Response

- The respective councils worked with centre owners, other investors and developers, operators, adjacent owners, the police, other public services and the local community/partnerships (many of these centres were in designated areas of Government priority comparable to Ballymun Regeneration).
- Masterplans and development/implementation studies were commissioned.
- Floorspace was reconfigured which included development of servicing space and the increase of the footprint of the anchor supermarket.
- Where necessary, the councils used their Compulsory Purchase Order powers to achieve the land assembly required.
- Marketing to and negotiation with predominantly the discount retailers on the back of securing the anchor supermarket as this profile of operator was found to best meet local needs in these centres. A mix of national and regional operators was signed up and in the larger centres this included some international multiples.
- The introduction of CCTV cameras, Centre Managers, a local government and enhanced police presence and a commitment to revenue spend on maintenance to address graffiti and vandalism.

5.24 The Corduff Shopping Centre is a valuable retail location that through the above steps could better meet the needs of the local community. A bold approach is required and this is something that should be embraced by the Strategy.

Donabate

5.25 Donabate is located in the Metropolitan Area and is designated as a Local Centre in the GDA and County retail hierarchies and a Moderate Growth Town in both the County Urban Hierarchy and the Regional Planning Guidelines. In the review of the County Retail Hierarchy, Donabate is more appropriately designated as a Metropolitan Area Level 4 Expanding Suburban Village Centre. It has a compact retail offer largely comprising one enclosed shopping centre of thirteen units anchored by SuperValu. The village's retail offer is predominantly local independently operated convenience floorspace. Supporting services include a credit union, solicitors, estate agents, insurance services, a restaurant, two bars and a medical centre. It has very much the feel of a growing centre and this is evidenced by the fact that Donabate's population more than doubled between 1996 and 2002. This growth is set to continue given the residential zonings that prevail. As its growth continues, there will be a need for the village to evolve and provide an increasing range of retail floorspace and local services. While local people will still look to Swords for their main shopping needs, Donabate should aim to become more self-sufficient.

Howth

5.26 Howth is a small, attractive and historic fishing village that has become a highly desirable location to live with a predominantly high income population in the village and its immediate catchment. It is a Metropolitan Area Level 4 Neighbourhood Centre in the GDA and County retail hierarchies and a Suburban Centre in the County Urban Hierarchy. Under the review of the County Retail Hierarchy, Howth is more appropriately designated as a Metropolitan Area Level 4 Traditional Suburban Village Centre. Howth has become increasingly characterised by restaurants, cafes and bars and is a popular leisure destination within the GDA. Catalysts have been the thriving marina, attractive harbour and historic waterfront, regeneration of the quays with investment by niche operators (such as Wrights of Howth) and a number of acclaimed restaurants.

5.27 The main retail area of the village is away from the waterfront and largely limited to a small line of frontages on Main Street and more recently along Harbour Road. Howth's retail offer has declined further since 2001 as a result of its changing character and the limitations of its retail footprints which do not meet the requirements of modern operators. There is no major convenience store and a limited range of other convenience floorspace. Comparison floorspace is aimed at speciality retailing although this is relatively limited in scale. The topography of the village, which rises steeply from the harbour to Howth Head, plus the heritage/form of Howth, limits the scope for any large scale retail development to meet in particular the main food and top-up shopping needs of local people.

5.28 Howth has many locational, heritage, environmental and leisure strengths. However, the potential of these is not being fully harnessed. There are untapped opportunities to capture this potential and enhance the offer and attraction of the village, particularly in and around the waterfront. This should be the focus of the Strategy's objectives for Howth and is set out in Section 6.

Lusk

5.29 Lusk is a Hinterland Area Level 4 Local Centre in the GDA and County retail hierarchies. In the Regional Planning Guidelines, it is designated as a Moderate Growth Town in the Hinterland Area and, with Rush, a Secondary Dynamic Cluster. It is an attractive small local centre with a tight urban core and a limited retail offer. Some residential development has occurred in recent years however its population grew below the County, GDA and national averages between 1996 and 2002. Consistent with the sequential approach, the Action Area Plan for the village seeks to direct new retailing to the village centre. There is market interest in Lusk and in the village centre, as illustrated by planning permission for a supermarket of the order of 1,000m^2 in size. At February 2004, the freeze date for baseline information on extant planning permissions, it was the subject of a revised application. The store would greatly improve the convenience offer of the village, particularly for top-up shopping. There is scope for additional development on the adjacent former horticultural site. The nature and scale of any potential development will not however redress the need for local people to travel for main food shopping. In addition, accepting that the priority is the village/town centre, there is scope for limited local convenience shopping within the new residential areas. Reflecting Lusk's designations in the Regional Planning Guidelines, the pending growth of the centre and its expanding retail and services offer, in the review of the County Retail Hierarchy, Lusk is designated as a Level 4 Hinterland Area Village Centre.

Malahide

5.30 Malahide is combined with nearby Portmarnock as a centre in the GDA retail hierarchy as a Metropolitan Area Level 3 Town and/or District Centre. The 2003 Strategy split the two centres and designated Malahide as a Metropolitan Area Level 3 Town Centre, the only one in the County. In the interim years since the preparation of the GDA Retail Study and the County Retail Strategy, there has been an increasing recognition that Malahide has limited potential to sustain and grow its role and potential as a 'Town Centre' within the GDA or County retail hierarchies. This is evidenced by the fact that it had very low population growth (2.1%) between 1996 and 2002. It is a trend that is set to continue largely due to the lack of available residential land. In the emerging review of the County Development Plan, it has been designated as a Suburban Centre. In respect of the County Retail Hierarchy, Malahide still remains one of the most important retail centres in the County. For this reason, over the period of the Strategy, it remains a Metropolitan Area Level 3 Town Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy.

5.31 It is a destination shopping centre with quality boutiques, restaurants and a busy marina and waterfront. There is strong demand for units and concern that retail floorspace is being eroded by the demand for commercial leisure. There is no major superstore within or abounding the centre and its convenience offer is anchored by a SuperValu and two other symbol group stores – Londis and Mace. The potential for expansion of retail floorspace in the core of the centre is limited, with only a few small scale opportunities for redevelopment and/or rationalisation/improvement of existing floorspace. Current mixed use redevelopments include the corner of Main Street and Church Street and on Lower Church Street. The marina area of the town does provide opportunities for additional floorspace but potential is constrained by access to the area, specifically in terms of the private car or public transport. The implication of these factors is that further retail developments in Malahide are unlikely to be large scale. As a consequence local people will have to continue to travel for main food shopping. This is a significant issue given that Malahide's role and importance as the only GDA hierarchy Level 3 Town Centre in the County. It must therefore be a priority that even in the absence of a major convenience superstore that the town's position in the hierarchy is sustained.

Ongar

5.32 Ongar is set to grow as a village over the timescale of the County Retail Strategy and has emerged as a growing centre since the 2003 Strategy. It is strategically located to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding districts of Littleplace, Castaheaney and Hansfield in West Blanchardstown in the Metropolitan Area of the GDA. The area is witnessing rapid residential development and, in parallel, to meet the needs of this expanding population a new village centre anchored by Dunnes Stores is currently under construction. The store is programmed to open in Autumn 2004. Reflecting the emerging role and function of the village in the County Retail Hierarchy, Ongar is designated as Metropolitan Area Level 4 Expanding Suburban Village Centre.

Portmarnock

5.33 While combined with Malahide as a Level 3 Town and/or District Centre in the GDA retail hierarchy, within the 2003 County Retail Hierarchy Portmarnock is designated as a Level 4 Neighbourhood Centre. Like Malahide, Portmarnock is a Suburban Centre in the County Urban Hierarchy. Contrary to national, regional and county trends, Portmarnock witnessed an 8.4% decline in its population between 1996 and 2002. This decline stems from a combination of lack of development, lack of land for development and an aging population. There has been an 8% decline in those under 14 and a 9% increase in people over 45. In common with Malahide, Portmarnock has limited residential land for future expansion. It is a dispersed centre comprising a range of small retail units along the main road (Strand Street), a small shopping centre on the coast road and a Dunnes Shopping Centre in th Carrickhill Housing Estate. Portmarnock is an affluent and desirable place to live with key attractions being its coastal location and internationally renowned golf course. Its retail offer is limited but there is evidence of an intensification of retail uses along Strand Road since the GDA floorspace survey. The additional floorspace is predominantly comparison shopping. Any future increase in floorspace is likely to be through further intensification/redevelopment of existing floorspace if local needs in this area are to be better met particularly in respect of convenience floorspace. Reflecting its characteristics and the expansion of the types of Level 4 Neighbourhood Centres in the review of the County Retail Hierarchy, Portmarnock is designated as a Metropolitan Area Level 4 Suburban Village Centre in the retail hierarchy.

Roselawn Shopping Centre

5.34 Roselawn Shopping Centre is a freestanding purpose built circa 1970s shopping centre located within a predominantly private residential area close to Blanchardstown Shopping Centre. In contrast to Corduff Shopping Centre, it is a busy and relatively healthy centre with few signs of vandalism. It was designated as a Level 4 Metropolitan Area Neighbourhood Centre in the GDA and County retail hierarchies and this is reaffirmed in the review of the County Retail Hierarchy. At the time of the health check, there was one vacancy which was awaiting a change of use to operate as a betting shop. The shopping centre is anchored by Tesco, who also purchased the centre in the last few years, which considerably adds to its strength and attraction. With the exception of Tesco and Boots, the retail profile of Roselawn is predominantly independent local traders with some ladies clothes shops and a hardware store. There is also a bar – the Roselawn Inn. However, it is a centre that is out dated and in need of investment/refurbishment. This requires to be addressed over the course of the Strategy.

Rush

5.35 Rush is designated as a Hinterland Area Level 4 Local Centre in the GDA and County retail hierarchies and a Small Growth Town in County Urban Hierarchy. With Lusk, under the Regional Planning Guidelines, Rush is designated as a Moderate Growth Town and Secondary Development Cluster in the Hinterland Area. In the review of the County Retail Hierarchy, Rush is designated as a Hinterland Area Level 4 Village Centre. Rush experienced a significant population increase (24.7%) between 1996 and 2002 and is characterised as a growing population centre set on the coast. Whilst vibrant, Rush has a relatively poor environment and a fragmented retail offer. It is a centre in transition. Rush is a key horticultural centre, evidenced by the acres of glasshouses located close to the rear of the main street and spread around the village centre. It is however becoming increasingly a dormitory village for commuters to Dublin and other larger centres. Rush's retail offer is characterised by local independent convenience stores with some symbol group representation and a limited number of comparison outlets. It has the scope through regeneration of its main street backlands for new floorspace to meet the convenience needs of this expanding settlement.

Skerries

5.36 Skerries is an attractive, vibrant and popular coastal resort, making it a desirable place to live. This is reflected in the 24.7% increase in the town's population between 1996 and 2002. Skerries is the fifth largest settlement and fifth largest retail centre in the County below Blanchardstown, Swords, Malahide and Balbriggan. In the GDA retail hierarchy, it is designated as a Hinterland Area Level 4 Local Centre – Small Towns and Villages. For consistency this was applied within the 2003 County

Retail Hierarchy resulting in Skerries being designated at the same level as Lusk and Rush in the hierarchy. It comes under the definition of a Moderate Growth Town in the Regional Planning Guidelines and the County Urban Hierarchy.

5.37 The town is clearly an important centre within both the County's Urban Hierarchy and its retail hierarchy. We have compared its population size and quantum of floorspace with that of other centres in the Hinterland Area of the GDA. From the analysis, Skerries' role and importance is not that of a Local Centre and it is not a Small Town in the GDA Hinterland Area context. In the review of the County Retail Hierarchy, Skerries is designated as a Hinterland Area Tier 2 Level 3 Town Centre, below Balbriggan in this level of the hierarchy.

5.38 A former small fishing port, today this asset, its beach and its supporting tourism infrastructure (including some well renowned bars and restaurants) are important in the economy of the town. Retail floorspace is predominantly that of independent convenience traders but it has a good range of comparison outlets and other services plus a theatre. These characteristics combine to make it a higher order centre within the County. It has a historic and attractive urban form, very few vacant retail properties and little opportunity for any major new retail development within the town centre. However, there has been a quality infill development by SuperValu which reflects that the challenge of achieving new development within the town centre and the adjacent backlands can be met. Skerries requires to see its convenience offer further enhanced to meet the needs of expanding population more sustainably.

Sutton/Baldoyle

5.39 Sutton and Baldoyle are two very different adjacent centres that were a combined centre within the 2003 County Retail Hierarchy and together were designated as a Metropolitan Area Level 4 Neighbourhood Centre. Both are separately designated in the County Urban Hierarchy as Suburban Centres. In order to assess where they should sit in the review of the County Retail Hierarchy, both need to be looked at individually in the first instance.

5.40 **Sutton** is a compact and busy centre located at Sutton Crossroads which benefits from being close to/on the route to both Howth and Malahide/Portmarnock. It comprises the Sutton Superquinn Centre and the Sutton Cross Centre. The former is a key anchor and attraction of the centre but it is inhibited by the road configuration and congestion. With the exception of Superquinn, convenience retailers are predominantly local independent traders. In addition, reflecting the affluence of the area, for its size Sutton has a good range of fashion outlets. Its immediate residential hinterland limits the development of any further new retail floorspace unless there is redevelopment/intensification of use of floorspace. It is a centre of high demand and space stays vacant only for a very short time.

5.41 **Baldoyle** currently comprises the old village centre and the Baldoyle Racecourse Shopping Centre. The former is very small and limited to a number of local shops. As with Sutton (noting that it is very limited in comparison to Sutton's offer), in view of the fact that it is set within a predominantly residential area then the opportunities for expanding the retail centre are limited, now and in the future. This has also to be put in the context of the proximity, scale and competition from other existing and emerging retail schemes in the locality and a less affluent population than its neighbour. Baldoyle Village is designated as a Metropolitan Area Suburban Village in the County Urban Hierarchy and as a Level 4 Suburban Neighbourhood Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. Baldoyle Racecourse is identified as a Neighbourhood Village in the County Urban Hierarchy and as a Level 4 Suburban Neighbourhood Facility in the County Retail Hierarchy. While there is limited scope for development within the village, there are opportunities at the Baldoyle Racecourse. These are:

- Baldoyle Racecourse Shopping Centre – which had a high level of vacancies but, as anticipated in the 2003 Strategy, the opening of Lidl has greatly reduced the number of vacancies to one unit.
- The proposed major mixed scheme on the former racecourse site is the subject of the Baldoyle and Portmarnock Action Area Plan. Part of this is the development of a mixed use centre around the proposed Baldoyle DART Station. It is envisaged that it will be a local centre in scale in respect of its retail content.

5.42 However, within the County Urban Hierarchy Baldoyle is an important emerging growth centre for the south eastern part of Fingal. The Action Area Plan for the former racecourse site indicates that the plan area will grow with over 2,000 new dwellings to be serviced by the new station. Baldolye's proximity to the planned growth of the neighbouring Dublin City Council North Fringe Area means that it has the potential to cater for a population of well over 15,000. As such, Baldoyle has been identified in the County Urban Hierarchy and the Regional Planning Guidelines as a Metropolitan Area Moderate Growth Town.

5.43 It is clear that while Sutton and Baldoyle are adjacent centres, they are very different in terms of their catchment areas and offers. The changes that are taking place at Baldoyle further reinforce the differences. In the review of the County Retail Hierarchy, they are individually designated as Metropolitan Area Level 4 Suburban Neighbourhood Centres. The role and function of Baldoyle requires to be monitored over the timescale of the Strategy to ensure that its retail offer and services adequately respond to the area's expanding population.

Swords

5.44 Swords has witnessed a major transformation in its profile and retail offer in recent years due to the following catalysts:

i. The relocation of the County Council's Headquarters from O'Connell Street in Dublin City Centre to its award winning offices in Swords Town Centre;

ii. The opening of The Pavillions, the major new quality shopping centre in the town centre; and

iii. The opening and expansion of Airside Retail Park close to the town centre.

5.45 The consequence of the first two in particular, combined with recent creative retail, commercial and residential development in the town centre, has made Swords a very busy and vibrant town centre with consequential high levels of traffic congestion. The Pavillions appears to have had the effect of displacing retail activity from the north of the town centre resulting in vacancies in this area of the centre. The relocation of the County Council to this area has however resulted in the introduction of a greater diversity of uses including enhancement of the centre's restaurant, commercial leisure and business support services. A strong attraction and anchor in the town centre was Superquinn. This major convenience operator has relocated to The Pavillions, which also is anchored by a Dunnes department store. Superquinn's former premises, which are adjacent to The Pavillions, are vacant but have planning consent for a mixed use scheme which incorporates retail floorspace and also provides the scope for direct pedestrian linkage from The Pavillions to the remainder of the town centre. We understand that the anchor for the scheme will be Penneys.

5.46 There is planning consent for Phase II of The Pavillions. The retail component of this is a small part of the extension with the bulk being commercial leisure, specifically a multiplex cinema. In the overall picture for The Pavillions, it is envisaged that there will be a third phase to the scheme, subject to transportation and highways issues being addressed. Currently, Phase I is causing considerable congestion in the town centre and onto the town bypass (the former N1). The completion and opening of the M1 has partially reduced the issue but the popularity of the town and The Pavillions still generates considerable volumes of traffic. There is scope for improved public transport to further help address the issues. A major part of the transportation strategy for the town is the extension of the proposed City Centre – Airport Metro line to Swords. The Metro would run along the town bypass and there would be a station close to the town centre. A decision on the Metro Project has been anticipated over the last two years but is still awaited. Current traffic issues have the potential to constrain further development of the town, and not solely in respect of retail floorspace, and any town centre expansion. There is therefore a need for a masterplan/integrated land use and transportation study for Swords that sets out the long term vision for the town and provides the guidance needed to achieve and secure its potential as a Major Town Centre in the GDA.

5.47 The old town centre of Swords is characterised largely by small independent shops and supporting services along Main Street and within a number of malls and shopping centres/courtyards. There is limited scope for further major retail development within the core of the centre although there could be backlands development on the west of Main Street, accepting that this will be limited by topography and the size of the potential development footprint. Consultations with Council Officers have identified potential for regeneration of lands to the immediate north of the town centre. This will require site assembly and working with the private sector.

5.48 Swords is an expanding major centre in the GDA, as recognised in its designation as a Metropolitan Area Level 2 Major Town Centre in the GDA Retail Strategy hierarchy. This is consistent with the County Urban Hierarchy which identifies Swords as a Metropolitan Consolidation Town. The importance of Swords within the GDA is also recognised in its designation in the Regional Planning Guidelines as a Metropolitan Consolidation Town. In the review of the County Retail Hierarchy, Swords designation as a Metropolitan Area Level 2 Major Town Centre is reaffirmed. Swords has a range of the higher order comparison multiples that typically characterise Major Town Centres. Unlike Blanchardstown, Liffey Valley or the new Dundrum Shopping Centre, however, it does not have a department store (such as a Roches (new concept/format), Debenhams, Arnotts, Clearys or House of Fraser) and/or a Marks and Spencer. In an ever increasingly competitive market place, these are important attractors to centres. This is a gap that must be addressed to ensure that the current competitiveness of Swords and the County as a whole is sustained. It is unlikely that this will be possible within the confines of the current town centre and thus expansion of the town centre requires to be considered as an option.

5.49 Swords' expansion does not only have implications for the town centre. The major increases in population – 21.8% between 1996 and 2002 – from residential expansion require that local needs be met both within new areas of development and in existing areas and centres. In and around the town centre and the environs of the town, there are a number of centres that serve an important local role. These on the whole are out dated in terms of retail offer and design. It is important therefore in the context of Swords that the Strategy should set down objectives that:

- Consistent with the RPG, enable the development of new district/neighbourhood centres in areas of major residential development
- Promotes the enhancement and/or redevelopment of existing suburban shopping centres.

Tyrrelstown

5.50 Tyrrelstown is currently a small village located close to Mulhuddart and the N3 and is identified as the strategic centre for North West Blanchardstown in the emerging County Development Plan. It is designated as a Neighbourhood Village in the County Urban Hierarchy and a Metropolitan Area Level 4 Neighbourhood Centre in the adopted County Retail Hierarchy. Tyrrelstown is an expanding village, and is set to grow substantially over the period of the Strategy. As such, in the review of the County Retail Hierarchy, Tyrrelstown is designated as a Metropolitan Area Level 4 Expanding Suburban Village Centre. Over the period of the Strategy and beyond, it will be important to ensure the retail needs of its expanding population are met and to that end sufficient land is zoned and retained for the future enhancement of the village centre's retail and services offer.

CORE RETAIL AREAS

5.51 All of the centres reviewed above were examined on the ground in respect of defining their Core Retail Areas. The definition of Core Retail Areas is a considerable move from the broad town centre uses zonings that have characterised development plans on the whole to date. As with the 2003 Strategy, it is thus important to clarify what Core Retail Areas are and why they have emerged as an instrument of policy and a requirement of the RPG. We address these under the following headings:

i. What characteristics define Core Retail Areas?

ii. Why is it important to define them?; and

iii. How is this applied at the County settlement level?

Characteristics that define Core Retail Areas

5.52 The Core Retail Area of a centre is normally defined as the area including and immediate to the 'prime pitch'. That is the area which achieves the highest rentals, best yields, is highest in demand from retailers/operators/developers and investors, is overwhelmingly retail floorspace and has the highest footfall of shoppers. Outside of this area, there may be other important retail areas or freestanding shopping centres. In respect of the former, retail floorspace would be only one of the town centre uses. The mix of uses normally would be commercial leisure, service related or residential and such areas are termed the secondary and tertiary retail areas of larger centres. The latter will only normally be a feature of larger centres. In fact, it is important to highlight that some smaller centres may not have what can be defined as a Core Retail Area as the centre may be fragmented and the retail market more locally driven.

Why is it important to define Core Retail Areas?

5.53 The RPG set down the **Sequential Approach** to the determination of retail applications. This essentially recognises the importance of sustaining the retail importance, vitality and viability of town centres (or district or large village centres). The emphasis in the RPG, and taken forward in the GDA Strategy and the 2003 County Retail Strategy, is on town centres, their redevelopment and expansion. Proposals for major retail schemes are required to take due cognisance of this as follows:

- In the first instance, the priority should be in locating new retail development within town centres.
- If town centre locations are not readily available within a reasonable and realistic timescale then edge of centre sites should be looked to. In the RPG, these are defined as sites that are within 300 – 400 metres of the **Core Retail Area**.
- Only after the options for town centre and edge of centre are exhausted should out of centre locations and sites be considered.

5.54 Therefore, in order to be able to undertake the Sequential Approach, then the starting point is the definition of the Core Retail Area of main centres.

How is this applied at the County Settlement Level?

5.55 The focus is on **main centres** as this is where large scale new retail development will be located, through the control applied by respecting the retail hierarchy. Additionally, from the health checks it is clear that it is not always necessary or appropriate for Core Retail Areas to be defined for smaller centres in the hierarchy. The main centres are taken to be those that are at the highest levels in the GDA retail hierarchy, namely Level 2 and 3 centres. Core Retail Areas are defined for these centres in the final section of the Strategy.

SEQUENTIAL APPROACH

5.56 All of the centres were examined against the principles of the Sequential Approach in respect of ***land availability*** and ***potential***. The main findings of the assessment are summarised below.

Level 2 – Major Town Centres

i. **Blanchardstown:** the next phase in the expansion of the Blanchardstown Town Centre is underway. There is additional scope for greater intensification of development around the main shopping centre through the reduction in surface car parking and the incorporation of multi-storey and basement parking. A key control factor on the quantum of new floorspace will be traffic management and increased public transport; and

ii. **Swords:** the next major phase of retail development will be Phase 3 of The Pavillions, this is not anticipated until post-2006. Following that, if Swords is to sustain its role and importance within the GDA retail hierarchy then a major expansion of the town centre will be required.

Level 3 – Metropolitan Area, Town and/or District Centres and Hinterland Area Town Centres

- **Malahide**: there is little scope for new town centre development over the period of the Strategy and beyond due to the characteristics of the centre. Edge of centre locations are also limited with the lands around the marina being the only opportunity. Access to this area will limit what can be achieved.
- **Balbriggan:** has permissions in the pipeline for town centre retail schemes. The key opportunity in the centre is the 'Viaduct' site but this will take time to deliver and will be well beyond 2006. Further expansion of this rapidly growing town will require a substantial increase in retail floorspace and an extension of the town centre. This could be achieved post 2006 and the Naul Road site is an edge of centre location that could meet this need. Its location in a developing residential area with good road and transportation infrastructure means that this site is compatible with RPG advice as a potential District/Neighbourhood Centre.
- **Skerries:** is designated as a Hinterland Area Tier 2 Level 3 Town Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. It has limited scope for any substantial retail development within the town centre and to meet growing convenience needs then edge of centre and out of centre locations will require to be looked to.

Level 4 – Neighbourhood Centres and Village Centres

5.57 The Metropolitan Area Level 4 Centres are defined as either **Suburban Village Centres** or **Suburban Neighbourhood Centres**.

5.58 **Traditional Suburban/Village Centres:** are identified as **Blanchardstown Village, Castleknock, Clonsilla, Howth, Mulhuddart** and **Portmarnock,** all of which have little or no scope for expansion of retail floorspace in or on the edge of their centres.

5.59 **Expanding Suburban Village Centres:** include **Donabate, Ongar** and **Tyrrelstown** which could accommodate additional retail floorspace within their village centres and lands require to be zoned and retained to achieve this. In addition, as they grow it is likely that they will also require the designation of smaller local centres in their expanding residential areas.

5.60 Suburban Neighbourhood Centres: are predominantly purpose built suburban centres:

i. There is little scope for any expansion of the centres of **Carrickhill, Rathbeale, Roselawn** or **Sutton**;

ii. There is scope for expansion of **Corduff Shopping Centre** but this is only likely to happen in parallel with a radical remodelling of the centre; and

iii. There is scope for **Baldoyle** to grow but at present floorspace around Baldoyle Station is to be limited to neighbourhood scale retailing. There is limited potential for any expansion of the old village centre. Dublin City Council has plans for more extensive facilities in nearby areas within its local authority area.

5.61 **Suburban Neighbourhood Facilities:** are likely to see only modest expansion/redevelopment and this will require to be in, or immediately adjacent to, the centre.

5.62 There are two **Hinterland Area Level 4 Village Centres** - **Lusk** and **Rush** - in the revised County Retail Hierarchy:

- **Lusk:** has scope for new development in and around the village centre.
- **Rush:** has potential to secure revitalisation of main street sites and regeneration of its extensive main street backland areas to provide for expansion of the centre's retail floorspace well into the future.

CONCLUSION

5.63 As with the 2003 Strategy, the review of retail development concludes that the key centres in the County will have difficulty, individually and together, in delivering the quantum of floorspace that there is capacity for, specifically to 2006. Given the constraints on these main centres, then to 2011 and beyond there is even greater concern that Fingal will be able to accommodate the scale of the potential retail floorspace and there will be capacity for. Further expansion of retail floorspace to ensure the County sustains and enhances its competitiveness will require a radical approach.

6 STRATEGIC RESPONSE – THE COUNTY RETAIL STRATEGY

6.1 Every retail strategy must be clear as to its purpose and describe what it is intended to achieve. To ensure this, we have retained the logical step by step framework adopted in the 2003 County Retail Strategy, which is summarised in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1
Framework for Strategy/Policy Formulation

AIMS

↓

STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK

↓

SPECIFIC POLICIES & PROPOSALS

AIMS

6.2 The principles underpinning the County Retail Strategy are set down by the GDA Retail Strategy. In addition, it is important that the principles relate to, and are in compliance with, the **Main Aims of the Emerging County Development Plan** which provide the foundations for the emerging County Development Plan's policies and proposals. These Main Aims are presented in Figure 6.2 below.

Figure 6.2
Emerging County Development Plan Main Aims

The Main Aims of the emerging Development Plan are as follows:

- To plan for and support the sustainable development of Fingal as an integrated network of vibrant socially and economically successful settlements, separated by Greenbelt areas, supporting and contributing to the economic development of the County, of its neighbouring authorities and of the Region.
- To provide for the future well being of the residents of the County by:
  - promoting the growth of economic activity and increasing employment opportunities
  - protecting and improving the quality of the built and natural environments
  - ensuring the provision of necessary infrastructure and community services.
- To promote a balance of development across the County, by developing a hierarchy of high quality, vibrant urban centres and clearly delineated areas of growth.
- To ensure an adequate supply of zoned lands to meet forecast and anticipated economic and social needs.
- To facilitate the achievement of objectives contained in the Fingal County Development Board's 'A Strategy for Economic, Social & Cultural Development in Fingal 2002-2011.'
- To foster the development of socially and economically balanced sustainable communities, promoting social inclusion and the implementation of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- To continue to influence regional and national planning and development policies in the interest of the County. To co-operate with the regional authority and other agencies in meeting the needs and development requirements of the Dublin Region in accordance with the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the GDA.

The Strategic Policy adopted by the Council will deliver on the Main Aims by:

- Setting clear standards for sustainable development practices throughout land-use zoning categories in the Plan to foster a balance between necessary social and economic development and the promotion and protection of amenity for new and existing communities.
- Consolidating the growth of the major centres of Blanchardstown, Swords and Balbriggan largely within their previously identified limits by encouraging infill rather than greenfield development and by intensification at appropriately identified locations.

Figure 6.2 Continued
Emerging County Development Plan Main Aims

- Consolidating development to prevent urban sprawl in the coastal settlements and in the areas of Howth, Sutton, Baldoyle, Portmarnock and Malahide, while protecting and enhancing natural resources.
- Providing a viable option for the retention of the rural community by the promotion of controlled growth of rural villages balanced with careful restriction of residential development in the countryside.
- Consolidating and protecting the Greenbelt from the coast to the Meath border (inter alia separating Swords, Malahide, Portmarnock and Baldoyle) together with the other rural Greenbelts in the County.
- Protecting and maintaining areas of the natural and built heritage of the County.
- Seeking the development of a high quality public transport system within and throughout the County, including improvements to the railway infrastructure and the facilitation of QBCs and promoting the extension of any rail links that may be made from Dublin City Centre to the Airport and onwards to Swords.
- Safeguarding the current and future operational, safety, technical and developmental requirements of the Airport within a sustainable development framework, being mindful of its impact on local communities.
- Considering the provision of an identified development zone at and around the Airport and in the South Fingal Fringe that will promote particular uses that will have an added value from proximity to the Airport.
- Securing an appropriate and suitable range of land uses for Greenbelt areas which will ensure that the lands are maintained to a high standard and not allowed to fall derelict.

6.3 Within this context, the **aims** of the County Retail Strategy set the framework for the Strategy's strategic policies and specific policies and proposals. The aims in the 2003 Strategy were examined in the review of the County Retail Strategy. The review reaffirmed that the aims of the 2003 Strategy remain appropriate and valid objectives. As such, the following objectives from the 2003 Strategy continue to clearly define the purpose of the Strategy and what it is intended to achieve across the County over the periods firstly to 2006 and then to 2011:

- **Objective 1:** To sustain and improve the retail profile and competitiveness of Fingal County within the retail economy of the GDA and beyond
- **Objective 2:** To address leakage of retail expenditure from the County by providing the means to strengthen the range and quality of its retail offer
- **Objective 3:** To ensure an equitable, efficient and sustainable spatial distribution of main centres across the County

- **Objective 4:** To confirm a hierarchy which assists in defining the County's settlement structure and objectives and provides clear guidance on where major new retail floorspace would be acceptable
- **Objective 5:** To ensure that the retail needs of the County's residents are met as fully as possible within Fingal, taking due cognisance of the GDA Retail Planning Strategy hierarchy
- **Objective 6:** To encourage and facilitate the preservation and enhancement of the retail role of both individual villages and village/settlement nuclei clusters around the County
- **Objective 7:** To encourage and facilitate innovation and diversification in the County's retail profile and offer
- **Objective 8:** To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail uses, with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach as indicated in the RPG
- **Objective 9:** To provide the criteria for the assessment of retail development proposals.

STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK

6.4 The Strategic Policy Framework provides the specific policies and proposals that will achieve the Strategy's objectives. The framework set out in the 2003 Strategy was examined in the review of the County Retail Strategy and reaffirmed as appropriate and valid. It is:

i. The retail hierarchy;

ii. Core retail areas;

iii. The sequential approach;

iv. Spatial distribution of new retail development; and

v. Consideration of need.

Retail Hierarchy

6.5 Following review of the County Development Plan Urban Hierarchy and the GDA and 2003 County retail hierarchies, it is recommended that the hierarchy set out in Table 6.1 be adopted as the County Retail Hierarchy.

Table 6.1
Fingal County Retail Hierarchy

	METROPOLITAN AREA	**HINTERLAND AREA**
LEVEL 2	**Major Town Centres**	**County Town Centres**
	Swords Blanchardstown	
LEVEL 3	**Town Centres**	**Town Centres**
	Malahide	***Tier 1 Level 3 Town Centre*** Balbriggan ***Tier 2 Level 3 Town Centre*** Skerries
LEVEL 4	**Suburban Neighbourhood and Village Centres**	**Local Centres – Small Towns and Villages**
	Traditional Suburban Village Centres Blanchardstown Village, Castleknock, Clonsilla, Howth Mullhuddart and Portmarnock Village ***Expanding Suburban Village Centres*** Donabate, Ongar and Tyrrelstown ***Suburban Neighbourhood Centres*** Baldoyle, Carrickhill, Corduff, Rathbeale, Roselawn and Sutton ***Suburban Neighbourhood Facilities*** Applewood, Baldoyle Racecourse/Stapolin, Bayside, Brackenstown, Carpenterstown Drinan, Hartstown, Huntstown, Kinsealy/Feltrim, Laurel Lodge, Mountview, Nevinstown, Portrane, Rivervalley, Santry Demesne, Seabury	**Village Centres**: – Lusk, Rush
LEVEL 5	Corner Shops	Smaller Village Centres/ Crossroads

Core Retail Areas

6.6 The Core Retail Areas for each of the main centres in the County are illustrated on Figures 6.3 to 6.6. The main centres are taken to be those that are at the highest levels in the GDA hierarchy, namely Level 2 and 3 level centres. Below, we broadly summarise the definition of the Core Retail Areas for each of the relevant centres at a settlement level:

- **Balbriggan** – main street frontage from Chapel Street to The Square
- **Blanchardstown Shopping Centre** – the main shopping centre
- **Malahide** – centres on the crossroads where The Mall, Church Road and New Street converge and extends from Old Street to Townyard Lane on The Mall, to St Margaret's Avenue on Church Street and the top half of New Street
- **Swords** – frontages from Bridge Street/Chapel Lane along Main Street and to Malahide Road and incorporating The Pavillions.

6.7 It should be highlighted that due to the nature of Skerries Town Centre and the dispersed pattern of retail floorspace no Core Retail Area has been defined.

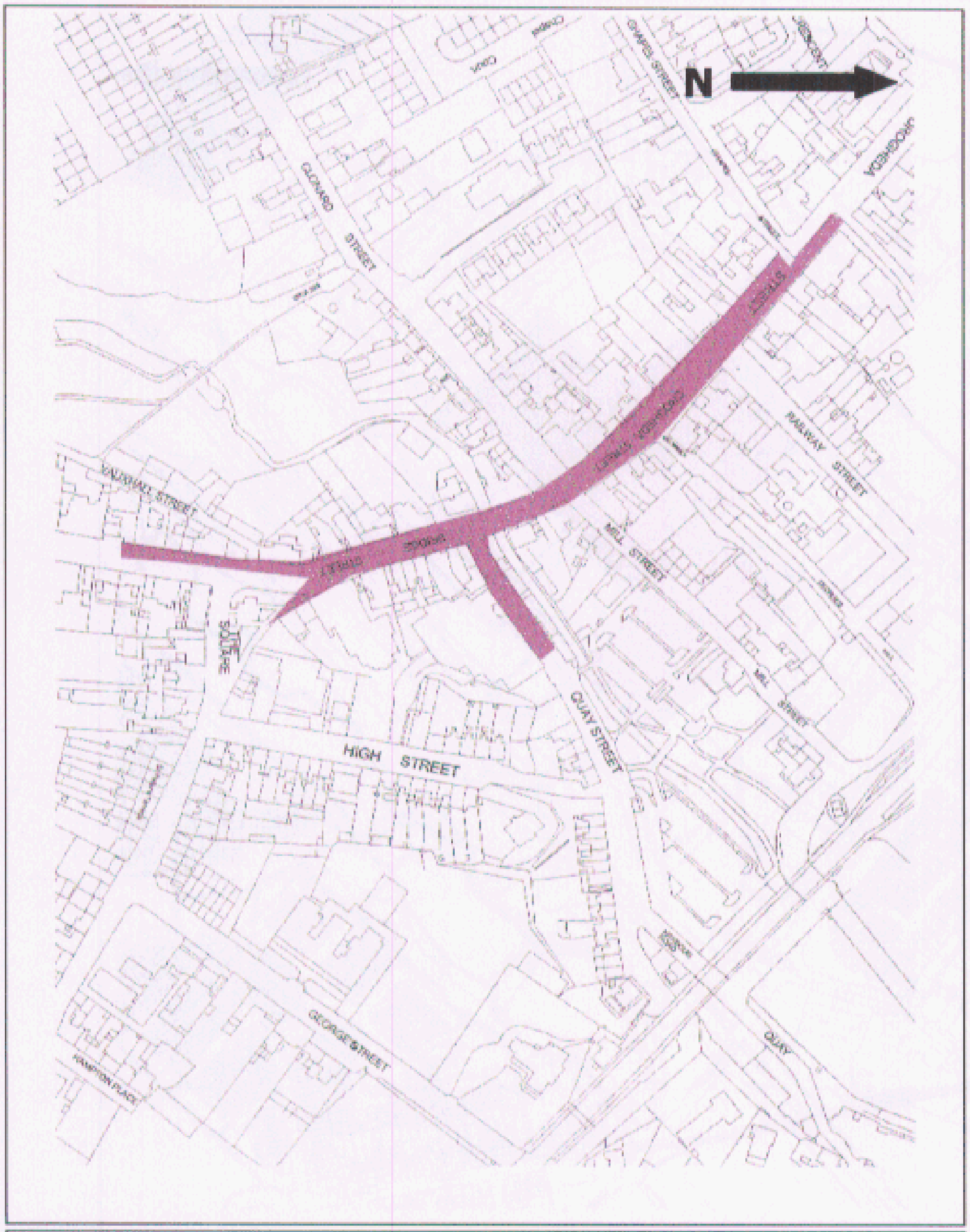

Figure 6.3: Balbriggan Core Retail Area

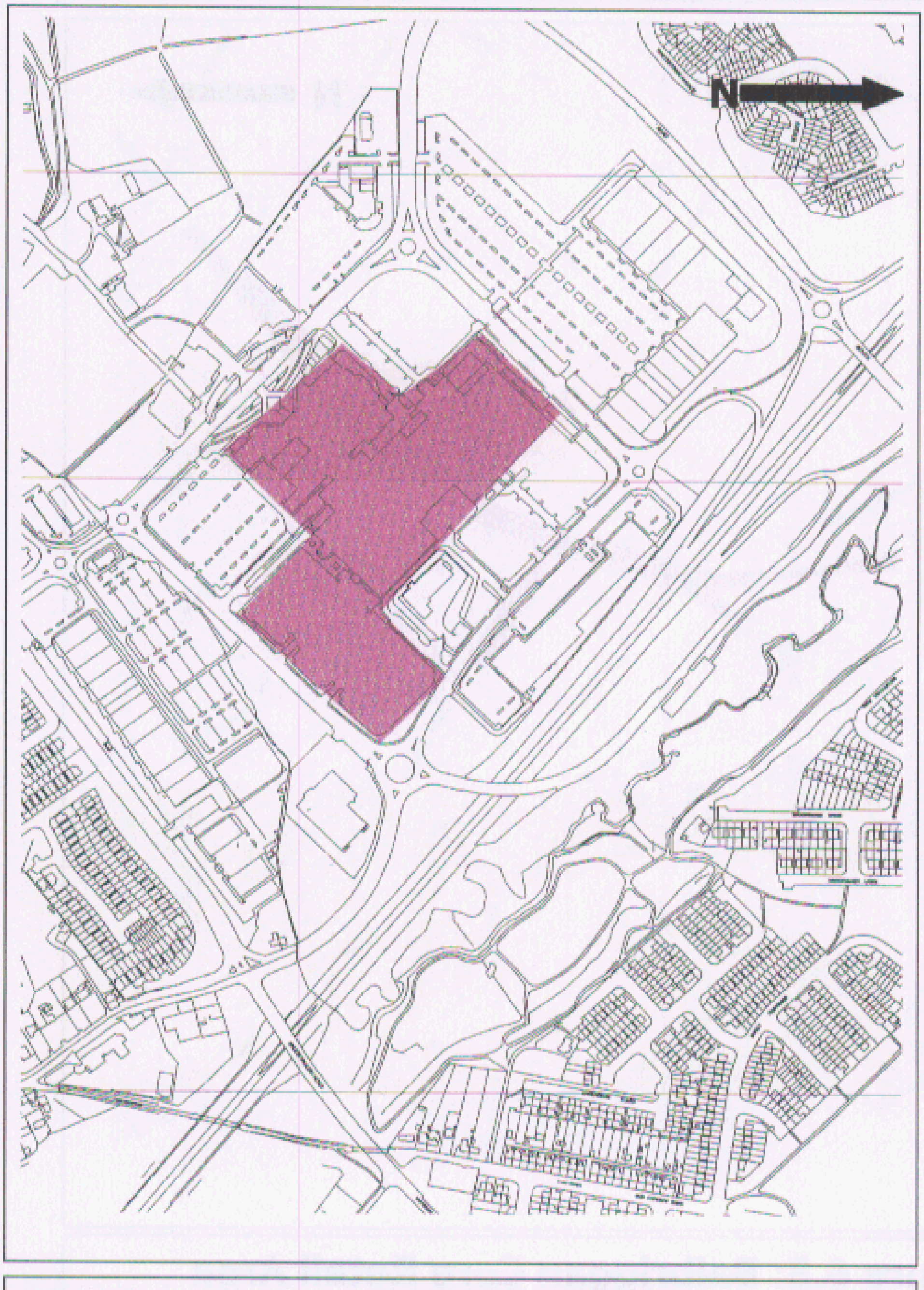

Figure 6.4: Blanchardstown Core Retail Area

Figure 6.5: Malahide Core Retail Area

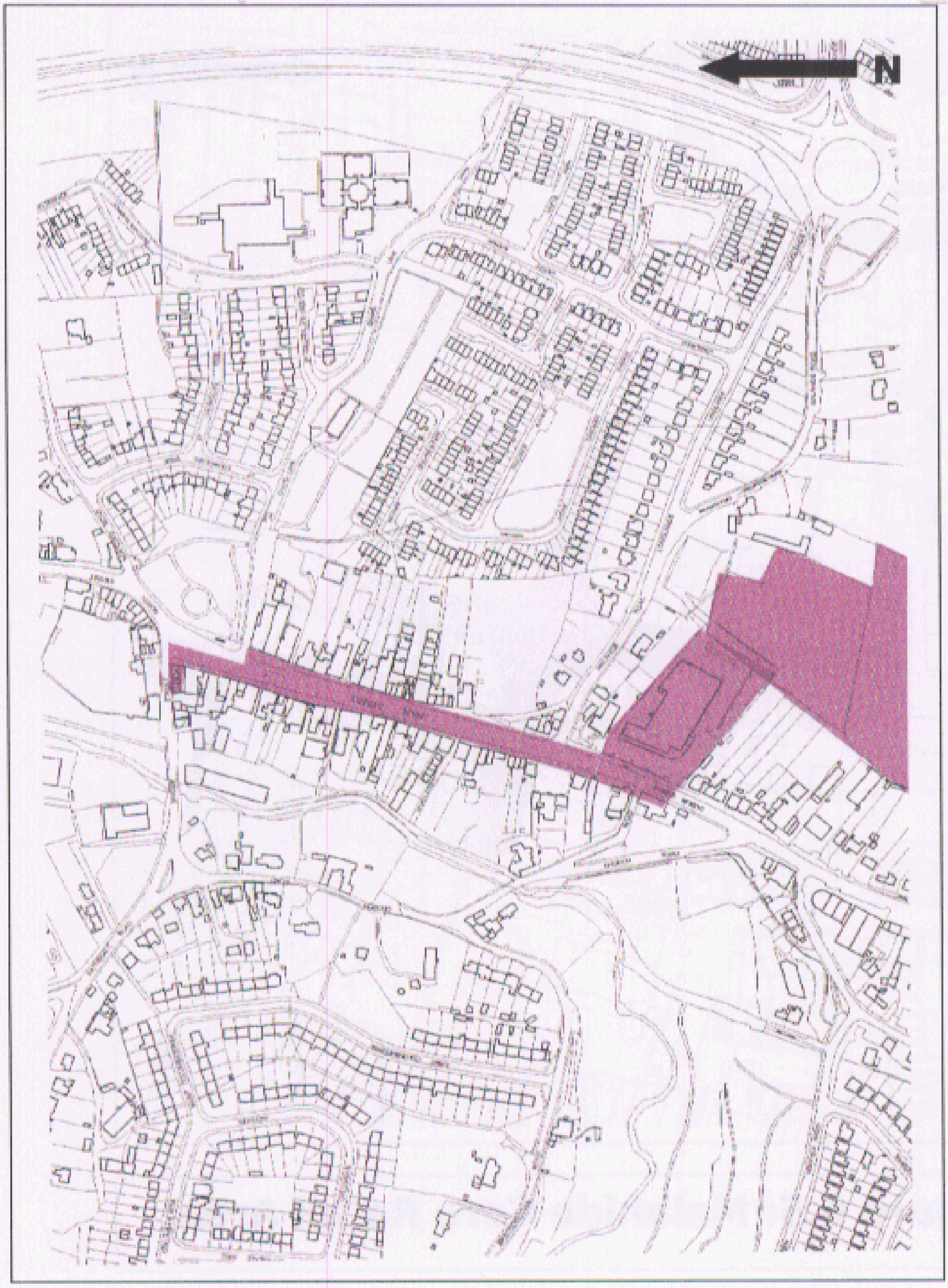

Figure 6.6: Swords Core Retail Area

Sequential Approach

6.8 In meeting the aims of the Strategy, policies and proposals in respect of the location of retail development must be in accordance with the principles set by the sequential approach in the RPG. The sequential approach in summary defines that:

i. The preferred location for new retail development, where practicable and viable, is within a town centre (or district or major village centre);

ii. Where it is not possible to provide the form and scale of development that is required on a site within a town centre then consideration can be given to a site on the edge of the town centre so as to encourage the possibility of one journey serving several purposes. An edge of centre site is taken to be one that is unlikely to be more than 300 - 400 metres from the edge of the prime shopping area and less in smaller settlements. The distance considered to be convenient will however vary according to local circumstances; and

iii. Only after having assessed the size, availability, accessibility and feasibility of developing sites and premises, firstly within a town centre and secondly on the edge of a town centre, should alternative out of centre sites be considered where it can be demonstrated that there are no town centre or edge of centre sites which are suitable, viable and available.

6.9 In formulating specific policies and proposals, it is recognised that in general retail warehouses do not fit easily in to town centres given their size requirements and the need for good car parking facilities and ease of servicing. As such, in some instances it may be possible to locate retail warehouse groups on the edge of town centres. However, retail warehousing proposals, as with other retail applications, will require to illustrate that they comply with the Sequential Approach.

Spatial Distribution of New Retail Development

6.10 The County Retail Strategy, in accordance with the RPG, provides the strategic policy framework for the spatial distribution for new retail development. The emphasis is on strategic guidance on the location and scale of major retail development. The Strategy does not seek to inhibit small scale retail development in centres around the County, particularly in smaller centres. It should be taken to be implicit in the aims of the Strategy that such developments should be encouraged and facilitated to enhance the sustainability, vitality and viability of smaller centres, including smaller main centres in the County Retail Hierarchy. The following provides guidance on how the Retail Strategy defines the distribution of strategic and non-strategic retail floorspace within the County Retail Hierarchy. This guidance is also provided in the GDA Retail Strategy and was set out in the 2003 Strategy:

- **Level 1:** major convenience and comparison

- **Level 2:** major convenience and comparison
- **Level 3:** predominantly additional convenience but not excluding comparison
- **Level 4:** convenience and tourism related comparison.

6.11 Additionally, the Strategy recognises the need to ensure that local needs, primarily convenience shopping and local services, are met in an equitable, efficient and sustainable way in major existing or new residential areas in and around main settlements through the designation of locations for District or Neighbourhood Centres in development plans.

6.12 There is some 35,488m^2 of net retail floorspace with full planning permission at present that is being developed but is not yet trading. This is just over 23% of the existing floorspace and therefore represents a significant increase in additional space. Key developments in the pipeline are the Red Mall and additional retail warehousing floorspace in Blanchardstown and the expansion of Airside Retail Park in Swords. There is expenditure capacity for additional floorspace but due to the timescales involved in the planning and development process then in the Major Town Centres this will not be until post-2006. It is important that opportunities are progressed within the Level 3 and 4 centres in the County Retail Hierarchy to ensure that needs are more locally met and helps reduce expenditure outflows from the County. There is however also capacity for opening up strategic opportunities for innovation in the County's retail offer.

6.13 The capacity assessment undertaken as part of the review of the Strategy, indicates that there is considerable scope for additional convenience and comparison floorspace within the County over the timescale of the County Retail Strategy and beyond. This is illustrated in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2
Indicative Net Floorspace Potential (m^2)

Period	**Convenience**		**Comparison**	
	Low	High	Low	High
2004-2006	3,172	3,865	-26	-22
2007-2011	11,445	13,766	12,855	14,526
2012-2016	10,223	12,996	25,427	33,898
Total	**24,840**	**30,627**	**38,256**	**48,402**

6.14 It is important to highlight that these figures provide a broad assessment of the requirement for additional new floorspace. In setting floorspace targets for main centres, the expenditure capacity potential of the County should not be taken as a cap on new development. Town centres and shopping centres draw shoppers from their individual catchment areas and these areas will cross the County's boundaries.

The size of the catchment area will depend on the importance and attraction of the centre/development. There will require to be reference to the overall expenditure capacity of the County but this should be put into the context of what that of the catchment area of a retail development is. This is consistent with the GDA Retail Strategy and in the principles set down in the 2003 Strategy.

Need

6.15 The County Retail Hierarchy recognises the need to have a good spatial distribution of centres and floorspace. This is particularly true in respect of convenience floorspace and the aim of reducing the need to travel to meet these shopping needs. The designation of Swords and Blanchardstown as two of the eight Level 2 Major Town Centres in the GDA also responds to this with regard to higher order comparison floorspace.

6.16 Currently, outside of Dublin City Centre, the County has a large share of the other higher order comparison floorspace in the GDA. Retailing is however a competitive and dynamic industry and there is already a changing balance and distribution of higher order floorspace emerging around the GDA. These changes provide alternatives not only to the City Centre but to Fingal's Major Town Centres. In order to sustain and improve the County's competitive position then the Strategy must provide the policies and proposals which facilitate this.

6.17 Outside of Dublin City, the County had the largest share of retail warehousing floorspace at May 2001. With the additional retail warehousing developments that have taken place, or are in the pipeline, at Blanchardstown and Airside Retail Park the County has witnessed an increase in retail warehousing floorspace in the intervening period. There has however been considerable new development of retail warehousing floorspace around the GDA over this period and there remains pressure for additional floorspace. In order that the County sustains its competitive position in this sector of the retail market, there is a need for provision to be made for additional retail warehousing floorspace over the timescale of the Retail Strategy. It is important that this responds to strategic need that is directed by the County Retail Hierarchy to ensure that sporadic and unsustainable development of retail warehousing across the County is avoided.

SPECIFIC POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

6.18 The specific policies and proposals of the County Retail Strategy are designed to facilitate achievement of the aims of the Strategy. They are formulated to ensure:

- Existing or emerging issues in the County's retail profile and its centres have the policy framework to be addressed

- The County has the policy framework to ensure strategic and local convenience and comparison shopping needs are met and the competitiveness of the County's main centres is enhanced
- The expenditure capacity potential for additional floorspace (Table 3.6) is harnessed over the timescale of the Strategy.

6.19 The policies and proposals are grouped under the following three categories:

i.	**Strategic Policies:**	Relate to the spatial distribution of centres, specific centres, their role in the hierarchy and the strategic aims of the strategy;
ii.	**General Policies:**	set principles that should be applied across the hierarchy; and
iii.	**Framework for the Assessment of Retail Developments:**	sets out the assessment criteria that will be used in the appraisal of future retail proposals.

Strategic Policies

6.20 The 2003 Strategy set out a suite of strategic policies which have been examined in the review of the County Retail Strategy. On the whole, the appropriateness of the strategic policies is reaffirmed but there have been modifications and additions which respond to the changes in the wider policy framework that have emerged since the original Strategy was adopted. This noted, Table 6.3 identifies the strategic policies that underpin the Retail Strategy.

Table 6.3
Summary of Strategic Policies

Policy Reference	Council Policy
Policy SS1: Retail Competitiveness	*To sustain and improve the retail profile and competitiveness of Fingal County within the retail economy of the GDA and beyond*
Policy SS2: Level 2 Metropolitan Area Major Town Centre - Blanchardstown	*To promote and encourage major enhancement of retail and leisure provision and diversification of town centre functions in Blanchardstown*
Policy SS3: Level 2 Metropolitan Area Major Town Centre - Swords	*To promote and encourage major enhancement of retail and leisure provision in Swords*
Policy SS4: Tier 1 Level 3 Hinterland Area Town Centre - Balbriggan	*To facilitate and encourage further retail and commercial development in Balbriggan to promote its role as the key centre in the north of the County*
Policy SS5: Metropolitan Area Town Centre - Malahide	*To facilitate and encourage further retail and commercial development in Malahide to enhance its importance as a main centre in the County*
Policy SS6: Tier 2 Level 3 Hinterland Area Town Centre -	*To facilitate and encourage the enhancement of the retail and leisure offer of Skerries to meet the*

Skerries	*needs of its growing population and its role as a main tourist centre in the County*
Policy SS7: Level 4 Metropolitan Area Suburban Neighbourhood Centres and Facilities	*To facilitate and encourage the enhancement of the County's Suburban Neighbourhood Centres and Facilities to ensure convenient access to shopping and other local services is sustained taking due cognisance of their roles and potential*
Policy SS8: Level 4 Metropolitan Area Traditional Suburban Village Centres	*To facilitate and encourage improvement and investment in the Traditional Suburban Village Centres within the County to ensure that their role, importance and attraction is sustained*
Policy SS9: Level 4 Metropolitan Area Expanding Suburban Village Centres	*To facilitate and encourage the enhancement of shops and services in the Expanding Suburban Village Centres within the Metropolitan Area to help ensure needs of the existing and expanding populations are locally met*
Policy SS10: Level 4 Hinterland Area Village Centres - Lusk and Rush	*To facilitate the local provision of shops and services in Hinterland Area Village Centres to meet the needs of the existing and expanding populations*
Policy SS11: Innovation in the County's Retail Offer	*To encourage and facilitate innovation in the County's retail offer and attraction*

Policy SS1: Retail Competitiveness
It is the policy of the Council to sustain and improve the retail profile and competitiveness of Fingal County within the retail economy of the GDA and beyond

6.21 **Justification:** the County continues to be the second most important area within the GDA for shopping outside of Dublin City Centre, principally due to the role, importance and continuing improvement of Blanchardstown and Swords. This is evidenced by the improved market share and trade draw performance of the County since the GDA Retail Strategy was prepared.

6.22 The role and importance of Fingal within the GDA economy is set to be further enhanced. The Regional Planning Guidelines medium term population forecasts and targets identify that by 2010 the County will have the second largest population in the GDA through a projected increase of nearly one third on its 2002 population and, as a consequence, overtaking South Dublin in population size behind the Dublin City administrative area. Additionally, the guidelines project that the County will be the second most important employment area in the GDA by 2010, overtaking both Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and South Dublin in the jobs 'league'. The Regional Planning Guidelines project/target that jobs in the County will increase by one third over the period. It is therefore important that Fingal's current prominence is sustained and enhanced and that the Strategy provides the vehicle to harness its role and potential in both the GDA and County's shopping and expenditure patterns.

6.23 However, the retail sector is one of the most dynamic and competitive sectors in the economy. There is substantial expenditure potential across the GDA for additional retail floorspace over the period of the GDA Retail Strategy and beyond. At present, there are emerging developments and major investment in new retail development within both the Metropolitan and Hinterland Areas of the GDA, and in fact towns/counties close to the GDA, which could over the period of the Strategy serve to erode the County's prominence and competitiveness. The Strategy requires to provide the framework and actions to redress this.

6.24 **Actions:** the specific retail sectors which require to continue to be improved in the County, if it is to sustain and improve its retail profile and competitiveness are higher order comparison and large scale convenience floorspace:

i **Higher Order Comparison:** there is a need to introduce higher order department stores within the County's retail profile as these are currently absent, with the exception of Marks & Spencer in the Red Mall extension to Blanchardstown Shopping Centre which is currently under construction. The scope, potential and sites for this require to be identified in both of the County's Major Town Centres - Blanchardstown and Swords;

ii **High Street National and International Multiples:** the County's main centres require to continue to improve representation of national and international high street comparison brands;

iii **Retail Warehousing/Bulky Goods:** are an important attraction of Fingal for shopping to both residents of the County and visitors from other parts of the GDA and the rest of the country. This position requires to be sustained;

iv **Large Scale Convenience Formats:** given the size of its existing population and that which is projected in the Regional Planning Guidelines to 2010 and beyond, Fingal is deficient in the quantum and distribution of large modern format supermarkets and superstores. While there has been an increase in convenience expenditure inflows, there has been a significant increase in residents in the County going elsewhere for their main food shopping due to the existing quality and quantum of the offer. This is an issue that requires to be redressed; and

v **Innovation in the County's Retail Offer:** the importance of this was identified in incorporating it as a specific strategic policy in the County Retail Strategy.

6.25 **Actions:** The baseline facts, information and analysis combined with the policies and objectives in the revised County Retail Strategy will serve to raise the awareness of retailers/operators/developers/investors as to the potential of the County for significant additional retail floorspace. In order that the Council maximises this potential, and in the appropriate locations, it will prepare a Marketing Prospectus that distils and promotes the facts and retail opportunities for centres and sites across the County.