance of recommendations? b) Are some recommendations accepted more than others? ▪ Where it becomes apparent that conditions applied in a planning decision have not been followed can chase it through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The planning regulations b) National Monuments Act for all monuments recorded in
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	<p style="text-align: center;">the RMP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### invited to make submissions by Bord Pleanála for planning appeals ▪ Dept of the Environment and Local Government guidelines on wind farms, published (1996) very interesting for visual aspects
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ditto for development control above ▪ Archaeology section can comment on visual impacts with respect to archaeological monuments, but will rarely comment on overall visual amenity ▪ One criticism that most in the section would have is that archaeologists engaged to prepare archaeological impact assessment for EISs rarely comment on visual impacts – would normally insist that it would be carried out with a request for further information to see that it was properly assessed if it was a concern to us

Environmental Group 4

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputs to CDPs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A list of the areas designated as SACs and SPAs b) Will mention undesignated areas such as bird flyways (corridors which are too diffuse to be mapped) c) Although we do a lot of mapping the concept of landscape is not mentioned – to us landscape is a matrix across which animals move – use the word landscape in a different way so the visual amenity will not be mentioned ▪ Comment on about 1000 planning applications a year either in, adjacent to, or upstream of designated SACs, SPAs, or National Parks ▪ Currently preparing planning guidelines for the ##### <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) mandated with protecting the natural environment (flora and fauna) so must restrict our comments to this area only b) not mandated with landscape or the visual amenity so cannot make any comments on visual even if in our view it is warranted (had knuckles rapped a few times in the past, so no comments on visual amenity any more) – legally not any of ##### business ▪ There are two exceptions where ##### can comment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) With respect to the 6 national Parks (Killarney, Glenbeigh, Burren, Connemara, Ballycroy & Wicklow) which are owned by the State. ##### can comment on landscape and the visual amenity for development applications from the viewpoint of a landowner (not as a prescribed authority) because tourism is one of the fundamental objectives of the National Parks and landscape and the visual amenity is important to tourism – a little complicated that there is no statutory basis for National Parks in Ireland – operate under the international statutory basis and the RUCN Guidelines b) ##### proposes many designations as SACs (Habitats Directive) and as SPAs (Birds Directive) on other peoples property - ~10% of the land and water area of the country is designated - currently preparing Conservation Plans for each of the designated SACs and SPAs which has a standard format including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Description of the site - included a very small comment (a few sentences) on the landscape and its aesthetic qualities – not really used but is recorded – this is an indication of the maximum importance ##### can assign to the visual amenity by law ➢ Statement of objectives - what we want to do ➢ Constraints – ➢ Operational objectives and strategies - how we are going to do it ▪ One case which became a vital issue subsequently was an application for afforestation on a site which was bounded on 3 sides by a National Park – It proposed trees on the skyline (visual amenity of National Park was going to be affected) so we objected and got into negotiation with the applicant who agreed to only plant 2/3 of the original on the lower slopes and kept them off the skyline – reconciliation because did not formally object.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### in monuments can comment on the visual aspects of planning applications because they operate under a different statute – National Monuments Act (1994) – whereas we operate under the ##### Act (1976) – it becomes an issue if someone is trying to build a house beside a dolmen – they can comment on the house if it affects the visual setting of the dolmen ▪ Areas of Scientific Interest (ASIs) declared unconstitutional ~20 years ago in the Clifden Airport case because they hadn't been sufficient consultation with landowners – ASIs replaced with NHAs which got their statutory backing with the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 ▪ If ##### make a development proposal – ##### have one design professional some of whose work is involved in the visual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Building works are still routed through the #####, who control the budget for the project and use their own architects to prepare the designs – very little consultation with ##### after the project is defined and initiated – ##### architects have more consultation with Local Authority planning departments to ensure planning permission is successfully attained – do not use architects of other ##### of Architectural Conservation who are conservation architects with very specialised skills who are more involved with rebuilding castles, etc b) If ##### proposing to erect a deer fence (fence line on the mountains breaking up the swell of the mountains) would consider visual aspects internally as part of discussions between field managers, regional managers and HQ c) Currently having a debate on signage – whether to continue to use timber signs (preferred) or begin to use standard steel signage ▪ Designations of SACs and SPAs are just an extra obstacle that planning applications have to jump in the development control process – compensation will be paid for loss of value, but not for any potential loss of value – if farmer has to cut his herd from 50 to 20 animals to eliminate overgrazing then compensation will be paid – overgrazing is taking out the plant communities which are being protected with the designation ▪ ##### have a list of notifiable actions (don'ts – don't fertilise, don't plough, don't plant forestry, etc) for designated areas which derives its authority from the regulations
Visual Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No statutory basis to comment except for the two exceptions noted above
Environmental Impact Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### only comment on ecological matters (flora and fauna) – same reasons as give above

Environmental Group 5

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plan - preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All aspects of planning and development for afforestation transferred from local authority planning departments (DoELG) to the ##### (DoMNR) in Nov 2002 – mainly due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Agreement between European Commission and DoELG to resolve issue of Irish threshold (70 Ha) requiring EIA for afforestation (reduced to 50 Ha) and also provision for sub-threshold EIA in environmentally sensitive areas b) Local authority planning departments did not have the expertise in forestry c) People thinking of planting will now only have to deal with one state agency instead of many previously (planning authorities, forest service, fisheries board, etc) ▪ Currently reviewing Forestry Act to combine all aspects of forestry and this new legislation (SI ? of 2002). Now operate parallel planning and development system for afforestation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Planning consent procedure b) Referral process – applications circulated to prescribed bodies to give them an opportunity to comment – local authority, + 5 prescribed bodies including #####, and ##### c) Enforcement process – existing cadre of forestry inspectors to conduct enforcement functions of system ▪ Indicative Forest Strategies – currently beginning preparation for 26 rural County Councils and Dublin City Council (not other cities)- To identify where forestry might best be situated in each county – early stages yet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Meeting with local authority planners to agree scope of IFS b) Consultative process with public meetings to get broader consensus on future of forestry in county – not trying to impose national solution, but adopt local concerns and nuances via consultation c) Produce IFS document identifying opportunities for forestry within county - diagram (map) indicating 3 categories – some councils don't like this terminology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preferred areas – best suited for afforestation and for which there is a general consensus ➤ Areas with potential ➤ Sensitive areas d) IFS voted on by the local authority councillors to be accepted – new debate on forestry being stimulated (democratic deficit previously) ▪ Intention of Indicative Forest Strategies is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To identify the best places in each county for forestry b) To formulate and drive local authority forestry policy and highlight policy opportunities c) Allow targeting of grants and differential grants later? ▪ ##### consulted on CDPs in a hit & miss fashion in the past – most CDPs didn't really address forestry – now trying to insert a reference to the IFS within the CDP - More proactive role now required with local authority planning departments as partners in the planning system – trying to link IFS to review of CDPs every 6 years – now meeting a much broader sector of people than would normally do business with ▪ IFS areas identified from first principles using layers of

	<p>information using GIS techniques (soil type, access roads, recreational activities, fisheries, etc) - research project in Teagasc (Kinsealy) mapping soils nationally providing information for preparation – soil productivity critical indicator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Too early yet to experience problems from landowners although: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) even though all the time stressing that the diagram (map) is only indicative rather than prescriptive – perception otherwise once lines put on map b) Don't in principle allow planting in SACs, NHAs and acid sensitive areas – problem last year in Kerry when limitations on planting introduced in acid sensitive areas – response of farmers was devaluing the land & doing us out of our livelihoods – similar for IFS identified areas? c) The EU provides compensation to farmers for the land-use limitations imposed as a result of SAC designations ▪ Sustainable Forest Management concept – set of standards on how mainly environmental, but also economic and social issues are dealt with via <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Code of Best Forest Practice - Ireland b) Forestry and the Landscape Guidelines
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landscape Guidelines – set out a range of standards which have an impact on the visual environment – completed by external consultants (####) – includes following visual policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Colour – mixed species rather than one dominant mono-colour b) Ridgelines – keeping them free of planting c) Buffering - along roads and rivers d) Shape – tends to match the previous underlying field pattern – never heard of land consolidation concept for forestry – Coillte did land swaps on an ad hoc basis sometimes in the past ▪ Referral of applications to prescribed bodies is important to give them an opportunity to make comment ▪ Landscape Architect (to be employed) by Forest Service will also have opportunity to comment on forest planning in sensitive areas being identified as more and more local authorities complete landscape character assessments of their areas – propose types of planting to suit or enhance sensitive areas using more complex models of colour composition, species mix, edge design and contours to achieve that ▪ Forest Service will have access to CDPs to identify if application located in visually sensitive areas designated by local authority – safeguard for the future is to talk to the local authorities often ▪ Currently stuck with existing forestry landscapes where monoculture & mono-colour is the norm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Old practices began to change with publication of first edition of landscape guidelines in 1992/3 when more concern for the environment and landscape began to take root – second edition published in 2000 b) Will take about 30 years to change the situation with the next rotation c) Consultation process is the safeguard for the future – feedback normally proposes mix of species so in time the monoculture 'green bottle' look will be a lot more colourful – unfortunately there is a long lead in to change

	<p>the problems of the past</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Average size of forests is 8 Ha ▪ Controls are applied <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) At pre-planting stage during the planning consent process b) At the planning consent process for planting stage c) At post-planting stage d) At maintenance stage (4 years) e) Up to the 20 years stage at premium payments stages f) the felling licence process – replanting after felling as a condition of the felling licence where current environmental rules will then apply ▪ Controls use the enforcement process – conduct inspections under the grants system and the licensing system – all sites are visited at least once during a 10 to 15 year period ▪ Code of Best Forestry Practice to be reviewed on an ongoing basis ▪ Neighbour Wood Scheme – aimed at local authorities and local interest groups as a amenity & recreation initiative for urban areas mainly – applications from all local authorities except 1 - grant aided – some large 10 to 15 Ha, but normally only 1, 2 or 3 acres, small pockets of urban forestry adjoining towns rather than in the urban area ▪ Do not publish anything giving predicted growth rates because it would be very site dependent - depends on soil productivity and species - 5 year old ash could be as tall as the ceiling, or only as tall as the table ▪ Interesting question to put to planners in local authorities - would they consider putting conditions on planting for screening specifying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Species – native species, faster growing species b) Age of sapling – smaller trees can sometimes can become established than larger ones c) When it should be planted
<p>Environmental Impact Statements – Thresholds triggering preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### (DoMNR) now responsible for afforestation EISs under new planning consent procedure ▪ Problems with EIAs for afforestation in past were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Blunderbuss approach of having to examine every conceivable factor b) High cost of EIA (15-20K typical cost for large project) putting people off planting ▪ Forest Service preparing a model for forestry EIAs for the future ▪ Only one example of a forestry EIS saying no to the development – so EISs seem to be pro development ▪ Standard and quality of forestry EISs in the past was not great – a lot of the problem is the blunderbuss approach to EISs of having to cover so much - don't know if planners would agree with this idea ▪ Scoping Procedure – intend to focus EIA procedure a lot more – no point in going ahead with this one, or go ahead with this one but look at x, y, & Z - use in-house information rather than the EPA Advice Notes as a guide to what EIA should include ▪ Examination of forestry EISs with respect to visual issues will use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The guidelines (didn't specify whether their own landscape guidelines or the EPA guidelines for EIA) b) Landscape Architect to advise on visual aspects

	c) Advice received from the 5 prescribed bodies in the referral procedure
Suggested most important improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ ##### - stuck with practice of past until a rotation – cannot fast forward it and current public perception of forestry quite negative because of past practice – green wall / postage stamps up the mountain – foresters have always seen themselves as environmentalists so not happy with idea that environmental concerns only took hold in forestry practice during 1990s

Environmental Group 6

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic Planning Guidelines – Meath won the high court case because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Justice Quirke found that the Council did have regard to the guidelines while they were preparing and adopting their CDP - there's an obligation to have regard to, not to comply with b) But he also found that local need was never defined - CDP never defined what local need was so the CDP was incomplete <p>Case highlighted the fact that there is no real point in producing strategic planning guidelines for urban areas if they are not going to be applied</p> ▪ Irish courts - supportive of local and central government administration - personal experience that Justice Quirke is very pro local authorities - he believes you should not interfere with the work of the local authority - just got out before the roof fell in on us – setting back our cause sometimes by not referring cases to Europe directly ▪ CDPs – plough on with same aspirations without completing strategic environmental assessment of old CDP to identify failures & deal with them ▪ Forestry – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Still operating under the 1996 forestry policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Recommends 10% broadleaves, even though EU recommends 30% broadleaves, and Crann have target of 50% broadleaves – our stats show that broadleaf planting has fallen from 13.7% to 13.2% to 12.8% during last few years – government hotly deny our figures saying that amenity planting brings total to 20%, but in absence of any credible government figures the EC accept our stats derived from a database of grant aided plantings which are incontestable – hoping to produce better figures by combining the number of broadleaf stems produced nationally with the number of stems imported and then calculating annual acreage – EC take these commitments very seriously and are examining possibility of claw back of grants – government have to do something, so special committee set up in Forest Service to work out how to encourage broadleaves ➢ Irish forest cover 7% currently – policy to increase to 17% by 2030 – target planting of 25,000 Ha per year for first few years and then 20,000 Ha thereafter – made target one year – currently 12,000 to 13,000 Ha per year over which there is some control at application stage to apply conditions ➢ Reforestation – about 9,000 Ha per year almost totally on Coillte lands – some controls applied for replanting when granting felling licences, but Coillte apply for a block felling licence for the whole country by submitting a list of all the stands to be cut, and as long as its not broadleaf or a recently seeded area they are given the licence on condition they replant – what is

	<p>replanted is not specified, so Coillte still applying 1996 forestry policy of 10% broadleaves – Coillte don't get a grant for replanting according to themselves, but have recently discovered a €4.5M grant fund on which controls could be applied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Forestry policy – Coillte have now recognised that there is profit in timber since the market is collapsing – there is no money in forestry, so Coillte are looking examining other revenue streams and they have identified property sales for development as an opportunity c) Indicative Forest Strategies were supposed to have been prepared 4 years ago – should include acid sensitive areas as vulnerable areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Participation – group of Irish NGOs got €40,000 from the Dept to examine participation by Ireland's civil society for the Earth Summit in RSA (copy of report supplied) – interesting that what comes up in most of the stories included in the report was the failure to bring design quality into any considerations of the decision making process – always add-ons afterwards to fix mistakes – Coillte don't want to know about participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Coillte have a CD with 22 sites for wind farms identified on their property – can pay €2,400 for a copy of the CD and tell Coillte which site you're interested in – any residents who might be affected by the wind-farms are not told about this and cannot access the CD b) Certification of forests was supposed to allow communities to participate in the decision making process, but that hasn't happened c) Agenda 21 not really working in Ireland, because of refusal DoMNR, Bord na Mona and the Forest Service to engage local communities in decisions ▪ Education – important for people to be aware of & understand the issues ▪ Democracy – local democracy of planning process has been diminished by removing responsibility for waste management from local councillors
<p>Planning System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Septic Tanks - assessments for suitability of septic tanks for single houses completed by developers agent – system where developers allowed to commission studies to suit themselves cannot work – some county councils don't even require tests anymore - no checking or no enforcement ▪ Design Quality – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) if could get building standards and building guidelines right from beginning we wouldn't have expensive add-on projects later – a good bit of common ground (quality of buildings, location of buildings, and ownership of buildings within family to a degree) between CRUBE (?) and An Taisce so would like to see the common ground highlighted and develop DoELG guidelines for quality construction in houses b) Too much use of Bungalow Bliss designs still – should be replaced with DoELG guidelines that reflect the regional characteristics of each area – no one has ever conceived national guidelines which will allow for local variations to ensure local distinctiveness is retained and complimented ▪ Forestry – have been chairing the national environment

- committee for ##### for the last 5 or 6 years – pushing forestry for the last 3 years at the behest of the EC who consider it Ireland’s largest land-use change
- a) Tried to set up a coalition of NGOs (Crann not for challenge) to challenge the certification of Coillte’s forests by the forest stewardship council – certification supported by WWF and must be assessed by recognised assessor to qualify – Coillte assessed by UK branch of SDS (Swiss firm in bribery scandals elsewhere) – Coillte only plant 10% broadleaves even though EU want 30% broadleaves
 - b) Irish afforestation council to develop national standards has been hijacked by the economic section in Coillte are adopting standards that do not match the afforestation council criteria or international standards (must adopt part of international standards and can only modify for natural reasons) - whole thing has now reached a crisis point after two years of inactivity and about to cause ructions
 - c) Forest Service now referring all applications to #####, but are wasting a huge amount of time by accepting applications which
 - Have no EIS even though they are over the threshold
 - Don’t meet guideline criteria - insufficient broadleaves

County Councils just return applications that don’t meet required criteria (check against box informing applicant why returned) – Forest Service should do the same and stop wasting people’s time
 - d) Forest Service then refusing to tell ##### result of application, saying it was confidential information – did not want ##### as a prescribed authority
 - e) Acidification issue – also referred to EC – unfortunate result of planting conifers on poorly buffered soils, they create a chemical reaction in the soil which leeches out magnesium from the rocks and contaminates water resources and kills fish by clogging their gills – whole areas now dead of fish because of conifer planting – now argument about how much of country is sensitive to conifers – I submitted complaint to EC and included EPA produced acidification sensitivity map for country as part of the documentation – but still nothing changed in new legislation, so proposing to bring in an acidification protocol – farmers going to be very unhappy because 700,000 Ha (10% of State) were identified as acid sensitive – previously planted acid sensitive areas are now being felled but are then required by law to replant the things which caused the problem in the first place – if it is bad for the environment it mustn’t be permitted
- **One-off Housing** – County Councils trying to limit by
 - a) More planning conditions of permissions in the rural area rather than within village and urban settlements to encourage people into villages - if people want to live there this will create a demand for services
 - b) Dowager clause – permissions available for locals and relatives
 - c) See septic tanks above
 - d) Would be much better control if could get technical controls in place, such as 55% of country has limestone

	<p>under the surface, so these areas should be no-go for septic tanks – on those grounds alone by protecting ground water resources you could limit a lot of this development</p> <p>e) North end of Lough Ennell opened to cruiser traffic in 1996 – long lake and top of lake is gorgeous with little inlets and bays with high mountains on left – German tried to put in a marina, and village of Darragh want to cut a canal from the lake to village, but cruisers not a great boon to locals because most provisions purchased in Carrick-on-Shannon – ##### appealed 30 to 40 houses in this area and has won all of them which makes the locals madder and madder – German couple (objecting to a cluster of 9 dwellings which were a forerunner to further development in the area) got an injunction against 4 of 6 locals intimidating them, who are very upset and are going back to court to get their names removed from the injunction – this sort of publicity doing the conservation movement a disservice by sending the wrong signals to the local community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open space – requirement for 2Ha per 1000 people – in Jobstown they build along all sides of the open space (not fronting onto but backing onto) so very difficult for the public to access the open space without going through a maze to get into them – should plan and design open spaces in an area as a public park and have developers contribute towards it - ▪ Town Planning – Local Area Plans (LAPs) are the way forward, but they seem to be consistently hijacked by well organised business interests – recognised within the tier of plans under the P&D Act 2000 – they form part of the CDP – island study by ##### controlled development, but not included in new draft zoning document ▪ Problems – everyone seems to know where problems are, but little action to fix them
<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fish Farms – magnitude of visual impact huge along Kenmare River – scale of operation was a total surprise – big industrial development in this area where views and prospects are designated for protection - still giving trial licences to new developments saying there will be a visual assessment done at some point – pressure for development enormous from grant funding available – not following their own guidelines by applying restrictions to aquaculture developments on behalf of other users of foreshore a) Fish farms moving in everywhere along Bantry Bay and ### objecting – two events impacted on preparation of case <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Government Reorganisation Act 1985 placed Bantry Bay under control of Cork CoCo after Whiddy Island disaster to co-ordinate emergency services because response during disaster deemed appalling ➢ Case in Donegal where someone appealed to An Bord Pleanála who determined that the fish cages were structures under the Act and required planning permission <p>I brought case to Cork CoCo using precedent that planning permission was required, so they changed the law and removed jurisdiction of Bantry Bay from Cork CoCo to ensure planning was not required</p> b) Preparation for health reasons is the problem – need alternative sites during the fouling period, so instead of 1, 2

	<p>or 3 sites in each bay there are now 2, 4 or 6 sites (doubled in size) just to allow for the fouling rule without any expansion in operation</p> <p>c) Dept of Marine & natural Resources issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lease for a part of the foreshore area ➤ Licence to operate – legislation for renewal of licence every 10 years requires applications to be accompanied by an EIS (DoMNR denies EIA required) – not a single one prepared because this is a real opportunity to assess the effects of fish farms on the environment since baseline information is available from EISs prepared for initial licence application – they are ignoring us and are not implementing the Act <p>d) DoMNR are renewing licences with just the decision of a senior civil servant - note on application ‘renewed 1st January 2002’ and the courts are backing them on it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DoELG has a few good people who try to be innovative, but DoMNR are black in comparison – DoMNR have the universities backing them and COFORD is passing around best forest practice guidelines but they do not want consultation
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EIA - general feeling that EIA process is not achieving what it set out to do particularly in terms of alternative locations for developers, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mayo Gas Pipeline – assessment of alternative sites and the visual assessment were appalling, so it went to court ▪ Urban Developments – many examples (i.e. Kilkenny border) where developers will apply for slightly under the threshold requiring EIA, and then subsequently apply for another development adjacent to first one – EIA process being subverted by developers ▪ Forestry – blatant evasions of the EU Directive – I believe we don’t have any control for forestry in the visual sense at all – have planted on both sides of the road within designated views towards Castletownbere – protected views mean nothing for forestry developments ▪ Power Stations – ESB & Bord na Mona wanted to build two new big turf burning power stations at Lanesboro and Shannonbridge without EIA (BnM have never done EIA on the extraction of turf in Ireland) – referred to the EPA but said it was not their responsibility - EIA necessary to examine effects such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consume 1500 Ha per year & exhaust midland bogs fairly quickly b) Remove the sponge effect of these bogs from the Shannon catchment which would be likely to impact on flooding <p>European Commission had already issued a reasoned opinion against Ireland for a Heritage bog near Abbeyleix – BnM wanted it for milled peat for briquettes – guy helping locals fight the case decided to list every IPC licence issued to BnM - no EIA discovered so complaint to EC two years ago – when we were building case against two power stations he informed us that no EIA was conducted for IPC licences – still took Irish court case, against the planning permission but court didn’t want to listen to us even though</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Licences had clearly been sanctioned without EIA b) No public advertising, so public denied opportunity to

	<p>participate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Forestry – Irish case against the EU Directive for EIA for forestry, turf extraction and land reclamation – ##### now prescribed authority for forestry developments so Forest Service forward applications for comment<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Page 3 missing from applications sent to ##### (containing the environmental considerations) – they said at meeting they had the Attorney general’s opinion that they didn’t have to include page 3, why are you asking for page 3 when no other prescribed authority have asked for it, but the environment officer for ##### read out the legislation to them and finally got them to agree to include page 3b) Then discovered that since they considered they were forwarding page 3 out of goodness of their hearts rather than as a statutory responsibility they weren’t treating the ##### submission as a statutory submission – also found they weren’t treating submissions from ##### and the ##### as statutory submissions either▪ Forest Service –<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) they have no idea about consultationb) Fighting really hard over the thresholds – were 200 Ha, then went down to 70Ha and now down to 50Ha, but absolute refusal to go any lower – many projects now coming in with 49.9 Ha, so developers are breaking up projects to come in under the threshold – I found an example of it in a mountain glen with a lake in Ardgoom where a farmer decided to plant conifers on 90 Ha right down to the lake – they had split the project in half to extinguish turbary rights on a portion of the land, so they gave him permission for 45 Ha initially and then for the remaining 45 Ha after the turbary rights were extinguished – the fact that it was next to an SAC was never spotted – crazy planting up there on a completely enclosed piece of landscape with a mountain lough – we sent photographs to the EC and they got really mad with the Forest Service over that one
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Environmental Group 7

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heritage Appraisal of CDPs – Commissioned UK consultants to develop methodology – uses subset (bolded below) of strategic environmental impact assessment (SEA) methodology which examines 7 criteria – introduced in 2000 – 33 appraisals completed to date (includes 15 CDPs, 3 City DPs, 8 Town DPs, 5 LAPs, and 2 other plans and strategies) - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <u>Energy Efficiency</u> – encourage energy efficiency b) <u>Environmental Protection</u> – protect environment, minimise pollution & waste, contain change within environmental capacities and adopt precautionary principle c) Non-Renewables – protect use and consume non-renewable resources wisely and efficiently d) <u>Renewables</u> – manage and use consumption of renewable resources within limits of replenishment e) Biodiversity – conserve and enhance biodiversity f) Environmental Quality – restore, conserve and enhance local environmental quality, diversity, character and distinctiveness g) Environmental Equity – improve environmental equity, especially accessibility to and understanding of environmental, historical & cultural resources and heritage <p>Examines 13 factors contained in the heritage plan under these 4 headings (monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens and parks, & inland waterways) – produced by panel of planning consultants for the ##### – Hopefully sufficient funds to do 30 to 40 per year – have agreed to do 1 LAP per county to develop standard - Two aspects to the appraisal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Scoping exercise – are policies included to cover 13 heritage factors b) Appraisal – evaluating the aims & objectives of existing policies in plan – 4 possible scores <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Likelihood of significant beneficial effects ➤ Criterion not relevant, or likelihood of no significant or only neutral effects ➤ Likelihood of significant adverse effects and/or likelihood of policy divergence with heritage/environmental objectives, or likelihood of conflict with other heritage/environmental sustainability aims ➤ Uncertain or unpredictable effects and/or some potential for policy divergence with heritage & environmental objectives, or potential for conflict with other heritage/environmental aims. High reliance on cross compliance in the application of the objective, or high reliance on assessment of specific proposals promoted by the policy, the appraisal of which would come later in the process and is flagged here as an issue ▪ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – Heritage Appraisal is introducing local authorities to SEA before it comes on stream in 2004 ▪ Heritage Officers – jointly funded by ##### – 19 appointed

	<p>to date – running for ~2.5 years to date - hoping to have Heritage Officer in each local authority by end of 2004 – funding for ##### ~ 1/3 DoELG and 2/3 national lottery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Village Design Statements (VDS) – already prepared for Ballysadare and Grange (using UK methodology) and two more being done in Co Sligo and one each in Co Offaly and Co Laois – ones in Ballysadare and Grange very successful – cost about €10,000 each (drop in ocean compared to development costs) – completed by UK consultant architects to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify what’s distinctive and characteristic about village b) How that distinctiveness can be used to inform new development – ensures that local character and distinctiveness is retained in any new developments – not the usual generic design so doesn’t erode the village character – try not to get characteristic core with generic donut around it – try to ensure character permeates out to whole village c) Does not preclude whether development should or should not take place – CDP does that, but it identifies what features should be incorporated if development does take place <p>Three workshops held for each one – consultants produced an issues paper as something to react to which identified broadly the character areas within the village and their distinctive features (this area is distinctive because to this, this and this) – 110 people turned up for first meeting in Ballysadare (unprecedented) people took to consultants immediately because they didn’t lead the workshop, but allowed people who came lead it – different consultation and workshop techniques used which were very effective</p> ▪ Public Consultation – local authorities are bad at engaging people – they have been on the defensive for so long it is difficult now for them to appreciate that they might get some good ideas from consultation – See VDS – VDS for main street in Falcarragh Co Donegal – very distinctive plasterwork on porches – local woman had married into a plastering family in Belfast about 50 years previously and Belfast plasterers spent holidays in Falcarragh doing nixers which created the distinctive plasterwork – disposable cameras given out to people to photograph what they felt was distinctive with surprising results people amazed at what others found distinctive - opened people’s eyes to their environment that is familiar and taken for granted and suddenly people can look at it differently if they know the storey behind it ▪ No qualified planners in country when 1963 P&D Act passed, so Engineers filled the new planning posts. Engineers had a dominant role in local authorities which mitigated against planners in the past – local engineers would have run the village renewal schemes in the 1980s and early 1990s – planning department now beginning to find their place within local authorities with a more co-ordinating role – significant number of extra planning posts created in the last few years -
<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### only examines the visual if it relates to a heritage site - does development within the cartilage or setting of a monument or house visually intrude ▪ Heritage Appraisal – examines landscape, but does not go into very much detail in terms of visual:

- a) Looking for policies to protect landscape character
- b) Looking at policies to see if they impact on (significantly detract from) landscape character
- **Landscape Character Assessment** – want each County to conduct a landscape character assessment
- **Conservation Areas** - can now be designated within CDPs for protection and Heritage Council interested in policies adopted to implement this
- **REPS** – pays farmers a subsidy to protect heritage assets on their land and manage them in an appropriate manner – could possibly be extended to manage views and prospects also –
- **Views and prospects** – possible trend of moving away from point views and linear views because it focussed on the exceptional landscapes (bumpy bits) and forgot about the ordinary landscapes (flat bits) – possibly natural to save the ‘honey pot’ landscapes because people could appreciate their value as tourist attractions, but the ordinary landscapes that most of us live in haven’t been valued to the same degree
- **Landscape Character Assessment** - uses the premise that every landscape has a distinctive character which should be defined – Study completed of Co. Clare which
 - a) Identified 17 distinct character types in the county
 - b) Evaluate each type in terms of defining people’s limit of acceptable change using public consultation – trying to formulate a set of guidelines for each landscape character type stating what development types are appropriate under what conditions and what restrictions apply

Landscape is continually changing, so with that accepted as a constant, the landscape character assessment captures the character of the present (its distinctive features and attributes) – development may compliment this character or change it to a different character if that is what is required – not very useful in themselves because of their scale because only identify broad landscape type

- **Landscape Capacity Studies** – at local level in response to particular development proposals – very useful detailed planning tool – based on examining ‘environmental capital’ (tradable assets) – what are the total resources on the site & what function do each of them play - what function in relation to biodiversity do ecological resources play – what function in terms of the cultural significance of the site do the cultural artefacts play – are those resources replaceable – can the site still function culturally if the cultural resources are removed/destroyed -
 - a) **Durrow, Co. Offaly** – very important Columban Monastic site (reputably where Book of Durrow written) – most below ground but includes a church with St Columille’s well, outline of the monastic enclosure, would also have suburban settlement - house on site built in 19th century – quite ordinary undulating farmland landscape (not particularly visually important) with an esker on northern boundary – UK Countryside Agency methodology used by consultant landscape architect which includes:
 - Describes the landscape
 - Describes the development proposal – golf course + 500 houses + hotel + apartments + leisure facilities + business park

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Statement of cultural significance ➤ Suitability Evaluation ➤ Conclusions <p>Heritage Council appealed because of sensitivity of site and developer withdrew application – local authority then decided to prepare an LAP which has just been put out for public consultation which looks at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Capacity of landscape to absorb development without changing its inherent character ➤ Suitability of development proposal to the landscape and what is there already <p>Conclusion – very low capacity for development because was such an open landscape (not much vegetation) and proposed development would significantly change landscape character</p> <p>b) Lough Rinn, Co. Leitrim – demesne landscape set within drumlin farmland on verge of two different types of landscape characters identified within the Leitrim landscape character assessment – landscape capacity study completed to bring down to a local level</p> <p>Conclusion – much more wooded site so higher capacity to absorb development</p>
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scoping EIA – receiving many requests from environmental consultants doing EIA and an Bord Pleanála – often get impression that they don't want to do it all, and they are asking you how can they do the bare minimum – don't normally respond to them – don't get involved in individual cases (try to concentrate on development policy) so refer them to Dúchas ▪ Any EIAs looked at are certainly done for the developer – have to read what's not in them rather than what is in them, because so much is left out – could ignore a lot of what is in them – the information about landscape in the EPA guidelines is strong on visual but very weak on landscape character - EIS for Durrow was unsatisfactory and treated landscape purely in visual terms – maybe visual assessments should be separate from landscape because they refer to many other aspects as well as landscape – ▪ Never came across an EIS yet that said no to a proposed development – blindly obvious that the Durrow EIS should have said that the proposed development was completely unsuitable ▪ EIA might be more objective if developer paid for it and local authority commissioned it (local authority the client) – If the EIS for Durrow was commissioned by anyone other than the developer it would have said no to the development, that the environmental impacts are of such significance that the proposal should go back to the drawing board which is what happened because of outside intervention
<p>Improvement suggested to aid the Visual Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Heritage Plan - published April 2002 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Carry out Landscape Assessments in all counties as quickly as possible to provide good baseline information – no national co-ordination, so character areas at county boundaries may not link up and names of landscape character types may be different across county boundaries – DoELG or Dúchas should take over co-ordination role b) Then conduct the value and sensitivity evaluation

Environmental Group 8

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hedgerow Management and Conservation Plan - feeding into all CDPs at present because one of our aims is to ensure that each county has a Hedgerow Management and Conservation Plan in operation (not one county had one in survey completed 3 years ago) – none notified the public about the hedge cutting season – only thing they considered was road safety and sightlines for traffic so hedges were cut without reference to wildlife - management plan should ensure that butchering of hedges does not occur any longer – 2 to 3 year rota system for cutting, and light trims before nesting seasons to ensure sightlines are OK
<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hedgerows – being told by local authorities, the public and the Tourist Board that hedges along road edges are spoiling the view because they screen particular views – “golly I wish they would take the hedges out” - particularly in Co Kerry & Cork – in West cork many hedgerows along roads are cut back because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It is recognised that they spoil a view b) They limit a sightline – not from road safety perspective, but from the visual amenity perspective c) Sometimes replaced with barbed wire or fencing ▪ National Hedgerow Survey – last one done in 1987 by An Foras Forbartha concluded that 1.5% of the country was covered by hedges – 3 year programme to complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Steering Committee includes main government agencies – Dúchas, Dept of Agriculture, Forest Service, Heritage Council, & Teagasc – want it to be inclusive - difficulty trying to get local authorities involved – seems to be very little co-ordination between local authorities – government agencies do not like prescriptive measures being forced on them from above so have to try to cajole them, get them involved so that they felt they are collaborating with something worthwhile – encountered a lot of suspicion and distrust in the last 6 months – steering committee only convened in April 2002 b) Tourism Sector - consulted previously – not really interested – hedges are just there, however survey of tourists identified that hedged landscape was the most striking thing that tourists notice – tourists used to come to Ireland for the people, but now they find the people increasingly rude, so tourists now come to see the Irish landscape c) Identifying different functions of a hedge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Farmers perspective – stock proof barrier – REPS helping farmers appreciate the environmental function ➤ environmental perspective – route for plants to disperse and wildlife to travel on – exotic species such as bats and owls also ➤ Contractors perspective – a livelihood in cutting them ➤ Legal perspective – defining the boundary between two properties – hadn’t discussed that function before so might raise it at the next meeting d) Pilot has just been completed in Co Leitrim, Mayo, Offaly

	<p>& Galway and now needs to be written up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What height should a hedgerow be? – different species may have different heights – from the perspective of wildlife and birds singing posts required along length of hedge, so require tall stands every so often ➤ What is the species composition of hedgerows – enormous variation regionally <p>e) Intended results of National Hedgerow Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Would like to put an economic value of a length of hedge – calculating it in terms of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. how much shelter it provides ii. its value as a carbon sink - agenda 21 perspective iii. certification of ecological value ➤ Certification of hedge cutting contractors – produce best practice guidelines for contractors i.e. no cutting during nesting season – contractors not allowed to cut hedges during 6 months of year if the law is enforced properly, so need to find a solution to gainfully employ contractors for the other 6 months – don't want all the contractors out cutting on 1st September destroying all the fruit and berries on the hedges, so need to have a rotation where hedges are only cut every 2 or 3 years – provide training courses in Teagasc offices ➤ Travelling road-show providing courses on hedgerow management teaching the different techniques used ➤ Educational awareness of the roles of hedges – handing out leaflets next week at the national ploughing championships – tremendous potential for people to start to appreciate hedgerows <p>▪ Hedgerows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Very important in Ireland because so little of the country is wooded – Forest Service working hard to change this – now approaching 10% of country wooded after 40 year programme b) Hedges need to be managed if they are going to function as stock proof barriers or as wildlife shelters – this is the biggest problem (bigger than their removal) with hedges at present because they just die off if they are not managed, turning into trees and then dying – managing hedges is labour intensive c) ##### working on a project for the Dept of Agriculture examining farming practice with respect to hedgerows – hedgerows are being removed as field sizes are enlarging to accommodate larger farm machinery – the impact of changing farming practices on the landscape
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<p>▪</p>

Environmental Group 9

Issues	Comments
<p>Aims and Roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mainly access - started by a group of dissident farmers (20-30%) who didn't want their commonage divided or fenced – court case judgement stated that commonage division had to 100% consensual - 3 main strands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Freedom to roam around large upland areas where commonages merge into one another – standing in middle of upland commonage and being able to appreciate sense of wilderness (pristine area and not being able to see man-made developments) – fences with styles every 200m, one-off housing, wind turbines, mobile phone masts are all intrusions into that sense of wilderness b) Rights of way - c) Fencing (barbed wire) – denies access and visual blot on landscape ▪ Strayed into other areas - in the past <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) What is the use of having access to landscape if you find it degraded when you get there with wind turbines, hydro schemes, mobile telephone masts – strictly not an access issue, but b) Made clear to us from outside the organisation to stick to our agenda, so do not stray any longer ▪ Area of influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ##### & ##### agendas overlap on land over 300m contour b) ##### also concerned with following areas below 300m contour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mountain - raised bogs ➤ Wilderness - blanket bogs, ➤ Recreational amenity areas - beaches, dune systems - does not include urban amenity areas ▪ Fencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Generally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Would prefer hedging or stonewalls instead of barbed wire – drawbacks with hedging also because can't see anything if walking, cycling or driving down small roads ➤ Barbed wire preferred by farming community especially if erecting a new boundary – no grants for fencing, so cheapest option ➤ Would question need for some new fencing - breached fences are not being repaired - so not fulfilling role as stock-proof barrier (would expect to see them repaired if this was their role) – so why needed in the first place b) New fencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commonages in Upland areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Large traditional commonages especially in western areas mainly used for sheep and cattle stretched for miles and miles because commonages merged with one another - were never fenced previously along the roadsides or along their perimeters ▪ Unwritten rules for commonages – in theory they should be managed by a committee and there should be an agreed stocking rate (probably

	<p>included in deeds for properties)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of the terrain was inbred into the stock - now being lost with new sheep in Cooley peninsula replacing sheep culled during foot & mouth ▪ Running a small herd of sheep an important part of subsistence economy of part-time farming – a little bit of work, a little bit of farming and drawing the dole – farming was very casual and could not afford to fence the commonage ▪ EU Common Agricultural Policy changed that by encouraging more sheep through headage payments – some people got greedy & stock levels rose sharply so that commonages were overgrazed ▪ Proposal by farmers to divide commonages as solution to overgrazing – eventually had large de-stocking plan – some commonages have recovered, but some have not where topsoil has been washed away – affected approximately 20-30% (guess) of commonages ▪ No sound agricultural reason for fencing upland commonages – many ways other than fencing for marking boundaries if stock-proof barrier requirement not necessary <p>➤ REPS – requirement under measure 5 to stock-proof farms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve fencing to ensure internal stock kept within farm and external stock don't have access – makes a lot of sense in lowland area, but totally unsuitable in the west – many boundary fences being erected along small roads ▪ Measure has been amended a few times <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Initially REPS planners (Teagasc) had discretion on certifying where fencing was necessary and that they were satisfied that no overgrazing would take place b) Then REPS planners had to request formal derogation before they could finalise a plan that wasn't fully stock-proofed – requests were always turned down so planners stopped requesting them – farmers had to erect fences and had to pay for them because there are no grants for fencing c) Then reverted back to the first rule in 2000 which gives discretion to the REPS planner ▪ Many reasons given for the need for fencing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) EU inspectors wish to count sheep during spot checks and can't have them traipsing all over the mountain b) Can't have diseased stock mixing with healthy stock c) Have not been able to establish whether this is an EU requirement of a Dept of Agriculture requirement, but FOI from Agriculture Commissioner's office (F Fichler) indicates EU is concerned about all new fencing in Ireland ▪ Perimeter fencing of REPS farms dealt with in
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	<p>“CAP Rural Development Plan 2000-2006”, published by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Ireland November 2000 – REPS schemes must conform to good farming practice (pages 167 to 169) as well as the REPS regulations – statement included that perimeter fencing of commonage is no longer necessary or desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dividing commonages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Official policy by Dept of Agriculture and Teagasc to assist division <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commonage shareholders propose division to Land Commission ➤ Land Commission inspector draw up commonage plan b) Official policy changed in 1998 - no longer encourage or assist division <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Farmers hire own consultant to draw up commonage plan ➤ Division must be consensual ➤ Dept will rubberstamp it but will not approve this course of action c) Didn't suit the sheep which were used to grazing over wide area – some upland areas very inhospitable terrain area for any animal, so only way to survive was to move up and down and across the mountain depending on the wind and weather d) Suited farmers as a short term solution – hidden agenda for providing more land for selling sites - seen as a major windfall for farmers – exacerbated rural housing problem ▪ Dept of Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Political wing of IFA and ICMSA b) Huge political clout for relatively small organisation compared to IBEC or the trade unions – politicians run a mile rather than confronting them ▪ England – legislation introduced by UK parliament around 2000 to provide “<i>freedom to roam</i>” over the 5-600m contour – no obstructions or fences allowed – fences in exceptional cases only but must have styles every 1-200m – implementation being phased in over a long time –Tourism groups, Ramblers and Open Spaces Society came together to propose measure – very powerful lobby group in the UK with many MPs from all parties – much stronger than the UK farming lobby which is weak in comparison to the IFA in Ireland
<p>Planning process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning permission for fencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Planning permission required in hitherto open areas under existing planning regulations (not Act) – requirement totally ignored by Local Authority planning departments, REPS planners and the Dept of Agriculture b) Any individual can take a planning enforcement case under section 27 of the planning regulations if council fail to do so – but expensive to do so - don't see why should do council's work for them c) ##### and ### have taken a few cases to court to raise issue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Case due soon in Maam district court on fencing enforcement ➤ ### took case against RTE who erected a fence around their mast on Mount Leinster – local farmers supported

	<p>####</p> <p>d) Badgering of councils in the west of Ireland seems to be paying dividends however - beginning to take on access issues and rights of way onboard as one of their duties – if farmer places fence across what is reputed to be a right of way then he has made two infringements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Put up a fence without planning permission ➤ Blocked a right of way <p>e) Used be a supplementary measure under REPS to give farmers grants for providing access – no longer available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### would agree that there is a fairly low priority for the visual environment by Ireland’s planning system
<p>Legislative Reform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### happy to be regarded as trespassers (under Occupier’s liability Act) so long as trespass is not restricted ▪ Freedom to Roam (similar to situation in UK) is what ##### seeks – no willingness within government to listen to ##### or host a conference to bring all the interested parties together and see if consensus can be achieved <p>a) M Cullen currently refusing to meet ##### on rights of way</p> <p>b) N Dempsey in past at least saw us but did nothing</p>

Environmental Group 10

Issues	Comments
<p>Aims and Roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### receives about €2.5M funding per year which predominantly funds its' recreational activities. The environmental work is predominantly voluntary ▪ Deals with uplands in Ireland above 300m and sea cliffs, and has two main remits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Access to these areas for recreational activities of its 6000 members Ⓡ Reacting to issues which impact on this environment, mainly through the planning process ▪ Environmental Policy – Irish uplands are limited in extent and very fragile in nature. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ To conserve the flora, fauna and traditional character of the upland areas Ⓡ To preserve the wilderness quality of those areas Ⓡ To encourage reasonable access to those areas Ⓡ To co-operate with reasonable, sustainable and appropriate developments by indigenous communities in those areas ▪ Policy documents available for built development, access, forestry, footpath erosion, litter and illegal dumping, mountain roads, agriculture. Policies that have a visual dimension are listed below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Built Environment – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Impact in terms of scale, positioning and design in the landscape setting b) Quality of that particular landscape and its ability to absorb development c) Economic and social value of the scheme d) Ecological consequences of the development both in the long term and during construction. Ⓡ Forestry – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protection of remaining natural forest b) Developments below the EIA threshold of 50Ha do not need planning permission c) Public access routes should be condition of investment grants of public monies towards development. Ⓡ Mountain Roads – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Should serve long term functions only b) Route of least visual impact should be used (should not be allowed in primary amenity zones) Ⓡ Litter & illegal Dumping – encourage county councils to impose fines & implement strategies to clear up illegal dumping
<p>Action through the planning process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would not think of visual issues from point or linear locations, but as areas, because generally members would be looking out from the tops of the uplands ▪ Concerns itself with planning applications above 300m contour ▪ Masts on Uplands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Objected to RTE mast on Three Rock Mountain, which was to be 450 ft high. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council refused it, but An Bord Pleanála subsequently passed it. This mast is substantially larger than all the other masts on Three Rock Mountain, so much so that it can be

	<p>seen from Douce Mountain when all the rest of the masts cannot be seen it can because it breaks the skyline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Objected to quarry development on Muckish Mountain in Donegal ▪ Wind-farms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ Wind-farms in Ireland mostly break the skyline, which from a visual point of view is unacceptable. However the pricing policy of the Electricity Regulator in Ireland is forcing these developments onto the uplands. Ⓡ Mountains above 500m only cover 0.5% of the land area of Ireland, and should be protected. The land area between 300m and 500m is many times more extensive, are of secondary scenic importance and these lower hills are suitable for wind farm use. Ⓡ Kerry County Council have recently published a Renewal Energy Policy, which has banned wind-farms from the three peninsulas and has identified preferred sites on the uplands along the Limerick and Cork border which do not have a primary scenic value. Ⓡ Wind-farms in Ireland are generally clustered, but in northern Germany they are scattered and sited in front of large stands of trees in the direction of the prevailing wind so that they disappear from view fairly quickly. The amount of mature trees available gives the landscape a higher capacity to absorb these high developments. ##### would not support a distributed policy for wind-farm developments, but a clustered one (like Kerry's) that deals with the siting issue more carefully. ▪ Fences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ ##### recently was successful in objecting to the erection of fences by RTE around its' mast on Mount Leinster. ### members reported the erection of the fences and it was discovered that RTE did not have planning permission for the development. RTE applied for retention of the fences, which was refused by the local authority on objections from #####.
<p>Improvement suggested to aid the Visual Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The issue of most importance to ##### would be fences in the upland areas, and commonage, which restrict access and mobility around these areas. This was driven directly by EU funding via the REPS schemes, and indirectly by enticing sheep farmers to divide commonage to the surrounding farms and fencing it to segregate sheep into individual landowners holdings in order to maximise headage payments. This also had the effect of overgrazing the upland areas in an unsustainable fashion, especially along the fences. Intensive agricultural development in upland areas is unsustainable. ##### is opposed to the division of commonages because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓡ It encourages the creation of unnecessary access roads Ⓡ It has the potential to cause development of patchwork forestry plantations Ⓡ It leads to erosion because of the concentration of stock in a confined area Ⓡ It reduces or eliminates entirely the wilderness nature of upland areas ▪ Another issue of importance would be the construction of roads

	<p>up into the uplands which create long-lasting scars on the landscape are driven directly by EU funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The erection of all these fences, the constructions of these roads, and the overgrazing all have a visual dimension.▪ The re-fencing of commonage may have a land ownership dimension.
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Environmental Group 11

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ##### project was a Participatory Approach to ##### Environmental Management designed to achieve more sustainable methods of planning and development. ▪ Project Aim – to enable communities in the ##### areas of ##### Bay (#####, #####, #####, #####, #####, ##### – 2/3 ##### and 1/3 #####) to prepare local plans for their own areas assisted by the project partners with the local authorities providing technical expertise – funding available to prepare 5 plans and the intention was that these plans would be included in some manner in the Development Plans – the last CDP for both ##### and ##### were published in 1999, so both are working to the same time schedule where their next CDPs are expected for publication in January 2004 - bringing more local knowledge into the CDPs – project pre-dates the P&D Act 2000, so not operating under any statutory timescale ▪ ##### Model – 2 main elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Environmental Forum - consisting of local community groups, Irish Rail (public transport agency), ##### County Council and ##### Council. Forum had authority to act as a body for evaluating and approving plans, for resolving conflicts of interests and liaising with local and central government b) 5 Local Planning Groups (LPGs) established - researched and formulated policies and produced action plans and programmes - consisted of 8-20 local people and experts who were responsible for overseeing the implementation of programmes (local solutions) targeted at specific issues ▪ Project Partners included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ##### County Council - planners and local politicians b) ##### Council - planners and local politicians c) ##### Chamber of Commerce d) National Resources Development Centre, Trinity College e) ##### Rail f) ##### 2000 ▪ Planning for Real Model – used when targeting socially excluded areas or disadvantaged areas to break things down to as many levels as it takes and present things in a format that people can relate to – difficult to conceive proposal in 3D from 2D plans – Typical development plan and traditional modes of consultation are obsolete – needed to encourage people to attend and contribute ▪ Community Groups – existing information in local authorities about community groups was not good - very scarce and only available for a number of sectors – so the first point of the public meetings was to find out about them and them to find out about us - ▪ Methodology used <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Official launch by the local authorities where community representatives were invited – newsletter in the local libraries – advertised in the local newspaper - b) Range of public meetings – attendance rate approximately 30%

- Saturday meetings of all groups together
 - Three local planning group meetings in each of the three centres to get ideas from local communities and use information while preparing local plans – had people serving on the local planning groups and other people acting in the background to assist them – did some work developing a local interface
 - c) Initial meeting to tell people about the project and encourage them to get involved – project about strategic planning – some people disillusioned when discovered that project was not providing money to implement some plan – who we are, what we are prepared to do, who are you? – had questionnaires to collect information on who we were talking to -
 - d) Second meeting did a spot analysis – what do you think is needed to improve your area – generated a list of 30 to 40 issues which were then grouped under topics and then prioritised within the topics -
 - e) Presented results from all the areas at a Saturday meeting of all the groups – cross pollination of ideas from other areas – certain issues emerged as common themes (historical lack of use of central funds) -
 - f) Local communities initially all congregated in groups associated with their own areas – didn't see themselves as having anything in common with communities from other areas – there was a problem about what people thought about people from other areas
 - g) Had a lot of people attacking the planners who were participating in the process - felt that there was very little participation at the beginning - we didn't know who they were and they didn't know who we were – we didn't know how they worked and we didn't know how they worked – clearly there was a lot of anger let off at the beginning
 - h) Local politicians were very suspicious of what the project was trying to do (some of it was very blatant and some of it was indirect) – they felt threatened by participation where the public was encroaching on their traditional area of operations – local politicians and local authorities make development plans – why are we involving the public? – seemed like the planners didn't believe them and were bypassing them – they had some differences in opinions – some felt the project was just a talking shop - “sure we know what the communities want”
 - i) Had difficulties with some local authority departments that felt threatened because we had funding to cut across traditional departmental boundaries
- **5 Plans Produced**
- a) Management Plan for ##### Peninsula
 - b) Recreation and Tourism Plan – chaired by ##### County Council – pull together the recreational facilities and tourism potential of ##### Bay
 - c) Transport Plan to promote use of public transport and cycling
 - d) Implementation of an Environmental Auditing Plan to make local enterprises more environmentally friendly – chaired by the Chamber of Commerce
 - e) Management Plan for public open space in urban areas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Description of the project provided in 5 reports (copies provided) – number 2 is important because it lays out the methodology used ▪ Project Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) tried to replace the traditional ‘top down’ system of local planning with a system based on active participation and partnership between planners and local communities b) was an important means of raising environmental awareness c) was an important means of breaking down the adversarial and confrontational attitude that sometimes occurs between Local Authorities and communities
Visual Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### County Council – developed a visual policy for their rural landscape which was based on the rural landscape classification ▪ David Bagnell – senior landscape architect in ERM – landscape classifications completed for Clare, Wexford, and Cavan
Environmental Impact Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪

Environmental Group 12

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p> <p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ is an umbrella body NGO with many government services, local authorities and environmental groups associated to combine their energies on a voluntary basis to promote and protect trees – functions include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Educational - programmes with schools b) Urban forests - Neighbour Wood Scheme with Forest Service c) Tree Register of Ireland – lists the celebrated trees both public and private (biggest and tallest) in Ireland which ##### considers very important - could be very useful framework for TPOs on individual trees – to be published very soon in a scientific journal – some people don't want the public trespassing on their property to look at these great trees, so being worked on at present to resolve this – may be some way of designating trees that cannot be visited d) Trees that there are stories about – catalogue of them needed but not yet produced - may not be the biggest and tallest, but they have a cultural link - ### travelling around collecting folklore about trees which will add to data already collected – intends to eventually publish a book on it – work should be a terrific addition to the tree register ▪ Crann – aim to win back balance in trees – 51% broadleaves ▪ TPOs – very seldom used – only know of one or two TPOs used to protect individual trees – used as a weapon to force conditions out of developers -scared of TPOs because they might have to pay compensation if a developer cannot remove a tree – always looking for mechanisms that are safer than TPOs – ##### in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown has been working for 5 to 10 years on mechanisms other than TPOs – trying to hold a seminar of TPOs because the whole thing is very unsatisfactory ▪ Tree Database - Belfast has one that only records trees on public land - limited one in Dungarvan also – to record species, age, location, condition etc - logistics to set it up and maintain it are huge but many benefits from it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Use as a management tool – check back to make sure particular trees were looked after b) Raises awareness & importance of trees as public visual amenity c) Calculate size of urban carbon sinks for agenda 21 ▪ Target canopy per Hectare - proposal by ##### for planning departments to have a target canopy (either 50 mature trees or 500 young trees) per hectare in urban areas – check with ##### in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown CoCo using similar types of stipulations at present - results would be to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Puts onus on developer to go out on site and count mature trees to minimise outlay on putting in young trees and ensure he has his quota b) Would be nice to think that same yardstick would be applied by local authorities themselves for areas already developed ▪ Establishing village boundaries in CDPs – need to have

<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ services in place to entice people to build within the village boundaries – should have the service users coming in at the same time as the services, otherwise huge investment not being used for a few years ▪ If tree is within 20 or 30ft of a dwelling if can be taken down for safety reasons without the need for permission – Ireland is very under regulated with respect to trees ▪ Need planning permission (from the Forest Service) for forests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Broadleaf forests > 0.1 Hectare (~ 1/4 acre) b) Conifer forests > 2.0 Hectares
<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coillte – doers – forestry developments has probably produced the biggest change in the landscape in Ireland during the last 20 years – huge impact from forestry in mountainous areas – has a very strong commercial mandate – must make a profit so reluctance to wholeheartedly adopt good practice guidelines especially when it clashes with profit ▪ Forest Service - formulating policy and setting standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Regulators – guidelines already produced – pressure for standards coming from Europe – conditions put on European grants...adopt standards or no grant – pushing to increase % of broadleaves planted by proposing use of native species and not in favour of ecosystems having alien species – Ireland would probably have a greater % of alien species than other EU Member States - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Can't plant monocultures any more - mixing species deals with the colour issue - mixture of broadleaves to give a better balance and more diversity ➢ Moving away from straight forest boundaries by making use of existing field pattern – will be tricky to get away from the old block boundaries – it is important that Coillte as the largest landowner responds to it and adopts these new forest design ideas – there are arguments that certain areas should be left unplanted - regulations are no good unless they are used ➢ Stepping forest boundaries back from the road to let in some light and allow sightlines into the forest b) Enforcers – can bring forest owners to court although only used very few times – have been a few fines, but nothing major – environmentalists would feel that there are not enough regulations and not enough teeth in the regulations – have to choose a course between environmentalists who want 100% broadleaves and no alien species (all conifers) and the regulations trying to achieve a balance of 50% broadleaves to conifers – if the targets are set impossibly high then they will not be adopted and we'll make no progress ▪ Forestry Stewardship Council – international body that gives seal of approval to timber i.e. timber stamped to certify it is from well managed and environmentally friendly forest – difficult to sell timber if it not stamped – stamp is very important to sell their product, so it also forces Coillte to adopt good practice ▪ One-off houses in Countryside – interesting suggestion by some members of the IFA farm forestry committee that trees on a site would count as brownie points towards getting permission for dwellings due to their screening effect

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Bord na Móna – when the peat runs out in the next 20 years there is going to be a lot of forests in low lying areas
Environmental Impact Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Review of EIA for Forestry – part of the UCD EIA post-graduate diploma – interesting findings on ways to improve the whole system – thresholds for mandatory EIA are probably still not correct, but if the system was a bit more friendly and easier to work with for the people involved the results might be better

APPENDIX N - Summaries of Interviews of Political Parties

Political Party 1

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Dúchas now an integral part of DoEHLG * Landscape – draft landscape assessment guidelines published in June 2000 – ongoing delays in producing final guidelines which would have statutory force - some concerns raised as a result including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The resource implications of the amount of extra work needed to classify the landscapes b) Lack of consistency because character areas do not necessarily stop at county boundaries and would have different approaches by different counties in how they apply the guidelines c) Made proposal up the line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Hoping to draw up terms of reference to go out to tender early next year to do a national landscape characterisation exercise – using information from existing GIS (data from forest service and Dúchas - monuments) into a multilayered GIS – the more important landscapes would be signposted by the
<p>National Landscape Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the mapping is very much the focus and will exclude urban areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Finalise guidelines text and get them out before the end of 2002 – new team dealing with this at present and not as keen on landscape as original team were d) Once character map produced (~2 years) then the local authorities will complete the sensitivity and values exercise – local authorities more suited to complete this task since they are in the locality so DoEHLG won't interfere too much at that stage – values and sensitivity information to be included in their CDPs – re-visit how the information is going to be applied at that stage e) Guidelines exclude urban areas because using the traditional concept of landscape of rural areas only – European Landscape Convention encompasses urban landscapes so may change in the future – new Dúchas colleagues might be keen to include urban areas – currently townscapes addressed under <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Instruments for urban renewal > Designations of architectural conservation areas * Consultation Vs Participation – certainly pressure from Europe to move to a more participative approach – reasons for difficulties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) partially just a learning curve for local authorities – perhaps half way along implementation road – certainly much more to be done b) historically no participation, so many changes required c) Difficult to reach consensus because views of the public are diverse d) A lot of the new provisions in the P&D Act 2000 were to enhance consultation – manager must now report on results of consultation on CDP to the members of the authority (comment on each view/suggestion made) – still a political

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<p>Visual Amenity Planning & Development System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> function to adopt the plan, so they may decide to ignore view expressed – we accept that participation is a good thing but it will cost a lot and who should pay for it – personal view is that 50% of public will fully engage with the process and the other 50% be alienated even further – huge resistance to regulation or any sort of public authority in Ireland e) Consultation unfortunate choice of word because of impression it gives – can minimise or maximise participation depending on your perspective – part of the problem of implementing a more participative approach is that the whole existing political structure will need to be changed f) Very difficult process to generate participation – very resource intensive – given the pressures on the planning system over the last few years staffing is an issue – many authorities are quite short of professional planners ▪ Many local authorities didn't have forward planners a few years ago – any resources they had were in crisis management of the development control process – did not produce development plans before either by continually applying for extensions – P&D Act 2000 now requires new plans every 6 years, and there are no more extensions so the plans must be produced – dealing with the lack of professional planners issue by approving many more planning posts and have had to import planners because Irish supply could not keep pace with demand – workload in development control seems to have calmed a bit from an unprecedented high of 89,500 applications in 2000 by dropping to 77,000 in 2001 – further falls expected for 2002 – send email if you want updates on the planning stats
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Sustainable Development Strategy – one-off housing not acceptable – officials in DoELG totally opposed to one-off houses – political interference by Eamonn Ó Cuiv saying one-off housing is the solution to rural problems - ▪ National Spatial Strategy – being identified as a panacea, but will not solve one-off housing – expected to be published before the end of 2002 due to the embarrassment if they don't – don't think it is very helpful – no concrete suggestions except that a central authority should complete the national landscape characterisation exercise within 18 months – it should focus on where the infrastructure should go theoretically – hope it tries to address pressures on the east versus pressures on the west - ▪ National Landscape Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Haven't noticed much pressure for a landscape policy so no concrete plans to produce one – probably meeting our commitments under the European Landscape Convention will be part of it, and depending on what arises from the landscape characterisation exercise and the national spatial strategy, but I don't think the focus will go to landscape b) Suggest that Landscape assessment guidelines will suffice c) Concerns about isolating one topic such as landscape to the exclusion of everything else – would normally try to bring different aspects together d) Possibly biased but our view would be that anyone for a national landscape policy wants to keep the landscape frozen in time – European Landscape Convention takes a different approach which we would support
<p>National Landscape Policy</p>	

<p>Visual Amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
<p>Planning & Development System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainability – P&D Act 2000 says that planning decisions will be according to proper planning and sustainable development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sustainable development deliberately not defined within act – Comhar publication on sustainable development is an official document so it is probable that local authorities will refer to it, but it probably will not be statutory prescribed – rows when bill going through Dáil (for and against including definition) – lawyers had difficulties with such a nebulous concept b) Local agenda 21 officers in local authorities all exploring concrete ways for sustainability – sustainability is certainly on the agenda at central and local levels – will have to work within the resources they have – IBEC screaming about numbers of public sector workers even though there is probably merit in having a whole sustainable development department within each local authority ▪ Decision to give planning function for forests to the Forest Service was due to EU pressure resulting from the row about Irish thresholds about requiring EIA – reducing the thresholds would put unworkable pressures on the planning system
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 28 of the P&D Act 2000 – ‘have regard to’ the guidelines – legally they must consider them, but not necessarily comply with them – guidelines are the preferred approach because it gives some flexibility ▪ Section 29 of P&D Act 2000 – Minister can direct with respect to a policy topic and the text says ‘shall comply with’ – much stronger than ‘have regard to’ – to date no policy directives by the Minister ▪ New EPA Guidelines – published March 2002 – discussion on landscaping towards the back ▪ VIA survey results – only 40% compliance with ‘EPA Advice Notes’ – compliance of other environmental factors (other than visual) is probably better – would not expect EISs to be strong on visual – will pass a copy of your paper onto my colleagues – come back to me if you have anything more ▪ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – P&D Act 2000 included a proviso to consider SEA of CDPs – to stimulate debate in local authorities ▪ EIA – no structured contacts between departments – applications may be forwarded to DoEHLG for comment -
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wind Farms – Thought that wind generators might have less of a visual impact if they were painted green – white stands out too much – a neutral colour such as green or blue might be better ▪ Masts – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) CIE erected a 60 ft mast on one of the hills overlooking # without the need for planning permission – they are exempt under the planning laws – once they have an existing mast they can replace it with a larger one without planning permission – so CIE has desecrated a lovely scene of # from the hill – the battle to save the views was lost because environmental grounds are less of an argument than safety grounds. b) National Cancer Registry carried out research into the incidence of cancerous tumours in the vicinities of pylons a

Political Party 2

Issues	Comments
<p>Party Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental Policy – have someone currently drafting policies for housing and waste management – election four years away so not rushing it – something very negative such as a waste incinerator (Vienna example) can be dealt with successfully with a little thought and flair.
<p>Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoning – removing suspicion that hangs over councillors or Local Authorities when decisions are taken against the professional advice of planners – proposal to establish a Certifying Authority that would examine all re-zoning decisions to ensure they complied with development plans, sustainable principles and the national spatial strategy (decisions wouldn't become law until examination conducted).
<p>Planning System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development Control - there is a need for a national landscape policy to try to eliminate some strange inconsistencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Various inconsistencies in ##### recently by ##### County Council – negative in some areas due to impacts on the landscape, but giving permission for large developments down the road. Seems to be no logic to it. b) Although planners are assigned to certain areas, safety measure in the system to ensure inconsistencies are avoided - planner makes a recommendation and manager takes the decision (sign the dotted line). I don't agree that this measure operates successfully ▪ Visual Impact – Your results have confirmed my impressions that visual impact is low in the scale of priorities with planners – two examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Block of apartments put up literally next door to the Catholic Cathedral in ##### and the impact was disastrous. They tried to tone down the scale of it by putting in certain planting, but severe damage to the landscape done there. b) Planners and manager proposed a material contravention to the CDP in relation to an office block (six storeys) in the ##### centre, which would have blotted out the view of a significant landmark. Planners argued that the scale (six stories) was in line with the tower of ##### on an adjacent site, but councillors overruled it and required sixth storey removed. ▪ Wind Farms – Thought that wind generators might have less of a visual impact if they were painted green – white stands out too much – a neutral colour such as green or blue might be better ▪ Masts – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) CIE erected a 60 ft mast on one of the hills overlooking ##### without the need for planning permission – they are exempt under the planning laws – once they have an existing mast they can replace it with a larger one without planning permission – so CIE has desecrated a lovely scene of ##### from the hill – the battle to save the views was lost because environmental grounds are less of an argument than safety grounds. b) National Cancer Registry carried out research into the incidence of cancerous tumours in the vicinity of pylons a

<p>Political Party 3</p> <p>Issues</p> <p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<p>few years ago. They identified a number of clusters around pylons, but nothing conclusive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Planning Guidelines – national landscape policy should not try to make everywhere the same, but should allow for local distinctiveness such as the local planning guidelines that planners use to hang their decision on.
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EIS Quality – faulty process - consultant hired by the developer may feel patronised – seen it an a number of occasions in major projects in ##### ▪ Suggested improvements for EIS - would consider legislation to enforce developer paying local authority a fee to appoint an agent chosen by the Local Authority to conduct the EIA

Where development should be concentrated in County

b) - Responding to submissions or queries

a) Quite vocal about specific aspects of Fingal, South Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown CDPs in the early 1990s when many piecemeal re-zonings happening in Dublin area - ##### policy would try to concentrate development close to services, close to public transport nodes - other councillors seemed to have other motives in regard to rezoning land

- 'With regard to' - Mr Justice Quicke's finding the Meath and Kildare CoCos did have regard to the strategic planning guidelines before they adopted their CDPs is a huge concern for the Party - the judge's interpretation of 'have regard to' renders the strategic planning guidelines meaningless by allowing CoCos to do something completely at variance with its recommendations - if we decide we don't want any strategic planning in Ireland then why commission having the documents drawn up in first place - complete waste of resources - major implications whether
 - a) Going to have huge increases in traffic levels & commuting times
 - b) Going to concentrate development in specific centres with services

May have to stop using 'with regard to' and use development must follow from the LAP as a better phraseology -

- 'Consultation' - may be the wrong word if we are trying to entice people to participate - very top down system in Ireland (9 times out of 10 have to defer to a Minister) with very little empowerment of communities - much more power devolved to communities in Europe via local government - my political ideology is that power should be devolved to lowest effective community level, but not much evidence of that in Ireland
- Local Area Plans - heartened by introduction of and statutory basis of LAPs under P&D Act 2000 - existing statutory plans (CPDs) at intermediate level - missing national spatial strategy (still due at time of interview) and regional plans above CDPs - there is a need for very detailed local planning which LAPs should provide examining:
 - a) Visual issues looking towards three dimensional modelling
 - b) Urban design
 - c) Impact of development on an area
 - d) Strong village centres are crucial where people congregate to 'a core'
 - e) Clarity required at local level - local authority function rather than developer function - great step forward if

Political Party 3

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involved in CDP preparation by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Have pretty good reputation in having input at an early stage – in general political parties are not great in getting in submissions at an early stage - i.e. submitted priorities that ##### wished to see contained in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown CDP containing specific objectives on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Green space ➢ Housing ➢ Where development should be concentrated in County b) Responding to submissions or queries c) Quite vocal about specific aspects of Fingal, South Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown CDPs in the early 1990s when many piecemeal re-zonings happening in Dublin area – ##### policy would try to concentrate development close to services, close to public transport nodes – other councillors seemed to have other motives in regard to rezoning land ▪ ‘With regard to’ - Mr Justice Quirke’s finding the Meath and Kildare CoCos did have regard to the strategic planning guidelines before they adopted their CDPs is a huge concern for the Party – the judge’s interpretation of ‘have regard to’ renders the strategic planning guidelines meaningless by allowing CoCos to do something completely at variance with its recommendations – if we decide we don’t want any strategic planning in Ireland then why commission having the documents drawn up in first place – complete waste of resources – major implications whether <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Going to have huge increases in traffic levels & commuting times b) Going to concentrate development in specific centres with services <p>May have to stop using ‘with regard to’ and use development must follow from the LAP as a better phraseology -</p> ▪ ‘Consultation’ – may be the wrong word if we are trying to entice people to participate - very top down system in Ireland (9 times out of 10 have to defer to a Minister) with very little empowerment of communities – much more power devolved to communities in Europe via local government – my political ideology is that power should be devolved to lowest effective community level, but not much evidence of that in Ireland ▪ Local Area Plans – heartened by introduction of and statutory basis of LAPs under P&D Act 2000 – existing statutory plans (CPDs) at intermediate level – missing national spatial strategy (still due at time of interview) and regional plans above CDPs – there is a need for very detailed local planning which LAPs should provide examining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Visual issues looking towards three dimensional modelling b) Urban design c) Impact of development on an area d) Strong village centres are crucial where people can relate to ‘a core’ e) Clarity required at local level – local authority function rather than developer function – great step forward if

<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<p>resourced</p> <p>Believe LAPs have a legal status since they can be stand alone documents or compiled into CDPs -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enforcement – monitoring of developments and enforcement of planning conditions is required – Masonite have breached it's planning conditions several times - LA responsible for application of planning conditions (no renewal – permission for life) and EPA responsible for application of conditions of IPC licence with regard to the production process being used (renewed every 3 years)
<p>National Landscape Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do you define positive or negative change of the visual amenity - Communities are concerned about change and there is very often a grass roots resistance to change – change can <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Be positive or negative b) Create jobs or destroy jobs c) Create new buildings or demolish older buildings <p>Negatives are usually as a result of human intervention in the landscape - does a five-storey office building on unspoilt agricultural land enhance or detract from views or prospects – would Braun factory on way into Carlow be better visually painted bright yellow than its current green? –</p> ▪ Definitions - need to have an understanding of where we want the visual amenity (landscapes) to go, both on a national and on a county basis – definitions are needed for what constitutes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The visual character of an area b) Enhancement due to positive visual attributes c) Degradation due to negative visual attributes ▪ Landscaping - very often architects use planting/landscaping to cover their mistakes and is used as an excuse to erect bad buildings – it is used as an excuse to locate one-off housing where it shouldn't be – standard planning condition is to plant 12 indigenous trees and you get 10 Leylandia fir trees - I think
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a good building stand on its own terms – can create good streetscapes and landscapes without necessarily using planting/landscaping which can look well and can enhance - very positive effect in rural area in association with one-off housing providing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Visual screening b) Shelter from the elements c) Makes a good composition having two associated together
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Green Space – moving beyond the set aside 10% of the site for green space and encourage saving existing mature trees – need to think about it much more in a qualitative sense with function in mind i.e. children's playground, walking areas, sitting areas, play areas, etc <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Very often of poor quality b) Not located close to where children area ▪ Trees – having tree survey prior to a planning application would be useful ▪ Encouragement – required for <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Planting from one point of view b) Improved building and urban design from another point of view ▪ Streams – tend to be placed in culverts for unidentified reasons – developers normally look at site with idea make it

<p>Political Party 4</p>	<p>flat, cover it in tar macadam and place the building in the middle with car parking all round it – more attention needed towards siting issues and landscape finishes -</p>
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scientific approach should be used for EIA - if consultants are not acting in a professional manner by producing documents which are biased towards the development it is up to the person accepting the information (normally planners) to evaluate the data quality – because the process is time scheduled planners normally only get a day or two to evaluate the EIS – EISs can be very deficient in the information they supply - current situation suggests that professionals are submitting deficient data which is being accepted by planners who are under significant time pressure to respond to applications in time ▪ Perhaps having EIS independently produced would help to remove the bias towards the proposed development – would put a huge onus on developers – may be cumbersome having a third party commissioning them – professionals should act in a professional manner - ▪ Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (SEA) evaluation of CDPs to see if their policies are sustainable being introduced by way of an EU Directive – post and ante evaluation of CDPs using SEA should help analysis of local authority policies – central government will also have to perform SEA on government policy ▪ EPA – slight concern about new EPA head previously with IBEC, so bring a very pro business bias to the job – crucial that there is no bias for this job ▪ Difficult to set up clear criteria for landscape impact assessment (LIA) and visual impact assessment (VIA), whereas EIA is normally quite scientific and objective – many different approaches in visual so not as cut and dried – new terracotta and steel addition to Leinster House quite successful, but screened from outside – certain subjectivity exists in the design area which creates problems for VIA
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Item zone of limited development as coastal and river protection b) National Landscape Policy c) <i>IBEC</i> might be sympathetic to a concept of laying out the broad spectrum (tree lines) of a landscape policy (within the general heritage framework) which would allow for local nuances - should make for speedier planning decisions and should facilitate almost all the preplanning enquiries by application conforms to all landscape criteria so should go through speedily, or application hasn't got a chance because it is incompatible with the landscape criteria laid out. d) Policy might list a number of 'shells' and a number of 'shell nuts' and references to particular situations would be useful -- i.e. this is the way the <i>IBEC</i> Heritage Trust has indicated this should be dealt with e) Should include a number of key mandatory provisions and a number of directional provisions to allow for local initiative f) It would be important to take cognisance of differences from topographical (physical) viewpoint and the aesthetic viewpoint g) If a good landscape plan was available all the

Political Party 4

Issues	Comments
<p>Party Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Spatial Strategy – ##### strategy “Towards a National Spatial Plan” written by ##### (architect) – copy provided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ##### belief that market forces left to their own devices do not reach optimum outcomes – some measure of control required b) Admission of Ireland’s failure to plan its future properly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ All political parties hold some measure of blame ➢ Lack of resources at heart of failure c) Spatial planning should be driven by the needs of citizens and communities - ##### committed to process of engagement, debate and communal ownership of the goals of NSS d) 10 visions for Ireland outlined in Plan, but only one (No. 4) sets a target which can be measured e) Urban Development Form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Increased densities and in town living ➢ Development of badlands???? ➢ Provision of public transport access to smaller towns f) Basic strategy – underlying principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Conceived on an all island basis ➢ Based on politically agreed socio-economic goals ➢ Framed on sustainable principles - economic, social & environmental g) Basic strategy – goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Re-integrate the severed links between the East and North-West ➢ Make the West as wealthy as the rest ➢ Accelerate development of the Dublin/Belfast corridor ➢ Direct tourism pressure away from overheating areas h) 1km zone of limited development as coastal and river protection ▪ National Landscape Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ##### might be sympathetic to a concept of laying out the broad spectrum (tramlines) of a landscape policy (within the general heritage framework) which would allow for local nuances - should make for speedier planning decisions and should facilitate almost all the preplanning enquiries by application conforms to all landscape criteria so should go through speedily, or application hasn’t got a chance because it is incompatible with the landscape criteria laid out. b) Policy might list a number of ‘shalls’ and a number of ‘shall nots’ and references to particular situations would be useful – i.e. this is the way the ##### Heritage Trust has indicated this should be dealt with c) Should include a number of key mandatory provisions and a number of directional provisions to allow for local initiative d) It would be important to take cognisance of differences from topographical (physical) viewpoint and the aesthetic viewpoint e) If a good landscape plan was available all the

	<p>environmental issues would have to fit into the overall landscape picture – preserving our cultural heritage is only 1/3 of the story – need to compliment that and bring out the other issues – SACs would be included in this also</p> <p>f) Dictat from on high will not work because people would not accept it, so policy would have to be a general framework (amoebic like) rather than a fixed thing - There would have to be refinements, nuances and definitions that could apply in local areas where you could pay particular attention to specific local issues</p> <p>g) Once the framework was created you could then develop eligibility criteria that apply to certain situations or circumstances</p>
<p>Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation of CDP – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Spent nearly two years preparing last revision of CDP – think we did a great job – very extensive and comprehensive series of discussions involving the public with a great deal of interaction between the general public, planners and the elected body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Planners present draft to the councillors for discussion – sometimes heated arguments and sometimes agreed with the planners on points - ➤ Draft CDP put on display to allow public to make submissions – sometimes letters written to editor of ##### News ➤ Amendments proposed and discussed between planners and councillors and revisions incorporated into final CDP ➤ Final CDP put on display – once CDP laid in stone in then don't think anyone should have a right to go against it b) Councillors and planners discuss and argue to make the points in the CDP relevant – sometimes get in an arbitrator to hear both sides if there is a dispute between the planners and councillors and generally run with recommendation of independent body - annoys me if I have a different view to that accepted in the CDP c) Local needs defined under 5 headings – (settlement strategy and housing, public services, transportation, employment, and amenities) – sometimes planners will try to say that a condition doesn't fall within the area of heading d) Want to make sure that there is no negative impact on the environment e) Maybe spend too much time focussing on planning conditions in order to ensure that conditions chosen are non-compensatable ▪ Area Action Plans – village plans proposed as part of the last CDP revision – when planners present the village plans to the public 3 out of 4 villages were upset (why did you agree to that?) – they don't want too much development, but they want some development – when planners come out with an idea the local public cut it in half – planners can find it difficult to take on-board the public's viewpoint sometimes, because they have an attitude 'we know best' – hard to see how more democratic the process can be, but village plans are massive improvement ▪ Water - ##### is the lake district of Ireland (Lough #####,

	<p>lough #####, lough #####, lough #####, lough #####, lough #####, lough ##### and the ##### as an artery right through the county to the ##### – particular reason to take cognisance of the environment – CDP pays particular attention to the lakes not only from tourism and fishing viewpoint, but also for the health of the County’s population</p>
<p>Environmental Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agriculture – very important to rural economy in ##### <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Has been restricted in and around the lakeshores to minimise water pollution b) CDP includes a code of practice for good agricultural practice as a broad framework (next step down from a statutory instrument) – it is advertised and the farming organisations and the general public have their input – having collective thoughts and getting a consensus view is very useful - consistent with REPS provisions - such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ When to spread slurry, what days ➢ The capacity of slurry tanks ➢ The maximum soil levels of N, P & K ➢ How close farm buildings can be, etc c) That is a curtailment of their rights - the un-stated right to farm where you want ▪ Rural Housing – ridiculous that young people have to go out to take photographs to indicate to planners their intentions of where they want to build – or trying to blend in with the existing situation by proposing a dormer between 3 existing dormers and the planners saying a 2 storey won’t suit here – planning is subjective so being told what is aesthetically beautiful and what should not be a factor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Supportive of O’Cuiv’s view to allow homes to be built in the rural areas – not holiday homes or urban generated rural housing, but for people who have a connection with the rural area through work or background b) No mad craze to build on top of something that is of natural beauty – council would take a protective view of something like this and planners would have a very strong view on it also – unanimous decision to apply appropriate restrictive criteria inside certain high amenity and sensitive areas ▪ Rural Sites – Very often a site is the only thing parents can give towards a child setting up a new home – now if the planning application conforms to the general guidelines (such as below) then application should flow freely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Structure fits into the environment - not an obnoxious monstrosity that sticks out of the landscape – does a nice landscaping job than is consistent with the surrounding environment b) Not a three storey complete with crèches and an old people’s home attached to it but 1.5 stories or single storey c) Complies with environmental standards by replacing septic tank with a pure bio-flow system d) Doesn’t block roads and not creating a difficulty with the traffic
<p>Planning System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Normal situation of two months for discrepancies to arise and the third month for approval is not happening because planning applications can be dragged out by going into the CDP and requesting further information and further

<p>Political Party 5</p> <p>Terms</p> <p>Statements</p>	<p>information, so the 5 weeks can be substantially extended</p> <p>b) When applying conditions to planning decisions - 'it doesn't look well there' should not be a reason for refusal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One-off housing in the rural area – permissions to build in the rural area should be restricted to “sons of the soil”
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### conference a few years ago ▪ Landscape Policy - do not have a separate policy on landscapes – only mentioned in manifesto with regards to waste incineration and litter ▪ Environmental Policy - do not have a separate policy for the environment, but referred to in many other policies i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Environmental taxation b) Encouraging more people to use public transport c) Waste management – hazardous waste, litter d) Rural Development & Agriculture
<p>Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Area Action Plans – for ##### being prepared at the moment being circumscribed by the strategic planning guidelines for Dublin area – some of the excesses of the past will not be eliminated but certainly being reduced ▪ Zoning – classic example in ##### of how it should not be done – landowners made applications to the council to have their land rezoned – if someone did not apply then not considered, so outcome was rezoning of little bits scattered all over the place (like currants in a cake) with no coherence at all, crazy – ##### now being redone, so focus is up far side of railway line in a large contiguous block – should ignore who owns the land and just choose the block required for the town's benefit rather than landowners benefit ▪ Development before Infrastructure - there is a need nationally to build 60,000 houses per year and a percentage of these need to be local authority houses – in an ideal world we should wait until the infrastructure is there before building but must carry on because of the imperative to provide the houses
<p>Planning System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forward planning – suffering from lack of planners, although improvement in last few years ▪ Development Control - ##### CoCo experience is that the function of planning department is to process planning applications – get them out the end of the pipe – situation not as bad now as it was a few years ago – every application went for additional information because they weren't in a position to make a decision when confronted with the deadline, so pushed back the deadline by requesting additional information ▪ Enforcement - enforcement of planning conditions, building regulations, and architectural standards (if established) is not happening – barely enough planners to keep development control functions afloat, so very few available for enforcement or forward planning – planning conditions for screening and planning around dwellings particularly in ##### are breached more often than observed – situation has improved in last 12 months, now more enforcement personnel ▪ Regulation of Architects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Not sure this is the solution because there are some very notable architectural examples designed by people without any formal qualifications who became world leaders b) Might be better to establish standards and having people submitting applications conform to the standards c) Design very subjective thing – ideally like to maintain

Political Party 5

Issues	Comments
<p>Party Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Landscape Policy - proposal by ##### debated at a ##### conference a few years ago ▪ Landscape Policy - do not have a separate policy on landscape – only mentioned in manifesto with regards to waste incineration and litter ▪ Environmental Policy - do not have a separate policy for the environment, but referred to in many other policies i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Environmental taxation b) Encouraging more people to use public transport c) Waste management – hazardous waste, litter d) Rural Development & Agriculture
<p>Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Area Action Plan – for ##### being prepared at the moment being circumscribed by the strategic planning guidelines for Dublin area – some of the excesses of the past will not be eliminated but certainly being reduced ▪ Zoning – classic example in ##### of how it should not be done – landowners made applications to the council to have their land rezoned – if someone did not apply then not considered, so outcome was rezoning of little bits scattered all over the place (like currants in a cake) with no coherence at all, crazy – ##### now being redone, so focus is on far side of railway line in a large contiguous block – should ignore who owns the land and just choose the block required for the town’s benefit rather than landowners benefit ▪ Development before Infrastructure - there is a need nationally to build 60,000 houses per year and a percentage of these need to be local authority houses – in an ideal world we should wait until the infrastructure is there before building but must carry on because of the imperative to provide the houses
<p>Planning System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forward planning – suffering from lack of planners, although improvement in last few years ▪ Development Control - ##### CoCo experience is that the function of planning department is to process planning applications – get them out the end of the pipe – situation not as bad now as it was a few years ago – every application went for additional information because they weren’t in a position to make a decision when confronted with the deadline, so pushed back the deadline by requesting additional information ▪ Enforcement - enforcement of planning conditions, building regulations, and architectural standards (if established) is not happening – barely enough planners to keep development control functions afloat, so very few available for enforcement or forward planning – planning conditions for screening and planting around dwellings particularly in ##### are breached more often than observed – situation has improved in last 12 months, now more enforcement personnel ▪ Regulation of Architects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Not sure this is the solution because there are some very notable architectural examples designed by people without any formal qualifications who became world leaders b) Might be better to establish standards and having people submitting applications conform to the standards c) Design very subjective thing – ideally like to maintain

	<p>vernacular designs in the rural area, but where do you limit the design frontiers – Objective should be to stop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ People from building ‘blots on the landscape’ ➤ Person who is going to push the barriers of our perceptions of what good design should be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demesnes – proposal to develop golf course in ##### – need a source of revenue to maintain the property and golf course provided a viable option - golf course not ideal land use, but was considered in terms of maintaining the parkland nature of the estate and renovating and maintaining the house – argued that viability of the whole development was dependent on building about 30 houses around edges of golf course ▪ Attitude to Trees – ##### development proposal also wished to fell a lot of trees - County Engineer used the argument that they could be felled because they were mature – I replied that humans mature at 30, but don’t expect to die until 80
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) There is a prevailing view that is a tree is mature it can be felled – are only considered as furniture b) Parkland estates should be maintained as parkland and there should be an obligation to renew trees to maintain the continuum c) Hedgerows – clearing hedgerows during the 60s and 70s to convert 5 acre fields into 40 acre fields was considered economically and socially desirable – would dream of doing it now, and might be pulled up on it – rural landscape is a product of farming activity – everybody believes it is pristine and just there, but it was put there by farming – there is an obligation to maintain it in some sort of reasonable vernacular tradition, rather than have a prairie – can create a cage of fields as an example of the vision and practice of a society in a particular area, but not realistic to expect farmers to hold rural landscape in freeze frame d) Advocacy for increased forestry in Ireland on the basis that Ireland are under forested compared to other EU Member State – although there is an economic benefit and an environmental benefit as carbon sinks we seem to be missing point that one of the attractions for tourists are our uninterrupted vistas in the West across mountain and bog land – don’t have a barrier of trees on either side of the road as in parts of Germany – uninterrupted vistas are an attraction and we need to be careful of what we are suggesting for forestry e) Forest specification - is a problem because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Broadleaf or mixed forests are more acceptable than many of the coniferous monocultures planted in the last few decades ➤ Planting right down to the waters edge on lakes has caused an acidification problem in lake water ➤ Forest planting could be 50 hectares before need for planning permission – that’s pretty sizeable ▪ Difficulties – planners can make mistakes also – unusual but it happens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Was outside Clifden with sheep farmer who showed me a house across the valley with a bungalow on the opposite skyline – before planning permissions were necessary people located houses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Out of the wind behind shelter

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Near running water ➤ Near access to the road <p>All these elements were in the original location chosen for the house down in the valley, but the planner changed the location to the top of the hill on the skyline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Inconsistency of planning decisions – major difficulty from a practicing councillors point of view – they won't let me build that there, but they let him build that down the road c) Everybody wants councillors not to get involved in individual cases until eventually it is their piece of land, and they request your input for a rezoning, a higher density, a planning application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local democracy - check on the planning system – if a councillor gets it wrong he can be chucked out at the next election – there is no recourse if a planner gets it wrong – when a development is built it is long term so what do you do then?
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EIS Quality – not as good as it could be because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) EIS tend to be weighty and voluminous documents – probably would not read them because if I was looking for a nugget to tell me there was something unsatisfactory I wouldn't find it in there, or it would be so well concealed that it would be difficult to find, so would look elsewhere b) EIS – significant degree of recycling taking place - consultants very good at recycling the same text over and over and just changing the figures c) Increasingly with large scale developments (power stations, very larger factories, etc) there is very much a case of EISs being used to build a case in favour of the development proposal rather than an objective assessment d) DoELG have the expertise to examine things critically and identify faults, but that experience is not available at local authority level ▪ Suggested improvements for EIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Adopt standardised approach to measurement and presentation of data – found it very difficult to compare data in the water quality plan for the ##### due to different measurement standards being used – this gives a tendency to obscure rather than inform b) Very little benchmark data (national or European) available with which to compare data provided within EIS i.e. minimum standards c) Maybe a case for a national agency employed by local authorities to ensure EISs are objective – but extra public funds required d) Developer pays for the EIS but local authority commissions it (Swiss system) ▪ Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) EIS for gas power station near ##### (big political issue at the time) had issues of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Purity of discharges into the river ➤ Temperature of discharges into the river ➤ Visual impact due to its height, but to be located in middle of a mature pine forest, so lines of sight and elevations were important <p>Could not have accused EIS in any point of being nakedly in favour of the proposal, but still had a feeling that it was pushing a conclusion supporting it</p>

<p>Political Party 6</p> <p>Issue</p> <p>County Development Plans</p>	<p>b) Was also a visual dimension to the ##### development in ##### – it is very dominant on the skyline especially coming into ##### from ##### – minimised through use of colour (pale pink) – initially would have said the colour was totally inappropriate, but seems to have melted into the landscape with time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ REPS – positives and negatives <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Positive - very beneficial on the ground where it has been adopted – primary importance was changing attitudes and making far more producers far more aware of their environmental responsibilities as part of a modern society b) Negative – requirement to erect fences along watercourses to create a buffer zone around them to improve water quality – down behind Croak Patrick on a small country lane and barbed wire fences all around a small stream – faceless bureaucrat in Brussels who never set foot on land devising scheme (other schemes also as well as REPS) – perception by farming community of things being imposed which haven't been thought through clearly (to identify knock on effects) – EU provides a general package for scheme but up to us to decide terms and conditions we apply, but no examination of effects here either
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Political Party 6

Issues	Comments
<p>City & County Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Also a members of the local authority in ##### ▪ Large inconsistency in type of development allowed dependent mainly on the promoter – i.e. ##### in ##### would not have happened without massive political weight for the development because <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ##### was an employment black spot for many years, so the proposal to create 3000 jobs was too great a political prize to say no to b) Timing of proposal when the employment need was large c) Political will for the project massively outweighed other aspects of the development, such as visual and landscape issues - nothing underhand but the priority of the need for jobs was seen to be more important ▪ ##### not seen as a tourist county, but much expansion in tourism nationally - beginning to be an appreciation for tourism in ##### with more balance being introduced but accept 100% that economic and industrial issues won arguments in the past ▪ Development Centres – cannot have every house in the villages, so have to populate the countryside, on the land (similar to the Eamonn O’Cuiv position) – current draft of CDP proposes development centres where planning permission should be easier to acquire (in terms of design and size issues)
<p>National Landscape Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ compared to housing in the countryside – only one permission at a time can be sought to try to facilitate country people and try to dissuade developers – trying to bring some balance between saying no building in the countryside and getting planning for anything anywhere in the past – unfortunately don’t have the funds to put in essential services like sewage treatment plants to entice people into the villages, so septic tanks will be the norm and the environment will suffer
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Category 1 - boundaries defined for existing villages population > 300 – LAP prepared for each of the villages b) Category 2 - village boundaries also defined in for new villages in locations where schools and a pub or a shop already exist – begin to develop the areas first and intention to prepare LAPs when they eventually become category 1 villages
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development centre idea caused a lot of friction between councillors and planners, the public, and farmers – one case where a significant portion of a farm was inside the village boundary and farmer says he will refuse to sell his land for housing because his farm would not be viable any longer
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organised ~ 12 public meetings in own area of county (as a public representative rather than on behalf of county council) to inform the public about the proposal on development centres (planners annoyance) – surprised by the numbers of people in some of the development centres who were concerned – didn’t want terraced housing (estate effect) which they associated with urban problems of drugs and anti social behaviour - cluster of semi-detached OK, but no terraces - wanted to retain rural setting and also wanted housing in the countryside & one-off housing – thought that if they could keep the area rural in nature they could avoid the urban problems – on balance most

	<p>people accepted the idea to have some plan in place which could be amended later</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulties with system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Planners received many submissions during consultation phase on development centres but decided there would be no alterations to the plan - so there is public consultation b) Planners arbitrarily refusing permissions saying that roads not listed as protected routes in the CDP are busy and should be protected instead of introducing a variation to the CDP ▪ Councillors roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) In CDP formulation b) In the planning process - nothing more important than representing constituents interests – constitutes ~ 50% of workload ▪ Could be waiting up to 6 months for an Bórd Pleanála to make a decision ▪ Requirement to complete landscape assessment led to the publication of a document ‘Building Sensitively in #####’ in 2001 - design guidelines for development (not industrial) in terms of protecting the landscape ▪ Waste management also a local government responsibility – but incineration being foisted from above and councillors not happy – much larger debate needed to allow local people and councillors reach consensus
<p>National Landscape Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Party does not have a policy on the landscape ▪ Fairly new to have spokespersons assigned to non core policy areas - in depth debates formulating policy development only taking shape during last two years with issues such as urban development, one-off housing, and industrial and rural issues - policies should not just be populist, but should be try to provide practical solutions for the issues
<p>Visual Environment Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ##### CDP contains protection for (list developed from local knowledge of planners incrementally over the years) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Scenic routes b) Areas of natural beauty (##### Valley) c) Coastline up to 200m from the foreshore d) Tourist woods additionally protected e) Viewing points ▪ ##### CDP contains 6 land-use zones such as going from very restrictive planning conditions to less restrictive including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) High scenic amenity b) Green zones to separate urban areas
<p>Environmental Impact Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
<p>Suggested most important improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪

Visual Impact Assessment: A Neglected Component of Environmental Impact Statements in Ireland?

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(Received February 2003; revised April 2004)

ABSTRACT This paper documents the results of an analysis of Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) in a sample of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) in Ireland.

APPENDIX O – Reviewed Papers resulting from this Research

for three categories of development: piggeries, quarries and urban developments between 1997 and 1999 are evaluated. The extent to which VIA have complied with the Irish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines and disparities between the results for each development category are examined. The survey concluded that (i) the standard of VIA is less comprehensive than might be expected, and (ii) the use of visualisation techniques for VIA could be substantially improved.

Introduction and Aims

Ireland has seen a dramatic increase (80%) in the number of planning applications for development between 1991 and 2001 (O'Connell, 2002), which put unprecedented pressure on the landscape and the planning and development system. More coherent and consistent policies are thus urgently required at national, regional and local levels to provide a planning framework to ensure this high level of development does not degrade Irish landscapes with inappropriate developments. The introduction of EIA into Ireland's planning and development system in 1986 (DoE, 1986) has been one of the principal stimuli in raising the awareness of the need to protect and conserve special aspects of the Irish landscape during the last decade. This has been further enhanced by Ireland's ratification of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention in March 2002, which encourages public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning landscapes to maintain and improve landscape quality (Council of Europe, 2000).

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ABSTRACT *This paper documents the results of an analysis of Visual Impact Assessments (VIA) within a sample of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) in Ireland. The standard of VIA conducted within the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process for three categories of development; piggeries, quarries and urban developments between 1997 and 1999 are evaluated. The extent to which VIA have complied with the Irish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines and disparities between the results for each development category are examined. The survey concluded that (i) the standard of VIA is less comprehensive than might be expected, and (ii) the use of visualization techniques for VIA could be substantially improved.*

Introduction and Aims

Ireland has seen a dramatic increase (80%) in the number of planning applications for development between 1991 and 2001 (DoELG, 2002), which put unprecedented pressure on the landscape and the planning and development system. More coherent and consistent policies are now urgently required at national, regional and local levels to provide a guiding vision to ensure this high level of development does not degrade Irish landscapes with inappropriate developments. The introduction of EIA into Ireland's planning and development system in 1988 (DoE, 1989) has been one of the principal stimuli in raising the awareness of the need to protect and conserve special aspects of the Irish landscape during the last decade. This has been further enhanced by Ireland's ratification of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention in March 2002, which encourages public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning landscapes to maintain and improve landscape quality (Council of Europe, 2000).

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There is an increasing awareness by planners and environmentalists that protecting Irish landscapes is an important national goal, and that all development proposals should be judged in relation to the balanced attainment of the objectives of environmental protection, social development and economic development (Comhar, 2002). In many respects, Ireland's recent Planning and Development Act (DoELG, 2000a) reflects this via its requirement for the mandatory consideration of sustainable development in planning decisions.

This paper attempts to assess the quality of VIA practice in Ireland by analysing a sample of VIAs submitted within Irish EISs. The analysis supplies evidence on the nature, techniques used, and quality of visual impact assessment practice from a sample of 164 EISs submitted between 1997 and 1999. The sample included EISs selected from three development categories; piggeries, quarries and urban developments and disparities between techniques used and standards achieved for the three development categories are examined. Relevant government regulations and guidance for conducting VIA are discussed, and conclusions are reached on the status of visual impact assessment in Irish EISs during the review period. Recently revised guidelines are also noted. The paper includes a detailed discussion of the key findings, and concludes with a number of recommendations for policy makers, administrators and practitioners to improve VIA standards to ensure planners can base their planning decisions on more reliable data.

Visual Impact Assessment and County Development Plans

Visual impacts on today's landscape are interpreted and defined in a myriad of different ways varying from the simple to the relatively complex. However, early definitions of the visual amenity initially related to simply identifying prospects and views of outstanding importance or beauty, rather than requiring all prospective developments to undertake a visual impact assessment. The process of formally identifying the visual amenity as part of the Irish planning process can be attributed to the original 1963 Local Government (Planning and Development) Act which officially established the planning and development system in Ireland. The third schedule of the Act listed purposes for which objectives may be indicated in County Development Plans (CDPs), which included "preservation of views and prospects and of amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest" (DoE, 1963). Guidelines for identifying views and prospects were reviewed in a draft report entitled "Controlled development of the landscape" (An Foras Forbartha, 1965) and another methodology for identifying outstanding landscapes was outlined in a national inventory of outstanding landscapes (An Foras Forbartha, 1977). For the most part, these guidelines formed the basis for identifying visual amenities for protection during the preparation of the original CDPs during the 1960s and 1970s. As CDPs were reviewed on a five-yearly cycle, the views and prospects listed in the previous CDP were rarely updated or changed. If any alterations were made, it was usually on an *ad hoc* basis using the local knowledge of local authority planners. No specific methodology was developed to review designated views and prospects within the CDP review process until recently.

The listing of views and prospects within CDPs encourage awareness of the local authority's objectives with respect to the visual amenity and also supply guidance for developers and planners. Views and prospects designated in CDPs

were used within the planning control process to refuse or modify planning applications if the proposed development restricted or obstructed a view. Surprisingly however, if the proposed development was likely to damage the quality of the view but not restrict or obstruct it, the local authority had no grounds to refuse the application, or request modifications.

A new approach to protecting the visual elements of landscapes has recently been proposed by the Department of the Environment and Local Government within the new Planning and Development Act (DoELG, 2000a). This consists of a set of guidelines issued to planning authorities for Landscape and Landscape Assessment (DoELG, 2000b). Whereas previous approaches for protecting landscapes and views concentrated on identifying and designating outstanding landscapes and views, this new approach proposes an assessment of all landscapes. These guidelines include the identification of visual and image units as well as landscape character areas. Furthermore, the guidelines also stress that account must be taken of community values placed on landscape in order to evaluate landscape sensitivity and the capacity of the landscape to accept new physical developments. This requirement has served to highlight the growing recognition of landscape in the planning process. Once compiled, these assessments will act as an important information resource for reviewing land use and visual policies within CDPs and in theory should lead to a more holistic appreciation of landscape in the planning process in Ireland.

Environmental Impact Assessment in Ireland

Planning permission for certain categories of major developments cannot be assessed on the basis of the planning application and the CDP alone (DoE, 1989). These categories also require that an EIA be undertaken and an EIS submitted with the application. EIS content is prescribed in Schedule 2 of the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (DoE, 1989). EIA is mandatory for all projects listed in Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the same regulations on the basis that these project classes will always have significant environmental effects. EIA is also mandatory for all projects listed in Part 2 of Schedule 1 where the project parameters are greater than the thresholds prescribed in the regulations. In addition, EIA may be required even though the project parameters are below the threshold levels prescribed in Part 2 of Schedule 1, if the planning authority considers that a development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. Criteria used for determining whether a development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment were established in Schedule 3 of the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations (DoELG, 1999).

EIA examines the existing environment and potential impacts resulting from the proposed development on human beings, flora, fauna, soils, water, air, climate, the landscape, material assets and cultural heritage. None of these environmental factors should be omitted at risk of invalidating the planning application, but their level of treatment may differ depending on the likelihood of impacts resulting from the specific project proposal (CAAS, 1995a). There has been a perception to date that environmental factors, which can be assessed by quantitative scientific analysis such as water, air, and noise, are more important than factors, such as landscape, which use more subjective evaluations (European Environment Agency, 2002).

Landscape Impact Assessment (LIA) examines two aspects, impacts on landscape character and impacts on the visual amenity. VIA is defined as an estimation of the likelihood of changes to the visual amenity of the landscape resulting from a proposed development (The Landscape Institute & The Institute of Environmental Assessment, 1995). Visual impacts are therefore often viewed as a subset of landscape impacts. They relate solely to changes in the visual amenity of the landscape due to obstruction or intrusion of views, and in theory, to the impacts that those changes may have on the viewer.

There are several methodologies used in Ireland for conducting a VIA (Bradley *et al.*, 1991; The Landscape Institute & The Institute of Environmental Assessment, 1995; Canter, 1996; Ortolano, 1997). Two of the most popular methodologies are described to give a flavour of the varying approaches. The first focuses specifically on an aesthetic evaluation of three main elements: scale, association and harmony; the essential component being an assessment of contrast in each of the three elements (Bradley *et al.*, 1991). Contrasts of scale occur when the size of a proposed development changes the sense of scale within a view of a landscape. Contrasts of association are differences between what we experience and what we are conditioned to expect, i.e. a development out of character with our experience to date. Contrasts of harmony are the most obvious impacts where the focus, shape and colour of the proposed development might upset the balance within the receiving landscape. These three elements combine to indicate how a proposed development fits into its receiving environment. Although this methodology gets to the core of some of the important issues, it does not provide a practical framework for consultants conducting VIA.

A second methodology proposes a five-stage process involving description of the proposed development, baseline study, identification of impacts, mitigation measures and presentation of findings (The Landscape Institute & The Institute of Environmental Assessment, 1995). The description of the development should include information on the siting, layout and essential characteristics of the proposed development within its environmental context. The baseline study should describe, classify and evaluate the existing landscape and visual resource, particularly its sensitivity and ability to accommodate new development. The critical stage of the assessment process is to systematically identify potential impacts, predict their magnitude and assess their significance. Mitigation is to eliminate or reduce the predicted impacts on the visual amenity. Finally, a wide range of presentation techniques is used to communicate the findings of the VIA process. This five-stage process was revised recently to include a sixth stage of consultation and review, and significantly, the mitigation stage was also moved from fourth to second place within the process (The Landscape Institute & The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2002).

Irrespective of which methodology is used, some components of visual impacts can be measured empirically, but others cannot. For example, the locations from where proposed developments can be seen could be identified, and the degree of physical obstruction or intrusion caused by that development could be reliably predicted. However, the evaluation of site sensitivity and the reaction of viewers to changes in the visual amenity are more subjective issues that cannot be so easily quantified. Rather, these require more in-depth analysis

of landscape evolution, cultural perceptions and the environmental values of the local community.

Methodology

EISs submitted to Local Authorities as part of the documentation for planning permission are available for inspection at local Planning Department offices. Individually visiting each one of the planning authorities in Ireland would be a long and arduous task. Far more convenient for a study looking at projects across several planning authorities is the collection of EISs in the ENFO library in Dublin. The one drawback with this centralized repository is the time lag between the receipt of EISs in local authorities and their appearance in the ENFO collection. For the period of the review from 1997–99, these time lags varied from 6–24 months.

At the time the survey was conducted the central repository contained nearly 1000 EISs submitted between 1988 and 1999. The statutory requirement for EIS content (DoE, 1989) and the EPA guidelines on the information to be contained in EIS (CAAS, 1995a) as well as the EPA advice notes on current practice in the preparation of EIS (CAAS, 1995b) would not have taken effect until 1996 at least. Furthermore, it was assumed that standards of EIAs in general would have been lower during the initial few years when professionals were undergoing a steep learning curve of the concepts, methodologies and techniques necessary. Therefore, the selected sample was chosen from the later years of the total EIS population to ensure those examined post-dated the learning curve of professionals conducting EIA as well as post-dating the implementation of the guidelines.

A pro forma was initially developed to systematically collect LIA and VIA data under the five headings of description of the proposed development, baseline study, identification of potential impacts, mitigation of impacts identified and presentation of findings. The pro forma was piloted to ensure that it was comprehensive, easy to conduct, and that the data collected were in a format suitable for subsequent analysis.

On the basis of the results of the pilot study, the sample population was stratified into separate development categories in order to assess any differences in VIA within and between development categories. The only three development categories with sufficiently large enough sample sizes to justify selection were piggeries, quarries and urban developments and these were duly chosen.

The pro forma was reformatted to concentrate specifically on the three development categories selected and to focus exclusively on VIA. The adopted format of the revised pro forma included six headings:

- (1) Identifying potential visual impacts.
- (2) Calculating the visibility of the development to select principal viewpoints.
- (3) Mitigation measures proposed to ameliorate adverse visual impacts.
- (4) Visualization techniques used to present predicted visual impacts.
- (5) Evaluating receptor sensitivity.
- (6) Evaluating significance of visual impacts on the overall visual amenity.

The survey examined 164 EISs in total, with the following breakdown by development category; piggery developments (35), quarry developments (42), urban developments (87). One EIS from the quarry development category was

Table 1. Incidence of identification of visual impacts (Listed in EPA Advice Notes on Current Practice) within VIA

Development category	Visual Impacts Assessed (Listed in EPA Advice Notes on Current Practice)	1997	1998	1999	Total
Piggery	Visibility of structures	27%	47%	20%	34%
	Visual impact due to water body eutrophication	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total		13%	23%	10%	17%
Quarry	Visibility of surface workings	64%	100%	89%	85%
	Visibility of surface plant	29%	56%	67%	49%
	Visibility of dust adjacent to site and transport roads	7%	11%	22%	12%
	Visibility of change of character (intensity and nature)	21%	28%	22%	24%
Total		30%	49%	50%	43%
Urban	Visual impacts due to the erection of new structures	81%	82%	90%	83%
	Visual impacts due to access roads	28%	47%	30%	38%
	Visual impacts due to telecommunication/power lines	19%	13%	0%	14%
Total		43%	47%	40%	45%

excluded from further analysis since it was an underwater development, which did not modify the existing visual amenity on the surface.

Results

Identifying Potential Visual Impacts

The EPA advice notes (CAAS, 1995b) list potential impacts likely to be significant for each of the environmental factors for each of the development categories. A list of potential impacts is provided under landscape, which contains two visual impacts for piggery developments, four visual impacts for quarry developments and three visual impacts for urban developments. The impacts listed for the selected development categories in the revised advice notes (EPA, 2002) are unchanged. First, the survey examined if these cited visual impacts had been identified for assessment. The incidence of identification (Table 1) in quarry developments (43%) and urban developments (45%) was more than twice the identification of visual impacts in piggery developments (17%). One visual impact cited for piggery developments; "visual impact due to water body eutrophication" was not identified in any of the EIS examined for this development category. These results indicate that the EPA advice notes (CAAS, 1995b) were not used in the majority of cases (only 37% of EISs assessed visual impacts listed).

Those preparing and evaluating EIS shall 'have regard to' the EPA guidelines according to section 72 of the Act (DoE, 1992). Part of the difficulty of non-compliance with the EPA advice notes might be that the guidelines and advice notes are two separate publications, and the Act makes no mention of the advice notes. Compliance might be improved if they were combined into one

Table 2. Identification of visual impacts (Not listed in EPA Advice Notes on Current Practice) within VIA

Development category	Visual Impacts Identified (Not listed in EPA Advice Notes on Current Practice)
Quarry developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alteration of visual amenity due to removal of site vegetation • Visibility of new fencing • Alterations to ground levels • Loss of amenity • Landscape restoration • Changes in land use • Light pollution • Form and movement of vehicles off-site
Urban developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility of temporary construction activity • Visibility of construction traffic • Visibility of existing power lines • Visibility of car parking • Visibility of retaining walls • Alteration of visual amenity due to culverting of river • Visibility of earthen berms • Alteration of visual amenity due to demolition of existing structure • Loss of views across open space • Exposed to more shade

publication. Similarly, the guidelines cost €13 and the advice notes €25 (2003 prices) which may act as a barrier to their more widespread application. In a recent Irish High Court decision where Meath County Council was alleged not to have had due regard to the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, Mr Justice Quirke decided that the term 'have regard to' does not require 'compliance with' but to give 'reasonable consideration of' the guideline (Quirke, 2002). However, is a compliance rate of 37% satisfactory? Perhaps some other wording than 'have regard to' might also be necessary for those preparing EIS (as distinct from those evaluating EIS) to assist in appreciably improving EIA quality.

A number of visual impacts not listed in the EPA advice notes were identified in EIS for quarry developments and urban developments (Table 2). Although, the incidence of their identification was low (less than 2%) these visual impacts could be useful when considering revisions to the current list. Surprisingly, visual impact due to signage was not considered in any urban development project. A number of impacts listed in the EPA advice notes under landscape for urban developments, but not explicitly specified as visual, do have a visual aspect however. The incidence of identifying these impacts was lighting (30%), litter (2%), removal of existing vegetation (49%), and landscaping proposals (76%). Although litter is one of the major contributors towards adverse visual impact it was only assessed in a very low number of EISs (2%), which may indicate an attitude difficulty with respect to the priority for minimizing litter.

Calculating the Visibility of the Development to Select Principal Viewpoints

The primary factor that influences the visibility of a development is its height. Generally speaking, the taller a development is, the more visible it will be from

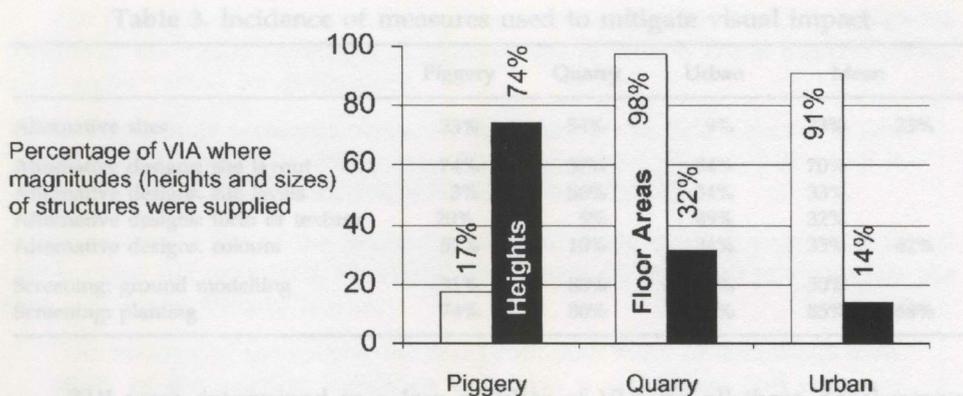


Figure 1. Incidence of supply of heights and sizes of proposed developments for VIA.

the surrounding area because it may still be visible above intervening structures or vegetation. Heights of proposed structures (Figure 1) were supplied in a substantial number of EIS for piggery developments (74%), but were supplied in a significantly lower number of EIS for quarry developments (32%) and urban developments (14%).

A secondary factor that influences the visibility of a development is its 'footprint' (ground floor area). These height and footprint data combine to provide the scale of proposed developments. Footprints of proposed structures (Figure 1) were supplied in most EIS for quarry (98%) and urban developments (91%), but were supplied in a significantly lower number of EIS for piggery developments (17%). Since these dimensions (height and footprint) are normally available within architectural drawings of proposed developments these results suggest that consultants conducting VIA consider this information neither necessary nor important for VIA.

Another factor that influences the visibility of developments is the location of developments relative to the shape of the terrain surface. Developments sited on top of a hill will be more visible from the surrounding terrain than those sited behind a hill or in undulating terrain. Existing buildings and vegetation in the vicinity of a development can also significantly limit the visibility of a development (Figure 2). Therefore, data on existing buildings and vegetation are important when calculating the extent of visibility to or from the proposed development. This area of visibility of a development is known as the visual envelope or the zone of visual influence (ZVI).

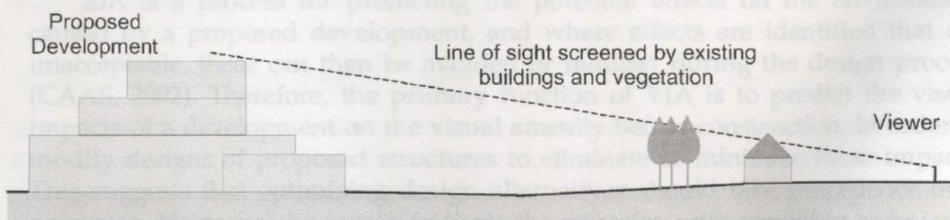


Figure 2. Screening of proposed developments by existing buildings and vegetation.

Table 3. Incidence of measures used to mitigate visual impact

	Piggery	Quarry	Urban	Mean	
Alternative sites	23%	54%	9%	23%	23%
Alternative designs: site layout	74%	37%	84%	70%	
Alternative designs: site levels	3%	56%	34%	33%	
Alternative designs: form or texture	20%	5%	49%	32%	
Alternative designs: colours	57%	10%	34%	33%	42%
Screening: ground modelling	31%	88%	40%	50%	
Screening: planting	74%	80%	91%	85%	68%

ZVI were determined in a low number of VIA for all three development categories (9%) with quarry developments scoring highest at 15%. Once the extent of visibility of the proposed development is determined, a number of viewing locations are selected within the area of the ZVI. The criteria for choosing viewpoints should consider the locations affording best views, proximity of the development, sensitivity of the viewing location and sensitivity of the viewers. Viewpoints selected should include both public and private locations and any viewpoints designated within the County Development Plan, which lie within the ZVI. Finally, a set of principal viewpoints is selected from the list of chosen viewpoints, from which visualization techniques are used to predict the nature and magnitude of visual impacts. Consultations with local authority planners and local communities may be necessary to ensure the principal viewpoints selected are the most relevant for potential visual impacts. Although viewpoints were chosen in most VIAs, the criteria used for selecting them were rarely supplied.

Mitigation Measures Proposed to Ameliorate Adverse Visual Impacts

Adverse visual impacts due to proposed developments can be mitigated in three ways, choosing an alternative site where the visual impact would be less, optimizing the design of the proposed development, or screening the views of the proposed development. Although choosing an alternative site in an Irish planning context is not a realistic alternative since the developer normally owns the site before EIA is conducted, alternative sites were discussed in 23% of VIA (Table 3). Visual impact may be reduced by modifying the design elements (form, colour, texture, siting and layout) of a proposed development, and screening can use ground modelling techniques or landscaping methods to alter the shape of the terrain or create new vegetation features to reduce or eliminate views of the proposed development.

EIA is a process for predicting the potential effects on the environment caused by a proposed development, and where effects are identified that are unacceptable, these can then be avoided or reduced during the design process (CAAS, 2002). Therefore, the primary function of VIA is to predict the visual impacts of a development on the visual amenity before construction, in order to modify designs of proposed structures to eliminate or minimize these impacts. This suggests that optimizing design alternatives should take precedence over screening. However, the results indicate the opposite, with screening techniques being used (68%) significantly more than design optimization techniques (42%).

The retention and use of existing vegetation as positive landscape features to enhance the visual amenity and as screening to reduce visual impacts seems to be under-valued by developers:

'A single large sycamore occurs in the centre of the field adjacent to site number 8. This is approximately 22m high with a girth of 2.3m, and it is in good condition. This will be removed.' (EIS 817)

This is representative of the general attitude towards existing vegetation found within many EIS examined. Similarly, developers do not seem to appreciate the time it takes for trees to mature:

'The removal of the substantial and prominent stand of deciduous trees south of the existing buildings will have a significant and negative short-term impact. However, when replacement planting becomes established within a 4 to 5 year period, the longer-term impact will become slight and neutral.' (EIS 887)

There seems to be a widespread belief that planting will provide effective screening within a 4 to 5 year period. Further research is necessary to confirm or refute this belief, and to develop a set of performance criteria for mitigation measures to ensure quantifiable results are achieved. It is also important for developers to retain existing vegetation as a positive landscape feature contributing towards the visual amenity, and for its screening qualities. Tree Protection Orders, designating significant stands of trees for protection within CDPs, and development control conditions applied to planning decisions are used by planning authorities to retain existing vegetation with varying degrees of success. However, control of felling at individual tree level may be necessary in future to provide the degree of protection required. Databases of vegetation resources especially within urban areas may be necessary to inform the development control and enforcement processes within planning authorities.

Occasionally landscape features were removed entirely without any justification. Developers proposed to bury streams in culverts in 7% of EIS for urban developments, with no reasons being supplied to support this course of action. Perhaps the safety of future residents was considered, or developers thought they might attract vermin, or maybe these features obstructed the layout for the development proposal. However, streams are positive landscape features, which significantly contribute to the environment and the visual amenity, yet their loss was not considered as negative visual impacts in any of the EISs in question. VIA should identify positive landscape features, such as cultural, vegetation and water features, and propose opening up views to them to enhance the visual amenity and counteract adverse visual impacts. All such enhancements to the visual amenity should contribute towards the final evaluation of significance of visual impacts.

Visualization Techniques Used to Present Predicted Visual Impacts

A range of visualization techniques is available to graphically present the nature and magnitude of predicted visual impacts. These techniques increase in complexity and realism from engineering elevations and artist's impressions, through photomontages to physical models and virtual models. Piggery developments recorded the least use of visualization techniques (3%), whilst quarry

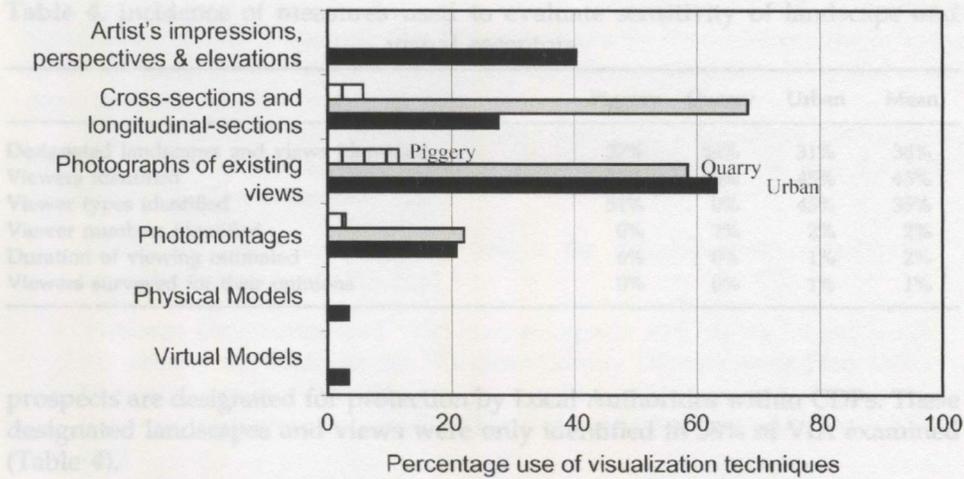


Figure 3. Incidence of usage of visualization techniques for VIA in Ireland.

developments and urban developments recorded slightly higher usages, 25% and 26% respectively (Figure 3). Although the cheapest, simplest and most effective technique for providing information on the existing visual amenity is photographic evidence, only half (51%) of all VIA examined used this technique.

VIA uses visualization techniques to indicate to planners, developers and the general public what the predicted changes to the existing visual amenity are likely to be. Predictions need to be calculated using scientific methods to ensure they are valid and repeatable, and visualization techniques should try to provide realistic impressions of the nature and magnitude of the probable visual impacts. Traditional techniques tended to be employed more frequently than modern ones with photomontages being used less (17%) than the more traditional techniques of artist's impressions, perspective views and elevations (22%).

Physical and virtual modelling techniques are expensive and might normally only be performed for projects involving major investments, but since EIA is only prepared for major developments, the use of modelling techniques was lower than anticipated (2%), and all of these models were only created for the urban development category. The overall use of visualization techniques within the three development categories was low (21%).

Evaluating Receptor Sensitivity

The sensitivity of proposed developments relative to their surroundings is evaluated using proximity of designated landscapes and amenity areas (landscape receptors) to the development site, and the value placed by potential viewers (visual receptors) on the predicted change in the visual amenity.

Five categories of landscape are designated for protection nationally including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), National Heritage Areas (NHAs), statutory nature reserves and wildfowl sanctuaries, and geological and geomorphological features of natural interest. Additional landscape features such as visually sensitive areas and views and

Table 4. Incidence of measures used to evaluate sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors

	Piggery	Quarry	Urban	Mean
Designated landscapes and views identified	37%	54%	31%	38%
Viewers identified	31%	56%	45%	45%
Viewer types identified	51%	0%	45%	35%
Viewer numbers identified	0%	2%	2%	2%
Duration of viewing estimated	6%	0%	1%	2%
Viewers surveyed for their opinions	0%	0%	1%	1%

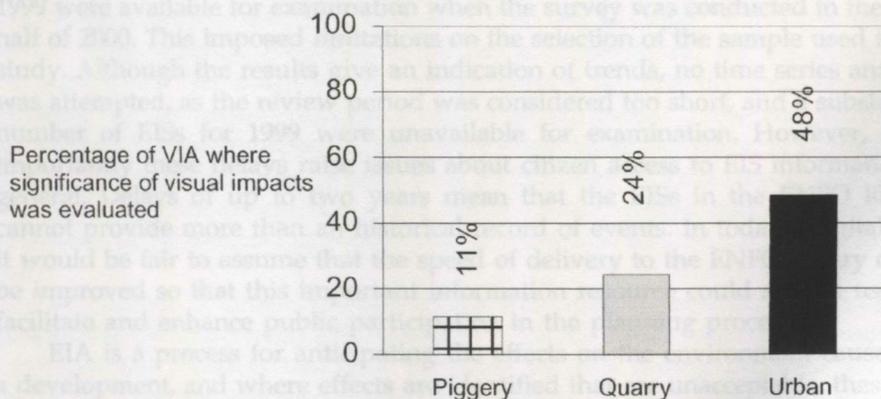
prospects are designated for protection by Local Authorities within CDPs. These designated landscapes and views were only identified in 38% of VIA examined (Table 4).

Although visual receptors were identified in 45% of VIA, their opinions were only collected in one EIS (876) of the 164 examined (1%). Other factors that contribute to sensitivity evaluation are viewer types and numbers, and their duration of viewing. Sensitivity provides a weighting factor to allow the significance of visual impacts to be evaluated more accurately. Consequently, these sensitivity results do not augur well for the evaluation of significance of visual impacts.

Evaluating Significance of Visual Impacts on Overall Visual Amenity

Finally, the significance of each visual impact is then evaluated from the magnitude and nature of the proposed development and the sensitivity of the landscape and viewers to the proposed development on the existing visual amenity.

Even though the measure of magnitude of visual impacts was satisfactory (54%), the low incidence of predicting the nature of visual impacts (21%) using visualization techniques, the identification of sensitive landscapes (38%), and the opinions of visual receptors were only collected in one VIA (1%). Therefore, it was unlikely that any real evaluation of significance could have taken place. This

**Figure 4.** Incidence of evaluation of significance of visual impacts.

is borne out by the results (Figure 4), which indicate an overall evaluation of significance of 34%. However, this figure is primarily derived from the influence of the urban category (48%) with piggery developments a low 11%, and quarry developments slightly higher at 24%.

These evaluations of significance were based on incomplete data in many cases, and unsubstantiated statements were noted in 8% of VIA for urban developments. Two examples are:

'Given the small scale and nature of the development, no adverse impact would arise.' (EIS 719)

'Between Greystones and Wicklow, prospects and views inland from the railway are listed in the Wicklow County Development Plan 1989. However, the Wicklow Mountains would be the dominant feature of the view, and glimpsed views of the site would not be significant.' (EIS 780)

It is extraordinary when a CDP contains listed views in the vicinity of a proposed development that unsubstantiated statements such as this can be made.

Discussion

This study adopted a pro forma based approach to evaluating VIA content of EISs in Ireland. However, several alternative research methodologies could have been adopted. One such alternative might have focused on those carrying out the VIA, and might have taken the form of a questionnaire-based analysis of a sample of professional environmental consulting firms. A second option might have concentrated on planners in local authorities who evaluate EIS for their planning decisions. These were both rejected as potential research methodologies because of the biases they might introduce to an initial investigation of the problem. However, both methodologies are now being considered for follow-up research projects.

One particular problem that arose with the methodology selected was that significant delays of up to 24 months were discovered between the time EISs were originally submitted to the local authorities and when copies became available in the ENFO library. Consequently, only 22% of EISs submitted during 1999 were available for examination when the survey was conducted in the later half of 2000. This imposed limitations on the selection of the sample used in the study. Although the results give an indication of trends, no time series analysis was attempted, as the review period was considered too short, and a substantial number of EISs for 1999 were unavailable for examination. However, more importantly these delays raise issues about citizen access to EIS information in general. Delays of up to two years mean that the EISs in the ENFO library cannot provide more than an historical record of events. In today's digital age, it would be fair to assume that the speed of delivery to the ENFO library could be improved so that this important information resource could also be used to facilitate and enhance public participation in the planning process.

EIA is a process for anticipating the effects on the environment caused by a development, and where effects are identified that are unacceptable, these can then be avoided or reduced during the design process (CAAS, 2002). These

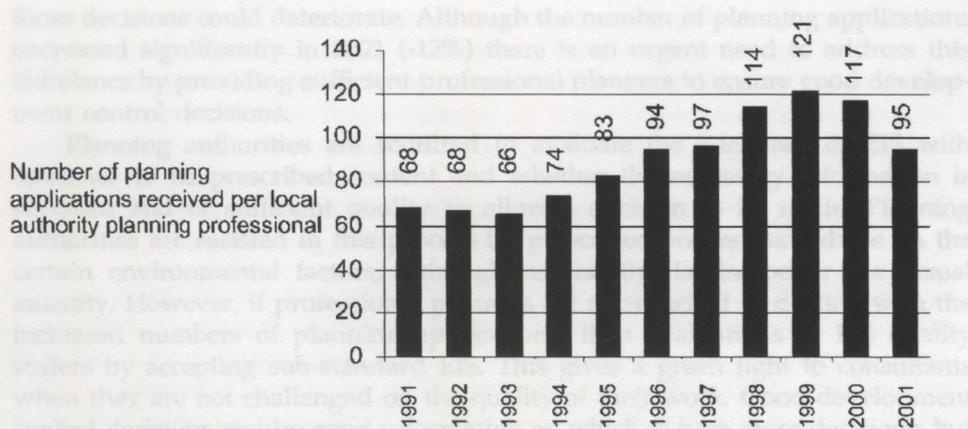


Figure 5. Increase in the number of planning applications received in Ireland per local authority planning professional. Source: (DoELG, 2002).

results indicate that non-optimized designs are being hidden from view behind vegetation and terrain screens. This suggests that the primary aim of EIA of fitting the proposed structure to the environment is not being achieved. Rather, it is the existing environment that is being modified to accommodate un-optimized designs. If this situation is to be addressed, it has implications for EIA legislation and the improvement of the quality of architectural designs. For example, no formal qualifications are required in Ireland to prepare architectural designs of proposed developments for planning permission. If the EIA process requires designs to be optimized so that maximum environmental benefit can be achieved, then legislators should consider limiting the design function of proposed developments to suitably qualified professionals, such as architects.

This study has shown that traditional manual methods rather than modern computer-based techniques were predominantly used to present visualizations of predicted visual impacts. This is surprising given the sophisticated software tools that currently exist to model alternative design scenarios. Further research is needed to identify the obstacles impeding the adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in this regard. Contributing factors may include the cost of new technology, a skills gap for using new technology, or the availability, suitability and cost of spatial data. For example, a ZVI calculation requires three separate 3D datasets, the shape of the terrain surface, buildings and vegetation. The shape of the terrain surface is currently available from Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi) as a digital terrain model. However, buildings and vegetation have traditionally been only supplied as two-dimensional objects in maps. The OSi are currently compiling a 3D survey of rural Ireland at a scale of 1:5 000, and are conducting trials using LIDAR which may improve the availability of 3D datasets of buildings and vegetation for ZVI calculation in the future.

The number of planning applications submitted in Ireland has increased dramatically (80%) between 1991 and 2001 (DoELG, 2002), whereas the number of professional planners has only increased by 29% during the same period (Figure 5). This has put unprecedented pressure on the development control system, and if planners are given less time to make decisions, the quality of

those decisions could deteriorate. Although the number of planning applications decreased significantly in 2001 (-12%) there is an urgent need to address this imbalance by providing sufficient professional planners to ensure good development control decisions.

Planning authorities are required to evaluate the adequacy of EIS with reference to its prescribed content and whether the necessary information is supplied and of sufficient quality to allow a decision to be made. Planning authorities are assisted in this process by prescribed bodies that advise on the certain environmental factors, although not on the landscape or the visual amenity. However, if professional planners are so stretched in dealing with the increased numbers of planning applications, then evaluations of EIS quality suffers by accepting sub-standard EIS. This gives a green light to consultants when they are not challenged on the quality of their work. Good development control decisions require good information on which to base those decisions, but if sub-standard EISs are accepted, then the quality of planning decisions will be adversely affected.

EISs are only produced for major development projects, for which public objections should be expected as the norm. Whereas the function of EIA is to optimize design alternatives to fit the proposed development to its environment, the function of an EIS is to provide evidence for a planning decision, an appeal, and possibly a public hearing. Therefore, the evidence provided in an EIS should be collected using scientific principles, and should expect to be scrutinized. There is an urgent need to provide planning authorities in Ireland with sufficient numbers of professional planners to challenge and improve the quality information supplied so that Ireland's landscapes are not degraded with inappropriate developments.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The acceptable standard of VIA in Ireland is defined within the EPA *Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements* (CAAS, 1995a) and *Advice Notes on Current Practice in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements* (CAAS, 1995b). Since only 37% of EISs assessed used this standard, this would suggest that new initiatives are necessary to improve compliance. The following measures might be useful in this regard:

- (1) Combine the 'guidelines' and 'advice notes' into one publication.
- (2) Make the combined publication freely available to consultants conducting EIA.
- (3) Recommend use of the combined publication for the scoping procedure within the legislation, and ensure a copy of the written opinion from the scoping procedure is included in the EIS.
- (4) Replace the 'have regard to' wording in the legislation for those preparing EIS with wording requiring compliance.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should initiate research in the following areas:

- To investigate and eliminate the obstacles restricting the adoption of modern computer-based techniques for conducting VIA in Ireland to significantly

improve the visualization of predicted visual impacts and to facilitate the implementation and adoption of ePlanning by planning authorities.

- To investigate the obstacles hindering the assessment of alternative design scenarios and consider the regulation of the design function to qualified architects in order to improve the quality of designs of proposed developments.
- To develop an information base on growth rates of different species of trees to ensure their screening abilities can be more accurately predicted.

The Irish Forest Service and planning authorities could promote the importance of protecting vegetation, including individual trees and hedgerows, and encourage the proper management of existing vegetation resources. Planning authorities could also introduce tighter felling control, especially in urban areas, where developers could be encouraged to reinstate trees of similar ages and dimensions. Databases of existing vegetation resources, at the scale of individual tree level could be established for urban areas to assist enforcement of tighter felling control. Planning authorities might also include a policy within CDPs to introduce targets for tree populations per hectare especially in urban areas to enhance the visual absorption capacity of the landscape. These measures, as well as enhancing the visual amenity, would also positively contribute towards Local Agenda 21 objectives.

There is a need to improve substantially the standard of VIA in Ireland to ensure planning decisions are based on good quality information. One approach would be for the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to initiate a recruitment drive to significantly increase the numbers of professional planners available to planning authorities. These in turn would be able to provide improved resources:

- For the planning control system to deal with the increased numbers of planning applications.
- For planners to evaluate sufficiency of information supplied in EISs and to challenge the quality of information supplied.
- To introduce an effective enforcement system for conditions applied to planning control decisions.

Planning authorities should re-examine their attitude towards the practice by developers of burying streams in culverts. Developers might be better advised to retain and enhance existing water features to complement the visual amenity. Planning authorities should actively promote all measures that contribute positively towards maintaining and enhancing the existing visual amenity.

This study suggests that for the categories of major developments reviewed, the standard of VIA in Ireland is not comparable to the standard of the more quantitative aspects of EIA, and when VIAs are carried out they are limited in scope and normally do not make full use of the digital techniques available to present visualizations of predicted changes to the visual amenity. Partly, this is a problem of measurement. For example, there is a perception that it is more difficult to measure and account for the subjective issues associated with the visual amenity than it is to measure quantifiable limits of pollutants. In many respects this issue of measurement is compounded by the relatively weak emphasis placed on landscape and VIA from a European perspective (European Environment Agency, 2002).

However, measurement alone is not responsible, for example the lack of a national landscape policy in Ireland (O'Regan, 1994) does little to enhance the importance of VIA. Recent publications of the Irish Landscape Fora (O'Regan, 1995, 1996 and 1997), the Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape (Aalen *et al.*, 1997) and of a policy paper on Ireland's landscape and the national heritage (Heritage Council, 2002) have assisted in stimulating a debate on landscape protection. At the moment environmental groups, the media and planning authorities are vigorously debating certain aspects of landscape policy so opportunities for improvement do exist. However, these issues are currently being discussed individually on an issue-by-issue basis rather than holistically on a national scale. Another possible contributing factor is the pressure placed on the current Irish planning control system to provide decisions for planning applications within prescribed timeframes. Constraints of time and personnel may well limit the resources available to evaluate EIS in a formal or comprehensive way, and improvements may well not be apparent until resources are improved.

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This research paper examines the various visualisation techniques utilised within VIAs prepared by consultants as part of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process in Ireland and assesses their potential use in participatory planning. It also assesses possible improvements and suggests recommendations for the future.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on the results of two surveys conducted to investigate how the planning and development system manages the visual amenity in Ireland. A quantitative survey assessed the quality of visual impact assessments (VIAs) carried out within environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the development control process. These results supply evidence on the nature, techniques used, and quality of visual impact assessment practice from a sample of 164 EIAs submitted between 1997 and 1999 (Prendergast & Rybaczuk, 2004). A second qualitative survey examined planning policies used to protect and enhance the visual amenity. Four stakeholder groups were interviewed including planners, design professionals, environmental organisations and the environmental spokespersons for the political parties. These results supply information on the development pressures impacting most significantly on the visual amenity, policies protecting the visual amenity within County and City Development Plans, other development policies impacting on the visual amenity, and methods used to enhance the visual amenity.

The inclusion of sustainable development in 2000 as one of the criteria against which planning applications are assessed by planning authorities has emphasised the role of public participation within the planning and development system. However, public participation in planning in Ireland is not as well developed as it could be, and initiatives to improve participation have not always been successful. The utilisation of the visualisation techniques used for VIA as potential communication forums is investigated to assist public participation.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Ireland's planning system is based on the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 (Oireachtas, 1963), which introduced Ireland's first statutory development control system. Much legislation and regulations have been enacted since, including a statutory independent planning appeals system (Oireachtas, 1976), an environmental control system (DoE, 1989), expanded functions to meet the demands of increased economic growth and a growing European dimension from Ireland's membership of the European Union. The Planning and Development Act 2000 (Oireachtas, 2000) recently introduced radical changes in the areas of protection of architectural heritage, increasing residential densities in urban areas, and requiring developers to commit a percentage of residential development sites for social housing.

The planning departments of Ireland's 88 local authorities (29 county councils and 59 municipal authorities) operate Ireland's planning system. The system includes a forward planning process which publishes Development Plans and land-use maps every five to six years, a development control process to adjudicate applications for development which includes a facility to appeal decisions to An Bord Pleanála (the Planning Appeals Board), and an enforcement process to monitor land-use and conditions applied to development decisions.

Planning permission for certain categories of major developments cannot be granted on the basis of the planning application and the County/City Development Plan (CUP) alone (DoE, 1989). These categories also require environmental impact assessment (EIA) to be carried out and an environmental impact statement (EIS) to be prepared and submitted with the planning application. EIA examines the existing environment and potential impacts resulting from the proposed development on human beings, flora, fauna, soils, water, air, climate, the landscape, material assets, and cultural heritage. None of these environmental factors should be omitted at risk of invalidating the planning application, but their level of treatment may differ depending on the likelihood of impacts resulting from the specific project proposal (CAAS, 1993a). There has been a perception to date that environmental factors, which can be assessed by quantitative scientific analysis such as water, air, and noise, are more important than factors, such as landscape, which use more subjective evaluation (European Environment Agency, 1993).

Using Visualisation Techniques in Planning to Improve Collaborative Governance in Ireland

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Abstract: *Public participation in planning is gradually being adopted as an established component of both local and national Irish governance strategies. However, facilitating public participation in planning is not based on a simple set of ingredients that can be mixed according to a set recipe. Rather, it is a complex process that requires consolidated co-operation between a variety of players, changes in existing organisational processes, the adoption of innovative technological tools, and the re-engineering of services and data to provide them to the public in a more user-friendly manner.*

Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) are just one example of environmental information that is important in a participatory context. Currently the mechanism for accessing these and the requirements for producing these are not conducive to participatory planning. EISs are rarely accompanied by any widely available metadata, they are rarely digital; in fact they only become catalogued and available in a central repository in Ireland after decisions have been taken. Furthermore, the statements themselves are not as effective as they might be in conveying the information they contain to planners and the general public. One particular issue for which EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) guidelines exist but which is rarely addressed comprehensively, is that of visual impact assessment (VIA) used to predict, visualise and evaluate the impact of proposed developments on the landscape.

This research paper examines the various visualisation techniques utilised within VIAs prepared by consultants as part of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process in Ireland and assesses their potential use in participatory planning. It also assesses possible improvements and suggests recommendations for the future.

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Planning permission for certain categories of major developments cannot be assessed on the basis of the planning application and the County/City Development Plan (CDP) alone (DoE, 1989). These categories also require environmental impact assessment (EIA) to be carried out and an environmental impact statement (EIS) to be prepared and submitted with the planning application. EIA examines the existing environment and potential impacts resulting from the proposed development on human beings, flora, fauna, soils, water, air, climate, the landscape, material assets, and cultural heritage. None of these environmental factors should be omitted at risk of invalidating the planning application, but their level of treatment may differ depending on the likelihood of impacts resulting from the specific project proposal (CAAS, 1995a). There has been a perception to date that environmental factors, which can be assessed by quantitative scientific analysis such as water, air, and noise, are more important than factors, such as landscape, which use more subjective evaluations (European Environment Agency, 1998).

EIA is a process for anticipating the potential effects on the environment caused by a proposed development, and where effects are identified that are unacceptable, these can be then be avoided or reduced during the design process (CAAS, 2002). Landscape Impact Assessment (LIA) examines two aspects of the landscape, impacts on landscape character and impacts on the visual amenity. Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) is defined as an estimation of the likelihood of changes to the visual amenity of the landscape resulting from a proposed development (The Landscape Institute & The Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2002). Visual impacts are therefore often viewed as a subset of landscape impacts. They relate solely to changes in the visual amenity of the landscape due to obstruction or intrusion of views, and to the effects that those changes may have on the viewer. Therefore, the primary function of VIA is to predict the visual impacts of a development on the visual amenity before construction, in order to modify designs of proposed structures to eliminate or minimise these impacts.

2.1 Methodology Chosen for the Survey of Visual Practice

EISs submitted to local authorities as part of the documentation for planning permission are available for inspection at local planning authorities. Individually visiting all of the planning authorities in Ireland would be a long and arduous task. Far more convenient for a study looking at projects across several planning authorities is the collection of EISs in the ENFO (Ireland's public information service on environmental matters) library in Dublin.

When the survey was conducted the central repository contained nearly one thousand EISs submitted between 1988 and 1999. The statutory requirement for EIS content (DoE, 1989), the EPA guidelines on EIS content (CAAS, 1995a) and the EPA advice notes on EIS preparation (CAAS, 1995b) would not have taken effect until 1996 at least. Furthermore, it was assumed that after the introduction of EIA professionals would have undergone a steep learning curve of the concepts, methodologies and techniques necessary. Therefore the selected sample was chosen from the later years of the total EIS population to ensure those examined post-dated the learning curve of professionals conducting EIA as well as post-dating the implementation of the guidelines.

A pro-forma initially developed to systematically collect LIA and VIA data was piloted to ensure that it was comprehensive, easy to conduct, and that the data collected were in a format suitable for subsequent analysis. On the basis of these results, the sample population was stratified into separate development categories for ease of comparison within each category. The only three development categories which had sample sizes sufficiently large enough to justify their selection were piggery developments quarry developments and urban developments, so these were duly chosen and the pro-forma was reformatted to concentrate exclusively on VIA. Development categories more likely to conduct VIA (wind-farms, afforestation) were purposely not selected, so that the overall survey results would be representative of the general quality of VIA practice in Ireland.

The survey examined 164 EISs in total, with the following breakdown by development category: piggery developments (35), quarry developments (42), urban developments (87). One EIS from the quarry development category was excluded from further analysis since it was an undersea development, which did not modify the existing visual amenity.

2.2 Visualisation Techniques used for Visual Impact Assessment

A range of visualisation techniques is available to present the nature and magnitude of predicted visual impacts which increase in complexity and realism from engineering elevations, to artist's impressions, to photomontages, to physical models and to virtual models. Piggery developments recorded the least use of visualisation techniques (3%), whilst quarry developments and urban developments recorded slightly higher usages, 25% and 26% respectively (Figure 1). However, only 51% of VIA used photography, which is the cheapest, simplest and most effective technique for providing information on the existing visual amenity.

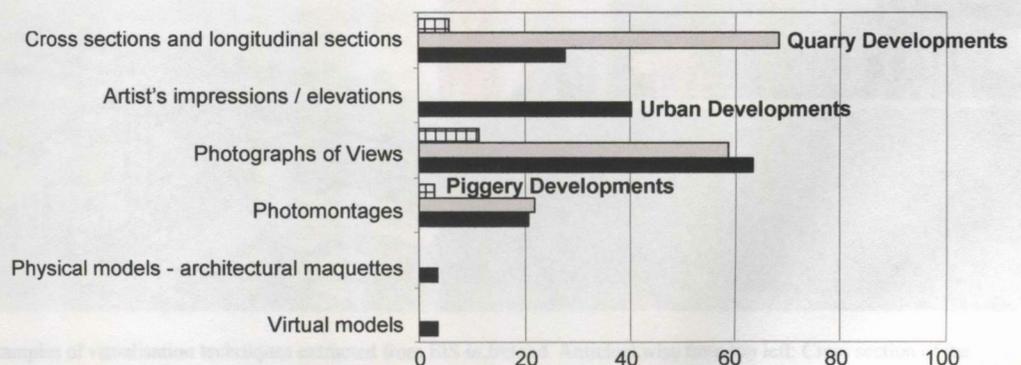


Figure 1 Incidence of use of different visualisation techniques within VIA in Ireland between 1997 and 1999.

VIA uses visualisation techniques to indicate to planners, developers and the general public what the predicted the changes to the existing visual amenity will be. Predictions need to be calculated using scientific methods to ensure they are valid and repeatable, and visualisation techniques should provide realistic predictions of the nature and magnitude of likely visual impacts. The overall use of visualisation techniques (Figure 2) was low (21%) and traditional techniques were more predominant than modern with photomontages being used less (17%) than the more conventional techniques of artist's impressions, perspective views and elevations (22%).

Physical and virtual modelling techniques can be expensive and might normally only be performed for projects involving major investments, but since EIA is only prepared for major developments, the use of modelling techniques was lower

than anticipated (3%), and all of these models were only created for urban developments. However, these results refer to data produced between 1997 and 1999 which are now somewhat dated, so it would be interesting to conduct a follow-up survey to determine any improvement in use of the visualisation techniques outlined and in the adoption of modern techniques. The adoption of modern techniques is not just technologically based, and issues such as the cost and copyright of spatial data influence decisions. Many of these issues are currently being examined during the development of the Irish Spatial Data Infrastructure.

Proposed developments can be virtually modelled in three dimensions, and sophisticated tools are available to provide very advanced simulations for surface rendering, lighting and atmospheric conditions. One of the main advantages of this new technology is the high standard of realism achieved using virtual models. An orientation and latitude can be assigned to a proposed structure to permit a virtual sun to cast shadows, which are correct for the site location. The ability to model structures to this degree of realism before a sod is turned enables the designer and the developer to identify and correct design mistakes before construction begins.

Another important benefit of producing virtual models is their ability to simulate multiple scenarios of form, layout, and finishes at design stage. This examination of multiple scenarios for each development proposal facilitates the improvement of design quality. Another major advantage of virtual models is their ability to check the architectural and environmental suitability of a design to its' site and its' environs. This examination of the proposed development to ensure it strikes a balance with the receiving environment with respect to its' form, scale, colour, orientation and detailing is the essence of EIA. However, in order to accomplish this satisfactorily it is also necessary to model the receiving environment and not just the proposed development site. Ideally, a three-dimensional model of the urban environment is required in which virtual models can be placed for examination and analysis. This identifies a particular difficulty in that most mapping products currently available are two-dimensional. It would be very expensive and time consuming for project proponents to produce 3D models of the receiving environment, but many city authorities worldwide are creating 3D city models as tools to suit this planning need (<http://www.casa.ucl.ac.uk/vc/cities.htm>). The current absence of 3D models for urban areas in Ireland means that 3D virtual models of the proposed development if created can only be analysed against a 2D model of the surrounding environment. As a consequence, this type of analysis is not yet commonplace.



Figure 2 Examples of visualisation techniques extracted from EIS in Ireland. Anticlockwise from top left: Cross section of the National University of Ireland sports complex in Cork, Front elevation of proposed renovation of a golf club, Artist's impression of Dundrum Town Centre, Photograph of existing residence proposed for demolition, Photomontage of the Luas bridge in Ranelagh, Physical model of the National University of Ireland Sports complex at the Mardyke in Cork, Dublin, and Virtual model of the Landsdown cement factory in Kingegad (EIS archive, ENFO Library, Dublin).

New visualisation techniques and methods for disseminating the information are also possible once the virtual model has been created. Visualisations techniques include perspective views, fly-throughs (using multiple perspective views), and interactive walk-throughs allowing the observer to chose their own route through the model to examine the development proposal in their own way and at their own pace. Since all of these different presentations of the virtual model are digital they are suitable for distribution and access over the Internet. This variability of presentation and increased access has the potential for making planning processes more inclusive by involving designers, developers, planners, decision makers,

local communities and interested citizens (Shiffer, 2002). The visual images become the driving force and the interface to provide planning information to the end-user in a format they can understand more easily. User groups accepted the potential inherent in technological solutions, both as practical community development tools and as potential means to empower individuals, organisations and entire communities (Haughey, 2004).

The use of many instead of fewer visualisation techniques provides multiple representations of a development proposal that collectively contribute to communicate the proposed concept more effectively. Secondly, and of equal importance, is the ability to use these visualisation techniques to provide alternative development proposals to ensure inappropriate developments are minimised.

3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN IRELAND'S PLANNING PROCESS

Public participation has been a feature within the forward planning and development control processes since the inception of Ireland's Planning and Development system. However public participation in the past was minimal in forward planning, because scant resources were traditionally allotted to policy formulation up to as recently as the mid to late 1990s, and County Development Plans cover relatively large areas which limits the detail possible for smaller community areas thereby mitigating against community involvement in the process.

3.1 Traditional approaches used for Public Participation

Public participation in County Development Plans is an important aspect of their preparation since local authorities must publish a notice to announce the preparation of draft Development Plans or variations to existing Plans. Once prepared, the draft goes on public display for 12 weeks to permit the public submit their observations and copies must also be sent to various statutory and voluntary organisations seeking their specialist advice. Submissions from the public and these bodies must be considered before local politicians can adopt a Development Plan.

In contrast to forward planning, public participation in the development control process is over-subscribed with multiple objections to individual development proposals being normal. Notice of submission of planning applications must be included on a site notice in a prominent position on the site boundary and published in a national newspaper to inform the public and stimulate participation. If the development proposal requires EIA then the planning authority must also publish a notice in a national newspaper that an EIS has been received with a particular development proposal. Details of applications are available for public inspection in the local authority offices for 8 weeks after submission during which time objections may be submitted. A draft decision is then published and a further 4 weeks is available where objections to the draft decision may be made to the Planning Appeals Board for adjudication.

However, public participation in the development control process is idiosyncratic and often driven by events. Knowledge of a proposed development may stem from the publicity it receives in the local media, a discussion between neighbours, or a chance observation of a planning notice while passing by. Some individuals act as local champions by taking on the role of community watchdogs and local community groups and local organisations can significantly improve participation by informing the community and stimulating opinions and observations. Government sponsored groups such as community development projects, or partnerships, can play important similar roles. However, they are not geographically uniform and tend to focus on socially excluded areas.

3.2 Sustainability highlighting the need for Public Participation

The new Planning and Development Act (Oireachtas, 2000) requires planning authorities to also consider sustainable development when evaluating planning applications for development consent. The concept of sustainable development usually cited is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland et al, 1987). A glaring anomaly between this concept of sustainable development and the traditional planning and development system in Ireland was that forward planning was too short by only considering a five to six year period, so there was an urgent need to provide a national and regional planning context for medium and long terms. Another focus of this concept of sustainability was to change the perception of landscape and environment from being a resource for life, to being a delicate resource with the ability to positively contribute to quality of life.

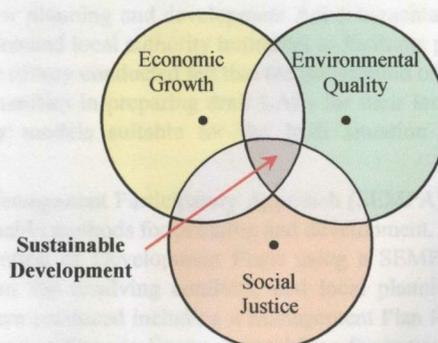


Figure 3 Relationship between economic growth, social justice and environmental quality to achieve sustainable development.

A national sustainable development partnership was established in 1999 with the aim of encouraging sustainable development across the Irish economy and society, and to advise government on policies to support and promote it. The partnership included a wide range of stakeholders from environmental, community, statutory, professional and economic

sectors and they developed an agreed view on what sustainable development means in an Irish context (Comhar, 2002). Twelve principles for sustainable development were recommended as a benchmark to comprehensively test the sustainability of existing and proposed plans and programmes. A more simplified concept was also provided which is more suitable for use by developers and professionals within the design process and for planners within the development control process. It states that the three objectives of economic growth, social justice and environmental quality should be addressed equally in an integrated manner in order to achieve sustainable development (Figure 3).

The concept of sustainable development is nothing new to planners, but it has consistently been relegated by the pursuit of economic development (ENER-IURE, 2002). However, economic growth need not be at the expense of social development or maintaining a healthy physical environment, so these three objectives need not be mutually exclusive. Sustainable development requires compromise between the three competing interests, and citizen participation is identified as key to the attainment of sustainable development (Comhar, 2002).

County Development Boards were established with representation from the local government, state agencies, local development sectors and social partners to develop local strategies to implement sustainable development, and local authority's operations are now required to be consistent with these strategies (DoELG, 2001). Local authorities have also undertaken a range of initiatives to promote sustainable development both within the authorities and within local communities. Strategic Policy Committees have been established within local authorities to ensure that:

- The objectives of sustainable development are integrated into Development Plan policies.
- The performance of local authorities is evaluated and managed in a more environmentally friendly manner.
- Local agenda 21 initiatives are taken to formulate partnerships with local communities to promote awareness and educate about sustainable development issues in order to develop joint solutions.

All these initiatives have led to an increasing awareness that protecting the environment is an important national goal, and that the participation of local communities is a key requirement in this regard to ensure sustainable development is achieved.

4 SURVEY OF POLICIES USED TO MANAGE THE VISUAL AMENITY

4.1 Methodology chosen for the survey

A second qualitative survey examined policies within Ireland's County and City Development Plans (CDPs) used to protect and enhance the visual amenity. A sample was selected from the 29 County and 5 City administrations in Ireland that contain major planning departments and senior planners from the selected local authorities were contacted requesting their participation in the study. Although the initial intention was to include planners only, it was subsequently decided to include the other stakeholders of the visual environment; associations of design professionals creating the development proposals, community and environmental groups with environmental interests, and the environmental spokespersons of the political parties. The survey conducted 42 structured interviews during the summers of 2001 and 2002, which included design professional associations (6), environmental groups (12), planners (18) and political parties (6). Although the results of this survey primarily provides information on the development pressures impacting most significantly on the visual amenity, policies protecting the visual amenity within CDPs, other development policies impacting on the visual amenity, and methods used to enhance the visual amenity, it also provides much valuable information on local initiatives being taken to improve public participation.

4.2 Initiatives to improve Public Participation

The inclusion of sustainable development by the new planning and development Act (Oireachtas, 2000) as one of the criteria against which development proposals should be evaluated and the identification that public participation is key to the attainment of sustainability have highlighted the need to improve public participation in planning. However, facilitating participation in planning is not based on a simple set of ingredients that can be mixed according to a set recipe. The lack of formal structures to involve community groups in planning in the past has resulted in a shortage of existing groups and structures to take on this new role.

A statutory requirement within the new planning and development Act (Oireachtas, 2000) to prepare Local Area Plans (LAP) for local communities has rejuvenated local authority initiatives to facilitate public participation in planning. Many of the groups interviewed in the policy survey conducted felt that the preparation of LAPs would significantly help public participation by involving local communities in preparing draft LAPs for their localities. Different methodologies have been tested to develop participatory models suitable for the Irish situation with varying results. Some of the methodologies employed were:

- The Suburban Environmental Management Participatory Approach (SEMPA) project was a participatory approach designed to achieve more sustainable methods for planning and development. The local authorities and stakeholders shared responsibility for preparation of Development Plans using a SEMPA model. The model contained two aspects: an environmental forum for resolving conflicts, and local planning groups tasked with finding local solutions. A number of plans were produced including a Management Plan for the Howth Peninsula, a Recreation and Tourism Plan, a Public Transport Plan, an Environmental Plan for commercial enterprises, and a Management Plan for the use of public open space. The project proved successful in raising awareness of environmental issues,

breaking down adversarial attitudes between local authorities and communities, and developing a local planning model based on partnership (Planning Authority A[#]).

- An experimental method was adopted by another local authority where the planners acted as facilitators and a steering group was established in a village by inviting locals to represent each sector of the community (farming, fishing, rural coastal area, tourism, commercial, residential, etc) and to prepare their own Local Area Plan. However, this methodology proved to be problematical because planners (historically under-staffed) have insufficient resources to commit to similar projects for the other villages (Planning Authority B[#]).
- An LAP for a rural town was prepared where public participation was limited. The advertisement of the Plan preparation was published before research or data collection began so the complete process to prepare the draft Plan was squeezed into statutory period of 6 to 8 weeks. Initially it was not intended to hold public meetings, however, one was held, but it did not address the hopes or aspirations of the local community so the Plan may not be representative of the views of the community (Planning Authority C[#]).

4.3 Difficulties encountered when encouraging Participation

There was a wide acceptance by all the groups interviewed during the policy survey of a historical lack of public participation in the forward planning process in Ireland. From the local authority’s perspective, processes and attitudes need to be changed to stimulate and encourage participation. The words ‘public participation’ are not mentioned in any of the legislation or regulations dealing with the planning and development system. ‘Public consultation’ is used instead. The use of the word ‘consultation’ permits a less than enthusiastic support for participation if those driving the process wish to retain control, so consultation processes can be held to satisfy a statutory duty rather than engage with the public in a spirit of partnership. Arnstein viewed consultation as one of the degrees of tokenism (Figure 4), so would attitudes to participation improve if ‘participation’ was used instead of ‘consultation’?

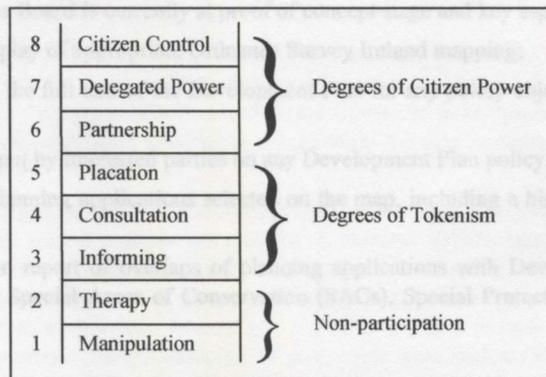


Figure 4 – Ladder of Participation (Arnstein, 1969).

Results from the policy survey indicate that some local authorities have difficulties engaging the public at times. Much money is spent putting adverts in newspapers, on local radio, and holding meetings in the local area, but local authorities do not get responses until draft Plans are published. The concept of public participation is to get people’s views at the start to direct the planning process, rather than when concepts have been solidified in the minds of the gatekeepers.

Participation can be very resource-intensive for planners who need to educate, encourage, facilitate and manage participation projects. Due to the historical understaffing of planning authorities where inadequate resources were traditionally assigned to forward planning (ENER-IURE, 2002), the numbers of planners required for participation are still well below what is required even though the staffing situation has significantly improved during the last decade.

The access mechanisms currently in place to permit inspection of documents at the planning authority offices operate at only 18% of capacity from the time perspective (30 hours in a 24/7 week) due to staffing shortages within planning authorities, thereby severely constraining public participation. Although access to planning information is provided within these limited hours, the travel distance to the local planning authority and the availability of public transport for citizens can be an issue especially in larger rural counties.

Public participation in the forward planning and development control processes is somewhat compromised by procedural rules. All local authorities apply a charge (to cover the cost of production) to purchase paper copies of Development Plans and their associated land-use maps, although many local authorities now publish both of these documents on their websites. Local authorities also charge citizens to make objections to planning applications at the application stage and during appeals (currently €20), and appeals are only accepted if the same person previously submitted an objection at the application stage. All of these rules contrive to limit public participation and some expressly prohibit social inclusion by applying a charge to participate.

It is recognised that there is a major educational issue to inform the public how and why to participate in the forward planning and development control processes (Ryser, 2003). The implementation of ICTs would permit the adoption of a direct democracy model in which the opinions and preferences of the public could have a significant impact on decision making (McDonagh, 2001).

[#] For reasons of confidentiality the planning authorities cannot be named.

5 USE OF ICTs IN PLANNING

ICTs provide a range of new possibilities to compliment traditional ways of employment and of interacting with others and what is evolving via information society initiatives is a fundamental change in service provision. The Irish governments' first action plan on the information society (DoT, 1999) used a three-stranded e-government approach for online delivery of public services: (a) information services - ensuring all public service information was available online via Department & Agency websites, as well as being delivered through traditional channels, (b) interactive services - enabling complete transactions to be conducted through electronic channels and (c) integrated services - re-engineering information and service delivery to suit user needs and developing a public services broker to supply government services through a single point of contact (www.reach.ie).

Although the implementation of the first plan was successful, rising standards elsewhere provide challenges to continually innovate, so the initial plan was superseded with a new action plan in 2002 (DoT, 2002). The new plan focuses on three key infrastructures: (a) developing the capacity necessary for delivery of advanced telecommunications services; (b) providing a secure legal framework for electronic transactions that businesses and consumers can use with confidence and (c) government playing a key leadership role in encouraging wider engagement with ICTs through its own business processes and service delivery arrangements. The new plan also contains a list of flagship projects, two of which directly relate to the planning and development system. The first project due for release early in 2005 includes an online facility providing access to the forward planning process to permit citizen interaction with the draft Development Plan, and development control process by supplying planning application forms on-line and to permit registering of unauthorised developments, commencement notices, and objections to planning applications by citizens on-line.

The second project named gPlan (GIS Planning) uses an integrated intranet/internet planning GIS (geographic information system) to provide documents and graphics relating to the planning register, Development Plans, and the forward planning and development control processes to remote users to view, analyse and make submissions via the system (www.proteus.ie). This project developed for the local authorities of Meath, Kildare and Donegal and the Local Government Computer Services Board is currently at proof of concept stage and key aspects are:

- To provide automatic display of appropriate Ordnance Survey Ireland mapping;
- To provide full access to the full text of the Development Plan for any policy objective or land-use zoning selected on the map;
- On-line submission of input by interested parties on any Development Plan policy objectives;
- To view full details of planning applications selected on the map, including a history of planning decisions in the area;
- To produce a notification report of overlaps of planning applications with Development Plan zonings, National Heritage Areas (NHAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs,) and Sites and Monuments.

5.1 Physical Access to Information for Public Participation in Planning

Physical access to information is the first key component necessary for public participation, which was identified as a right in the Freedom of Information Act (Oireachtas, 1997). The on-line ePlanning facility via the Public Service Broker portal should significantly improve the period of access by providing a 24/7 service, and should also permit access from remote locations over the internet. Many thousands of personal computers (PC) have been installed in public libraries during phase one of the Information Society Action Plan, trying to minimise the digital divide by providing access to the internet to those who do not have PCs at home.

Since the forward planning and development control processes both operate within statutory time periods, it is not only necessary to provide access, but access must be permitted within the statutory time period. If the process operates within an 8-week period and the information is not available until the start of week 2 (12.5% loss) or week 3 (25% loss), this loss of access hinders participation. This loss of access would be an ideal indicator of the success or otherwise of the new online access mechanisms and planning authorities should be required to maintain their loss below target values and publish information quarterly on whether targets are being achieved.

It is clear that improving public participation will not thrive unless the employment of ICTs in the interaction between government and citizens is at a sophisticated level. However, the existence of websites merely providing access to information about government services does little to change this manner of interaction between government and the citizen (McDonagh, 2001).

5.2 Intellectual Access to Information for Public Participation in Planning

The development control process requires a diverse range of planners, architects, engineers, project proponents, local politicians and the public to be able to conceptualise development proposals from documents supplied with planning applications. This necessitates reading maps, trying to visualise ideas in 3D from 2D schematic drawings and plans, and also understanding scientific evidence supplied in environmental impact statements (EISs) on impacts on water, fauna, traffic flows, and landscape. Therefore, intellectual access to information is the second key component necessary for participation, and how the information is presented can either impede or facilitate its understanding. Consequently, there is a need to examine the way information is currently presented in order to develop new paradigms to maximise communication, understanding and participation for all involved.

5.2.1 Capacity Building

The current process demands that individuals and community groups are aware of how the planning processes operate in order to allow them participate. This could be a dangerous assumption, which may divorce many citizens from the planning and development system and highlights a need to educate the public on how to participate and the need for participation by developing a sense of community ownership. Since public participation should be inclusive and not marginalize any social groups, this capacity building might best be provided during the mandatory schooling period before the age of 16. A planning and development module in the Civil Social and Political Education (CSPE) curriculum in second level could satisfy this need. The module would be specifically designed to educate how these processes operate and what role the public is expected to play in a democratic society. A second module should also be developed to educate existing adults how to participate and encourage them to become involved in their local communities.

5.2.2 Presentation of information

There is a need to examine the way information is currently presented in order to develop new paradigms to maximise communication, understanding and participation for all involved. Technical and scientific information can be difficult to grasp in text or in tabular form. Planning authorities are statutorily obliged to publish planning lists of applications received, decisions made, appeals received, and appeals decisions, and most do so via their websites. However, the lists are supplied in a format, which makes it difficult to find the information required, by having to read through page after page of textual data. This type of information needs to be re-engineered and supplied in a format, which assists rather than confuses knowledge.

Concepts can also be grasped much more quickly if presented graphically. Graphics not only disseminate the basic information but they can also indicate how elements are linked and how processes operate chronologically. One of the aims of the Information Society policy is to re-engineer existing processes to ensure government services are client focussed. This was successfully achieved in providing government information using a concept of lifecycles for citizens (www.oasis.gov.ie) and for businesses (www.basis.ie).

Changes in the landscape arising from new developments have a direct, immediate and visible effect upon people's surroundings, thereby arousing strong feelings. Immediate opinions are stimulated when people are visually confronted with a constructed development. Using visualisation techniques within the development control process is an important way of stimulating the public into vocalising opinions at a stage when the development is not yet built and their opinions can make a difference (Bell, 1999).

Many examples exist where geographic information system (GIS) technology has been successfully applied to improve existing planning processes, but radical changes are required to examine development proposals visually and optimise public participation in the process using visualisation techniques. Geo-visualisation is a relatively new area of geographic information research that integrates approaches from visualisation in scientific computing (ViSC), cartography, image analysis, information visualisation, exploratory data analysis (EDA) and GIS to provide the theory, methods and tools for visual exploration, analysis, synthesis and presentation of geographic information (MacEachren & Kraak, 2000). The strength of the combination of all these disciplines is the opportunity to look at data differently and stimulate so-called visual thinking by visual exploration and analysis. Two important functions of geo-visualisation in planning are exploration and collaboration. Professionals (planners, architects and engineers) can use geovisualisation for visual thinking to explore and preview different planning scenarios. Collaboration has to do with presenting development proposals visually between the various groups (planners, architects, engineers, project proponents, local politicians and the public) at different stages of the development control process. These geo-visualisation techniques can dramatically improve understanding of the planning issues, entice wider public participation by presenting the issues in a format which is more easily understood, and lead towards improved planning decisions and a better environment. Furthermore, the internet seems to be the logical delivery mechanism for collaboration to disseminate these geo-visualisations and as a resource to provide forums, chat rooms and email for discussing development alternatives (Jiang et al, 2002).

5.3 Implications of Public Participation to Collaborative Governance

There are many examples of significant improvements in public participation when investment is committed to local community groups (Clarke, 1999; Haughey, 2004) so funding should be provided for community groups across all social classes to assist participation at community level and ensure participation is widespread both thematically and geographically.

Supplying information in current formats from websites will not in itself improve participation. The information needs to be re-engineered to suit the public and its' provision in graphical formats using visualisation techniques should assist information understanding. The new ePlanning and gPlan facilities for the forward planning and development control processes are eagerly awaited and should provide the tools necessary to significantly improve citizen interaction in the planning and development system.

The development of eDemocracy can be viewed as underpinning a new approach to democratic theory where the basis of this theory is that representational democracy has failed. The perceived weaknesses of existing democratic arrangements are that members of the representative assemblies represent partisan interests, that they tend to follow only their own partial understanding of what is good for their constituencies, and that they are more responsive to the requirements of the political party they belong to, than to the citizens whose mandate they have received. The implementation of ICT, it is argued, will allow for the adoption of the more desirable model of direct democracy in which the opinions and preferences of all members of the public can have a significant impact on decision making (McDonagh, 2001).

6 CONCLUSIONS

- The results of the survey of visual impact assessment indicate a low use (21%) of visualisation techniques for VIA in Ireland in the late 1990s, and there is a need to investigate why this is so. Obstacles limiting the use of visualisation techniques such as availability of skilled staff or availability, suitability or cost of spatial data should be examined and eliminated to encourage improved use of visualisation techniques.
- The gPlan facility currently being piloted and tested should permit maximum use of the full range of visualisation techniques available and should examine the concepts used in geo-visualisation to explore, analyse and present data in visual formats to assist understanding and encourage public participation.
- Consideration should be given to replacing the word 'consultation' with 'participation' in planning and development regulations to minimise the use of public consultation in a closed manner and to maximise participation of local communities in planning and development processes.

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<http://www.reach.ie>