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“The changes in our country’s economy and the growing realisation that we need to ensure the most effective use of resources have made it both possible and essential that we begin to plan our future.”

There is an old saying, “If we fail to plan, we plan to fail”. Previous generations may have wanted to plan but the pressures and the uncertainty of resources were such that planning was somewhat of a luxury and so events tended to shape things rather than be shaped by the pro-active decisions and dreams of people.

The changes in our country's economy and the growing realisation that we need to ensure the most effective use of resources have made it both possible and essential that we begin to plan our future. We have seen that service provision and delivery at local level, can only be improved if there is, first of all, a common vision of what kind of county we want and that this vision is shared and owned by as many as possible of the stakeholders.

We in the County Development Board regard the people of Monaghan as the principal stakeholders in the development of the county. A plan will have limited impact unless it has the full endorsement and ownership of those whose lives it means to effect. For a plan to succeed, it cannot be delivered by state agencies or voluntary bodies alone. At best, local people can actively cooperate to ensure the delivery of the plan; at worst, they can work to impede its delivery. This is why we have placed so much emphasis on consultation with the people of Monaghan. We have been absolutely determined to give everyone the opportunity through as wide a variety of means as possible to have an input into this plan. We have also been anxious to draw on the imagination and talents of all the people of Monaghan. This plan is not only the CDB’s plan, it is the plan of the people of Monaghan.

Having the vision is one step; there is then a need to create goals and objectives which will ensure the achievement of the vision and then there is the need to imaginatively design actions which will translate goals and objectives into reality on the ground. Our plan contains 340 separate actions. Each of these has been subjected to the most rigorous analysis to test their potential contribution to our community. The implementation of these actions represents a very formidable challenge. What we have on our side, however, is a team of highly motivated and professional organisations and staff who are committed to putting Monaghan first.

I want to pay special tribute to all the statutory bodies and their staff who have been involved with us throughout this process. I want also to acknowledge the tremendous input from the social and community partners in our planning. Together I am convinced that we have created a template which will shape the future of Monaghan for the next ten years and beyond. I commend this plan to you and ask everyone in Monaghan and those outside our county with influence, to work with us to make this vision a reality.

“Ar scath a chéile a mhaireann na daoine”

Padraig McNally
Cathaoirleach
Monaghan County Development Board
“I thank you and I say how proud
That I have been by fate allowed
To stand here having the joyful chance
To claim my inheritance”

-Patrick Kavanagh
The Strategy for the Economic, Social and Cultural Development of County Monaghan prepared by the Monaghan County Development Board is the culmination of a two year process of Consultation, Research and Visioning.

It is the first attempt at long term integrated planning embracing all aspects of life in the County. It provides a Vision about Monaghan as a place to live in 2012. It identifies short term and medium term objectives that need to be met between now and 2012 and it identifies the changes that will come about in Monaghan upon reaching these objectives.

Since it’s establishment, the County Development Board has adopted and followed a number of fundamental principals, particularly those of inclusion and participation, mutual respect and consensus, shared ownership and responsibility.

The consultation process undertaken has sought to engage representatives from all sectors of society including the community sector, public and political life and the private sector and to facilitate their contribution to developing the strategy.

The Strategy therefore represents an agreed approach by all stakeholders in the County on a range of significant challenges and opportunities.

Through this process the CDB has enabled the stakeholders to develop and build ‘a team’ which will have the capacity and confidence to work together in successfully implementing the Strategy. Agencies and Organisations have committed to co operating and collaborating in the delivery of common objectives thereby optimising resources and investments within the County.

Accomplishing the Strategy over the next decade will involve over 50 different agencies and organisations each having committed to taking a Lead and/or Support Role in ensuring the delivery of each of the agreed actions.

The Board is committed to overseeing the implementation of the Strategy and has put in place measures to continually monitor, evaluate and review the process and it’s outcomes. It will also have the flexibility to revise and alter objectives and actions in line with changing circumstances.

I would like to express my thanks to all those involved in the development of this Strategy, especially the Community & Voluntary sectors and the various Development Agencies and Organisations. I would particularly like to thank the members of the Board for their commitment and co-operation through the strategic planning process.

I would also like to acknowledge the assistance provided by the Officials at the Department of Environment & Local Government, other Government Departments, Frank Dolaghan, Mentor Economic Development Limited, the County Manager and members of Monaghan County Council for their invaluable support.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank my own team at the Office of Community and Enterprise for their work and dedication in producing this Strategy.

Adge King
Director, Monaghan County Development Board

“Since it’s establishment, the County Development Board has adopted and followed a number of fundamental principals particularly those of inclusion and participation, mutual respect and consensus, shared ownership and responsibility.”
Monaghan County Development Board was established in April 2000 as part of a new national approach to the re-organisation of local development and the reform of local government. The County Development Board brings together all the key players in the county, providing a platform for the various organisations to examine issues affecting the county, agree a common approach, and work in partnership to deliver actions designed to give all the people of the county a better quality of life.

The task of the CDB is to:

- Prepare a ten-year Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development for Co. Monaghan,
- Oversee and facilitate the Implementation of the Strategy,
- Support integration and co-ordination in the delivery of services.

This document represents the first step in ensuring that a more cohesive approach is taken to future development in Co. Monaghan. It is an Integrated Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development, and provides a starting point from which inter-organisational relationships can grow over time. By adopting a strategic approach to development, the CDB will ensure that the available resources are used in an optimum manner, and that no areas are overlooked in planning for a balanced progression of all aspects of living and working in the county. Our Vision for the county in 2012 is that:

“Monaghan is an inclusive, outward-looking, progressive county, providing a diverse, vibrant economy, a sustainable environment and a high quality of life for all.”

Summary Challenges

The CDB, in extensive consultation with sectoral experts, voluntary groups and the general public, have identified the key challenges which face Monaghan in 2002. They include:

Social Inclusion. The wide dispersal of population across the county tends to conceal many social issues. Underemployment, hidden poverty, lack of facilities remain key issues. The challenge for the future is to ensure that the counties economic progress benefits all sectors particularly those who are marginalised. Inclusion will involve taking the necessary steps to ensure that disadvantaged groups can have equal access to an adequate income, quality employment, lifelong learning, affordable housing, quality healthcare services and the opportunity to improve their skills.

Economic Infrastructure. The economic development of the county is greatly dependent on the provision of a robust infrastructural base. Future industrial competitiveness depends on a quality road network system, choice and competitiveness of energy sources and telecommunications infrastructure, a range and diversity of serviced sites and industrial space as well as provision for the disposal of waste and sewerage in a sustainable manner.

Agriculture and Rural Development. Monaghan is mainly an agricultural county, with over 22% of our workforce engaged in farming, compared with 14% nationally (CSO 1996). Average farm size is below the national average. The large dependence on the mainly low-margin dry stock sector means that few farms are capable of generating a viable family income. Dairy farming and the farmyard enterprises of mushroom, poultry and pig production contribute substantially to the county’s economy; however, the disposal of agri-waste poses a problem for the future development and expansion of these enterprises. Coinciding with the decline in farming is the challenge of sustaining viable rural communities and
This strategy represents the culmination of a two year process of analysis, consultation and planning.

the maintenance of primary services in rural areas. This is particularly relevant in Co Monaghan.

Protection of the Environment. Monaghan’s high water table and predominately impervious gley soils renders the county more susceptible to pollution. The quality of the environment is under threat from the daily pressures of industrial and residential development and agriculture. Future development in the county, coupled with the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment will very much depend on our ability to manage waste particularly agricultural waste.

Valuing Education. Perhaps the most serious problem facing the county is the low educational attainment of the adult population. Almost 37% of the workforce did not progress beyond primary school, and it is estimated that 25% of adults have basic literacy and numeracy skills problems. In today’s fast-changing industrial landscape the key to future success lies in the availability of a well-motivated, well-educated adaptable workforce. The lack of local access to third level education contributes to the low up-take of higher education opportunities by Monaghan people. Addressing these educational deficits are key not only for the economic development of the county, but also in addressing the barriers brought about as a result of social exclusion.

Industrial Performance. The county’s self help ethic is evident in the extremely high number of self-employed people in the county, which boasts the highest level of new business start-ups in Ireland. However the counties industrial base is narrow being particularly dependent on the furniture and food sectors with few jobs in the recognised growth areas such as electronics and information technology. The future viability of many industries is dependent on developing value-added products and competing successfully on global markets. The attraction of the county as a location for future investment is a key issue for the future.

Our Border Location. Situated on the periphery of the Republic of Ireland and surrounded on three sides by Northern Ireland, the Northern conflict has impacted negatively on the social, economic and cultural development of the county. Investment, particularly in infrastructure and industrial development, has been substantially curtailed over the years. In terms of spatial development the County does not neatly fit into a specific geographical region. This is reflected in the fact that Monaghan has over the years has been slotted into different regions for different administrative and developmental purposes - North West for Tourism, North East for Health, Central Border Local Authority Region and East Border Region for Commerce. This has major consequences for the County if it is to optimise potential opportunities from the National Spatial Plan.

Modern Living and Health. The population of County Monaghan is largely rural based with 77% living outside towns of population greater than 1000. The high dependency ratio, rural isolation and the significant number of elderly people living alone necessitates a comprehensive range of locally available health and social services. The needs of particular groups including women, victims of violence, persons with disabilities, lone parents, young people at risk, ethnic minorities and travellers also require particular consideration in the development of health services and programmes. Fostering healthy lifestyles through sport and recreational activities, improving diets as well as changing attitudes to drink and drug abuse are issues which need to be addressed. Other major concerns are the number of deaths and injuries on our roads and in the workplace which continue to exceed the national average.
Tourism Development. Monaghan's proximity to the border has limited the county's ability to share in what is becoming Ireland's largest industry. The development of tourism in the county requires special consideration at a national level to overcome the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Monaghan has to compete against the more developed parts of Ireland for a share of national resources. Notwithstanding these disadvantages a number of emerging opportunities are now presenting themselves. This includes the opportunities of the Peace process, the growing demand for activity holidays in a natural unspoilt countryside as well as the development of major flagship projects such as the Ulster Canal.

Quality Jobs. Corresponding with the trend of high volume low-margin industrial output is the issue of low wage levels. A high proportion of employment in the county is unskilled manual labour with few incentives for our younger educated people to return to work in the county. Crucial to the success of the economy in the county is the boosting of the requirement for skilled and professional staff. Upskilling of the existing workforce as well as providing suitable skill training for the unemployed, underemployed and persons working at home are issues which need to be addressed.

A Place to Enjoy. Whilst Monaghan has produced nationally and internationally renowned poets, writers, artists and sports people, the county is severely lacking in the cultural and recreational infrastructure and supports which would facilitate the participation by all sectors of the community in arts, cultural and recreational activities. The key challenge to the further development of the county as an attractive place to live, is the need to provide an environment where creative and sporting excellence is nurtured. At the same time it is necessary to ensure that all people living in the county, regardless of socio-economic background, ability, religion or race, are given the opportunity to participate in the cultural and sporting events of their choice.

Strategic Actions

Section 4 of the Strategy identifies 340 individual actions to be delivered by over 50 agencies and organisations. These are summarised as follows:

Viable Rural Communities.
Agriculture will continue to be supported both for its contribution to the economy of the county and because of its importance in sustaining rural communities. Every effort will be made to maximise the number of viable family farm units through a combination of primary agricultural production, a mix of farmyard and alternative farm enterprises as well as developing local opportunities for part time and full time off farm employment. Greater participation by young people and women in farming will be encouraged. The economic and social infrastructure of rural areas will be enhanced and local services preserved and extended.

Social Inclusion. Monaghan County Development Strategy is about ensuring that the people in our society are looked after and have access to the same life chances as others. The co ordination of service delivery by agencies will result in the improvement of the quality and range of services available. Policies and practices will be designed toward meeting social need. There will be a focus on breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty, addressing income inadequacy and supporting specific target groups including lone parents, ex-prisoners and people living in isolated areas. The barriers to participation in the life of the county will be removed through the provision of affordable and accessible housing and caring for the needs of travellers, the homeless and victims of domestic violence. In addition mobility through the county will be improved through the provision of additional transport services particularly rural transport.

Educational attainment. The provision of equal access to educational opportunities from early childhood right through adulthood is one of the key priorities of the strategy. Children will be encouraged to remain at school for as long as possible through the provision of additional supports including the wide provision of remedial teachers, home school community liaison officers and counselling services, greater access to afterschool clubs and development of parenting programmes.

Access to life long learning will be facilitated through the establishment of a life long centre incorporating distance learning facilities and the provision of outreach learning opportunities. Access to a wide choice of third level courses will be optimised through the development of outreach courses from existing universities throughout Ireland and abroad. Consideration will also be given to linking third level university courses with present and future industrial needs of the county.

Sustainable Environment. The preservation of our environment will involve a number of approaches including the promotion of greater energy efficiency, protecting the natural and built environment and controlling the production and disposal of waste including municipal, agricultural and industrial waste. Proposed actions include the incorporating of energy conservation principals in the design and construction of new buildings. The preservation and maintenance of heritage sites building and their settings. A holistic approach to the development and planning of our towns, villages and the countryside.

The natural environment will be preserved through the implementation of measures which will protect our rivers, lakes and wetland areas as well as the counties existing flora and fauna.

Business supports. The shortage of industrial land around urban centres will be addressed. Training in management skills, planning and finance will be targeted at the county's self-employed and family businesses. Companies will be supported in increasing export sales, and increasing investment levels in research and design, so that they can continue to produce value-added goods for the higher end of the consumer market.

A Design Centre, providing Research & Development workspace for food and furniture companies and incorporating incubator units for start-up businesses and retail outlets for local producers (including crafts), will be established.

Infrastructural Improvements. Road links with our neighbouring counties will be improved. East/West, North/South road networks through the county and town by-passes, together with improvements to the existing road.
We are at the start of a journey of discovery and opportunity; as the stakeholders work ever closer with one another to achieve the initial actions laid out in this Strategy, new opportunities and actions will emerge.

network, will all contribute to the ease and safety of travel through the county. Economic development will be supported through the availability of a diversity of serviced land banks and industrial buildings, a choice of energy sources and a competitive telecommunications network. The CDB will lobby for the re-opening of the Ulster Canal as a flagship tourism infrastructure project for the region.

Tourism. Optimising the tourism potential in the county will require a co-ordinated approach by all stakeholders at county and regional level. Proposed actions include the development of a critical mass of quality tourism infrastructure including a range of accommodation, indoor and outdoor leisure facilities, attractions and services. The potential to develop a number of flagship projects will be pursued. Joint marketing opportunities will be identified on a regional and cross border basis. Monaghan will be promoted as a short-stay weekend-tourism destination with specific tourist packages designed around key themes including golf and angling.

Building on Peace. A concerted effort will be made to develop linkages at all levels with our counterparts on the other side of the border so that the people of Monaghan may have full access to their economic, social and cultural hinterland. Particular emphasis will be placed on utilising the arts, education, addictions, home and health and well being will be promoted through publicity campaigns on health education, addictions, home and workplace safety. Anti social behaviour will be addressed through early intervention including civic responsibility programmes for school and youth organisations.

The County Development Board will assume the key co-ordinating role in the implementation of the Strategy, and will take a pro-active approach to the achievement of the goals set out in this document. Individual agencies have committed overall responsibility for each identified action.

Six Implementation Working Groups, based on sectoral issues, will be set up immediately following publication of the Strategy. They will devise specific Action Plans, which will set concrete targets against each action. Periodic evaluations will be carried out to ensure that the actions are achieving their intended effects. The CDB will maintain a strategic planning role, continuing to seek to identify gaps, shortfalls and opportunities as they arise and to facilitate the evolution of solutions.

The strategy marks the first attempt to address long term strategic planning in regards to public service delivery at a county level. We are at the start of a journey of discovery and opportunity; as the stakeholders work ever closer with one another to achieve the initial actions laid out in this Strategy, new opportunities and actions will emerge. Each success will give rise to further opportunities. In light of this, the document must be viewed as work in progress. It will require ongoing review and adjustment in response to changing circumstances and the insights gained from the implementation process.
2. Introduction / Réamhra

2.1 Origins of the County Development Board

The establishment of County Development Boards within each of the 34 Local Authority areas in the country represents a new national approach to the reorganisation of local development and the reform of local government. These new structures provide a statutory framework for the planning and delivery of all aspects of public policy, services and programme delivery. Fundamental to the work of the CDB is the establishment of an agreed vision of where the county should be by the year 2012 and the securing of the commitment of all stakeholders to optimise the opportunities presented by integration and co-operation in the delivery of the vision.

The establishment of the CDB’s has its origins in the document, “Better Local Government - a Programme for Change”, published by the Department of the Environment & Local Government in 1996. The report provided a framework for the reformation of Local Government to allow for a more participative democracy and better co-ordination of services at the point of delivery. “Better Local Government” adopted a holistic approach to development at county level, encouraging a partnership approach to service delivery. “BLG” prepared the way for major changes within the County Council structure - one such change was the establishment of the Office of Community & Enterprise, which, amongst other duties for the Council, provides the administrative support to the County Development Board.

In 1998, an interdepartmental Task Force on Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems published its report on how the efforts of all these bodies could be best integrated at local level. The idea behind integration of services at a county or city level is to enable each area to develop a tailor-made response to its own unique circumstances. The efforts and resources of each agency can then work towards the one ‘shared vision’ of how the economic and social life of the county is to develop.

In response to this challenge, the Task Force recommended that new structures, known as County or City Development Boards (CDBs), be established in every county and city in Ireland. CDBs bring together, for the first time, the key players at local level to engage in a process of long-term planning for each county or city. The aim is to ensure the integrated delivery of services at local level through co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration. Each CDB is charged with:

- The establishment of a 10 year Strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of the county
- Overseeing the implementation of this plan
- Supporting the integration and co-ordination of service delivery among stakeholders
- The Strategy will provide the means whereby the Shared Vision will be translated into reality - working together will ensure success.

County Development Boards comprised representatives of all the key sectors involved in development in the county. These are organised into four ‘pillars’, namely:

- Local Government (County Council & Town Councils),
- Local Development Bodies (Area Partnerships, LEADER groups, and County/City Enterprise Boards)
- State Agencies (Dept. of Social, Community & Family Affairs, FÁS, VEC, IDA, An Garda Síochana, Health Board, Teagasc, Enterprise Ireland, North West Tourism)
- Social Partners (Employers and Employees, Farming, Trade Union and Community & Voluntary sector).

The process of coming together as a Board, of sharing information, agreeing the way forward and allocating responsibilities is, in itself, a vital part of the work of the CDB. It has enabled individual members to take a holistic view of the development requirements of Co. Monaghan. It also identifies the necessity of combining resources in tackling key issues and optimising outcomes. The process engaged in over the past two years has built up trust, capacity and commitment among the individual stakeholders and has effectively put in place a ‘team’ which is now well positioned to take on the challenge of implementing the Strategy.

The County Development Strategy is a statutory document and has received the endorsement of Monaghan County Council. All public agencies and bodies will now be required to ‘proof’ their plans against this Strategy. It is the framework by which all public bodies and agencies will operate. It may necessitate some adjustments or amendments to be made to individual organisations plans and programmes in order to bring all plans in line with the goals and objectives set out in the County Strategy.
Monaghan County Development Board met for the first time on April 5th 2000. The inaugural meeting was preceded by numerous meetings to agree the appropriate representation on the Board, as laid down in the Department of the Environment & Local Government’s guidelines, ‘Preparing the Way’ (1999). Achieving democratic representation on the Board from the community and voluntary sector posed a particular challenge. After extensive consultation with sectoral groups and through public meetings, it was agreed that the best way forward was to build on the previous community development work of County Monaghan Partnership and Cavan Monaghan Rural Development Co-Op. Accordingly, it was agreed that the community and voluntary sector in the county could best be supported through the development of thematic networks with particular emphasis on ensuring involvement and participation of marginalised groups. Seven thematic county networks were identified:

- Disadvantaged Groups
- Community Development Groups
- Women’s Groups
- Youth & Sport Groups
- Heritage & Culture Groups
- Disability Groups
- Tidy Towns & Residents Associations

A County Community Forum comprised of 3 representatives from each network was subsequently formed which nominated two members to the County Development Board.

The structure and membership of Monaghan CDB is outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL PARTNERS</th>
<th>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farming Organisations</td>
<td>County Enterprise Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade Unions</td>
<td>County Monaghan Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>Cavan Monaghan Rural Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Voluntary Sector</td>
<td>(Seven Community Forum Networks)</td>
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<tr>
<th>LOCAL AUTHORITY</th>
<th>STATE AGENCIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monaghan County Council</td>
<td>Enterprise Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Manager</td>
<td>IDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 SPC Chairs</td>
<td>North Eastern Health Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Rep from Town Councils</td>
<td>An Garda Síochána</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North West Tourism Authority</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dept of Social, Community &amp; Family Affairs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teagasc</td>
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<tr>
<th>COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD</th>
<th>For the purposes of developing the strategy, five working groups were established.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(27 members)</td>
<td>CULTURE / HERITAGE / RECREATION • ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY • ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair: Chair of Monaghan County Council</td>
<td>AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT • SOCIAL INCLUSION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Operating Principles

Each CDB is required to devise and implement an integrated strategy which deals with the design and delivery of public policy and service delivery. Each County/ City Development Strategy is guided by a series of key overall principles which have been identified on a national basis as follows:

- The Strategy will have a basis in the distinct features and situation of the county, including an understanding of sub county issues and concerns.
- It will promote the principles of participation and inclusion, ensuring the maximum number of groups are represented and that participation by all is facilitated.
- There will be a clear focus on social inclusion.
- Decision-making will be based on consensus.
- It will demonstrate an understanding of the individual needs of the constituent bodies on the CDB.
- Sustainable development principles will be accepted.
- The process of developing the Strategy is considered to be part of the solution.

- Those involved are committed to flexibility and openness to change.
- Transparency and accountability with regard to the process and by participants will be paramount.
- Responsibility and ownership of the process will be shared.

The County Development Board will operate under the umbrella of the Local Authority, with its secretariat being provided by the Office of Community and Enterprise, a newly formed division operating within the County Council.

2.4 Horizontal Principles

All public bodies are required to ‘proof’ their plans to ensure that the actions contained therein take proper cognisance of the Government's commitment to the following:

- eliminating inequality in our society
- eliminating poverty and social exclusion in Ireland
- promoting development in rural areas
- promoting sustainable development practices

The concept of Proofing is relatively new to public bodies, and it will be some time before final procedures are in place within each organisation. Guidelines to assist CDB’s are being produced by the relevant authorities. In order to ensure that proofing issues were enshrined in the document from the earliest stages, the Board has engaged in a number of training events on proofing. The resulting templates have been used by the Board at every step of the planning process, and will continue to be refined and applied as the Action Plans are devised and at the evaluation stage.

Proofing is necessary to ensure that the Strategy does not have any unintended detrimental effects. It addresses the questions:

- Does the action have a positive effect, either directly or indirectly, on the areas outlined?
- Does the action have no discernible effect?
- Does the action have a negative effect?

Proofing issues considered to date include:

Rural Proofing: Ensuring that policies and actions do not discriminate in favour of urban centres with large population bases, or lead to further decline in marginalised rural areas.

Gender Proofing: Ensuring that women, who comprise almost half the population of Monaghan, are heard at decision-making level and have equal access to opportunities proposed under the Strategy.

Equality Proofing: Ensuring that the issues affecting those least able to speak for themselves are brought to the table. (e.g. disabled, travellers, refugees), and to safeguard their right to equal access to all the services. There are nine different groups which are protected under the Equal Status Bill 1999 and the Employment Equality Act 1998, including race, sexual orientation, gender and membership of the traveller community.

Sustainability Proofing: Ensuring that decisions taken today do not impair the Monaghan of the future (e.g. natural environment, waste management).

Proofing is an ongoing necessity and much of the work will be performed during the implementation phase of the process.
2.5 County Development Strategy

The County Development Strategy sets out a framework for economic, social and cultural development over the next ten years. Its purpose is to provide a broad framework which facilitates better service delivery, enabling groups and organisations to work together towards a common goal.

The Strategy is a template, guiding all locally delivered public services and local development activities. The CDB will aim to ensure the avoidance of duplication in the delivery of services at local level, identify gaps in coverage to target groups or geographical areas and support opportunities for co-operation and collaboration in the undertaking and delivery of new programmes.

The Strategy represents the culmination of a two year process of analysis, consultation and planning. For the first time at county level, the State Agencies, Elected Representatives, Local Development Organisations and the Social Partners including representatives from the community and voluntary sector have come together to jointly develop and implement a ten year Strategy for the county. The Strategy addresses itself to the challenge of what needs to be done, and by whom. In meeting this challenge, the Board sought to address four key questions:

• Where are we now?
• Where do we want to go?
• How should we get there?
• How will we know we are getting there?

Steps followed in developing the strategy:
In answering these questions the Board has followed the routine guidelines as set out in “A Shared Vision for County/City Development Boards” and have adopted the Eight Step Approach as follows:-

Step 1: Process Initiation: Aims/Philosophy
Step 2: Audit of Service Provision
Step 3: Analysis of Present Economic, Social and Cultural Situation
Step 4: Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
Step 5: Development of Vision, Goals and Objectives
Step 6: Identification and Selection of Options and Development of Strategies
Step 7: Establishment of Targets and Key Result Areas
Step 8: Drafting of the Section on Monitoring
2.6 Consultation

In order to ensure true integration of service delivery, the CDB embarked on a comprehensive campaign of consulting with the people of Monaghan, whose lives ultimately will be affected by the choices included in the Strategy.

The purpose of the consultation process was to establish a two-way flow of communication between the CDB and the general public, so that the proposed actions contained in the Strategy will penetrate deeply into our society and truly become an integral part of Monaghan life.

Consultation with community and voluntary sector involved simultaneous workshop sessions with representatives of the seven Networks and Community Forum and with the Board and Working Groups. This allowed the sum of the deliberations of all participants to inform each stage of the strategic planning process.

The wider public has also been able to link into the decision-making process directly through a series of consultation exercises including:

- Public meetings in each of the main towns
- The www.monaghancdb.ie website

Hundreds of ideas and comments have been collected and brought to the planning table over a six month consultation period and these have been incorporated into the final Strategy.

2.7 The Monaghan Consultation Process

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2.8 Methodology

As a starting point, Monaghan CDB laid out the headings under which the issues facing Co. Monaghan could be identified and explored and solutions sought. These were:

- Monaghan as a Place to Work
- Monaghan as a Place to Live
- Monaghan as a Place for Future Generations
- Monaghan as a Place to Enjoy and be Proud of
- Monaghan as a Place to Grow

Five Working Groups were set up to examine the issues raised and to advise the Board on the best approach to the issues which emerged. Membership of the Working Groups included Board members, but also drew in additional expertise and specialists, thus widening the experience and expertise feeding into the process of deciding the future development of the county.

The Working Groups were:

- Social Inclusion
- Economic Infrastructure
- Economic Sustainability
- Culture, Heritage and Recreation & the Arts
- Agriculture, Rural Development & the Environment

Each Working Group prepared a Contextual Document, outlining the current situation in the county, the main issues facing us as we move into the 21st Century and suggesting the options for development which were available.

This work was supplemented by the production of two research documents “Social, Economic and Cultural Profile of County Monaghan” and “The Audit of Service Provision”.

The Working Groups subsequently prepared comprehensive SWOT analyses on their respective sectors.

These were refined in plenary sessions with the Board and also in a separate session with the community and voluntary sector. The SWOT document is summarised in section 3.3 of this document.

The Visioning process led to the agreement on the overall vision for the county and it emerged that the issues facing the county could best be addressed under the different Thematic headings - each with its own vision statement.

The combined output from the Board, Working Groups, Community Sector and Public Consultation were then developed into strategic Goals, Objectives and Actions for each of the twelve themes.

Having agreed the broad content of the document - further consultations with the individual agencies and organisations identified lead and support agencies for the undertaking of actions. In addition, targets and timescales were also agreed.
2.9 Regional Context

There is a recognition among Development Boards that there are common regional issues which will influence the Economic, Social and Cultural Development of all counties. These can only be tackled in a meaningful way on the basis of a regional focus and through regional co-operation. Many agencies represented on the CDB’s e.g. Health Boards, Fas, Enterprise Ireland operate under Regional Sectional Plans. The need for balanced regional development is acknowledged, as is the avoiding of unnecessary and wasteful inter-county competition in the Strategies.

Because of its geographical location - the Northern conflict has impacted negatively on the counties potential to develop. The County Monaghan strategy recognise the opportunities that now exist to build on the Peace Process and to open up access to the counties natural hinterland across the Border.

2.10 A Shared Vision

The CDB has addressed the economic, social and cultural development of Monaghan under twelve headings, each of which contributes to the attainment of the CDB’s overall vision of Monaghan in ten years’ time.

Each of the twelve themes is dealt with individually in Section 4. However, the over-riding vision of the county belongs here at the start of the document. Each of the 336 actions outlined in the rest of the document is designed to bring us a step closer to achieving our overall Vision of Monaghan in 2012.

Our Shared Vision for Monaghan is:

“Monaghan is an inclusive, outward-looking, progressive county, which enjoys a diverse, vibrant economy, a sustainable environment and a high quality of life for all.”
3.1 Data Collection

3.1.1 Baseline Statistics

In preparing the CDB Strategy, the Board has compiled all the available information on the county in order to make informed decisions as to the way forward for Monaghan. Information has been sourced through individual groups, the Central Statistics Office, agencies such as the Health Board and Gardaí, and government departments such as the Department of Agriculture & Food, Rural Development and the Department of Social, Community & Family Affairs. Information was also taken from reports such as the NEHB’s Health Status Report and DoELG’s Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin.

The available statistics for Monaghan have been compiled and presented in the CDB’s ‘Baseline Data Report’ (Sept 01). The full report is available on the CDB’s website, www.monaghancdb.ie. The report, as far as possible, maps the available information so that differences at local level can be pinpointed and areas which are suffering higher levels of deprivation identified.

Due to the postponement of the 2001 Census of Population, the most up-to-date statistics in many areas are dated to 1996 or earlier. However, the Baseline Data will be updated and reviewed following the publication of the next Census and any necessary changes to the Strategy will be incorporated into the annual review.

3.1.2 Identifying the Service Providers

In order to ascertain who is currently delivering services in Monaghan, who they are targeting with their services and the resources they have available, an Audit of Service Providers was undertaken by the CDB. In addition to identifying who is doing what in the county, the Audit also identified a number of common problems which were being encountered by the service providers. The Audit pinpointed a number of gaps in service provision where clear needs existed, but where no one was currently providing a service. The full Audit of Service Provision (Sept 01) report is available on the CDB’s website, www.monaghancdb.ie.
“Consolidation of the Good Friday Agreement heralds major new opportunities for the reintegration of Monaghan’s natural catchments, presenting new opportunities for cross border co-operation.”

3.2 Summary of Baseline Data

3.2.1 Introduction and Description

County Monaghan is located in the Border, Midlands and Western Region and is one of the three Ulster counties bordering Northern Ireland. The county shares 108 miles of border with Northern Ireland, giving the county the longest share of border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of all the southern border counties. Consolidation of the Good Friday Agreement heralds major new opportunities for the reintegration of Monaghan’s natural catchments, presenting new opportunities for cross border co-operation in relation to economic development and social service delivery.

Monaghan is one of the country’s landlocked counties, characterised by rolling hills - its drumlin topography shaped during the last Ice Age. It accounts for 129,093 acres or 1.9% of the land area of the Republic of Ireland with 69% of the land dedicated to agriculture (mainly grassland), 4% to forestry and 1.7% covered by lakes. Temperatures can vary from 27 to -7 degrees and there are approximately 250 days of rainfall per year. There are five major towns in the county; Monaghan, Ballybay, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney and Clones but Monaghan remains a predominantly rural county with only 23% of its population living in population centres of more than 1,000 people.

3.2.2 Population Profile

The 1996 Census sets the population of Monaghan at 51,313 indicating a long-term historical population decline over the last 160 years. Prior to the Great Famine of the 1840s the County had a population of 200,000 and one hundred years ago it was almost 75,000. Between 1986 and 1996 there has been a population decrease of 0.1% compared to an increase nationally of 2.7%. Both Castleblayney Urban and Clones Urban have suffered the most significant population decreases between 1991 and 1996 (-7.1 and -7.6% respectively). The rural environs of the main towns have remained relatively static over the same period.

The lack of up-to-date census figures, which would reveal the demographic effect of the economic growth over the past five years, makes it difficult to accurately estimate the current population in the county. However, taking into account the increase in new house completions (180% increase since 1994) over the past five years, Monaghan’s current population is estimated to be 53,487.

Population projections based on pre-1996 data estimate that, in the absence of positive action to stimulate inward migration and the retention of Monaghan-born citizens, the populations of Clones, Castleblayney and Monaghan Town will decline. The population of Carrickmacross is expected to rise significantly over the next twenty years. Population decline has been most severe in twelve DEBs in the west of the county, referred to as the CLÁR area (south of Clones, and North of Carrickmacross bordering with Cavan). This area has been designated for Special Rural Regeneration as a result of a population decline in excess of 50% from 1926-1996.

3.2.3 Natural Environment

The country’s impervious grey soils render Monaghan highly sensitive to pollution. However, this, combined with a drumlin-dominated topography, also produces a number of areas of great environmental significance. There are currently forty-one proposed natural heritage sites and one Special Area of Conservation at Kilrooskey Lough Cluster. There are over ninety-five species of bird in the county, many of them protected, including the Whooper Swan, Kingfisher, Hen Harrier and others. The Wildlife Act 1999 provides statutory protection for Natural Heritage Areas. Amenities of special environmental interest include the Slieve Beagh/Bragan Mountains, Beagh, Shanronagh, Corlat, Lough Muckno, Mullyash, Emlylough and Tattybrack.

There are 50 principal lakes in the county with approximately 200 subsidiary lakes. The two principal river basins are the Erne Catchment and the Blackwater Catchment, the conservation and development of which have both cross-border and inter-county implications.

Ground water quality in Monaghan lags behind national figures with 59% of rivers polluted to some degree, compared to a state-wide figure of 33% over the past number of years. The principal causes for this deterioration are nutrient surpluses due to the overuse of chemical fertiliser and farmyard waste collection, storage and disposal.
3.2.4 Infrastructure

A. Transport
Monaghan lacks any transport infrastructural alternative to its roads. The N2 (running from Dublin to Derry) and the N12 linking Monaghan to Belfast (cutting off at Middletown) are the County's two national primary roads. The N2 currently has an average daily traffic flow of 7395 vehicles and it is estimated that by 2019, if present trends continue there will be a 49% increase in traffic on the roads. National secondary routes include the N54 linking Clones to Monaghan and the N53 linking Castleblayney to Dundalk. There are currently 108 km of national 290 km of regional and 2073 km of local roads in County Monaghan. Although total Council expenditure on non-national roads has increased steadily from €4.4 million in 1994 to €14.4 million in 2001, bottlenecks are still very much a feature, particularly in Monaghan Town, Castleblayney and Carrickmacross.

The dispersed population in the county places additional pressures on its transport infrastructure and consequently the natural environment. Nationally, 16% of the population have more than five miles to travel to work, school or college compared to 30% in County Monaghan. The car is the favoured mode of transport, followed by buses.

Monaghan's location is of strategic significance regarding North/South linkages such as the Dublin- Derry and Belfast-Galway routes. The development of the proposed new East-West link from Dundalk to Sligo also has implications for Monaghan. Road closures along the border over the past thirty years have had a debilitating affect on the economic and social development of the county, particularly on the Border towns and villages.

B. Energy
The primary sources of energy in Monaghan are Electrical or Natural Gas based. There are no renewable energy sources in the county. There are nine medium voltage distribution substations in the County and, with the exception of Lisdrum, the stations are not overloaded. The ESB are currently implementing plans to upgrade Lisdrum and a number of other loops.

Bord Gáis currently has a large gas main servicing the south of the county around Carrickmacross and Lough Egish. In general, however, the County has a weak gas infrastructure and there are no natural gas lines in the West or North of the County. There is potential for the development of a gas distribution mains to Clones and Monaghan Town through Cootehill, Co Cavan.

C. Water
There are twelve public water schemes in the county (four of them large) and twelve group water schemes. The high number of group water schemes is indicative of the strong tradition of self-help and co-operation in the county. Recent analysis deemed that 54% of piped water supplied in the county was unsatisfactory. Domestic usage accounts for the main proportion of water consumption. In rural areas, agriculture accounts for 45.2% of water usage. There are a number of areas which have no piped water supply in the county, the most significant being the rural areas east of Clones, the west of the county and the mountainous and sparsely populated areas to the north.

D. Waste
Agriculture is by far the most significant waste producer in the county producing 93,000 tonnes annually (1991 Census and currently estimated to be 60,000 tonnes); Monaghan produces 27% of the total agricultural waste produced in the North Eastern region. It is estimated that 28,740 tonnes of household, commercial and industrial waste and sludge/other waste are deposited at the landfill site at Scotch Corner annually.

Landfill is still the dominant form of disposal although some recycling occurs. A Materials Recovery Facility has been established at Scotch Corner to facilitate further recycling. There are 6 bring banks (1 per 8,413 people), which recycle 124.5 tonnes of waste (100 tonnes of glass and 24.5 tonnes of cans and textiles). Monaghan people recycle more cans and textiles than any other county in the North Eastern region.

E. Telecommunications
Broadband infrastructure is limited in the border region and Monaghan is relatively poorly provided for in terms of high-speed telecommunications nodes, with no SDH or ATM nodes, thus severely limiting the capacity of the network to transfer information. Eircom is the only operator in the county (and in the North Eastern region as a whole, with the exception of parts of Dundalk, which are served by Esat). The absence of a variety of telecommunications operators results in high end-user costs, thereby reducing the competitiveness of existing and potential new businesses in the county.

Currently a Digital Technology Corridor for Counties Armagh and Monaghan is being developed to attract inward investment and to add value to the skill base of both counties. While both BT and NTL are supporting the Armagh element, Monaghan does not have a competitive telecommunications infrastructure to exploit this initiative to its fullest.

Local authorities in Cavan, Monaghan and Louth have made a joint application to the Department of Public Enterprise to upgrade the telecommunications infrastructure in the region. This infrastructure is crucial in order to attract ICT and telematics investors to the county.

3.2.5 Economic Profile

A. Economic Living Standards
The table on the next page summarises the economic profile of the over-fifteen population in the county in 1996.
Currently a Digital Technology Corridor for Counties Armagh and Monaghan is being developed to attract inward investment and to add value to the skill base of both counties.

B. Labour Force Participation

The county's labour force participation rate, comprising 55% (20,870 people) of the county’s population, is significantly higher than the regional average of 36% and compares favourably to the national average. There was a 12% increase in labour force participation between 1986 and 1996. Males make up 72.9% and females make up 35.9% of the labour force, compared to national figures of 70.8% and 40.7% respectively. This high labour-force participation rate is indicative of the industrious and enterprising tradition of Monaghan people. Participation rates by women are less than the national average, whilst those in the labour force are very often employed in the lower paid sectors such as clerical and administration. This imbalance has, however, been reduced over the past eight years: in 1991, the ratio of males to females in the 'Clerical Staff' group was 1:4; in 1998 that ratio was 1:3.

The majority of employees within the manufacturing sector in the County are industrial workers and operatives (79%).

There is evidence of labour-shortages in the county. Information provided by FAS indicated that employers notified almost 1000 job vacancies in 2000. A recent report commissioned by IBEC revealed that 39% of companies in the border region are currently experiencing recruitment difficulties. Sectors most affected by this labour shortage include manufacturing, transport and construction. Vacancies were principally amongst general operatives, labourers and customer services.

C. Wages and Disposable Income

Despite the economic boom over the past six years, disparities between disposable income levels in Monaghan and the state average have widened from 92.3% in 1994 to 90% in 1998. Currently the annual wage per employee is approximately €6,330 lower than the state average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Profile Summary Table</th>
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<tr>
<td>At Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CSO
D. Industrial Development

Monaghan has experienced a 49% growth in gross industrial output between 1991 and 1998 and a net industrial output growth of 65% over the same period indicating cost reductions due to economies of scale or a move towards a higher value added product. However, net output per employee is only one third of the figure for the state as a whole, indicating a dependence on low value-added products. The result is that Monaghan expends 36.6% of overall net output on salaries and wages compared to 16% nationally. At the same time, disposable income, as indicated above, is still significantly below the state average.

Table 5.4 indicates Monaghan’s Output in contrast to the other areas in the North Eastern Region and the state as a whole.

The food sector accounts for 45% of industrial production in Monaghan, with furniture at 13.6%. As is the trend nationally, clothing, footwear and leather and textiles are in decline.

E. Agency Support for Industry:

State agency support for Industry has increased in recent years, and over the past six years, approximately €34,788,700 has been invested in the region. Enterprise Ireland (EI) provided approximately €33m of this, with additional support from IDA, FÁS and Bord Bia. In this period client companies of EI created some 2,300 permanent and full-time jobs, as well as 1600 part-time positions. Over 1,800 jobs were lost between 1996 and 2001.

Monaghan has not benefited to the same degree as other Counties’ areas as regards state support to facilitate inward investment. There was a 21.8% decrease in the number of jobs created in IDA supported companies in the North Eastern region between 2000 and 2001 in contrast to a 6% increase in the North Western Region.

Grant-aid and support are paid, in the main, for Capital and Equity, R&D and Marketing. The County Enterprise Board, established in 1993, has provided supports for small business (with less than 10 employees), allocating an average of €469,800 per year. (£2.8m over seven and a half years).

F. Tourism

According to Bord Fáilte’s 1999 figures, there were 43,000 overseas visitors to County Monaghan, accounting for only 7% of visitors to the North West region, of which 69% of visitors were from Britain. Monaghan receives significantly less visitors than other counties in the border region. Tourists spent almost €9m in Monaghan in 1999, in comparison to over €29m in Cavan and €14m in Leitrim.

Excluding self catering accommodation, there are currently 880 bedspaces (in Bord Fáilte approved accommodation units) available in the county.

Angling is the county’s biggest tourism activity but there is also a wide range of other activities and attractions available including rally driving, horse riding, golf, hill-walking, outdoor pursuits, watersports and heritage and genealogy based tourism.

G. Agriculture

Monaghan’s Agricultural Sector is dominated by drystock farming on relatively small farms. The average farm size is approximately 16.7 ha compared to a national average of 28.2. The number of dairy cows has decreased since the introduction of milk quotas in 1984 but these have effectively been replaced by suckler cows. The number of dairy farmers has reduced by two thirds over the same period, although milk quotas have actually increased by 16%.

Including subsidies (of which there is approximately €20 million), Monaghan’s farming output is €205 million per annum. The biggest contributors are dairying and poultry farming, followed by beef and mushroom production. The biggest growth sector over the past number of years is mushroom production. Approximately 16.5% of the farms in

<table>
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<tr>
<th>STATISTIC</th>
<th>MONAGHAN</th>
<th>CAVAN</th>
<th>LEITRIM</th>
<th>LOUTH</th>
<th>STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Output (£’000)</td>
<td>677,567.80</td>
<td>725,534.69</td>
<td>93,809.52</td>
<td>3,897,030.60</td>
<td>64,628,359.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Output (£’000)</td>
<td>204,877.32</td>
<td>188,769.42</td>
<td>37,014.14</td>
<td>2,095,466.53</td>
<td>35,416,641.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net/Gross Output (%)</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Output Per Unit (£’000)</td>
<td>1829.70</td>
<td>2,389.65</td>
<td>1193.55</td>
<td>11,706.99</td>
<td>7,180.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Wages Per Employee (£)</td>
<td>16,611.99</td>
<td>20,435.16</td>
<td>16,566.27</td>
<td>21,595.77</td>
<td>22,989.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Output Per Person Engaged (£)</td>
<td>44,645.26</td>
<td>61,090.91</td>
<td>34,368.00</td>
<td>220,505.25</td>
<td>136,030.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages as % of Net Output</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Angling is the county’s biggest tourism activity.

The economic growth over the past ten years is reflected in consumer spending as shown by new vehicle registration and new house completions, both of which have soared over the past five to ten years. There were 2217 new vehicles licensed in Monaghan in 1999, almost twice as many vehicles as were licensed ten years earlier. At the same time, growth in new vehicle registration has fallen behind the national average. Monaghan has a high number of commercial vehicles, reflecting the strong tradition of self-employment in the county.

Forestry accounts for only a small proportion of Monaghan’s land, despite the county’s strengths in the timber and wood products sector. Organic farming is also relatively underdeveloped in the county.

H. Other Economic Indicators:

The number of house completions increased by 186% from 1994 to 2000 (i.e. from 229 annually to 426). Planning permissions increased by 198% over the same period.

3.2.6 SOCIAL ANALYSIS

A. Age Dependency and Gender Breakdown

There is a very high proportion of people in Monaghan aged less than 15 and over 65 (age dependent). Approximately 38% of people in the county are age dependent compared to 35.1% nationally. The county also has a male-female ratio of greater than one (Male: Female - 26,158 : 25,155), an indicator highly correlated with areas suffering from decline or relatively high deprivation.

B. Income Disparities and Deprivation

In addition to a growing disparity between disposable income at national and county level, there are also disparities within the county. In 1995, over 50% of the households earned less than €13,299 per annum, whilst 20% of households have incomes greater than €28,411 per annum.

Using the Hasse Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation based on social class composition, educational attainment, level of unemployment, proportion of lone parents, extent of small farming and the age dependency rate, 21 DEDs in Monaghan were ranked amongst the most disadvantaged DEDs in the Country in 1996. Only two were ranked amongst the 10% most affluent and these were located close to Monaghan town. There has also been an increase in the level of deprivation in Monaghan relative to the national figures (15% above the national average in 1991 and 21% in 1996).

C. Unemployment

Monaghan’s unemployment rate (Percentage of unemployed people and first time job seekers as a proportion of total labour force) has usually been lower than the national average (12.9% in 1996 compared to a national
average of 14.8% and a regional figure of 16.9%). Unemployment levels, however, do not reveal the real level of deprivation in predominantly rural areas; neither does it account for the realities of the migration and emigration of rural people and the decline of rural communities.

D. Accommodation and House Prices

In 2001, 8.7% of households in Monaghan were either within social housing units or on a local authority-housing waiting list. Since the 1930s, 3,575 social houses have been constructed by the six local authorities, of which 76% have been sold to tenants under tenant purchase schemes and 24% are rented as social accommodation. In April 2001 there were 716 applications for social housing; 230 in Monaghan Electoral Area, 177 in Carrickmacross EA, 132 in Clones EA and 177 in Castleblayney EA.

Voluntary and co-operative housing bodies (nine in the county) currently provide social rented accommodation for families and sheltered housing to meet the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities. Homelessness does not appear in the official statistics; however it is estimated that there are at least 21 homeless families in Monaghan.

Currently there is no crisis/temporary accommodation for the homeless or victims of domestic violence.

House prices have increased by 213% in Monaghan between 1995 and 2000 (from an average price of €68,280 to €145,790). Analysis based on current trends, regarding the direction of household incomes and house prices in County Monaghan, projects that the percentage of additional households annually, appropriate for social and affordable housing, will increase from 33.2% of the population currently to 35.4% in 2006.

E. Health Status

Recent studies have revealed strong linkages between social deprivation and poor health. Approximately 31% of the population in Monaghan hold medical cards. The general statistics follow national trends; e.g. the birth rate in Monaghan is in decline and there is an increase in births outside of marriage, reflecting the general breakdown of the traditional family structure.

Circulatory illness accounted for the majority of deaths in the county in 1997 (46.3%) - putting it far ahead of cancer (19.8%) and respiratory diseases (18.4%), which are the second and third most common causes of death in Monaghan respectively. Of the 26 counties in Ireland, Monaghan is ranked 26th (worst in the country) for heart disease amongst females and 25th amongst males. Deaths due to cancer are lower than the national average.

The highest proportion of deaths in younger age groups is due to injury - mostly road traffic accidents - where the rate is higher than the national average amongst all males of all age groups. The county is ranked 25th, or 3rd worst, in terms of motor vehicle accidents amongst males.

Monaghan has the 5th worst record in the country for injuries and poisonings. This category includes statistics on suicide. An average of 33 males commit suicide each year in the NEHB region - the majority of these are under 35.

F. Health Services

The North Eastern health Board is charged with the delivery of Health and Social Services to the whole community. The delivery of services by the Board is under pinned by a number of key strategies such as: The National Health Strategy 2001, The National Cancer Strategy 1998, The National Cardiovascular Strategy, The National Health Promotion Strategy 1999 and other regional and local strategies.

There are three hospitals in Monaghan, one General Hospital in Monaghan Town (with Accident and Emergency
assaults are on the increase in the crimes involve theft, although physical per 1,000 in 2000. The majority of crimes per 1,000 people in 1996 to 32 crimes reported in Ireland in 1999. The accounting for only 5% of the total Monaghan, Donegal, Leitrim / Sligo) Northern Region (comprising Cavan / The crime rate in Monaghan is the third lowest in the country, with the Northern Region (comprising Cavan / Monaghan, Donegal, Leitrim / Sligo) accounting for only 5% of the total crimes reported in Ireland in 1999. The rate is, however, increasing, from 18 crimes per 1,000 people in 1996 to 32 per 1,000 in 2000. The majority of crimes involve theft, although physical assaults are on the increase in the

There are 121 beds in Monaghan General Hospital - one for 437 people in the county. There are 306 beds in Residential Units, 244 of which are Public where the following services are provided: Respite, Assessment & Rehabilitation, Specialised Alzheimer's services and Continuous Care beds. Social Day Care services for older people are provided from eleven sites managed in partnership with both the Health Board and the Local Community and Voluntary Groups, servicing 615 older people on a weekly basis. Home support services are provided to 760 people and there are six places available in the Boarding Out Services.

Day care services are provided for up to 86 people with learning disabilities at four Centres providing daily activities, rehabilitation and skills training. Currently there are a total of 345 people classified as having an intellectual disability. Home support is provided to 89 people in the county and there are six community group homes.

G. Crime and Security

The crime rate in Monaghan is the third lowest in the country, with the Northern Region (comprising Cavan / Monaghan, Donegal, Leitrim / Sligo) accounting for only 5% of the total crimes reported in Ireland in 1999. The rate is, however, increasing, from 18 crimes per 1,000 people in 1996 to 32 per 1,000 in 2000. The majority of crimes involve theft, although physical assaults are on the increase in the county. The number of Traffic Offences in the county has also increased very significantly from 3495 in 1996 to 11482 in 2000. The number of deaths due to traffic accidents has almost doubled over the same period.

The detection rate for recorded offences in Monaghan was 43.6% in 1999 (higher than the state average of 42.2%). The total of circuit court cases, as a proportion of indictable offences detected, is 84%.

There are 78 community alert schemes around the county, which help to decrease the vulnerability of people living in isolated rural areas, in what is a predominantly rural county.

H. Education

The key characteristics of education in County Monaghan are:

- a high level of early school leaving
- a low take up courses to degree level, and
- a high take up of further education/adult education and adult literacy courses.

These facts are reflected in the fact that over 36% of over fifteens have no formal education or primary education. Only 5% are educated to degree level, yet, at the same time there are over 3,500 people currently enrolled in adult education and adult literacy courses in the county. The availability of work and the lack of a tradition of third level take up have acted as major pull factors attracting young people out of the education system and into the workforce. The high level of take up of certificate courses and adult education courses available through MIFET (VEC run Further Education Centre) may be influenced by the fact the courses are available locally and on a part-time basis, conducive to the needs of the local population. It also indicates that despite the high school drop out rates there is a significant trend towards up-skilling and life long learning.

I. Education Facilities

According to the Department of Education and Science statistics, there were 6880 children attending the county’s 66 primary schools in 1998/99, and 5833 students attending the county’s 11 secondary schools. Five of the 11 secondary schools are VEC-run, accounting for 40% of second level students. The DoE’s lists 107 students as having special needs, catered for in eight classes. The average number of special needs students per class is 13.4, which is higher than the national average of 11.2. Monaghan Education Centre provides training for teachers to Masters levels as well as a home school liaison service for Monaghan Town, a Reading Recovery Programme and a number of other supports.

There are three schools in the county which receive special funding under the Department of Education’s Designation for Disadvantage Scheme. This scheme, however, does not take into account the dispersed nature of socio-economic deprivation in the county and as a result there are still a number of schools without adequate resources to meet the needs of all their students.

Nationally all the Universities in the Country are located south of a line from Galway to Dublin. There are four Institutes of Technology located in the border region. National studies on spatial factors in education indicate that distance from third level institutions significantly affects college take up. There is major potential for the development of outreach courses from existing universities and regional technical colleges, both on a cross border basis and nationally.

A number of initiatives are taking place both inside and outside the mainstream education system to encourage more parental and community involvement in the education process and to tackle educational disadvantage. Currently there are three Home School Community Liaison Officers in the County, two attached to VECs and a third attached to Monaghan Education Centre. In 2000 there were fourteen homework clubs supported by County Monaghan Partnership catering for 532 children.

The main providers of vocational training for people with disabilities in the county are NTDI in Monaghan town (with 35 places) and Rehabcare at Rooskey (with 34 places).
**J. Social Inclusion**

Social inclusion involves addressing the policies and practices that prevent sectors of the community from accessing an adequate quality of life. It involves identifying and addressing why people may be shut out from educational opportunities, the labour market, affordable housing, high quality healthcare and from an adequate income. Groups considered to be at most risk of exclusion are: long-term unemployed, lone parents, large families, people with disabilities, the elderly, members of minority ethnic groups, including travellers, and people living in isolated rural areas.

In February 2001 there were 2,606 people claiming some form of benefit related to unemployment, including some part-time and seasonal workers. These statistics do not reflect the number of people on low incomes in full-time employment. The number of women on the Live Register is significantly lower than the number of men. This can be accounted for by the large proportion of women who are classified as on ‘home duties’.

The number of people receiving Family Income Support in 2000 was approximately 263, representing a decrease from the previous year. There are 14% of households in the county headed by a lone parent - 4% higher than the national average with approximately 50% (763) households receiving one-parent family support.

The number of people receiving disability benefit (paid to insured people unfit to work due to a sickness or disability) increased from 682 to 730 between 1998 and 2000. The number of people receiving disability allowance (weekly allowance to people with a disability) has also increased from 6,454 aged over 65, 55% of which were female. Of these, there are 1782 people living alone, 61% of which are females.

The Traveller Census dated November 2000 identified 58 Traveller families resident in Monaghan. These families are mainly living in Monaghan town. Monaghan County Council is currently in the process of delivering its Traveller Accommodation Plan (2001) to address accommodation issues for travellers.

There are approximately 155 refugees and asylum seekers in the county. In addition there are 690 non-nationals (over 16) with work permits registered in the Monaghan District - including Monaghan, Emlyvale and Clones. These figures do not include the families of immigrant workers who have the right to join them after one year - in Emlyvale, for instance, over 10% of the children starting the local national school were non-nationals. A recent study revealed there to be very little co-ordination of services for non-nationals, and the need for a more integrated approach to service delivery.

**3.2.7 CULTURE**

**A. Arts Facilities**

Facilities for the Arts are relatively under-developed in County Monaghan, with only four dedicated arts venues and one purpose built arts centre. There is one theatre- (The Garage) and two exhibition areas in Monaghan Town and one Literary Resource Centre at Inniskeen. Funding has been received for the development of an Arts and Resource Centre in Castleblayney, which will incorporate a theatre and artists workspace. Workspace is also available for artists at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre at Annamakerrig, which is a state-owned international retreat venue for professional artists. Additionally, there are two Community based arts projects, Monaghan Youth Theatre and the Sliabh Beagh Community Arts Project.

**B. Libraries and Museums**

There is a total of five public libraries in Monaghan, one general library unit and a school mobile unit. The County Museum in Monaghan town is one of only nine museums in the county that enjoys designated status from the National Museum to retain artefacts. There are two folk museums in the county, one located in Ballinode and one in Inniskeen.

**C. Arts Expenditure**

Expenditure from the Arts Council in 2000 in Co. Monaghan amounted to £256,000 - with an additional £80,000 from the County Council. Some of the larger projects funded by the Arts Council include the Tyrone Guthrie Centre and The Garage Theatre. County Monaghan VEC also receive funding for the development of the arts.

**D. Performing Arts**

There is a strong tradition of Community/ Amateur Drama in the County and there are currently three main non-professional performing groups within County Monaghan: The Drumlin Players, The Castleblayney Players and Monaghan Youth Theatre. A professional group, Quare Hawks, is in residency at The Garage Theatre. The Castleblayney Drama Festival, organised on an annual basis by a voluntary committee, is the principal community drama event in the county.

**E. Festivals and Events**

The county’s high level of community and voluntary activity is reflected in the fact that there are thirty- seven festivals in the County from March to November, covering everything from angling festivals to watersports, vintage fairs to music festivals, motorcycle rallies to heritage weekends. The annual “Harvest Blues” Festival is a major event for Monaghan Town, attracting internationally renowned rhythm and blues artists and visitors from all over the world. The old traditions are still strong in Co. Monaghan and the county boasts a prestigious collection of vintage agricultural machinery.
F. Irish Language

The Irish language is spoken regularly by approximately one tenth of the population, principally in the north of the County and around Castleblayney. There are three Irish national schools in the County and three Naíonra (Irish language playgroups) in the county. There are three main Irish speaking groups: An Cumann Gaelach in Monaghan Town, Conradh na Gaeilge/Glór na nGael in Carrickmacross and Glór an Oirthuaiscairt in Carrickmacross.

G. Community Groups

There is a high participation rate in community and voluntary activities. To date, there are 490 Community based groups registered with the Office of Community and Enterprise in Monaghan County Council. These groups include: Community Development Associations, Disability Groups, Youth Organisations, Sporting Organisations, Residents Groups, Tidy Towns Groups, Issue based groups (such as ex-prisoners, refugee support groups charitable groups etc). Women's Groups and Heritage groups.

H. Sports and Recreation

There are seventy sports clubs in the County registered with the Office of Community and Enterprise, covering a range of interests including football, boxing, badminton and Gymnastics. There are thirty- eight GAA clubs, most of which own their grounds. St Tiernach's Park in Clones is owned by the GAA and hosts the Ulster Gaelic Football Championships (almost every year). There is one Rugby Pitch in Ballinode and a high quality soccer pitch owned by Monaghan United Soccer Club (who play in the Irish premier division).

There are four private Swimming Pools in the county, two in Monaghan Town, and one in Castleblayney and one in Carrickmacross. Currently there is no operational public swimming pool in the County.

The County is well catered for as regards golfing facilities with four eighteen hole golf courses - two in Carrickmacross, one in Monaghan Town and one in Clones and one nine hole golf course in Castleblayney. There are two driving ranges in the County, one in Inniskeen and one in Monaghan Town.

There are a number of outdoor pursuit facilities in the County, most significantly the VEC's Outdoor Education Centre near Rockcorry. Activities such as sub aqua diving and water skiing also take place at Lough Muckno Leisure Park. There are two Equestrian Centres located at Glaslough and Carrickmacross. There are two vehicle-racing tracks at Latton and at Scotshouse (Rally School Ireland).

I. Cultural Diversity

There are at least 40 non-EU Nationalities represented in Monaghan at the moment. The most significant populations are of Latvian, Lithuanian, Romanian and Nigerian Origin. There are 690 non-nationals registered in the Monaghan District and a further 350 in the Carrickmacross area.

The 1991 Census is the most recent statistical evidence of people in each County by religious denomination. These revealed 88% of the population to be of Roman Catholic origin, 3% Church of Ireland, and 5% Presbyterian. In 1991, there were at least fourteen different congregations in the County. However, there are no exact figures on the additional religious spiritual communities developing as a result of the growth in the non-national communities and the emergence of an increasingly multi-cultural society.

J. Voting Turnout

Monaghan’s voting population is significantly higher than the state average, with a turnout of 66 % at the last local elections in comparison to a state average of 50%, indicating a relatively strong sense of civic pride in the county. However, in common with national trends, the voting population is in decline.
3.3 Audit of Service Provision

3.3.1 Introduction

This section summarises the findings of County Monaghan’s Audit of Service Provision undertaken by the Office of Community and Enterprise. This research is the initial step in an overall process aimed at providing a coherent framework for the co-ordination of public and local development services in the County. It was prepared in accordance with the guidelines set out in ‘A Shared Vision for County and City Development Boards’ by the Interdepartmental Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development.

The full document is available for reference from the Office of Community & Enterprise, and can be accessed through the CDB’s website, www.monaghancdb.ie

3.3.2 Aim and Background

The precise aim of this body of research was to answer the strategic question ‘who does what and where?’ In line with this, data relevant to the following parameters was collected:

- geographical area covered by organisations
- the policy sectors targeted
- the principal activities and specific programmes undertaken
- the groups targeted
- the major constraints on service delivery as experienced by service providers.

The completed report includes an analysis of the characteristics of the sector and summaries of the plans, priorities and specific programmes undertaken by the various groups.

The findings summarised below are part of an ongoing body of research to identify the major constraints and gaps in service provision and to inform the future targeting of services on a county and sub-county basis. The challenge lies in keeping the information up to date as services available change over the coming years.

3.3.3 Main characteristics of Service Provision in County Monaghan

The main characteristics of public and local development service provision in the county, based on the findings of the County Monaghan Audit of Service Provision, were:

- Advice/Information and Education / Training are key services in the county. Education/ Training also emerged as the most important policy sector for the organisations surveyed.
- Few of the organisations surveyed identified promotion and marketing activities as one of their main activities.
- There is limited emphasis on national growth sectors such as energy and telecommunications/E-commerce.
• The principal target groups include the general public, disadvantaged women and disadvantaged rural communities and farmers. Adults with literacy problems, the elderly and substance abusers are targeted by fewer agencies. It must be noted, however, that it is not in the scope of this survey to make any observation on the level or quality of services for particular target groups.

• Most service providers surveyed target all of County Monaghan. However, there is a strong national and regional dimension to the delivery of services particularly the border and cross-border region.

• The majority of head offices of organisations are located in Monaghan Town. Some of the larger organisations provide outreach services to the main county towns. Limited public transport, particularly in rural areas, is a major obstacle to the general accessibility of services in the county. Ultimately this can be seen to intensify the isolation of already marginalised sectors of the community.

• Funding emerged as the most significant constraint on service delivery. Other constraints can be seen in the graph below. Other frequently reported constraints on service delivery include factors such as accommodation and staffing and restrictions as a result of inflexible statutory remits.

• There are a number of additional supports for local development available through the private banking sector.

3.3.4 Gap in service provision in the County according to service providers

• There is a lack of awareness of existing services in a variety of sectors.

• There is a need for more interagency co-operation and coordination

• Tourism services are limited, including information, accommodation & promotion.

• Many villages and towns have heavy constraints on existing basic services such as water, sewage and waste collection.

• There is a need for a flexible transport service throughout the county

• There are limited childcare / preschool services.

• Most services are located in Monaghan Town.

• Further and Higher Education sector needs to be developed.

• The economic base of the County needs to be broadened.

• Limited telecommunications service limits economic development.

• Lack of resources for disadvantaged families particularly in rural areas.

• There is limited support for small farmers

• Limited Youth activities particularly in rural areas
Building on the information collected through research, consultation and the working groups, a basis for the undertaking of a SWOT Analysis was established. The SWOT analysis report covers the twelve different thematic areas and runs to over 30 pages. The summary presented here is a condensed version of the original SWOT and included the issues which the Board considered as having the highest priority.

The SWOT document produced by this process runs to some thirty nine pages in length. In order to ensure clarity and to facilitate the identification of the key issues facing the county, the document was condensed down to a two-page summary. Issues which appear in the summary SWOT were identified as priorities through workshop sessions, again with Board, Working Groups and Community Networks.

The summary of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing the county, is as follows:

### STRENGTHS
- Indigenous entrepreneurial spirit, small business base and work ethic
- Good industrial relations
- Strategic location of County
- Diverse tradition of Arts, Heritage and Culture
- Strong literary tradition
- Vibrant community and voluntary sectors involved in service provision and impacting on all aspects of life in the County
- Strong local social conscience & value systems
- Well developed enterprising range of agricultural businesses supported by high level of co-operative activity
- Largely unspoilt rural landscape
- Sustainable rural communities
- A willingness among organisations and agencies to foster co ordination and co operation.
- Increased culture of co-operation & partnership
- Growth in outreach services
- New County Council strategies on Waste, Water and Housing

### WEAKNESSES
- No third level educational institution
- Underdeveloped ICT infrastructure and low uptake of IT in local industry
- Weak tourism base
- Over-reliance on traditional industries / sectors
- Loss of young people and a brain drain from the County
- Lack of choice in employment opportunities
- Low wage economy
- Low level of inward investment
- Peripherality
- National criteria too off restrictive for local application
- Under-representation of females in the workforce
- Inadequate childcare
- Poor social infrastructure
- Weak transportation infrastructure
- Deficiencies in capacities of water and sewerage services
- Lack of serviceable development land
- Shortage of housing, especially social housing
- No alternative energy sources
- Weak infrastructure for arts, culture, heritage and sports
- Low priority of the County on national stage
- Constraints on farm development caused by quotas, waste and succession issues
- Low return from farming
- Lack of co-ordination of service delivery at local level
- Hidden poverty
- Under-employment
- Real and perceived barriers to cross border activities,- uncertainty, currency difference, past experiences etc
- Lack of social and recreational amenities
- Barriers to participation in full time adult education
### OPPORTUNITIES
- Cross-border economic, social and cultural development
- Expansion of existing businesses and agricultural sector
- Development of lifelong learning
- BMW strategy/Objective 1 status /EU initiatives
- Council’s strategies on waste, sewerage, housing
- Attraction of inward investment, both private and public
- Unspoilt environment – agriculture, tourism
- Third level outreach facilities
- Development of ICT business
- Development of tourism
- Expansion of labour force through untapped sources
- Re-zoning of land for industrial and housing use
- National Spatial Strategy
- Development of / access to alternative energy
- Expansion of facilities and participation in arts, culture and sports
- Innovation to help sustain rural communities
- Co-ordinated local service delivery
- Social economy
- Mainstreaming community initiatives
- Filling the information gap through a communications strategy
- Development of active citizenship especially among young people
- Capacity to fully access natural hinterland because of the PEACE initiative.
- Further expansion of capacity of local communities

### THREATS
- Continued brain drain and loss of young people
- Continued “invisibility” of Monaghan at National level
- Failure to provide and upgrade local transportation infrastructure
- Failure to implement balanced regional development
- Securing adequate resources to implement strategies
- Changes in EU policy affecting agriculture
- Continued currency differential with Northern Ireland
- Failure of peace process
- Failure to move away from traditional industries
- Rising costs compared to developing markets
- Continued centralisation of/reduction in public services
- Termination of funding for community and voluntary sectors
- Decline in volunteerism, community activist burn out
- Lack of flexibility and slow responsiveness to development opportunities
- Competition from other Counties
- Failure to access broadband technology
- Attitude to traditional values
- Ageing population
- The negative impact of alcohol, drug and substance abuse particularly among teenagers.
- Downgrading of the county as a centre of primary services
- Withdrawal of social services

The continued ‘brain drain’ and loss of young people poses one of the greatest threats to County Monaghan.
4.1 Introduction

In the development of the Strategy for the Economic, Social and Cultural development of the County - Monaghan C.D.B. has identified twelve key strategic aims or “themes” which require to be addressed. Whilst each theme is dealt with separately, they all interm are interwoven and interdependent; with all contributing to the overall vision for the County.

Visions, Goals, Objectives.

In order to give shape to the strategic planning process, it is important to know where we want to go. To this end, the CDB has prepared a vision of Monaghan in ten years’ time. Working from this Overall Vision of Monaghan in 2012, mini-visions for each of the twelve themes were prepared. The next step involved identifying the things which would need to happen in order to get there; these became the goals in each theme.

Objectives are what need to happen in order to reach the goal. Behind the objectives are a number of specific Actions, all of which contribute towards the achievement of their objectives.

In deciding “what we want to do”, it is crucial to identify how we will know if we are getting there. Hence Key Result Areas have been identified for each action, so that we will know how far we have come and how much remains to be accomplished.

Agencies and organisations have identified specific actions for which they will assume responsibility. These are identified as the Lead Agency in the following sections. Organisations have also identified strategic actions where they will be able to support the Lead organisation; these are listed as the Key Stakeholders at the end of each section.

The CDB itself is the Lead organisation in a number of actions which will require the bringing together of a number of agencies, or which are in need of pre-development work before they can be implemented.

The timescale over which the action is to be carried out is also identified. Actions are expressed as either Short, Medium, or Long-term. Most actions will be achieved in the short to medium terms (2001 - 2004) and (2005 - 2007) respectively. This coincides with the timeframe of the present National Development Plan.

It should be noted that the actions contained in this document are strategic, not specific. They provide a framework whereby the relevant lead and support agencies can develop an overall work programme for their delivery. The 2/3 year action plans to be prepared by the implementation working groups will set out the specific paths for the delivery of each action.

Please refer to Appendix 4, page 106, for a list of relevant abbreviations used throughout the following sections.