

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

I.1 National Context

I.2 Regional Context

I.3 Local Context

I.4 Other Plans and Studies

2. AREA PROFILES

3. USER GROUPS AND WATER RELATED COMMERCE

4. DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES

5. TOURISM STRATEGIES WITIN THE AREA

6. INVENTORY OF TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE WATERWAY CORRIDOR AREA

I Introduction

Relevant information relating to the social, economic and development activities within the study area has been collated. This preliminary report presents an overview of the pertinent strategic and statutory documentation and highlights particular issues, which will have an influence on the overall understanding of the study.

The first section of this report is devoted to policy that will influence decisions in the waterway corridor. The second section outlines the social and economic data for the key towns and villages falling within the wider study area, leading to a brief overview of development pressures experienced by the towns and villages. The final section gives a broad inventory of the activities and facilities within the corridor area.

To fully understand the context of this study and the factors influencing policy decisions, it is necessary to examine the overall hierarchy of policy guidance through European, national, regional and local levels. Several documents have been referred to in order to gain a thorough understanding of the wider policy context within which this study falls. The relevant documents that should be considered for the sustainable development of the waterway corridor are set out below.

I.1 EUROPEAN POLICY

European Spatial Development Perspective

Aims: To achieve balanced and sustainable development, in particular by strengthening economic and social cohesion. The aim is to resolve the social and economic claims for spatial development with the area's ecological and cultural functions and hence, contributing to a sustainable, balanced territorial development¹.

Relevance to the Study Area: European policy intends to amalgamate economic and social cohesion; conserve natural resources and cultural heritage; and attain a more balanced competitiveness within the European Territory. This will advocate a more equal and fair quality of life for residents in Europe.

The Cork Declaration: A Living Countryside

Aim: To raise public awareness on the importance of starting new rural development policy, making rural areas more attractive to live and work in for all people, to support the programme devised to achieve the desired goals and to promote sustainable rural development in an international context².

Relevance to the Study Area: The 10-point programme is pertinent to the Study Area as it intends to promote sustainable rural development based on private and community based initiatives that are integrated with international markets. The 10 points are:

¹ EU, European Spatial Development Perspective, 1999, pp 10

² EU, The Cork Declaration, 1996

Rural Preference - Sustainable rural development to become the fundamental principle of all rural policy. This would lead to a much fairer, equal and more balanced environment.

Integrated Approach – rural development policy must be multi-disciplinary in concept, multi-sectoral in application and with a clear territorial dimension. An integrated approach based on agricultural adjustment and development, economic diversification – small and medium scale industries and rural services – management of natural resources, enhancement of environmental functions and the promotion of culture, tourism and recreation.

Diversification: more focus on providing the framework for self-sustaining private and community based initiatives i.e. investment, technical assistance, education etc. and promoting the development of viable rural communities.

Sustainability – policies should sustain the quality and amenity of Europe’s rural landscapes so that their use by today’s generation will not prejudice the options for future generations.

Subsidiarity – Policy must be decentralised and based on partnership and co-operation between all levels concerned. The emphasis must be on a “bottom up “approach. Rural development must be community-driven within a coherent European framework.

Simplification: policy must be more simplified with greater coherence of what is presently done through many separate channels, a limitation of EU law on general rules and procedures, more subsidiarity in decisions, decentralisation of policy implementation and more flexibility overall.

Programming: application must be based on coherent and transparent procedures, and integrated into one single programme for rural development for each region with a single mechanism for sustainable and rural development.

Finance: Use of local resources must be advocated for local rural projects which diversify rural economies.

Management: enhancing capacity and effectiveness of regional and local governments and community based groups through provision of training, assistance, sharing of information and experience between regions and rural communities throughout Europe.

Evaluation and Research: more transparency of procedures is required to guarantee the good utilisation of public money, stimulate research and innovation, an enable an informed public debate. Stakeholders must be consulted on monitoring and evaluation also.

I.2 NATIONAL POLICY

Local Authorities and Sustainable Development Guidelines on Local Agenda 21

Aims: to provide Local authorities with guidelines in preparing Local Agenda 21s.

Relevance to Study Area: The recommendations within the Study will need to follow an agenda of sustainable development. Therefore, the principles set out in the Guidelines should be adhered to and should provide guidance when developing objectives and proposals within the study.

National Development Plan

Aims: to achieve a more balanced regional development in order to reduce the disparities between and within the two Regions and to develop the potential of both to contribute to the greatest possible extent to the continuing prosperity of the country. The purpose is to give effect to the National Spatial Strategy, by prioritising and funding infrastructure.

Relevance to the Study Area: The study area is within the Border, Midland and Western (BMW) Regional Operational Programme. The total allocation for expenditure under the Regional Operational Programme for 2000-2006 is €2,645.6million.

The Inter-Regional Operational Programme will have most relevance to the Study Area. Within this programme is the Local Infrastructure Sub-Programme which consists of measures in respect of Non-national roads, Rural Water, Waste Management, Urban and Village Renewal, E-Commerce, Seaports, Regional Airports and Culture, Recreation and Sports.

Under the Culture, Recreation and Sports Measure, funding will be available to “Further develop the Shannon navigation and the Shannon/Erne waterway by improving facilities at existing locations and adding new destinations to cater for increased usage of the system” and “provide for improvements in recreational angling facilities including stock and habitat improvements”

The Productive Investment Sub-Programme also consists of measures, which includes Tourism. The relevancy here is the acknowledgement that areas such as East-Connaught and the Midlands and Border counties are still undeveloped. Against this background, €57.1million will be expended on developing major tourist attractions, developing special interest products and supporting tourism and the environment. There will also be an amount of €1.87 million set aside for marine and water based tourism facilities and €12.7 million for ongoing development of development of angling and related tourism.

National Spatial Strategy

Aims: a 20-year framework designed to deliver more balanced social, economic and physical development between the regions by changing the spatial structure of Ireland through promotion of regional centres outside of the Greater Dublin Area. The Strategy demands a certain critical mass of population, skills base, and business and transportation links to strengthen regional areas.

Relevance to the Study Area: The Corridor area falls within two regions – the Western and the Northwest regions with Roscommon in the West and Cavan and Leitrim in the Northwest. Roscommon and Leitrim are considered rural areas, which are remote and weak. The Strategy acknowledges the need to strengthen the rural economy. This is to be achieved through strengthening sectors of employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing. Efficient agricultural, marine and natural resource sectors, together with significant and developing sectors such as tourism, enterprise, local services and other sources of off-farm employment are recognised as the mainstays of a strong rural economy. However, various types of places will require tailored responses.

Policies for rural areas which are weak include:

- Building up rural communities through spatially targeted and integrated measures
- Developing new rural tourism resources such as inland waterways.

Policies for rural areas which are remote include:

- Promote marine and natural resource based development.
- Overcome distance barriers with the support of technology.

With regards to the Border region, Carrick-on-Shannon has been identified as a county town, which will perform regionally strategic residential, employment, administrative and other service functions. The corridor from Boyle to Carrick-on-Shannon is part of a National Transport Corridor.

The villages and rural areas within the Border region, notably Sligo/ Leitrim and through northern parts of Cavan, tourism assets in natural and cultural heritage and inland waterways have much potential for development, with a particular emphasis on towns including Drumshanbo.

With regards to the West Region, the region from Boyle to Carrick on Shannon as far down as Strokestown is considered as a rural area with strong potential for diversification. Roscommon is recognised as having strong functional links with parts of the midlands region. Linking the midlands gateway through upgraded infrastructure has the potential to benefit a number of towns in the region.

Boyle has also been identified as an opportunity town in Roscommon for development and expansion through effective promotion and marketing in association with larger towns, hubs and gateways and at a smaller level, village and rural areas in parts of the west and Roscommon within the Shannon catchment, are recognised for their significant natural and cultural heritage attractions such as landscape, inland waterways and historical artefacts. Priorities accepted for development in these areas include identifying key assets and presenting and assembling a quality package through enhancing hotel facilities, improving regional road access and improving awareness through marketing.

Under the NSS, Regional Planning Guidelines will be prepared for each of the eight regions and will in turn shape the Development Plans of the Counties. This could have implications for the ability to achieve the policies and actions drafted in this study. It is considered that the policies identified within the study could feed into the relevant Regional Planning Guidelines.

Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland

Aims: To provide a comprehensive analysis and framework, which will allow sustainable development to be undertaken more systematically in Ireland.

Relevance to the Study Area: The Strategy intends to guide development throughout the country in a sustainable fashion, which will ensure that present resources are available for future generations to enjoy. Guidance is provided on all strategic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, marine resources, industry, energy, transport and trade. Therefore, this Strategy will guide any objectives or proposals that will be developed for the study area to ensure that the effects of the same will not impair the ability of future generations to enjoy the waterways.

Government White Paper on Rural development – Ensuring the Future: A strategy for Rural Development in Ireland

Aims: The White Paper sets out a vision and a framework for the development of rural communities in Ireland into the next millennium. The ultimate objective of the strategy is to ensure the maintenance of vibrant, sustainable rural communities.

Relevance to the Study Area: The White Paper defines the rural development policy agenda as all Government policies and interventions which are directed towards improving the physical, economic and social conditions of people living in the open countryside, in coastal areas, towns and villages and in smaller urban centres outside of the major urban areas. Policies will aim to create balanced and sustainable regional development while tackling the issues of poverty and social inclusion. As much of the study area is rural, this paper is pertinent, in particular to ensure that policy makers are aware of the likely impact of policy proposals on the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of rural communities.

1.3 REGIONAL POLICY

Border, Midland and Western Region Development Strategy 2000-2006

Aims: To enhance the economy's productive potential, contribute to continuing growth in sustainable employment and to the re-integration of the long term unemployed, and those at risk of becoming so, into the economic mainstream and to contribute to a balanced geographic distribution of economic activity that will make best use of national economic growth.

Relevance to the Study Area: The Strategy identified strengths and weaknesses within the Region which included a lack of highly skilled personnel, varied quality of infrastructure, high quality natural environment, both land and coastal, high endowment of natural resources and low urban structure. It is proposed that expenditure in the region to tackle these issues will include £3,360 million for transport infrastructure, £396.5 million for economic infrastructure and £141.1 million on environmental infrastructure. An "integrated package" approach will be required using innovative planning and delivery mechanisms for the Strategy implementation.

West Regional Development Plan Structural & Cohesion Funds 2000-2006

Aims: The preparation of this Regional Plan is to present a strategy for the development of the West Region over the period 200-2006. The Plan identifies and addresses the key challenges facing the region and develops a programme of actions to ensure sufficient resources are channelled to the region to support its economic and social development.

Relevance to the Study Area: As part of the strategic aims and objectives of the Regional Plan, four sub-programmes are proposed for economic infrastructure, economic development, human resources and rural development. Under the sub-programme for economic infrastructure the main relevant infrastructure programme is to complete the upgrading of the N4 Boyle to Carrick-on-Shannon. It is expected that the reclassification of the N61 as a Strategic Corridor Link will resolve the disadvantage and improve the prospects of Roscommon Town and County.

Under the sub-programme for economic development, tourism and in particular, rural tourism was considered a valuable industry in terms of economic investment. Rural tourism is recognised as a multi-faceted activity including angling, watersports, heritage, cultural and eco-tourism. The West is considered a quality resource for these types of tourism development. However, it is realised that rural tourism must develop in a sustainable manner which draws on the character of the area and which does not destroy the attraction on which the area depends. The development of tourism in the Shannon Corridor is seen to provide one of the best opportunities of retaining the local population. The system of lakes and canals, scenic landscapes and a rich cultural and archaeological heritage provides the potential for such development. However, the need for hotel and guest accommodation, particularly in Roscommon, has been identified as an obstacle to this potential in addition to road access and basic infrastructure. One of the key objectives in promoting more sustainable economic development and competitiveness in the region is to encourage private sector investment in high quality tourism facilities and overseas tourism marketing and address shortcomings in quality and location. High priority measures include realising the potential of the Shannon Corridor through the provision of infrastructure eg waste outfalls, marinas with pump out facilities, water and sewerage facilities in adjacent towns.

Under the sub-programme for rural development, opportunities to develop the economic profile of second and third tier towns in the region through specialisation in certain activities, such as tourism in Boyle, were also acknowledged. Boyle was designated a high priority town in Roscommon for investment under the regional plan. This would entail measures to integrate the provision of infrastructure and business/ training support services, integrate Plan with job creation targets necessary to maintain rural communities and support the provision of comprehensive rural transport system to combat rural deprivation and isolation. The importance of the environment is also considered under rural development and the worth of water quality and fisheries, landscape and cultural heritage appreciated. Measures proposed in the plan include a monitoring regime and management programme for all the major river and lake catchment areas in the region at a cost of £10m.

The West Regional Report 2000-2006

Aims: To implement a vision for the Region's communities and its quality of life focused by the people. The plan seeks to retain rural communities and its quality of life through a strategy of balanced regional development building upon its comparative advantages and strengths.

Relevance to Study Area: Some of the Study Area is situated within the western region and a number of the strategic issues facing the Region also exist in this edge. These include tackling problems of decline and lack of development in rural areas and promoting sustainable development that meets the needs of people living in the west.

Western Development Commission - The State of the West - Recent Trends and Future Prospects

Aims: The Western Development Commission (WDC) has responsibility for promoting and fostering economic and social development in the seven western counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare. The report highlights the very limited progress in achieving balanced development in the Western Region. While there has been population and employment growth in the region, it is unevenly spread and concentrated in Galway and to a lesser extent Clare, with the remaining five counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Mayo and Roscommon exhibiting characteristics of low growth and underdevelopment.

Relevance to the Study Area: The report is relevant as it provides data on the infrastructural and socio-economic situation of the western region and states that there is potential for tourism to make an increased economic contribution to the West's rural areas but this requires the creation of a driving force for change which can give a clear strategic direction and deliver integration of support to deliver it.

Western Regional Guidelines

The Western Regional Guidelines providing for integrated regional development has sub divided the western area into zones and North Roscommon has been segregated into Zone C. The Guidelines state that Roscommon is the County in the region that has the least developed tourism base and there is a need for more tourist accommodation and facilities in County Roscommon particularly in the towns of Roscommon, Boyle, and other appropriate locations.

There is potential to develop greater economic gain associated with the River Shannon and its network and this can be achieved through the provision of increased mooring facilities at 4/5 chosen locations along the Shannon and by allowing for select types of significant commercial development along the riverside to provide for an economic gain from the Shannon. Joint coordination between Boyle and Carrick on Shannon should be explored and opportunities also exist to develop Lough Key and its environs as a natural amenity and major tourist attraction.

Border Regional Guidelines

The Border Region, the Counties of Donegal, Monaghan, Cavan and Leitrim contain a great number of lakes and is the source of Ireland's two longest rivers – the Shannon and the Erne. The Guidelines stipulate the importance of protecting environmental features such as landscapes, habitats and protected species, river catchments, the marine environment and the cultural heritage. The Guidelines recognise that Inland Waterways are a significant tourism resource and has potential as an economic driver for the inland parts of the Region. The cross border element of this is also significant. The reopening of the Ulster Canal and the extension of the Shannon Erne Waterway to facilitate access to Killashandra would have major economic benefit for the region. The Guidelines state that the necessary resources should be put in

place to enable these developments to proceed as there is a distinct absence of flagship tourism projects for the Region.

I.4 LOCAL POLICY

It is really at the local level, through the relevant County and Town Development Plans that physical development along the corridor is identified and implemented. The following section summarises the local policies and objectives that will impact on the study area. In some instances this is general policy, applicable throughout the respective Plan area and in others it is specific to the waterways themselves and the wider zone of influence.

Roscommon County Development Plan 2002 – 2008

The County Development Plan has a number of policies relating to the entire Shannon study area as much of the west of the county adjoins Lough Ree. However, as the majority of these policies were discussed in the previous study concentrating on the area between Shannonbridge and Lanesboro, the County Development Plan is discussed here with relevance to The Upper Shannon Navigation Corridor, which takes in the settlements of Strokestown, Roosky, Boyle and Cootehall, the Kilglass lakes and Lough Key.

The Plan identifies four scheduled towns including Boyle and five smaller urban areas including Strokestown to play an important role in supporting the network of smaller towns and villages and the rural communities of the county. It recognises the need for these areas to thrive for the rest of the county to benefit. The encouragement of residential, industrial and service developments to locate within towns and villages will improve the attractiveness of these settlements as areas to live and work.

In relation to the tourism industry it is acknowledged that the County still has a number of under-utilised tourism assets such as the Lough Key Forest Park and the entire length of the Shannon waterway system in the county. It is realised that these assets require protection to ensure their sustainability as tourism resources. The greater use of recreational assets such as fishing, cruising and exploring the past are also highlighted.

The main part of the development strategy is to encourage sustainable and environmentally friendly development while conserving and protecting the natural and built environment. The settlement strategy seeks to facilitate social and economic growth in the towns and villages and support rural diversification. Some strategic objectives of relevance include:

- The improvement and upgrading of transport links to and within the county.
- The support and facilitation of tourism throughout the county, including the Shannon waterway.
- The improvement and development of community facilities and of the county's recreational, leisure, sporting and amenity assets.
- The conservation and protection of the natural environment.

The Development Policy Section contains a number of relevant policies under various chapter headings. Whilst the housing section only peripherally relates to this study, it is worth noting that one of the development policies is 'to ensure that housing proposals do not cause traffic or environmental problems or damage visual amenity'. While the transport section mainly relates to road infrastructure, it is worth

acknowledging that the policies include ‘to undertake a programme of bridge improvements’ and ‘to reserve and maintain free of development a land corridor for the provision of town bypasses including Strokestown, Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon. Rooskey is identified as a location for a bridge to be built over the River Shannon.

The following environment objectives are relevant to the study area as they seek to ‘conserve the proposed Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Candidate Special Areas of Conservation listed in Schedules 8 and 9 and ‘to protect the views and prospects listed in Schedule 11’ including

- View 1: Over mountainous areas of north of Ballyfarnon
- View 2. Eastwards over Lough Allen
- View 3: In the Lough Key area
- View 4: Over the Kilglass Lakes area

Other relevant policies in the Environment Section of the Plan include ‘to conserve the Archaeological and Historical Sites and their settings in the County listed in Schedule 12’, ‘to conserve the buildings and structures listed in Schedule 13, together with their settings’ and ‘to assess development proposals in the Lough Key Area according to the policies of the Lough Key Study 2002’.

Tourism policies and objectives in the Plan include facilitating the development of tourism, including agri-tourism in the County, ensuring that all sections of the population have access to tourism facilities in the County and facilitating appropriate tourism investment programmes.

The following is a list of Amenity Schemes, as identified in Schedule 14 of this Plan to facilitate the development of the tourism industry in the County.

Location	Development required	Proposed Action
Strokestown	Major environmental, amenity and townscape improvement works to cater for the town’s designation as a Heritage Town	To continue programme of works as submitted to and agreed by Bord Failte
Warren or Drum (Boyle Pleasure Grounds)	The upgrading of the recreational area in accordance with detailed development proposals	To continue development programme to include environmental improvements
Rooskey	Development required to cater for the growing use of the area for tourism, recreation and amenity purposes	To investigate the type and range of facilities which are required in the area
Kilglass Lakes Area	Development required to cater for growing use of the area for recreation and tourist purposes	To investigate the developments necessary for the area to cater to its present use as a popular

		tourism and recreational area
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The Roscommon Development Plan has a specific aim to conserve the environment of the Shannon waterway, which includes the River Suck, and to further develop it as a tourism resource. A number of policies in the Plan

- Support the appropriate further development and conservation of the Shannon waterway and environs as a tourism and environmental resource.
- Facilitate the development of appropriate tourism initiatives along the Shannon waterway.
- Recognise the Shannon, the loughs and the Shannon Callows as habitats for a rich variety of flora and fauna.
- Facilitate with adjacent local authorities the establishment of a sustainable development and planning strategy for the future development of the Shannon waterway during the period of the development plan.
- Ensure the non-proliferation of private individual jetties and moorings along the Shannon system and especially within areas of conservation such as NHAs.

Its objectives seek to

- Prepare of a planning and development strategy in conjunction with Dúchas Waterway Services (*now Waterways Ireland*) and other relevant local authorities for the Shannon Waterway system in the County.
- Ensure that development proposals in the area of the Shannon are generally located within existing centres, and to prohibit development proposals where it would be detrimental to visual and environmental amenity.
- Locate appropriate development proposals in existing centres within the Shannon corridor.
- Support the maintenance, upgrading and development of the Shannon waterway system³.

In terms of development of the Shannon waterway, the Council will, where appropriate and in accordance with sustainable development principles, support the development of harbours, jetties and quays, the upgrading of locks, extension of the river system and environmental works along the Shannon. The Council will also support the development of additional facilities for tourism and recreational purposes in order to increase the attractiveness of the Shannon as a resource and amenity for use by the local population and visitors to the area.

The Council recognises that there is increasing pressure for housing and further recreation and tourism facilities in the urban environs areas and particularly in the Lough Key area. Such development can have a significant impact on the landscape and thus needs to be carefully managed to ensure it is appropriate in the context of its surrounds. Development in the Lough Key area is guided by the Lough Key Study 2002 and provides a framework for the long-term location of land uses in the study area and sets the context for implementing development and management objectives. The Council recognises the Lough Key

³ Roscommon County Council, Roscommon County Development Plan 2002, pp 39

Forest Park as one of the premier tourism attractions of the county and will the relevant bodies in its sustainable development for leisure, tourism and amenity uses.

Within the development control section of the Plan, there is specific reference to marinas as follows:
 New commercial marinas will normally be required to locate in, or close to existing centres, such as ...Boyle, Cootehall and Roosky. This will facilitate the economic provision of onshore facilities and contribute to the expansion of nearby towns and villages. Of note the Plan states that the development of single jetties and moorings may be acceptable at some locations, such as picnic or landing areas where their siting and design is appropriate. However, the Council will monitor the number of such jetties and moorings to ensure that there is not an undue proliferation of these facilities.⁴

Special Policy Areas are identified in the Plan and are used for either of two purposes.

- For environmental conservation purposes to protect areas where new development must be kept to a minimum due to their particularly high environmental or scenic values
- For urban containment purposes to protect areas of countryside near to main towns that, in the absence of positive action, could be lost to urban sprawl and/ or ribbon development.

Special policy areas include areas of high amenity value such as:

Description	Features of Interest	Intended Action
Lough Key Area	Area of excellent amenity value - contains beautiful lake surrounded by trees and open space	To follow those recommendations as contained within the Lough Key Study
Mountainous areas in the Arigna/Lough Allen/Ballyfarnon Area	Beautiful scenery	To conserve and protect the amenity value of the area
Kilglass Lakes Area	Lake-studded landscape of high visual quality	To protect the amenity value of the area

Boyle Town Development Plan 2002

The town of Boyle is situated within the upper Shannon Navigation Corridor Study. The Boyle Town Development Plan is relevant to the study area as it aims to consolidate the town as an attractive place in which to invest, live, work and recreate. The plan attempts to facilitate the achievement of a high quality of life for residents and visitors through the further development of sustainable economic and social activities in a quality environment.

General environment policies aim to conserve and enhance the quality of the environment of the town. This will promote economic and social regeneration in the town. The quality of the environment is an important factor in determining where people choose to live and in creating an image that is conducive to

⁴ Roscommon County Development Plan 2002-2008, p 47

attracting investment into the town. An attractive town is also required to entice tourists and visitors to the area also.

The Recreation Tourism and Community Facilities section aims to facilitate the provision of adequate recreational, community and tourism facilities in Boyle and a number of policies aim to:

- Ensure that all sections of the population have access to the tourism, recreation and community facilities in the town.
- Improve existing local authority recreational and amenity facilities, as well as to provide new facilities where needed.
- Facilitate the development of tourism in Boyle.
- Continue to facilitate the upgrading and provision of additional facilities at Lough Key Forest Park.

The Council recognises that the further development of new and improved tourism, recreation and community facilities will assist the growth of tourism in Boyle. They will ensure the town is more attractive to both the local community and visitors. The Council also recognises that tourism has a great potential for economic development and employment generation. The Council will encourage the establishment of facilities and services in the town that complement the recreational and tourism uses offered at Lough Key.

An area at the entrance to the town from Carrick-on-Shannon has been designated as a Reserved Site to facilitate the provision of a very high quality development that will act as a 'flagship' for Boyle and provide high quality employment. Developments permitted on the lands must address the roads, incorporate a high level of landscaping and provide a landmark for the town. This reserved site has the potential to accommodate a high quality hotel which would in turn provide quality accommodation for visitors and tourists to the area.

Roosky Local Area Plan 2004-2009

Roosky lies on the banks of the River Shannon in County Roscommon within the western region of Ireland and is within the boundaries of this study area. The vision behind this plan is to provide a high quality living, working and recreational environment, which will meet the socio-economic and civic aspirations of the community, while enabling maximum environmental protection.

The Local Area Plan (LAP) states that Roosky has developed as a mooring point for many cruisers due to its prominent location on the River Shannon. The LAP realises the potential of the village to become a major stopping off point for river cruisers due to its strategic location. There is potential to develop a service industry based on passing trade and wintering/mooring of boats from the River Shannon. There are also a variety of walks identified in the village and in particular a river walk to Roosky Lock.

Roosky Bridge, located on the eastern side of the village spans the River Shannon and joins the neighbouring counties of Roscommon and Leitrim. The river at this point links Lough Forbes, which is located to the south of Roosky, with the Lough Bofin/Lough Boderg complex of Upper Shannon lakes.

The Lough Boderg/Lough Bofin network has been designated as a proposed National Heritage Area (Site Code 001642). The habitats are woodland on the lake shore with well developed typical Shannon flora and reed swamps. Roosky is surrounded by many lakes, offering an array of angling choice with still water fishing of perch, pike, rudd and bream. The LAP acknowledges the village's location on the Shannon as an opportunity to open up a world of activities for the visitor both from angling and boating perspectives.

The Council recognise that the historic nature of Roosky is an important resource with regard to its potential for tourism and attracting investment into the village. There is potential for extra enhancement proposals in order to promote the marina as an amenity area for the village. In addition the LAP states that there is potential for future mooring, car parking, toilet and shower block facilities. The Council is aware that the development of environmental enhancements as well as appropriate landscaping, tree planting, car parking and traffic circulation improvements will help in creating a better environment for Roosky and stimulate the development of tourism in the village.

The Council also advocates Roosky's location near several fishing lakes which offers some of the best fishing waters anywhere in Ireland. A signposting scheme for these is recommended. There are many amenity walks around the village which have potential for development and entertainment. It is stated that the Roscommon Sports Partnership will be looking at walking routes in the Roosky area in 2004

Roosky is adjacent to two sites designated for natural heritage protection. Lough Forbes is designated as a Special Area of Conservation and a Special Protection Area under the EU Habitats Directive and the EU Birds Directive. Lough Bofin, is also proposed for designation as a Natural Heritage Area under the Wildlife Acts. The Council acknowledges that there are many other, undesignated areas of natural and semi-natural vegetation in Roosky, especially along the canal and the River Shannon with its floodplain and associated wetlands. These areas are increasingly coming under developmental pressure. A sustainable approach requires that natural heritage is conserved and protected for the benefit of future generations. It is the policy of this section to protect and conserve statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites, locally important habitats and geological features.

The LAP recognises that Roosky has a number of walks, which as yet have not been developed to their full potential. It is envisaged that these walks will link into other existing amenities in the locality such as the marina and associated developments. The Planning Authority will seek to facilitate the development of tourist projects around Roosky. If Roosky is to develop as a tourist centre it would require additional restaurants and possibly hostel accommodation. The LAP encourages the development of tourist attracting/tourist catering enterprises in Roosky.

Strokestown Local Area Plan 2004-2009

The vision of this Local Area Plan (LAP) is to provide a high quality living, working and recreational environment, which will meet the socio-economic and civic aspirations of the community, whilst at the same time affording maximum environmental protection. Strokestown is just a short drive from the River Shannon, which provides numerous attractions for tourists. The area is surrounded by many lakes, offering a choice of still-water fishing opportunities for coarse and pike anglers.

The LAP identifies the Court House as one of the most impressive buildings in the town. It is anticipated that in time this building can be refurbished. Similarly the adjoining vacant properties along Church Street could be adapted to provide tourist facilities such as craft shops and restaurants.

In relation to archaeological and built heritage it is the policy of the plan to:

- Protect and preserve those archaeological sites shown on the Record of Monuments and Places, those as yet unknown, and those discovered since the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places (1998).
- Protect, conserve and where necessary enhance the character, quality and distinctiveness of the architectural heritage of the town.
- Safeguard and maintain Protected Structures in accordance with Government policy and guidelines
- Maintain, conserve and improve, as far as possible, the built heritage, architectural quality, character and scale of Strokestown
- Have regard to the impact of proposed development on the built and archaeological heritage of the town
- Roscommon County Council will implement Part IV of the Planning & Development Act 2000, which relates to Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) in accordance with Government policy and guidelines
- Preserve the character of Bawn St, taking account building lines and height, and structures that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value
- Have regard to the impact of proposed development on the built and archaeological heritage of Strokestown

The Council acknowledges that the development of environmental enhancements as well as appropriate landscaping, tree planting, car parking and traffic circulation improvements will help in creating a better environment for Strokestown and stimulate the development of tourism in the town. Strokestown is set within a picturesque valley between Slieve Bawn in the south east and the Caslin Hills to the north. Annaghmore Lough, a Natural Heritage Area (NHA) is located 5km to the north west of the town. Strokestown is surrounded by many lakes and the River Shannon is within a short distance to the east. A signposting scheme for these is recommended.

There are no designated natural heritage sites within the Strokestown plan area. However all native flora and fauna, field boundaries, trees, floodplains and rivers within the plan area contribute to the natural heritage and biodiversity of Strokestown. It is the policy of the plan to protect and conserve statutory and non statutory designated wildlife sites and locally important habitats and geological features.

The Council is aware that the tourism industry provides great opportunity for economic development and employment creation. It is envisaged that new investment priorities should be directed into Strokestown to enable the town to develop as a heritage centre. It is considered that the development and implementation of strategies aimed at contributing to the promotion and facilitation of tourism is one way of projecting an image of a place and attracting further inward investment. The Council will seek to

facilitate the development of tourist resources where appropriate, in partnership with other public sector agencies and the private sector.

The LAP states that the tourism sector in Strokestown is underdeveloped. Apart from a few initiatives aimed at promoting Strokestown Park House, there has been little attempt made to market the other numerous attractions in the area. It has been identified that there is also a deficit in overnight accommodation facilities in Strokestown, which discourages tourists staying in the town. The LAP encourages the development of tourist attracting/tourist catering enterprises in Strokestown. In addition, an integrated marketing campaign to promote tourism is advocated.

Lough Key Plan 2002

This plan is relevant to the study area as Lough Key is contained within the remit of the Upper Shannon Navigation corridor. The Lough Key Plan examines the existing pressures within the area which includes the demand for permanent owner occupied housing, demand for self-catering holiday accommodation and demand for holiday homes. The demand has been derived from the scenic beauty and recreational potential of the lake. The analysis has indicated that demand is particularly acute in the Doon and Cootehall areas. This has resulted in a demand on existing facilities, however this tends to be seasonal.

The development strategy states that the key to maximising the potential of the lake is to establish a successful triangular relationship between the lake, the Forest Park and Boyle Town. This strategy is based on the concentration of residential and other development into development nodes, intended to reinforce and enhance existing communities and relieve pressure for development in more environmentally sensitive areas. Two such nodes have been identified;

- Boyle Town, intended as the primary gateway to the area, especially for road traffic and
- Cootehall, intended as a secondary gateway to the area, for water borne traffic.

Development outside these nodes will be restricted, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the nature, scale and location of the proposed development. A number of zones have been identified that are especially vulnerable to development.

Generally no development, other than the refurbishment of existing structures, the development of jetties or moorings associated with an existing tourism establishment or development associated with agriculture, should be acceptable in Conservation Zone 1. It is recommended that all lands within this zone be considered for designation as Landscape Conservation Areas, as defined in Section 13 of the 2000 Planning and Development Act. Any proposal for development within this zone must be accompanied by a Visual Impact Assessment.

Zone 2 lands aims to provide for and protect the continued use of lands as agricultural holdings and sustain local communities owner-occupier residential development for *bona fide* farmers and their immediate families. Speculative development should be restricted. New development should be carefully designed to minimise negative impacts.

Zone 3 lands fall within the bounds of the study area but have no direct impact on the lake. While these lands do not have a particular landscape or ecological value they nevertheless form an attractive rural environment and are an important part of a visitor's experience of the area. Roscommon County Council's policies on development in rural areas should apply.

Zone 4 mostly consists of lands within the Forest Park. It is recommended that these lands be designated a Landscape Conservation Area, as Zone 1. The further development of these lands for recreational and leisure purposes, including a hotel, preferably involving the restoration of existing structures in accordance with DoE conservation guidelines, but where necessary including the construction of new buildings, is encouraged. Great care must be taken to preserve the park like character of the zone and views from the lake.

Zone 5 relates to lands within the two development nodes of Boyle and Cootehall. Where possible development within these zones should connect to the public sewer. Development within these zones should have an appropriate urban form.

The Plan contains a number of specific recommendations including a recommendation that the original entrance driveway to Boyle Forest Park be reinstated as the principal entrance into the park. It is of critical importance that the lands around the Boyle - Lough Key basin are developed in an attractive and interesting manner so as to attract and retain visitors. A hotel or pub/restaurant fronting onto the basin for example, would help establish the appropriate festive atmosphere. It is recommended that an Action Area Plan be drawn up to guide development in and around the basin and between the basin and the town. It is further recommended that water based activities be established as an integral part of the development of the Lough Key – Forest Park.

The Plan clearly states that the Forest Park has the potential to become a magnet tourist attraction of regional importance if a critical mass of attractions and activities are developed within the park and a strong identity for the park promoted. Coillte had previously put forward a proposal to develop the park as an activity/adventure centre, aimed particularly at children and teenagers, with an emphasis on education and increasing environmental awareness. While the activities proposed by Coillte, were considered imaginative and an appropriate use of the park, The Council believe that these activities, together with water sports such as wind surfing and dinghy sailing, can best be developed in the wider context of the lake and its environs rather than being confined to the Forest Park. The interpretative facilities proposed can probably best be developed in association with Waterways Ireland and Duchas and expanded to include information on the ecology and history of human settlement in and around the lake.

The Plan recognises that the development of these tourist products will require additional accommodation including stables, changing facilities (close to lake, possibly in existing centre), Indoor interpretative/information centre (possible refurbishment of old church) and possibly a 'club house' facility (bar/restaurant/function room) which may also accommodate office/administrative requirements.

The heritage potential of the old Rockingham Estate is promoted within the Plan. For example, the old stable building may be refurbished as stables around which a pony trekking business can be based, or may make a craft centre, possibly specialising in wood products. Other structures within the estate can be

refurbished or conserved. More active management of the wooded areas is also needed. The removal of non-native species and plant mostly native broad leaf trees will be supported. It is recommended that the historic estate identity of the park be developed and promoted with a visitors' centre developed as a focus point in the park. A high quality landmark building is required. Ideally this building will have a sufficiently powerful image as to become synonymous with the park.

It is recommended that all marina development be required to provide public toilets, laundry and sewage pumping facilities as a condition of a grant of planning permission. Extending the marked navigation to the northern part of the lake and providing mooring facilities on some of the islands, where no conflict with conservation interests arises, would broaden the appeal of the lake to cruisers, encouraging visitors to stay for more than one day. Access to the lake can also be improved, to the benefit of all commercial activity in and around the lake, by extending the operating hours of Clarendon Lock. The installation of automatic lock controls, operated by a key card should be a priority. Interpretative facilities on some of the points of interest on the lake (crannogs, water fowl habitats etc.) at the Forest Park visitors' center would encourage boats to moor at Rockingham and offer a deeper insight into the lake's unique environment to both visitor and local. The plan states that potential exists for the development of other water sports on the lake such as dinghy sailing and windsurfing on a more structured basis. As these sports require the provision of a boat slip and changing rooms, they are best developed as part of a larger leisure facility, such as those proposed for Forest Park and Doon. More intensive use of the lake will require a management regime to minimise conflicts between different recreational users of the lake. Such potential conflicts are best resolved through the drawing up of an agreed Code of Conduct by relevant businesses, clubs and other interested parties.

Much of the enjoyment of the lake is derived from the visual delight of views of the lake from the land. The potential of these views can be capitalised on with little adverse environmental impact by developing marked walks, drives, cycle routes and bridle paths.

Leitrim County Development Plan 2003 - 2009

The relevant objectives and policies for the study area include the following:

- To embrace the principles of sustainable development in its widest sense and Agenda 21 Strategy
- To recognise that Leitrim's archaeological, natural and built heritage are important elements in the long term economic development of the country and to promote their conservation and enhancement, public access and enjoyment.
- To protect the unique character of Leitrim's landscapes
- To develop tourism by encouraging the sustainable exploitation of natural attractions, and facilitating the provision of appropriate infrastructure, accommodation and facilities which will extend, consolidate and diversify the tourism industry.
- To co-operate with neighbouring county councils and Regional Authorities in developing the economy of the northwest of Ireland.

The Council recognises the potential of the County to develop a significant tourism industry. They acknowledge the spectacular scenery, angling and boating opportunities however, the county has not

expanded as much as neighbouring counties with regards to tourism. It is considered that the lack of quality accommodation, poor access and proximity as the likely factors.

Progress has been noted in relation to the promotion of the Shannon and the more recent development of the Shannon-Erne Waterway. The impact on adjacent towns such as Carrick-on-Shannon has been commended. The Council encourages the development of tourist and visitor accommodation in addition to additional tourist activities but with minimal impact on the environment.

- It is the policy of the Council to promote the development of an environmentally friendly tourism industry, that minimises negative impacts on the environment and maximises the social and economic benefits to the county.
- It is the policy of the Council to facilitate and protect public access to the countryside, to watercourses and the county’s built and natural heritage.

Specific objectives in the Plan include:

- To support the Management Plan for Lough Allen
- To support the work of Waterways Ireland in extending and promoting the extent of the Shannon Navigation including extension to Dowra.
- To advocate the reopening of the end navigation in Drumsna.

The Plan seeks to protect all Natural Heritage Areas proposed for designation whether before or during the lifetime of the Plan so as to recognise that the process of designation of such sites is ongoing, with new sites being added and boundaries of existing sites being adjusted, as better information becomes available. Furthermore, it is the policy of the Council to protect these views from intrusive development and enhance them by the removal of dereliction and eyesores. Lay-bys and viewing areas will be developed as appropriate and as funds allow.

Views and Prospects include:

Reference	View
V21	View towards Lough Allen from the R280
V22	View towards Lough Allen from the R200
V23	View of Slieve Iarainn and Lough Scur from the R209
V25	View of River Shannon from the N4 Faulties to Aughamore
V26	View of Lough Rynn from Local Roads LP01053 and LS05515
V27	View of River Shannon from Local Road LSO7426
V28	View of River Shannon from the N4 in the townlands of Munkil and Tully

In relation to watercourses it is the policy of the Council to permit development on a flood plain only in exceptional circumstance (where the development is of significant importance for the local community) and to require all waste water treatment plants discharging into the county’s watercourses, which ultimately feed into the county’s lakes, to be fitted with phosphorous removal facilities. It is the policy of the Council to promote and protect public accessibility to the county’s watercourses.

All structures in the Record of Protected Structures shall be protected and it is the policy of the Council to protect Archaeological subjects and Heritage Objects within the County, including all sites and monuments listed in the Record of Monuments and Places for County Leitrim. Enhancing public accessibility to the county's industrial heritage is also a policy.

Ensuring that access to good fishing waters is available to locals and visitors and that the resource is appropriately managed is a key objective, whilst it is the policy of the Council to actively promote public access to lakes and rivers.

Carrick – on – Shannon Local Area Plan 2004-2010

The Vision statement for this Plan includes:

“Carrick-on-Shannon has its own unique sense of place, largely defined by its relationship to the Shannon. The Council will ensure that this sense of place is strengthened as the town grows. Linkages to the Shannon will be strengthened, the historic core of the town protected and new neighbourhoods developed with their own distinctive character.”

The Council acknowledges that the town has emerged as a significant tourism destination, largely centred on the Shannon. There has been considerable investment in tourism accommodation and other tourism enterprises. The Council believes that this industry has the potential to develop further and supports further investment proposals that will expand and upgrade the tourism product on offer. In particular, the Council advocates the development of a high quality hotel (of minimum four star quality) in, or close to the town.

As part of the Plan, the Council welcomes and facilitate the location of the proposed government departments/ agencies in the town as part of the national decentralisation programme. The Council also supports the location of Waterways Ireland in the town and seeks to support the further development of the town as a tourism destination. To this end the feasibility of developing, and facilitating if appropriate, a public marina and associated facilities at an appropriate location on the River Shannon in partnership with Waterways Ireland, will be examined.

An urban design study to examine the feasibility of redeveloping the riverside lands and quay area within the town so as to maximise the potential of the river for the town as an amenity will be commissioned during the lifetime of the Plan. It is recognised that the waterfront area of the town presents exciting possibilities of further developing the leisure and amenity facilities, and tourism potential, of the town. This is considered one of the town's most attractive aspects.

The Council has developed a Recreation Strategy for the town and is detailed in the Plan. The possibility exists for the development of a tourism zone centred on a riverside amenity opposite the Landmark Hotel between the N4 and the Shannon, to the east of the bridge and an arts/culture quarter fronting onto the river, to the west of Bridge St. To the west, the fulfilment of the potential of the green area beside the Tennis Club, reduction of car parking and landscaping of the waterfront area would create an attractive town park. In the longer term, as the town develops, all proposals will be considered in the context of an urban design plan for area.

The MBNA Park is intended for less intensive and less structured activity, while it is envisaged that the amenity lands between the existing bypass and the river will evolve as a low intensity eco-park, with a pedestrian walkway and some fishing stands the only human activity envisaged. Existing vegetation will be removed where necessary to open views to the river and new vegetation will be selected for minimal maintenance and maximum biodiversity.

The Plan aims to develop the River Shannon as a tourism and leisure resource; to promote appropriate development along the riverside for leisure, amenity and tourism related uses, subject to the protection of the environmental quality and ecological value of the river; to enhance public access to the river and to support the promotion and development of heritage and heritage related activities.

Conservation policies aim to protect the buildings and structures listed for protection in the Record of Protected Structures for County Leitrim that lie within the Carrick-on-Shannon development boundary; to encourage and support the DOEHLG in carrying out an Inventory of Architectural Heritage for Carrickon- Shannon and to seek the protection of the external fabric of structures of heritage value in the Architectural Conservation Area.

Protecting the views and prospects of special amenity value or special interest is a key objective. The effect proposed development may have on the view or prospect will be considered in evaluating planning applications located in the foreground of identified views and prospects. The Council may refuse permission for development that would block or seriously degrade a view that is protected. It is a specific objective of the Council to protect the following views and prospects:

- From the Shannon Bridge to east and west.
- Views of the spires of St. George's Church of Ireland
- The vista along St. George's Terrace, terminating in the former gaol building.
- Prospects of Hartley House, from the Shannon and from St. George's Tce.

The Council are in cognisance of the fact that the low lying parts of Carrick-on-Shannon suffer from extensive flooding during prolonged wet periods. The Council recognises that these flood plains serve an important function. Development on the river's flood plain can lead to both the development itself being inundated and downstream flooding problems for other low lying lands. Such development proposals will only be favourably considered where the Council is satisfied that the development is of significant strategic importance for the town and the mitigated impact on the flood plain is acceptable. It is a specific objective of the Council to protect and improve the water quality of the River Shannon and to protect the floodplain of the Shannon. Planning permission for development on the floodplain will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and where the Council is satisfied that downstream (and upstream) consequences are insignificant.

1.5 ADDITIONAL PLANS AND GUIDELINES

Shannon River Basin Management Plan

Throughout Ireland, river catchments are grouped together in River Basin Districts (RBDs) for which a River Basin Management Plan is to be produced every seven years. The Shannon River Basin Management

Plan is under preparation and much of the surface water risk assessment has been undertaken to date. The programme as a whole, aims to provide feedback on the current status of Irish Rivers. As part of an environmental management system for river catchments it will help towards improved pollution control, will help to maintain the status of high quality rivers where they already exist and will help in the restoration of other rivers to good ecological quality as required under the Water Framework Directive. Responsibility for implementing these programmes will primarily rest with the local authorities.

This study has relevance to the Waterways Corridor as it defines a hydrological and surface water boundary, which is a catchment area associated with the river and lakes. Furthermore, the National Rivers Monitoring Programme comprises an ecological monitoring programme. The hydrological boundary could potentially influence the defined corridor for the study area and the study team is awaiting information from the EPA in this regard. Little ecological work has been undertaken to date.

It is acknowledged that an important resource management issue is, balancing the interests of different users involved in different types of uses. This implies, inter alia, that collective action among the user groups is required to agree rights about access to, allocation of and control over the resource, since resource uses by the separate user groups are interdependent. Furthermore, to comprehensively address significant water management, issues such as environmental taxes, pollution charges and water pricing should be explored. The difficulty is that natural resources are a difficult component to quantify and value.

National Heritage Plan 2002

The National Heritage Plan recognises that the conservation of heritage is an integral part of the development of the waterways system and that both the further development of the waterways system and the ongoing management of existing waterways have considerable implications for the heritage of inland waterways. Furthermore, there are a number of disused and derelict waterways across the country. It is necessary to learn from past experience and ensure that no actions are taken which would prevent or hinder the possibility of restoring those navigations at some future date. The Heritage Plan supports the preparation of Waterway Corridor Studies as a tool 'to promote and advise on best practice and raise standards for heritage conservation and management among practitioners'.

The Plan states that the development of a programme for the conservation and enhancement of the inland waterways requires the creation of a record of all its heritage elements, including architecture, wildlife, and underwater and industrial archaeology, to allow a plan for their future management to be put in place. Similarly, an information and education programme for the waterways can only be effectively developed on the basis of a record of its heritage and its historical context. Therefore, it is a priority of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to undertake a full inventory. Whilst this is outside the remit of this study, the consultant team is undertaking a cursory study of these areas and will highlight significant gaps in knowledge.

National Biodiversity Plan 2002

Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan 2002 was prepared in response to the obligation contained in Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The objectives of the convention are:

- The Conservation of biological diversity;

- The sustainable use of its components; and
- The fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

The Plan includes a section devoted to inland waters and wetlands, including peatlands as it recognises that these are important for biological diversity in Ireland. This section refers to the Water Framework Directive which was transposed into implementation by the end of 2003 and presents a major opportunity for strengthened protection of aquatic ecosystems. Actions include: establishment by Local Authorities of comprehensive projects for river basin management in relation to all inland and coastal waters; producing guidelines for drainage and wetlands; considering initiatives to enhance conservation of freshwater fish species and communities; drafting a strategy for use of machine cutaway bogs as wetland or woodland habitats.

Waterways Ireland

In terms of navigation, Waterways Ireland is the North/South Implementation body responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of approximately 1,000 km of inland navigable system, including the Shannon Navigation. The powers conferred upon them date back to the Act for the Improvement of the Navigation of the River Shannon, 1839, which transferred powers to the Shannon Commissioners to ascertain and carry out necessary works for the improvement of the inland navigation. In 1846, the powers and duties of the Shannon Commissioners were transferred by statute to the Commissioners of Public Works. The subsequent sequence of the transfer of power has occurred through the Shannon Navigation Act, 1990; Heritage (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order, 1996 (S.I. No. 62 of 1996); Heritage (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order, 1996 (S.I. No. 332 of 1996); Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht (Alteration of Name of Department and Title of Minister) Order, 1997 (S.I. No. 306 of 1997); Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands (Powers and Functions) Act, 1998; and the British-Irish Agreement Act, 1999. Waterways Ireland as a body operates under the overall policy direction of the North/South Ministerial Council with departmental responsibility South of the Border held by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Future of Ireland's Inland Waterways

In 1999 the Heritage Council published a Policy Paper on the Future of Ireland's Inland Waterways. Consultation for this document highlighted the importance of a strategic plan for the waterways and their corridors, furthermore emphasis was placed on the importance of heritage aspect, both built and natural, of the waterways in light of their role as recreational and tourist amenities. It is these issues in particular that are being addressed by the Waterways Corridor Study of the Upper Shannon Navigation - Boyle River Navigation to Roosky including L. Allen, Lough Key and the Carnadoe Waters. The overall aim of the policy paper is that the inland waterways and their corridors should be developed in a holistic way, conserving where possible their built and archaeological heritage features and protecting their unique ecological systems, to enhance the enjoyment and appreciation of that heritage now and for future generations. The Policy Paper covers a broad ambit of topic areas from resource management, development control and heritage conservation through to user management and opportunities for development.

2 Area Profiles

The study area is predominantly rural in area and under populated. It has, however, experienced immigration in recent years as population levels have slightly increased. Leitrim had a population of 25,799 in 2002, an increase of 3% on the 1996 figure of 25,057. Roscommon had a population of 51,975 in 1996 which increased by 3.5% in 2002 to 53,774.

An understanding of economic activities and socio-economic developments along the waterways is necessary to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the potential of the waterways to contribute to surrounding settlements and the tourism market. There are many villages / towns sitting on the waterways and directly linked with the waterways, whilst others are located some distance away from the physical water, but yet have strong economic links with the resource. An assessment of the main villages/towns in the study area has been undertaken in an attempt to ascertain their contribution to the tourism market and their ability to enhance the overall benefit of the waterways to the region. This assessment will also contribute to the definition of the actual corridor for the study area.

2.1.3 Area	Population 1996	Population 2002	% change
Dowra	165	152	-7.9%
Drumkeeran	488	523	7.2%
Arigna	29	15	-48.3%
Drumshanbo	971	977	0.6%
Leitrim Village	587	618	5.3%
Carrick-on-Shannon	2,148	2,663	24%
Cootehall	Part of Boyle Rural (993)	Part of Boyle Rural (970)	-2.3%
Boyle (urban)	1,690	1,643	-2.8%
Jamestown	Part of Drumsna (143)	Part of Drumsna (173)	21.0%
Drumsna	143	173	21.0%
Dromod	424	511	20.5
Roosky	220	198	-10.0%
Strokestown	572	631	10.3%

Table 1 – Overall population figures for study area (Source CSO – census 2002)

2.1 DOWRA

The village which is nestled in a valley a short distance from the northern shores of Lough Allen has been described as a classic example of a village with a very harmonious relationship with its landscape and surroundings. An Taisce sees an opportunity to develop Dowra as "a model village" and aims to work with local people in suggesting a plan for the area. However it is stated in the Cavan County Development Plan 2003 – 2009, undeveloped serviced land is limited due to topographical restraints of

the incised river valley to the west and steeply rising land to the rear of the village. Therefore, opportunities for in-depth development is greatly limited.

Dowra has no physical connection with the waterways and plans are currently underway to make the River Shannon navigable to within less than a mile of Dowra Village allowing cruiser traffic to travel as far as Annagh Upper. Linkage with the water could provide Dowra with the stimulation it requires to secure development and the critical mass to provide additional services.

Population

Dowra is a very rural village with few services and a weak urban form, lying on the Leitrim – Cavan border. The population of Dowra has fallen in recent years from 165 in 1996 to 152 in 2002, representing a decrease of 7.9%. The nearby village of Drumkeeran has experienced an increase in population over the same period. This may indicate a migration from Dowra to this larger village.

Employment and Workforce

According to CSO data from 2002, there were 49 persons employed in some form of industry in Dowra. Of these, the dominant sectors were agriculture, commerce and “other”, employing 39%, 14% and 12% of the industry workforce respectively. With regards to occupation types, 57 belonged to a certain occupation group, whether employed or unemployed. The most popular occupations were agriculture, services, sales and building. Of those persons aged 15+ 60 were employed, 4 were unemployed and 61 were not in the labour force.

2.2 DRUMKEERAN

The road to Drumkeeran, "the ridge of the quicken tree", skirts the winding shores of Lough Allen and fine views of the northern end of Lough Allen can be enjoyed from the top of the village where the road bends towards Drumshanbo. Drumkeeran is an average sized village lying between Lough Allen and the smaller but attractive Bellavel Lough.

Although the village has no direct linkages with the waterways, with Spencer Harbour the closest mooring point, Drumkeeran is the only substantial village serving Lough Allen, when boats leave Drumshanbo. Boat trips are, however, run to the island of Inishmagrath, 400 yds from the shore on which lie the ruins of an ancient and disused graveyard, demonstrating the potential linkages that can be formed with the waterways

Population

The population of the village increased by 7.2% from 488 persons in 1996 to 523 persons in 2002. The form and scale of the village is attractive with a defined streetscape, whilst a good range of services and facilities are on offer.

Employment and Workforce

According to CSO data from 2002, there were 201 persons employed in some form of industry in Drumkeeran. Of these, the dominant sectors were professional services, building and construction, manufacturing, and commerce, employing 22%, 19%, 15% and 14% of the industry workforce respectively.

With regards to occupation types, 222 stated their occupation, whether employed or unemployed. The most popular occupations were building, manufacturing, professional and services. Of those persons aged 15+, 216 were employed, 15 were unemployed and 179 were not in the labour force.

2.3 ARIGNA

Although not identified as a village associated with the waterways at the original steering group meeting, it is considered by the study team that the village of Arigna, its associated Mining Experience tourist attraction and walkways could have greater association and linkages with Lough Allen. Arigna is situated in a picturesque valley in the hill country of North Roscommon and until its recent close-down, Ireland's only coal-mining centre.

Arigna Church dominates the approaches to the village and a long, winding and wandering tour route, the Arigna Scenic Drive is clearly signposted. The recent opening of Arigna Mining Experience has resulted in renewed interest in the area and this attraction, associated with scenic drives and walkways has the potential to develop linkages with the waterways, through the provision of adequate signage and directions.

Population

A long elongated dispersed settlement, the population of the village declined between 1996 and 2002 from 29 people to 15 people, representing a decrease of 48.3%. In accordance with the Small Area Population Statistics⁵ (SAPS) the DED of Arigna has a population of 134 persons.

Employment and Workforce

In accordance with the SAPS data for the DED of Arigna, there were 45 persons employed in some form of industry. Of these, the dominant sectors were manufacturing, professional services, building and construction, and agriculture, employing 31%, 18%, 16% and 16% of the industry workforce respectively. With regards to occupation types, 50 stated their occupation, whether employed or unemployed. The most popular occupations were manufacturing, agriculture, building and professional. Of those persons aged 15+, 50 were employed, 5 were unemployed and 57 were not in the labour force.

2.4 DRUMSHANBO

Nestling beneath the Slieve Anierin and Arigna mountains this little town, situated at the southern end of Lough Allen, is primarily known and marketed as an angling resort. The village is just a short walk from the mooring point at Acres Lake or from the lock at the entry to Lough Allen.

A heritage centre in the market house reflects the area's special links with narrow-gauge steam trains, coal mining, and also features local folklore and is a significant tourist attraction. An annual festival, An Tostal, with emphasis on Irish music, singing and dancing is held in Drumbshanbo each year and provides an alternative to the waterways visitor.

⁵ Census of Population 2002, Small Area Population Statistics

Contributing to the development of Drumshanbo as a lakeshore town, a recent development on the shores of Lough Allen will provide the town with a hotel and spa, holiday homes and an eighteen hole golf course. The proposal also includes the development of a marina which will contribute to the provision of mooring facilities on Lough Allen

Population

With an increase in population of 0.6% in the last intercensal period, the population of Drumshanbo stands at 977 people in 2002.

Employment and Workforce

According to CSO data from 2002, there were 387 persons employed in some form of industry in Drumshanbo. Of these, the dominant sectors were commerce, “other”, professional services and manufacturing industry, employing 22.7%, 18%, 14.5% and 13% of the industry workforce respectively. With regards to occupation types, 412 stated their occupation, whether employed or unemployed. The most popular occupations were sales, professional, “other” and services. Of those persons aged 15+, 426 were employed, 15 were unemployed and 339 were not in the labour force.

2.6 LEITRIM

Leitrim village is the gateway to the Shannon-Erne Waterway and boasts a jetty with excellent facilities for the cruising traffic which pass through. It is a well kept village with an excellent reputation in the Tidy Towns competition, with bars, limited restaurants and local shopping provision.

The village has come under significant development pressure with the opening of the Shannon-Erne waterways and the sewerage system is now at capacity. There is significant development underway in the village at present with two new marinas and apartments and there is an extant permission for the construction of a hotel, apartments and another marina. A study examining the carrying capacity of the village and the adjoining river system should be undertaken to ascertain its capacity to accommodate further development.

Population

The population increased from 587 people in 1996 to 618 people in 2002 resulting in an overall increase of 5.3%.

Employment and Workforce

In accordance with 2002 CSO data, there were 268 persons employed in some form of industry in Leitrim Village. Of these, the more popular sectors were commerce, professional services, building and construction, “other” and public administration, employing 24%, 17%, 13%, 13% and 12% of the industry workforce respectively. With regards to occupation types, 277 stated their occupation, whether employed or unemployed. The most popular occupations were professional, sales, building, manufacturing and administration and government executives. Of those persons aged 15+, 296 were employed, 9 were unemployed and 188 were not in the labour force.

2.7 CARRICK-ON-SHANNON

Carrick-on-Shannon is the largest settlement within the study area. The town, straddling the counties Leitrim and Roscommon lies alongside the River Shannon. The town is identified in the National Spatial Strategy as performing regionally strategic residential, employment, administrative and other service functions. Carrick-on-Shannon is identified in the Leitrim County Development Plan 2003 as one of two principal engines for future economic development in the northwest region'. As such the town has major potential to develop, acting as a catalyst for the economic and social regeneration of County Leitrim.

Carrick-on-Shannon is a thriving centre, well served with amenities and utilising the great potential of the Shannon. There are activities in the area for all ages including golf, tennis, swimming, canoeing, rowing, water-skiing, sailing, boating and guided walks. There are numerous pubs, restaurants, shops and a cinema. The Old Barrel Store Arts and Crafts Co-operative, formed in 1987 by artists and crafts people living in Carrick and the surrounding area for the display, promotion and sale of their work, is also a significant attraction. Excellent opportunities exist to develop walks along the riverbank and open up visual and physical access to the river. Potential also exists to redevelop the riverside lands and quay area within the town so as to maximise the potential of the river for the town as an amenity.

Population

The town experienced dramatic population growth over the last inter-censal period, recording growth of almost 25%, the highest growth rate of any town in the country. In 2002 the town recorded a population of greater 2,000 persons for the first time since 1981. Although not quantifiable, it is considered that the Rural Renewal Scheme and the expansion of MBNA have contributed to growth in the town.

Employment and Workforce

In accordance with 2002 CSO data, there were 1,036 persons employed in some form of industry in Carrick-on-Shannon. Of these, the more popular sectors were wholesale and retail, health and social work, banking and financial services and manufacturing employing 12%, 11%, 11%, and 10% of the industry workforce respectively. Of those persons aged 15+, 58 were unemployed in the area.

2.8 COOTEHALL

Cootehall is an attractive village situated on a bridge over the Boyle River located to the east of Lough Key. In recent years it has come under significant pressure for development, which is likely to intensify once the new sewerage treatment works has been constructed. The village has a specific development strategy outlined in the Lough Key Plan. Cootehall is identified as a development node in the Plan, along with Boyle town. It is considered in the Plan that concentration of development in the village will allow for the possibility of critical mass to develop, providing shops, pubs and restaurants.

Cootehall acts as a gateway to Lough Key at the beginning of a beautiful stretch of water to the lake. The views and prospects of the river from the road should be protected in any future development of the

village. The village has excellent potential to further develop its links and can provide a limited alternative to development in the adjoining countryside.

Population

Cootehall is located within the ED of Boyle Rural. The population of the ED in 2002 was 970 which is a decrease of 2.3% on the 1996 figure of 993 persons. It is not possible to obtain a breakdown for the actual population of the village.

Employment and Workforce

In accordance with 2002 CSO data, there were 401 persons employed in some form of industry in the ED of Boyle Rural. Of these, the more popular sectors were commerce, professional services, manufacturing industry and public administration, employing 30%, 19%, 17%, and 10.5% of the industry workforce respectively. With regards to occupation types, 418 stated their occupation, whether employed or unemployed. The most popular occupations were sales, professional, administration and government executives and manufacturing. Of those persons aged 15+, 420 were employed, 19 were unemployed and 352 were not in the labour force.

2.9 BOYLE

Boyle is the principal town in north Roscommon lying at the foot of the Curlew Mountains. The town has recently benefited from an upgrade in the sewage treatment plant and the construction of a by-pass road removes Dublin-Sligo through traffic, creating a more attractive environment in which to live. Boyle is earmarked as a development node in the Lough Key Plan, relieving development pressure from the countryside.

The Shannon navigation system was recently extended close to the town, linking the town with the waterways. Lough Key Forest Park is also a significant recreational amenity area. Boyle has many historical buildings and archaeological sites, which are of national importance, with Boyle Abbey one of the best-preserved historical sites in Ireland. Throughout Boyle there are numerous stone cut buildings and impressive monuments, and a sign-posted walking tour of the town leads to all its major locations. An information panel needs to be provided at the mooring facility on the Boyle River to entice people into the town.

Population

Boyle Urban has not enjoyed the prosperity and growth that other towns of similar size have experienced in recent years, falling in population from 1,690 in 1996, to 1,643 in 2002.

Workforce and Employment

According to CSO data from 2002, there were 761 persons employed in some form of industry in Boyle Urban. Of these, the dominant sectors were wholesale and retail, manufacturing, health and social work and construction, employing 17%, 16%, 12% and 9% of the industry workforce respectively. Of those persons aged 15+, 81 were unemployed.

2.10 JAMESTOWN

Located less than 5km from Carrick-on-Shannon, the Jacobite town of Jamestown is one of the most historic spots in county Leitrim. The ruins of this monastery can still be seen in the present graveyard in the village. There is no public sewerage system in Jamestown at present although it is included in a Programme of Works that is gone to the DoEHLG for approval. A lack of sewerage facilities in the past may have protected the village from development. The attractiveness of the village and the availability of services may contribute to increased development pressure in the future.

Jamestown provides an ideal location for fishing and is a pleasant mooring spot for boating with a grass area beside the quay for open air eating. The village is just short walk from the quay where basic supplies and facilities are available.

There is no statutory LAP for Jamestown, although a non-statutory Urban Framework Plan has been prepared for the village with particular emphasis on the architectural treatment of the village. It is imperative that the architectural merit of the village is protected when considering any future development and in this regard the preparation of a Village Design Statement should be considered.

Population

Jamestown is located within the ED of Drumsna. The population of the ED is 173, which is an increase of 21% on the 1996 figure of 143 persons. It is not possible to obtain a breakdown for the actual population of the village.

Employment and Workforce

According to CSO data from 2002, there were 387 persons employed in some form of industry in the DED of Drumsna. Of these, the dominant sectors were building and construction, commerce, manufacturing industry and professional services employing 20%, 19%, 18% and 11% of the industry workforce respectively. With regards to occupation types, 231 stated their occupation, whether employed or unemployed. The most popular occupations were manufacturing, building, sales and professional. Of those persons aged 15+, 245 were employed, 14 were unemployed and 166 were not in the labour force.

2.11 DROMOD

In 1994 Dromod won the Irish Tourist Board County Award Competition for its valuable contribution to Irish Tourism, and its work towards improving the environment. The village has a modern harbour at a particularly pretty tree-lined section of the river and services include a Post Office, shops, pubs and a restaurant. In 1994 the people of Dromod commenced a comprehensive programme to enhance the area in order to make it a more pleasant place to visit and live. The programme includes the restoration of old buildings and natural amenities, landscaping and construction of stonewalls to improve the village. There is an established horse jumping and pony trekking centre in Dromod, located approximately two miles from the marina and a shuttle service is operated free of charge. The restoration of the old Cavan and Leitrim narrow gauge railway is a major venture in the area. The steam engines are back in use and many of the old buildings such as the Stone Water Tower and Engine shed have been carefully restored.

Population

The population of Drumod increased substantially by 20.5% in the last intercensus period, increasing from 424 in 1996 to 511 persons in 2002. The village had the greatest population increase in the Mohill rural area and is testimony to its attractiveness as a place to live. Even today there is significant pressure for residential development on the shores of Bofin and Boderg outside the visible village boundary.

Employment and Workforce

According to CSO data from 2002, there were 219 persons employed in some form of industry in the DED of Drumod. Of these, the dominant sectors were commerce, manufacturing industry, “other” and professional services employing 22%, 17%, 16% and 12% of the industry workforce respectively. With regards to occupation types, 233 stated their occupation, whether employed or unemployed. The most popular occupations were sales, building, manufacturing, professional and “other”. Of those persons aged 15+, 236 were employed, 11 were unemployed and 158 were not in the labour force.

2.12 ROOSKY

Roosky meaning 'marshy place' is a pleasant village straddling the Shannon, where the counties of Leitrim, Longford and Roscommon meet. The urban form of the village on the Roscommon side (western side) is currently very dispersed. However, the Roosky LAP does state that the potential for future development in the village will largely be concentrated on the western side, adjoining Lough Bofin and this should contribute to greater infill development.

Immediately downstream of the fine six span bridge crossing the Shannon, boats can be seen moored on both sides of the river, as there are long quays on both banks of the river bridge. On the east bank right at the bridge, there is a hotel called the Shannon Key West Hotel, with 40 bedrooms. Despite the fact that Roosky is a small village, it is an important centre providing easy access to the waterways. Roosky is one of the best moorings on the Shannon as all the facilities are located in close proximity to the mooring areas, including several pubs, two supermarkets and bar cum restaurants

Population

Traditionally suffering from population decline, the population of Roosky actually increased by 13.4% between 1996 and 2002 to a population of 508 people. However, total population has still not reached the 1986 population figure of 541 or of 1,016 in 1961 when the population of Roosky peaked.

The partial closure, as a result of fire, of the village's largest employer, a Glanbia meat processing factory in May 2002 does nothing to improve population levels as staff numbers decreased from 450 to a current level of 95 in the cannery operation.

Employment and Workforce

In accordance with 2002 CSO data, there were 218 persons employed in some form of industry in the DED of Roosky. Of these, the more popular sectors were manufacturing industry, commerce, building and construction, agriculture and “other”, employing 39%, 15%, 12%, 9% and 9% of the industry workforce respectively. With regards to occupation types, 226 stated their occupation, whether

employed or unemployed. The most popular occupations were manufacturing, professional, “other”, sales and building. Of those persons aged 15+, 229 were employed, 7 were unemployed and 165 were not in the labour force.

2.13 STROKESTOWN

Strokestown, one of the few planned towns in the country, is noted for its wide streets but is probably best known as the home of the Famine Museum, which is located in the stable yards of Strokestown Park House. Strokestown is identified as having a weak urban structure with substantial urban strengthening opportunities in the National Spatial Strategy.

Strokestown has the potential to complement Roosky in the provision of tourist facilities and to facilitate residential development to relieve the pressure for one-off housing around the highly pressurised Carnadoe Lake. The Local Area Plan for the town will facilitate development whilst preserving the established and built heritage of the town.

Although Strokestown is located approximately 5km from the actual waterways, the town has strong links with fishing on the lake, providing accommodation facilities and services. The Shannon Regional Fisheries Board promotes 14 lakes surrounding Strokestown, describing Grange Lough and Kilglass Lake as part of the Strokestown Lakes. It is considered that this association could be further enhanced and that the significant built heritage of the town and its tourism potential could be further promoted in association with the waterways. Linkages need to be formed with the lake and this could be achieved with an information panel at Grange displaying taxi numbers.

Population

The population in Strokestown increased by 3 persons (0.3%) between 1991 and 1996 and demonstrated a marked increase of 130 persons or (14.9%) between 1996-2002 to 943 persons.

Employment and Workforce

In accordance with 2002 CSO data, there were 353 persons employed in some form of industry in the DED of Strokestown. Of these, the more popular sectors were commerce, professional services, building and construction and manufacturing, employing 28%, 16%, 10%, and 10% of the industry workforce respectively. With regards to occupation types, 388 stated their occupation, whether employed or unemployed. The most popular occupations were professional, sales, “other” and service. Of those persons aged 15+, 392 were employed, 29 were unemployed and 317 were not in the labour force.

3 User Groups and Water-Related Commerce

- 3.1 The identification of different user groups and uses on and close to the waterways was necessary to afford an understanding of the key stakeholders in the waterways. These user groups and uses informed the consultation process and ensured that all key individuals, groups, associations and bodies were effectively consulted during the process.
- 3.2 A general assumption is that water based activities generate the only users on the waterways. Whilst activities such as angling, cruising, sailing, canoeing, powerboating, and other water sports are the main waterway users, other activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding, appreciation of the local environment and heritage such as bird watching and the Summer Schools also benefit from and use the waterways.
- 3.3 As of November 2004 a total of 5,205 boats were registered on the Shannon system with Waterways Ireland. Whilst many of these boats are privately owned, a number of the registered boats are hire cruisers, operating from various locations around the Shannon system. The figure of 5,205 boats is continuously growing from 3,876 boats in 2000 to 4,479 boats in 2002 and reflects a growing interest in boating nationwide. To gain some appreciation of boat traffic within the study area, figures are drawn from Waterways Ireland's lockkeepers monthly records, demonstrating the number of lock passages throughout the Shannon navigation. What these figures do not portray is the number of users who cruise the study area without passing through the locks. There are six locks within the study area and all locks portray various levels of usage as follows:

Lock	2002	2003	2004 (upto Sept)
Roosky Lock	9,507	9,564	8,221
Albert Lock	11,259	11,216	10,121
Clarendon Lock	7,773	8,050	6,554
Battlebridge	2,096	2,148	1,713
Drumleague	2,026	2,081	1,658
Drumshanbo Lock	1,091	1,110	874
Total lock passages	76,962	76,172	66,735

- 3.4 Over the past three years there has been an average of around 44% of the boat users on the Shannon moving into or out of the study area. This data is further broken into private and hire boats and from the records it is concluded that hire boats account for 75% of boat traffic and that private boats account for 25%. This figure could reflect the volume of hire boats on the Shannon system but may also only be reflective of the fact that hire boats undertake longer passages and use the locks more frequently than private boaters who do not move far from their cruising base.

- 3.5 There are five boat rental companies registered with the Irish Boat Rental Association (IBRA) within the study area. The two biggest boat rental operators, Carrick Craft and Emerald Star Line, with fleets in excess of two hundred boats each, are located in Carrick-on-Shannon. Tara Cruisers with a fleet of twenty one cruisers is located in Lough Key, whilst three day boat rental operators are located in Leitrim village, Dromod and Lough Key. The Moonriver boat located in Carrick-on-Shannon operates passenger day trips and cruises on the Shannon during the Summer months, as does Lough Key Boats, a ten seater power boat. These boat rental companies are significant stakeholders in the waterways corridor and it is essential that the waterways are conserved and protected to ensure the continuation of a vibrant and genuine market place for the boat rental companies.
- 3.6 Other water users include the Carrick-on-Shannon Rowing Club who run a yearly regatta in the town of Carrick-on-Shannon. Longford Sub Aqua Club and Lough Ree Sub Aqua Club although not located within the study area, frequently dive the waters. There are no facilities for sailing within the study area although it is considered that Lough Bofin and Boderg are suitable sailing grounds. These users have concerns in relation to the speed of motorized craft on the river and the disregard that users have to the 5mph speed Bye-Laws.
- 3.7 Swimming, particularly around the lakes is widespread during the summer months. Popular public bathing locations are found at Lough Key, the western bank of the river at Carrick-on-Shannon and on Kilglass Lough. Corry Strand was a popular place for swimming and life-saving classes, but has been lost as a recreational facility as a result of high water levels on the lake. Continued enjoyment of the waterway for bathing is dependent on water quality.
- 3.8 The Upper Shannon Catchment including the Boyle River is probably the richest coarse angling water in Ireland and contains some valuable salmonoid sections. Lough Allen and the inner lakes, particularly Kilglass Lakes and Grange Lough hold tench along with rudd, bream and perch in the reeded waters, whilst pike stocks in Lough Key have increased in recent years as a result of a vigorous restocking programme under the Boyle & District Angling Club. Angling is one of the most popular sports along the waterway, from both the water and the shore and is relatively well-developed. Fishing has traditionally generated a significant volume of commerce in settlements adjacent to the waterways, in places like Roosky, Carrick-on-Shannon and Strokestown.
- 3.9 The waterway provides an important habitat for birdlife, particularly the Callows, Lough Allen, Grange Lough and Kilgalss Lake. These are popular areas for bird watching, although this is relatively informal, and could be promoted by provision of low-impact, ecologically sensitive hides for bird-watchers. The boardwalk on the eastern bank of the river at Carrick-on-Shannon, downstream of the bridge and opposite the Landmark Hotel was a popular spot for bird watching and for undertaking other ecological and educational activities. However, it has fallen into a state of disrepair and is no longer accessible, but consideration should be given to its refurbishment, providing important access to an ecological sensitive area.

- 3.10 Wildfowling is also a popular sport, particularly around Lough Key, although much of the park on the southern side of the lake is a Wildlife Sanctuary. The Wildlife Act 1976, Chapter IV sets out the requirements for issuing hunting permits. Regional Game Councils through their local gun clubs regulate game shooting, with the umbrella organisation, the National Association of Regional Game Councils (NARGC), regulating hunting so that it does not impact on wildfowl breeding seasons. Like Angling Associations, Game Councils are concerned about protection of wildlife habitat, including water quality.
- 3.11 There are several designated walkways throughout the study area including the Miners Way, Leitrim Way and the O'Sullivan Beara Way as far as Leitrim village. The Natural Waymarked Ways Committee currently inspects the walkways yearly and farmers land is covered by the public liability insurance of the relevant local authority. Consideration should be given to physically link the walking routes with the waterways, through the provision of additional signage and information boards at key locations around the waterways.
- 3.12 Cycling is generally not promoted along the waterways, although there are bicycle hire places in Carrick-on-Shannon and Drumshanbo. However, there is potential to develop designated cycle routes, or greenways that can be used by both walkers and cyclists as part of a future development strategy, particularly along sections of the disused Cavan-Leitrim Rail Line and the Tarrance Canal. Similarly, whilst there are opportunities for horse trekking in various locations along the waterway, this is an activity that is underdeveloped.

4 Development Pressures

- 4.1 Discussions were had with the Planners and, where applicable, Heritage and Conservation Officers of the County Councils to establish both areas of concern and also an indication of demand for development within the zone of influence of the waterways. Whilst much of the study area is rural, urban centres such as Carrick-on-Shannon and Boyle do exist.
- 4.2 Significant pressures exist in the study area not only within the rural landscape but also within certain towns and villages within the study area. There has been a notable increase in development pressure in parts of the study area, most notably in the Shannon towns and villages of Roosky, Carrick-on-Shannon, Boyle, Leitrim village, Dromod and to a lesser degree Drumshanbo. It is assumed that this development pressure is attributable to the Rural Renewal Scheme. The **Rural Renewal Tax Incentive Scheme** will continue to operate in the Upper Shannon area until June 2006, but a valid application for the proposed development must be lodged with the local authority by 31st December 2004 to qualify under the scheme. The Scheme offers tax relief of 50% of the build cost of a new residential property and 100% of the refurbishment cost of an existing residential property. In terms of commercial and industrial properties the Scheme offers up to 100% rebate of construction or refurbishment costs to owner-occupiers or lessors, subject to certain conditions. The purpose of the Rural Renewal Scheme is to increase population in rural areas and whether it has successfully achieved or is near achieving its primary purpose is not clearly known as there is little quantitative information available at local or regional level.
- 4.3 Contributing to the development of **Drumshanbo** as a lakeshore town, a recent development on the shores of Lough Allen will provide the town with a hotel and spa, holiday homes and an eighteen hole golf course. The proposal also includes the development of a marina which will contribute to the provision of mooring facilities on Lough Allen. Other substantial residential development has been granted to the west and north of the village at Corrachuill and Carricknabrack. Permission was also granted for 30 no. cottages and a 50 berth marina at Derrintober, however this decision was overturned by An Bord Pleanala on the 12th July 2002. The reasons stated for the refusal of this proposal were on the grounds of unsustainable development and material contravention to the objectives of the Leitrim County Development Plan.
- 4.4 **Leitrim Village** is the gateway to the Shannon-Erne Waterway and boasts a new floating dock type jetty with excellent facilities for the cruising traffic which pass through. It is well kept village with an excellent reputation in the Tidy Towns competition, with bars, limited restaurants and local shopping provision. The village has come under significant development pressure with the opening of the Shannon-Erne waterways and the sewerage system is now at capacity. There is significant development underway in the village at present with two new marinas, office facilities and apartments granted in 2002 and there is an extant permission for the construction of a hotel, apartments and another marina. A recent planning permission lodged in 2004 for the

- construction of 40 houses and a 41 berth marina is currently under consideration by the Planning Authority. An additional application for development of 52 apartments, 8 townhouses and office space has also been recently granted in November 2004 for the village. A study examining the carrying capacity of the village and the adjoining river system should be undertaken to ascertain its capacity to accommodate further development, having regard to the once 'sleepy little hamlet'.
- 4.5 **Cootehall** is an attractive village situated on a bridge over the Boyle River located to the east of Lough Key. There is a mixed-use application (04/1335) currently with Council for the development of residential, commercial, retail, and office uses with a decision due on the 7th January 2005. The proposed scheme is located on the triangular green space in the centre of the village. Notwithstanding the specific development strategy outlined in the Lough Key Plan, regard must be had to the context and character of Cootehall when assessing development proposals along with the need to protect key village features, such as village greens. Cootehall acts as a gateway to Lough Key at the beginning of a beautiful stretch of water to the lake. The views and prospects of the river from the road should be protected in any future development of the village. The village has excellent potential to further develop its links and can provide a limited alternative to development in the adjoining countryside.
- 4.6 **Boyle** is the principal town in north Roscommon but has not enjoyed the prosperity and growth that other towns of similar size have experienced in recent years. The town has recently benefited from an upgrade in the sewage treatment plant and the construction of a by-pass road removes Dublin-Sligo through traffic, creating a more attractive environment in which to live. Boyle is earmarked as a development node in the Lough Key Plan, relieving development pressure from the countryside.
- 4.7 At present there are a number of applications at further information stage with Council. One of the applications is for a residential development comprising of 99 dwellings at Warren or Drum and another for 32 dwellings at Greatmeadow. There are at least a further 6 applications for residential developments comprising of between 4-6 new dwellings. There is also an extant planning permission for the development of a marina village and ancillary uses at Knockvicar, Boyle. In addition, earlier in the year the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, Mr John O'Donoghue TD, announced that funding of up to almost €5.7m (75% of eligible costs) had been approved under the Tourism Product Development Scheme towards the development of a new adventure park within the Lough Key Forest Park in Co Roscommon. It has also been speculated that a proposed eco-tourism resort is to be located at Lough Key Forest Park. This is expected to not only benefit the local economy of the North Roscommon area but will also be a major flagship project for the whole county and for the region. This €150m development will include a five star hotel and golf course.
- 4.8 Although not quantifiable, it is considered that the Rural Renewal Scheme and the expansion of MBNA have contributed to growth in the town. MBNA is the single biggest employer in the town, whilst the IDA holds 15 acres at Keenaghan and has already constructed a 25,000sqft advance building on the site. The town is identified in the National Spatial Strategy as performing

- regionally strategic residential, employment, administrative and other service functions. Carrick-on-Shannon is identified in the Leitrim County Development Plan 2003 as one of two principal engines for future economic development in the northwest region'. As such the town has major potential to develop, acting as a catalyst for the economic and social regeneration of County Leitrim.
- 4.9 Substantial residential development has occurred on the western bank of the river in Co. Roscommon with associated marina facilities, whilst planning permissions for have been granted for two marinas, a business technology park, hotel and substantial residential development at Townparks. Carrick-on-Shannon has experienced unprecedented residential development in recent years and this is more than likely attributable to the incentives available under the Rural Tax Incentive Scheme. In 2001 a mixed use scheme comprising a business and technology office park, residential and marina development in the townlands of Attirory and Townparks was granted permission. More recently, permission for a hotel, conference and leisure facilities, apartments and retail units was granted at Main St., Carrick on Shannon. In addition, there are a number of applications at further information stage with the Council. One of the applications is for the development of 143 dwellings, a commercial/ community use building, a crèche/ childcare facility and associated works at Cortober, Carrick-on-Shannon. Another application is to revise a previously granted outline permission to erect a business campus. There is an additional application at further information stage for the development of a two-storey sports facility and replacement of stand at Kilmore, Carrick-on-Shannon.
- 4.10 Today there is significant pressure for residential development on the shores of Bofin and Boderg outside the visible village boundary of **Dromod**. Substantial residential and waterside development has been permitted and is under construction outside the visible village boundary to the south. The development includes an aparthotel, gym, 9-hole golf course and substantial residential development and fronts the waterways immediately downstream of the public harbour. The development is very visible from Lough Bofin and does not integrate well into the landscape.
- 4.11 Dromod has significant potential to further develop its tourism market and to develop its residential and commercial base in a cohesive and integrated manner. The village does not have a specific Local Area Plan to guide and co-ordinate future development and consideration should be given to the preparation of some form of plan / development boundary to ensure the integrity of the village is protected.
- 4.12 **Roosky** meaning 'marshy place' is a pleasant village straddling the Shannon, where the counties of Leitrim, Longford and Roscommon meet. The urban form of the village on the Roscommon side (western side) is currently very dispersed. However, the Roosky Local Area Plan does state that the potential for future development in the village will largely be concentrated on the western side, adjoining Lough Bofin and this should contribute to greater infill development. A 'River Activity Zone' has been designated on the southern banks of the Shannon, whilst housing and associated marina development has been zoned on the shores of Lough Bofin. Development is currently underway on the housing and marina development zoning consisting of 44 no. houses

and a 68 berth marina. The waterways tourism product and the benefits derived locally from the navigation are restricted by limited mooring in the village and north of the bridge. Other factors include the out-of-use toilet and shower facility on the west quay and lack of lighting. On the east bank right at the bridge, there is a hotel called the Shannon Key West Hotel, with 40 bedrooms. Despite the fact that Roosky is a small village, it is an important centre providing easy access to the waterways, but requiring additional facilities.

- 4.13 At present there is an application at further information stage to erect 6 no. industrial units, hardware store and storage compound at Roosky. In comparison to Carrick-on-Shannon and to a lesser degree, Dromod, development has been relatively slow to date.
- 4.14 **Strokestown** has the potential to complement Roosky in the provision of tourist facilities and to facilitate residential development to relieve the pressure for one-off housing around the highly pressurised Carnadoe Lake. The Local Area Plan for the town will facilitate development whilst preserving the established and built heritage of the town. Strokestown has a compact retail and commercial base and provides neighbourhood scale retail facilities and local retail services to a relatively local catchment. Development pressure within the town has not been significant. There has been residential development to date but not of a large-scale nature. There is a development application with Council for the development of 20 housing sites at Kildallog, Strokestown. A decision is due on the 21st December 2004.

5 Tourism Strategies within the Area

5.1 FUTURE OF IRELAND'S INLAND WATERWAYS

In 1999 the Heritage Council published a Policy Paper on the Future of Ireland's Inland Waterways. Consultation for this document highlighted the importance of a strategic plan for the waterways and their corridors, furthermore emphasis was placed on the importance of heritage aspect, both built and natural, of the waterways in light of their role as recreational and tourist amenities. It is these issues in particular that are being addressed by the Waterways Corridor Study of the Upper Shannon Navigation - Boyle River Navigation to Roosky including L. Allen, Lough Key and the Carnadoe Waters. The overall aim of the policy paper is that the inland waterways and their corridors should be developed in a holistic way, conserving where possible their built and archaeological heritage features and protecting their unique ecological systems, to enhance the enjoyment and appreciation of that heritage now and for future generations. The Policy Paper covers a broad ambit of topic areas from resource management, development control and heritage conservation through to user management and opportunities for development

5.2 IRELAND WEST TOURISM

Ireland West Tourism is the official Regional Tourism Authority for Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. The organisation is the principal contact for all individuals, organisations and authorities involved in tourism at local and regional level. Ireland West Tourism operates an extensive Marketing Programme at home and overseas in co-operation with our trade members. This Programme is supported with special marketing funds from Bord Failte. The current marketing mix includes the following items:

- Print - regional and tri-regional brochures
- Trade and consumer promotions
- Website marketing
- Advertising campaigns
- Special initiatives in support of air access routes
- Familiarisation visits to the region by international travel trade professions and journalists⁶

The West Region

The West Region accounted for approx 14% of national overseas tourism receipts in 2001 - a drop from 15% in 2000 - being in third place after Dublin and the South West. The total revenue generated by the region in 2001 was €403.5 from Overseas visitors, €212.5 from Domestic visitors and €21.59 from Northern Irish visitors. Some 70% of overseas revenue accrued to County Galway, 24% to County Mayo and just 6% to County Roscommon. It is estimated that tourism supports 21,900 jobs or job equivalents in the West Region.⁷

⁶ http://www.irelandwest.ie/about_us/

⁷ *ibid*

The Regional Performance

While the Ireland West Region has experienced growth in tourism revenue this growth has not mirrored the rate of growth achieved for Ireland as a whole. In particular in comparison with other West of Ireland regions the growth has been considerably short of the growth rate achieved in the Dublin region, reflecting the concentration of access through Dublin.

5.3 NORTHWEST TOURISM REGIONAL PROGRAMME

At present the Northwest Tourism Region and a team of consultants are producing a 3 year Tourism Strategy. It is expected that the Strategy will be available in January 2005.

5.4 TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT SCHEME - NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2000-2006, REGIONAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES BMW & SE REGIONS OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

There is funding for five specific sub-measures to aid tourism investment in the Local Enterprise Development Priority of the two Regional Operational Programmes (OPs), divided as follows:

- Sub-measure 1 Development of Major Attractors (and clusters of existing attractors)
- Sub-measure 2 Special Interest Pursuits
- Sub-measure 3 Tourism/Environment Management
- Sub-measure 4 Tourism and Recreational Angling
- Sub-measure 5 Marine Tourism

Some €130m of public sector funding, including €55m support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), has been earmarked for tourism product development under sub-measures 1 to 3 (which will be implemented by Bord Fáilte). Support for angling and marine tourism (to be implemented by the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources) will be additional to this.

The overall objective of the Tourism Product Development Scheme is to develop the tourism product in a sustainable way that widens the spatial spread of tourism, diverts pressure from highly developed areas and increases under-performing Regions' share of overseas tourism revenue. The categories of Eligible Bodies are as follows:

- Private Sector: Companies and other legal entities and individuals. The entity should demonstrate whether it can be categorised as an SME
- Public Sector Bodies: Commercial and non-commercial Semi-State Organisations and Local Authorities.
- Voluntary Organisations: Community groups and not-for-profit bodies, including companies be satisfied.

The project categories include :

- Major attractions
- Clusters of existing attractions

- Special interest projects including cycling, walking, horse-riding great gardens, specialist outdoor activities, water-based tourism and health tourism.
- Tourism and the Environment
- Angling and Marine Tourism

Right through the appraisal process, there will be a strong emphasis on integration and coherence of proposed projects with existing attractions and tourist activities in the area, to maximise potential for the creation of groups of mutually complementary tourism attractions and facilities ("clusters") and, accordingly, impartial and sustainable tourism in the area concerned.

5.6 BRÉIFNE PROJECT

Bréifne is a brand building, promotional and market development programme. Project objectives therefore include the creation and marketing of an internationally recognised brand identity for the Region, raising the Bréifne knowledge base at local, national and international level, developing a suite of best standards in the area of cultural/heritage and eco-tourism, carrying the message out to the stakeholders in the region and providing a platform for the project to sustain itself beyond the end of 2005.

Bréifne will achieve its objectives through the development and implementation of a comprehensive marketing strategy. By December 2005 all the programme elements will be completed and ready for use in a co-ordinated and coherent strategy. Among those outputs will be the following:

- A comprehensive, natural and cultural resource inventory and database for the entire region.
- A Bréifne booklet and DVD pack illustrating and explaining the more than 600 million year history and physical evolution of the region.
- A "best in class" Bréifne website.
- A Bréifne heritage brochure.
- A suite of district based walk, cycling and touring publications.
- A suite of road and tourist information signs.
- Training for industry and community stakeholders on the Bréifne product.
- A detailed landscape characterisation for the entire region has already been completed.

Following its implementation Bréifne will bring significant benefits at local and regional levels. These should include:

- The development of a new, branded tourism destination "Bréifne".
- Attraction of increased tourist numbers to the Region from the domestic and international markets, thereby leading to the creation of new employment and investment in the area.
- Increased positive exposure of north-west Ireland and, specifically, the Bréifne Region to niche customers throughout Ireland, Britain and continental Europe.⁸

⁸ http://www.gsi.ie/everyone/breifne/gsi_breifne_project.htm

5.7 LOUGH ALLEN TOURISM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT STUDY, 1990

This study, while carried out 14 years previously, is still relevant to this subject study. The plan was developed in response to European and global trends in tourism sector. A initiative was developed for Lough Allen which capitalised on the unique and additional assets of the area. The unique assets identified included:

- Nearest lake to source of Shannon
- Best pike fishing in Europe
- The Arigna mountains (mythology)
- Certain unique landscape combinations.

It is recommended that although the area has many other assets, they are not unique. The more significant assets should be exploited as they are not found anywhere else and this fact should be promoted.

Other development opportunities were identified which include:

- Farm diversification – organic vegetables and fruit a possibility as other “niche” markets
- Forestry – now seen as an opportunity. Main area will be in the South. Downstream employment could be considerable – also a tourism product.
- Water quality and visual impact considerations limit its final extent.
- Tourism potential – cruising, angling, water sports, agri-tourism, walking/ climbing, biking

With the acknowledgement of development opportunities, development constraints are also identified which include:

- High costs of access, signposting and general tourist knowledge of the area.
- Circulation – there is a need to upgrade the road infrastructure
- The lake is undeveloped – need for sailing and other lake based infrastructure.
- Navigational problems associated with Lough Allen
- The appearance of the many settlements require refurbishment
- Lack of “identity” for the area and no attempt to market it as a unique and attractive product.
- The high scenic quality of the area requires protection, as do both archaeological and scientific sites.

Overall, it is considered that the area has great potential as a tourism destination however, it is little known, is difficult to access, and is not perceived as an area for development in its own right. The overall goal of the Plan is to develop Lough Allen and environs as a broad based sustainable integrated rural development project. The relevance of the Lough Allen study will provide a “checklist” as to what has not been achieved within the 14 year lifetime of the study. The subject study can look at what has been successfully implemented and what has not and attempt to determine what the best solutions will be to achieve maximum results from a new proposed plan.

5.8 'THE GREEN BOX' IRELAND'S FIRST AREA-BASED INTEGRATED ECOTOURISM PLAN - WESTERN DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM PROGRAMME

2002 was the year designated as the International Year of Ecotourism, and its Commission on Sustainable Development requested international agencies, governments and the private sector to undertake supportive activities. In response to this call the Western Development Tourism Programme in partnership with the Organic Centre, Rossinver, has developed Ireland's first area-based integrated Ecotourism Plan.

It is expected that Ecotourism Plan act as a template for further integrated Ecotourism developments in the Western Region and border counties. The long-term objective is to create a wide geographical network of Ecotourism areas.

“It is intended that the Plan will fast-track new tourism initiatives in underdeveloped areas in the Region. It is a low environmental impact approach, which requires little by way of extensive investments in infrastructure. It both guides and supports efforts of communities in creating additional choice and providing value holidays for domestic and international visitors. By providing a channel through which a fast expanding niche market of value conscious visitors can be accessed, the overall concept of integration ensures a spread of the benefits of tourism to other rural areas.”⁹

Leitrim, West Cavan and Fermanagh, North Roscommon, North Sligo and South Donegal have been identified as a suitable area for the Ecotourism Plan. The region is surrounded by the natural water boundaries of the Atlantic coastline to the north, the Erne System and the Shannon-Erne Waterway to the South and East and to the West Lough Allen and Lough Arrow. The 'Box System' is described as “a means of delivering fresh organic produce direct to subscribers on a regular basis”¹⁰.

The area for development has been named the 'Green Box'. The defined area contains established tourist and environmental elements to meet the demand for this type of tourism and offers potential for the development of further significant projects. The rationale is to provide a conceptual and spatial 'Green Box', a defined region containing environmentally sustainable products, accommodation and attractions within a context of clean natural resources. The type of tourism products and activity generated will have a minimal impact on the ecology of the area, be of maximum benefit to the community, and match the needs of environmentally-conscious visitors.

The Plan contains background information on Ecotourism and its sustainable approach to tourism development. The Plan details a process necessary for a community/organisation to undertake the planning and development of an area as an Ecotourism destination. It also describes in detail both the area and the attractions currently existing within the 'Green Box'. These include an array of organic agri-food initiatives, quality local arts and crafts, low impact outdoor pursuits activities, geological projects, health and fitness, educational features. There is also the provision of environmentally sound infrastructure including energy conservation, ecologically motivated schemes and environmentally sound transport.

⁹ http://www.trueireland.com/downloads/WDTP_GreenBox.pdf

¹⁰ *ibid.*

The Plan details the strategic approach to the development of the Green Box and formulates and organisational structure. This provides an example of a certain type of networking proposed within the region. The development of a strategic marketing, communication and research strategy is proposed. In addition, a certification programme will be developed which will aim to impact positively on the environment and host community. The introduction of a certification programme is considered as absolutely core to successful implementation and sustainability of Ireland's first Ecotourism destination.

Once the Plan is implemented, it is expected to generate 4,800 visitors. This is expected to increase by 20% in Year 3. The 20% increase will be a result of increased networking, joint marketing, product development and the arrival of other 'Green Boxes' in the Western Region. It is estimated that this amount of visitors will generate an economic spin-off in the area of approximately €1.5 million per annum, creating 15 new whole-time or part-time seasonal jobs. It is also expected that the increased activity in the 'Green Box' will encourage direct investment in new tourism products and infrastructure creating an overall investment of over €5 million.

7. Inventory of Tourism and Recreational Facilities in the Waterway Corridor Area

It should be noted that this list was accurate at the time of writing, however it is recognised that it is not exhaustive and any omissions are unintentional.

COUNTY LEITRIM

6.1 DOWRA

Cycling:

The Cavan Way

This route runs between Dowra and Blacklion (25km) where it links with the Ulster Way. It includes the source of the Shannon and an area known as The Burren, where there are several pre-historic monuments.

Walking:

The Leitrim Way

The Miners Way & Historical Trail

6.2 DRUMKEERAN

Accommodation:

Framar Holiday Homes – Drumkeeran

Local Attractions:

Drumkeeran Heritage Centre - Drumkeerin Co. Leitrim

A beautifully reconstructed Irish Cottage and farmyard in a unique campus which draws inspiration from the magnificent rugged landscape surrounding mountains, lakes and woods. The Heritage Centre has a traditional sweat house and agricultural machinery. There is a coffee shop on site. The Donald Fidgeon Resource Centre on site tells the story of the 1798 Rebellion and Drumkeerin's part in it by use of displays and memorabilia.

Lavagh Forest, Drumkeeran

Cycling:

Tour de Humbert Trail - 140 miles/225 km. The Leitrim section of the route goes through Dromahair, Killargue, Drumkeeran, Drumshanbo, Keshcarrigan, Garvagh and Cloone

Pubs and Bars:

Wynne's Bar – Main St, Drumkeerin

Davitts Bar – Drumkeerin

Tours:

Lough Allen Drive

The Miners Way & Historical Trail

6.3 ARIGNA

Accommodation

Derrbehy, Lough Allen, Arigna, County Roscommon

Attractions

Arigna Mining Experience: Arigna Mining Experience opened Ireland's first Coal Mining Museum. With an exhibition area tracing 400 years of mining and a tour which takes you through what was a working mine, the whole experience is both educational and extremely intriguing for kids. All of the tour guides are ex-miners and are therefore able to relate a history of a life that no longer exists in a way which is both educational as well as being interesting.

Tours:

The Miners Way & Historical Trail

6.4 DRUMSHANBO

Pubs:

Beirne's Of Battlebridge - Old World Pub

McGourty's Of Drumshanbo, Pub Accommodation

Paddy Macs Pub & Guesthouse

Barrys Tavern & Guesthouse, High Street

Monicas Bar, High Street

Meehans Bar, High Street

Marians Bar, High Street

The Millrace, Church Street

The Welcome Inn, Church Street

The Chariot, Church Street

Krefeld I, Church Street

McTernans, Carricknabrack, Drumshanbo

Conways Corner House, Main St, Drumshanbo

Restaurants:

McGuire's - Family run Restaurant & Leisure Centre

Allendale Restaurant and B&B, Convent Avenue

An Chrannog Coffee Shop and Restaurant, Church Street

McGourty's, The Square, Drumshanbo

Accommodation:

Ramada Hotel & Suites At Lough Allen, Drumshanbo, Leitrim
Mooneys Bed And Breakfast, 2 Carrick Road, Drumshanbo
Kane self-catering, Greagnacullian, Drumshanbo
Paddy Macs Pub & Guesthouse
Barrys Tavern & Guesthouse, High Street
Fraoch Ban, Drumshanbo
Krefeld One Guesthouse, Church Street
McGourty's of Drumshanbo, Pub Accommodation
Self Catering: McGuire's Cottages and Restaurant, Drumshanbo
Aughakilbrack House, B&B
Eva Mooneys, B&B
Forelands, Self Catering, Lough Allen
Island View, B&B, Cormongan, Dowra Road, Drumshanbo
Lough Allen Hotel & Spa, Lough Allen
Mount Allen Lodge, Drumshanbo

Local Attractions:

Moorlands Equestrian Centre
Sliabh an Iarainn Visitor Centre
Acres Lake Amenity Area, Drumshanbo

Boating Amenities:

Mooring: There's good mooring at the mouth of Lough Allen at Drumshanbo. There are two mooring spots on the lake, one on the east shore at Cleighran Mor, and one on the west shore at Spencer harbour. There is also mooring and water to the south at Acres Lake and Battlebridge.

Toilets: No

Showers: No

Water: Yes

Diesel: No

Sewage: Yes

Parking: Yes

Walking/ Cycling

The Leitrim Way
The Miners Way & Historical Trail
Town Trail
Tour de Humbert Trail

Tours

Lough Allen Drive

6.5 LEITRIM VILLAGE

Pubs

Carthys Bar, Main Street
Donnellans, Main Street
Beirnes of Battlebridge, Battlebridge
Cois na Habhainn, Leitrim Village

Restaurants:

The Barge, Main Street
Leitrim Inn, Main Street
Glenview House and Restaurant, Aughoo
Teach Bean Óg, Leitrim Village
Riverside Restaurant, Leitrim Village

Accommodation:

Landmark Hotel, Carrick on Shannon
Leitrim Quay, Self Catering, Leitrim Village, +353 71 9622989, Email: leitrimquay@ireland.com
Acorn House, B&B, Macken Lane, Leitrim Village

Boating Amenities

Mooring: Some mooring possible on grass to the east of the bridge, and a nice old stone quay with a new floating jetty to the west. Almost always busy. Also mooring and water available at Battlebridge to the north.

Toilets: Yes

Showers: Yes

Water: Yes

Diesel: No

Sewage: No

Parking: Yes

Tours

Shannon-Erne Waterway, Doherty's Trekking Centre

6.6 CARRICK-ON-SHANNON

Restaurants:

Kens Oriental
Lemongrass Restaurant
Shamrat Restaurant, Bridge Street
The Anchorage - Take Away
Phoenix Court, Bridge Street

Havana Bar, Bridge Street
Burkes, Bridge Street
Wheats, Market Yard Centre
Vittos, Market Yard Centre
Chung's, Main Street
Shamrat, Bridge Street
Paddy's Bar, Main Street
The Anchorage, Bridge Street
The Bush Hotel, Main Street
Little Sicily, Main Street
The Poitin Still, Main Street
Coffey's Pastry Case, Bridge Street
Lemmongrass Restaurant at Victoria Hall, Quay Road
Boardwalk Café, Landmark Hotel
Ferrari's, Landmark Hotel
The Oarsman, Bridge Street
The Barge, Leitrim Village
CJ's Restaurant-Landmark Hotel

Public Houses:

The Mariners Reach
Burkes Lounge Bar
The Tavern Pub
The Oarsman
Cryan's Riverside Inn, Bar and Restaurant
The Anchorage, Bridge Street
Flynn's Corner Bar, Main St
Glancy's Waterfront Bar

Accommodation:

Shannon Valley Hotel
Bush Hotel
Landmark Hotel
Carrick Holiday Home, Shannon View
Liscannor House, Lisconnor, Kilclare – Self-catering
Aisling House, St Marys Close
Attyrory Lodge, Dublin Road
Cladra House, Calgragh
Derrbehy House, Lough Allen
Gortmor House, Lismakeegan
Hartley Lodge, Hartley
Hollywell Country House, Liberty Hill
Lough Brab House, Farnagh
Moynane House, Dublin Road

Tourist Shops / Services:

Coffey's Pastry Case, Coffee Shop
The Book Shop, Main Street
Classic Possessions
Mulveys
Gallery and Craft Shop

Boating Amenities

Mooring: As a major centre for cruisers and pleasure boaters, there is an abundance of mooring on both sides of the bridge. Some of the mooring belongs to hire companies.

Toilets: Yes

Showers: Yes

Water: Yes

Diesel: Yes

Sewage: Yes

Parking: Yes

Walking

Shannon-Erne Waterway Walks
Town Trails – Carrick-on-Shannon Tourist Office

Outdoor Pursuits

Carrick-on-Shannon Rowing Club

Cruising

Emerald Star Boat Hire - The Marina
Lisnagat Horse Riding Centre
Tara Cruisers, Carrick on Shannon
Carrick Craft, The Marina, Carrick-n-Shannon
Crown Blue Line, Carrick-n-Shannon
Moon River Pleasure Cruiser
Leitrim Design House, Market Yard

Leisure

Carrick-on-Shannon Swimming Pool
Carrick-on-Shannon Sports & Leisure Centre
Carrick-on-Shannon Angling & Tourism Association
Carrick-on-Shannon Golf Club
Woodbrook Golf Course, Carrick-on-Shannon

Entertainment

Rockin Robbins Night Club
Gaiety Cinema, Carrick-on-Shannon

6.7 JAMESTOWN

Pubs:

The Arch Bar, Main Street

Kenosys, Main Street

Restaurants:

Al Mezza Restaurant, Jamestown

Lebanese Cuisine, Jamestown, Carrick-On-Shannon

Accommodation:

Hayden, Rue, Jamestown, Leitrim – Self-catering

Coyle, Rve, Jamestown, Leitrim – Self-catering

Boating Amenities:

Mooring: There's a small quay about five minutes walk from the village.

Toilets: No

Showers: No

Water: No

Diesel: No

Sewage: No

Parking: No

6.8 DRUMSNA

Pubs:

Garveys Lounge Bar

Taylor's Bar by the Bridge

Mulvey's Arch Bar

Duignan's Bar & Restaurant

Al Mezza - Restaurant

McLoughans, Main Street

Accommodation:

Lisnaicea House, Lisnaicea, Drumsna

Boating Amenities:

Mooring: There's a small quay for mooring, and the river here is quite wide.

Toilets: Yes

Showers: No

Water: Yes

Diesel: No

Sewage: No

Parking: No

6.9 DRUMOD

Accommodation:

The Waterfront Holiday Village, Self-catering Accommodation, Dromod Harbour

Restaurants

Cox's Reataurant

The Brandy Well, Dromod

Public Houses:

The Railway Bar, Dromod

Jimmy Bar, Dromod

The Brandywell, Dromod

The Copper Still

Attractions:

The Cavan & Leitrim Railway. The Narrow Gauge Station, Dromod

Guided tours and train trips just a short walk from Dromod Marina.

Derrycarne Wood - This wood, just north of Dromod, has a picnic site, car park and access to the River Shannon. It was the seat of Lord Harlic but the house is now demolished.

The Bog Oak water feature in the centre of the village is entitled 'The Weeping Tree' and was made by a local craftsman from a piece of bog oak which was found nearby.

Loughs Bofin and Boderg and Kilglass Lake in the area are renowned wildfowl sanctuaries.

Tours:

Dromod - Cavan-Leitrim Steam Train & Railway Museum; Derrycarne Wood (3km)

6.10 COOTEHALL

Shops:

Henry's Family Grocer, Cootehall

Accommodation:

Clarendon House

Restaurants:

The Moorings, Lough Key, Knockvicar

Clarendon House

Public Houses:

Clarendon House
Cootehall Bridge Restaurant & Coffee Hall

Cruising

Shannon Erne Waterway Holidays, Cootehall near Carrick-on Shannon.

Located on sheltered moorings on the north Shannon near Lough Key, the marina facilities include showers, toilets, laundrette and a secure car park. (Restaurant opening Summer 2000). Self-drive, modern, luxurious, easy to handle 2-4 berth and 4-8 berth cruisers are available.

6.11 BOYLE

Pubs:

Saddlers Inn, Kingsland
Rockingham Arms, Bridge Street
Railway Bar, Elphin Street
The Moylurg Inn, Bridge Street
The Hideaway Bar, Elphin Street
Donnellans Bar, Cleen
Abbey Bar, Patrick Street
Clarkes Bar, St. Patricks Street, Boyle, Co. Roscommon
King House, Main Street,, Boyle, Co. Roscommon
Lavins Bar, St. Patricks Street, Boyle, Co. Roscommon

Restaurants:

The Moving Stairs Restaurant, The Cresent
Chinese Delight, Bridge Street
Blue Moon, The Cresent
The Chambers Restaurant - Boyle:

Accommodation:

Abbey House, Boyle
Abbey Mews, Anney House, Boyle
Ballinvilla, Boyle, Croghan, Boyle,
Avonlea, Boyle
Cesh Corran, Boyle
Rosdarrig Boyle (
Clarendon Granary, Boyle, Knockvicar, Boyle
Hillside House, Boyle, Doon, Corrigeenroe, Boyle
Lakeview Lodge, Boyle Knockvicar, Boyle
Riversdale House, Boyle, Knockvicar, Boyle
Rock a Doon, Boyle

Rushfield, Croghan, Boyle
Taylor, Lisserdrea, Boyle
Forest Park Hotel, Boyle
The Royal Hotel, Boyle (
Rosdarrig, Carrick Road,

Moorings:

New harbour located 0.5mile from town centre
Lough key forest park has good mooring at two quays, and at Drum Bridge.

Cruising

Lough Key Boat Tours, based at Rockingham Harbour, Lough Key Forest Park

Golf

Boyle Golf Course is a nine hole golf course within 5 minutes of the town centre off the N61..

6.12 ROOSKY

Public Houses:

The Crews Inn, Bar & Restaurant

Accommodation:

Avondale House, B&B, Roosky
West Winds Bed and Breakfast, Roosky
Killianiker House Bed and Breakfast
The Shannon Key West Hotel, Roosky
Scregg House, Carrick-on-shannon, The River Edge, Roosky,

Activities:

Lakeland Fishery Course Angling Club (

Mooring:

There is mooring available at several points between Roosky Lock and Roosky Bridge and north of Roosky bridge there is a concrete island for mooring while waiting for the bridge to lift. There are also mooring points in Kilglass Lake and Grange Lake, and at Carnadoe Bridge (Private Marina). The lock keeper for Roosky Lock & Bridge can be contacted at 071 963801820715.

Toilets: No

Showers: No

Water: Yes

Diesel: Yes

Sewage: No

Parking: No

6.13 STROKESTOWN

Accommodation:

Dufficy, Strokestown, Elphin Street, Strokestown

Lakeshore Lodge Clooneen, Strokestown

Percy French Hotel, Roscommon

Golf

Strokestown Golf Club

Walking

Sliabh Ban- Walking Through Time- Strokestown. A “Walk through Time” which will demonstrate the fundamental links between the natural history and the cultural development of an area over time.