

Chapter 2:

Nenagh in Context

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2.1 Nenagh in Context

The town of Nenagh is situated almost in the geographical centre of North Tipperary and is in close proximity to the largest lake on the River Shannon - Lough Derg. The town lies to the North of the Silvermines Mountain range and to the East of the Arra Mountains. It is situated on the main Dublin – Limerick National Primary Route, N7, and thus acts as a focal point for routes connecting with other centres, including the National Secondary Route N52, the corridor to the Midlands from the South. By virtue of this strategic location Nenagh has evolved as an important market town and strategic focal point.

Nenagh town is the administrative centre for North Tipperary County Council and acts as a service centre for its own population and the surrounding rural hinterland. There are a number of key land-use activities in the town including the Arrabawn Creamery, Procter and Gamble, Carey's glass, Abbey Machinery, the Civic offices, the Revenue offices and the Court House. The town itself has a population of 6,121 (CSO 2002) however, not all of the population within this Development District is fully dependent on Nenagh with a substantial part of its hinterland being attracted to Limerick City.

2.2 Historical Context

The name "Nenagh" is derived from two Gaelic or Irish words; "an" meaning "the" and "aenagh", "fair". The first "a" is dropped in each word, thus giving the anglicised form of "Nenagh". The addition of "Urmhumhan" gives the aenagh or aonach (the modern spelling) a territorial location -the Fair of Ormond/East Munster. The fair was therefore and remains an important aspect of the commercial, recreation and cultural life of the town and its catchment.

Modern archaeology has indicated a legacy of settlement established over several thousand years. The town itself developed around the great stone castle, erected by a Norman - Theobald FitzWalter, the first Butler. The castle, 1200 – 1220, and manor remained the property of Theobald's descendants for over 500 years. Today the Castle Keep is deemed 'the most remarkable structure of its kind in Ireland' (Leask) and is Nenagh's best-known landmark visible from all approaches to the town.

The town itself developed from the mid-1700s onwards when its sale out of Butler ownership led to the large-scale grant of leases and the subsequent growth of residences, small industries and shops.

Growth and development was accelerated in the 1830s-40s when the geographical county of Tipperary was divided into two ridings and Nenagh became the main town in the north riding. It was around this time that Nenagh acquired a county gaol and new courthouse, a workhouse and a new military barracks within a decade. The town continued to develop with six new link roadways cut by 1864 and the

opening of the present railway spur from Ballybrophy to Limerick.

The layout of the town in the nineteenth century was such that the roads were quite distanced apart, with the result that there were considerably sized gardens and lots within the inner areas. Today, the basic layout of the town remains very much the same as it did in the nineteenth century. The streetscape remains a mixture of architectural styles from the ruins of a 13th Century Franciscan Friary to the classical Courthouse of 1843 and the elegant late 19th Century Town Hall. Development has however consolidated around the central area and considerable ribbon development has taken place along the approach roads.

The late eighteenth century and nineteenth century saw Nenagh evolving from the original Aonach Urmhumhan and Norman settlement to a market town, providing services to a fertile agricultural hinterland. Industry thrived in the town in the nineteenth century with brewing, distilling, corn processing, coach building and iron works being the dominant industries. Smaller craft works provided considerable employment and were usually incorporated beside or beneath the owners' residences.

The picture today is of a flourishing but not over industrialised town, producing agricultural machinery, aluminium, stainless steel and copper hollowware, glass and healthcare products, as well as food produce including a much expanded co-operative creamery. Nenagh continues to function as an important service centre within the County with a considerable rural threshold, accounting for 36% of selling space and 27% of turnover in the County. It services the surrounding areas centred on Toomevara, Silvermines, Newport, Borrisokane, Cloughjordan, Portroe and Ballina and remains an important market town.

2.3 Present Day Context

In its present form, Nenagh is of significance for the following reasons:

- The town's very name an Aonach Urmhumhan, 'the fair of Ormond' demonstrates the antiquity and importance of this place as an important meeting place.
- The town has evolved around, and been influenced by, the Anglo-Norman castle, and the interaction of Gaelic and Norman families.
- The present town, with the exception of the castle keep and the Franciscan Friary, evolved from the early eighteenth century onwards and still contains many indicators of its significance as a prosperous market town and the principal town of North Tipperary.
- As a centre of regional and County government, the county court and the county town of North Tipperary, Nenagh has acquired a number of important civic buildings.
- The historic core bears evidence of the early-twentieth century transition from English to Irish governance, most obviously evidenced in the comprehensive re-naming of streets.

- The buildings and street plan of the historic core of present-day Nenagh can be interpreted as a largely coherent, inheritance which has been developing since the thirteenth century.
- The historic core has an ecological role as a habitat for wildlife within an urban environment.

Nenagh, like many other Irish towns, is enjoying something of a renaissance in the early years of the twenty-first century. It is vibrant, prosperous and changing at a pace considerably faster than was the case in its more recent history. There is now real danger that, as has happened elsewhere, much of what makes it special could be swept away in the wake of new development.

2.4 Community Context

There is a strong community commitment to economic and social development within Nenagh. This is evident in the widespread support for clubs such as the GAA, soccer, rugby, tennis, angling, sailing and swimming clubs. In addition to these is the superb indoor athletics arena host to many local and national events.

The town also provides a number of support groups such as the Irish Traveller Movement, Bereaved Parents, Drug and Alcohol Awareness, as well as clubs for the youth of the town including Foróige Clubs.

Unique to Nenagh is the Community Reparation Project which promotes the ethos of Restorative Justice by providing an alternative disposal within the Criminal Justice System.

Nenagh Community Network is a Community Partnership for Nenagh Town, and offers support services that empower people to improve their quality of life. Nenagh Community Network is currently restoring the Town Hall, a historic landmark, to provide a range of meeting rooms and services including the restoration of the theatre. This will maintain the Town Hall as a focal point for the community and will be a centre of community development activities, expertise, networking, communication and learning.

2.5 Current and projected Population

Like the national population which has risen consistently in recent years due to net in-migration associated with economic buoyancy, Nenagh Town exhibits a net population increase. The population of the town in 1971 was 5,085 increasing to 5,645 by 1996, an increase of 11% (see Table 2). The population continued to increase from the period 1996 to 2002 but at the lower rate of 8.43%. Analysis of comparable urban centres serving a rural hinterland indicates that Nenagh experienced higher population growth than most other urban centres in the county. Despite the modest increase, the positive natural increase (of birth rate over death rate) is not reflected in the census figures and highlights the impact of migration.

Table 1 shows the increase in population in Nenagh over the past twenty years.

Table 1: Population of Nenagh 1981 – 2002

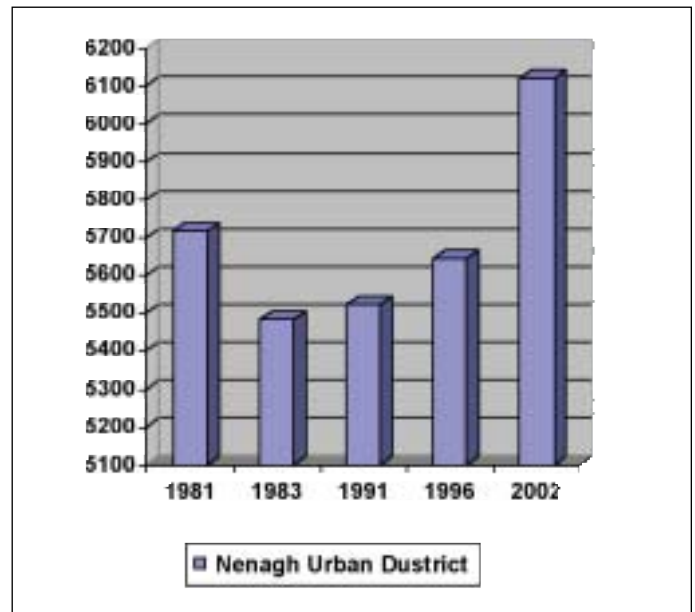


Table 2: Population 1951-2012

Year	Population	Year	Population
1951	4,420	1983	5,483
1961	4,317	1991	5,525
1966	4,542	1996	5,645
1971	5,085	2002	6,121
1981	5,717	2012	

Table 3: Comparative percentage increase of population 1971 - 1996

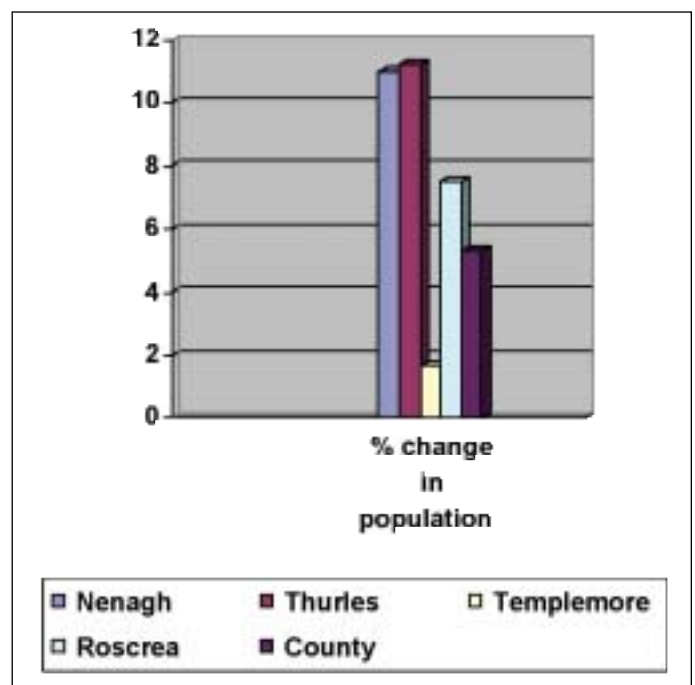
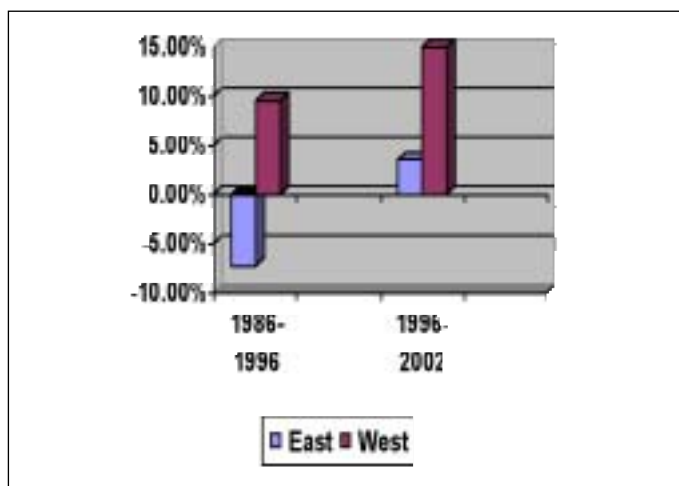


Table 4. Comparison of population growth in the period 1971-1996

Area	% change in population
Nenagh	11
Thurles	11.23
Templemore	1.7
Roscrea	7.5
County	5.3

Within the town there is a marked difference in population growth between the east and the west electoral areas, where over the period 1986-1996, population changed by -7.3% and 9.6% respectively. This difference in districts continued on through to the 1996 - 2002 period in which east Nenagh fell by 3.5% while the west district increased by 15% (see table 3). This shows that there is an increasing disparity between east and west Nenagh which was influenced by a number of factors, the western districts proximity to Limerick, market interest in land to the west and inadequate zoning objectives on land to the east. This disparity is further reflected in a number of other indicators.

The environs of Nenagh which are included in the Urban District of Nenagh also experienced an increase in the period from 1996 to 2002 (Table 5). This highlights a growing trend towards migration from the town to the surrounding countryside.

Table 5: Percentage population change in Nenagh East and Nenagh West from 1986 to 2002.**Table 5a: Population Comparison**

	1996	2002	% Change
Nenagh East Urban	2,005	1,934	-3.5
Nenagh West Urban	3,640	4,187	15.0
Nenagh Rural*	268	333	24.3
Total	5,913	6,454	9.14

*Area included in environs of Nenagh

2.6 Population Structure

The population of Nenagh Town and its related environs is characterised with a decline in the cohort aged 0 to 14. Nenagh West Urban experienced a decline of 3.4%, however, Nenagh East Urban experienced a decline of 11.4% more than triple the national average. This shows a decline in fertility rates and the huge disparity between the East and West sides of the town. Out-migration also appears to be a problem in the east of the town with a 18.5% decrease in the age cohort 15 to 24 from 1996 to 2002. The west side, in the same time period, experienced an increase of 6.7% for this age cohort. Table 6 shows that the age bracket 25 to 44 contained the highest percentage of population in the two urban districts and also the surrounding environs.

Table 6: Population 25 - 44 cohort

Area	Pop Aged 25 to 44	Pop Aged 25 to 44 (%)
Nenagh East Urban	587	30.4%
Nenagh West Urban	1,318	31.5%
Environs	84	26.7%

* 2002 Census

Between 1996 and 2002 this age bracket increased by 8.1% in Nenagh East Urban, the only age bracket to show an increase in this area. The increase in Nenagh West Urban was also profound showing a 33.3% increase against 16.2% nationally and implying that lower than average out-migration of this group has occurred. Females and males within these age cohorts appear to have the same levels of out-migration with females only slightly higher. This shows equal employment opportunities within the town and could be due in part to the mix of both technical and administrative jobs. The remaining age cohorts have shown the same trend of a decline in the east and a notable increase in the west. The population in the age cohort 75 plus, in both districts, increased well above the national average as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Percentage Change in Population Structure

District	Pop. Change 1996-2002 (%)		
	Aged 45-64	Aged 65-74	Aged 75 +
Nenagh East	-3.70%	-4.90%	28.10%
Nenagh West	19.20%	24.70%	30.60%
Nationally	18.20%	14.30%	9.10%

Table 7 indicates that Nenagh has an ageing population which is well above the national average in the 75+ age cohort. It suggests that fertility levels have not only dropped but that the population is also ageing. There is a growing trend that young people are leaving the town for

employment and education and not returning in the same numbers. This changing population structure has implications for service provision in terms of educational, social, health and recreational facilities.

2.7 Population Projections

The task of accurate population projections is onerous given the interplay of numerous factors of uncertainty. The projected population will be influenced by variable fertility rates and the extent of migration which is in turn dependant upon the economic welfare. The recent trend indicates that the population of the area is increasing despite falling fertility rates and an increase in older cohorts, which would suggest a level of in-migration possibly due to improved infrastructure and economic opportunities within the town. However this must be carefully managed if the town is to remain attractive to young people both socially and economically.

In order to redress the trends towards an ageing population the following options are presented:

Option 1: **do nothing** and is outlined above as current trends – This will inevitably lead to a further decline in the services of the town and an increase in the average age of the population of the town;

Option 2: **Promote the town and rural area equally** not giving preference to either despite the clear negative impacts;

Option 3: **Promote the town through residential / industrial / commercial / heritage development** – Due to its locational advantage, architectural heritage and human and technical resources, this was seen as the most sustainable option. Furthermore the hinterland of the town should be restricted to that which is required to serve local need. Such an approach would serve to encourage the younger migrant population to live in Nenagh rather than Limerick or the hinterland and to take up employment to remain living in the town. This would offset the losses of younger population who move away from the area for education or employment purposes. Also it would afford the opportunity to address the current ageing of the population and the imbalance between the east and west districts.

In order to ensure that Nenagh continues to expand at a rate comparable to other urban centres in the county over the period 2007-2013, the following will need to take place:

- The introduction of a further employment activity that attracts in-migration e.g. a government department, a high-tech industry, etc.
- Successful promotion of Nenagh Town having regard to its close proximity to Limerick City.
- Successful promotion of the town as a tourist destination as part of a broader tourism area encompassing the Lough Derg Area;
- Introduction of a settlement strategy that strengthens the town as a growth centre.

2.8 Socio-Economic Trends - Household Numbers & Headship Rates

The headship rate or the number of persons per household has declined in Nenagh to 2.7, conforming to the national trend of smaller household sizes. Thus, despite a population increase in the urban area of 8.4% in the period 1996-2002, the number of households has increased disproportionately. Headship is determined primarily by income and with economic growth, continued household fission of resident population is likely.

There are a total of 2,227 permanent households in Nenagh, 747 in Nenagh East Urban and 1,480 in Nenagh West Urban. In North Tipperary, 3.7 per cent of households were purchased from the Local Authority while 5.6 per cent of households were rented from the Local Authority. These figures are comparable with the state, however the number of houses being purchased from the Local Authority in Nenagh is well above that of the county and the state as a whole at 8.1%.

2.9 Socio-Economic Structure - Community Base

Despite strong local involvement in local regeneration, and rapid growth of the town in recent years there is a continued level of underlying poverty in Nenagh. Table 8 demonstrates the groups within Nenagh that are at risk of social exclusion and disadvantage.

Table 8: Disadvantaged Groups in Nenagh

Grouping	Numbers
One Parent Families	306
Public Authority rented Housing	153
Housing Waiting List – Urban (Rural)	169
People with a disability	578
Elderly at Risk	
Travelling Families in Nenagh	
Town awaiting accommodation	2

Table 9: Relative Affluent and Deprivation in Nenagh Urban District 1991 – 2002

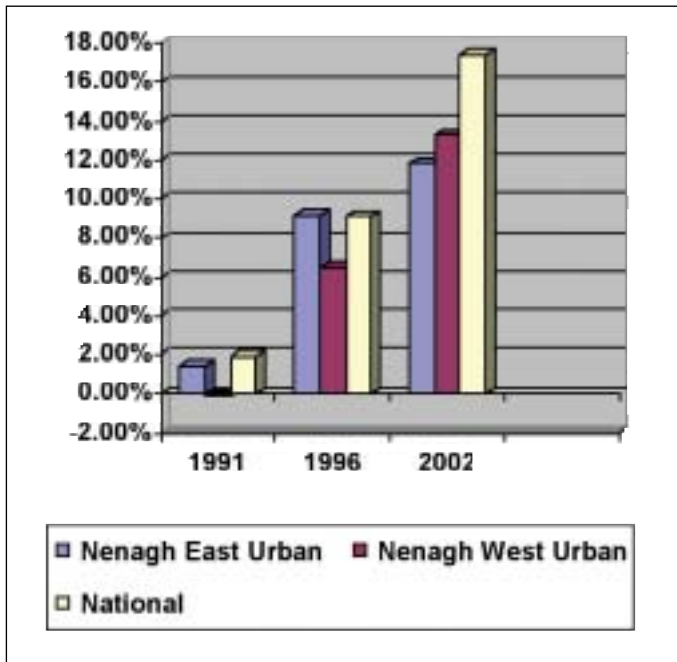
District	1991	1996	2002
Nenagh East Urban	1.4	9.2	11.8
Nenagh West Urban	-0.1	6.5	13.3
National	1.9	9.1	17.4

A look at the Deprivation Index since 1991 shows a vast overall improvement in the Nenagh area since 1991. The index scores range between roughly – 50 (most disadvantaged) and +50 (most affluent). The measurement scale is identical for all three Census waves, thus allowing the direct comparison of each areas score from one wave to the next. Secondly, the rightward shift of the 1996 and 2002

curves relative to that for 1991 reflects the exceptional growth experienced by the Irish economy over the past decade.

The national figure for 1996 is 9.1 and 17.4 for 2002, which captures the underlying trend. Nenagh also experienced a rightward shift in this time period which mirrored the national economic growth however this shift was below the average national figure. Table 7 shows that Nenagh East Urban was well below the national figure for 1991 but improved in line with it for 1996. After this period its level of improvement slowed and was well below the national figure of 17.4 for 2002. Nenagh West Urban fared slightly better with its 1991 figure much closer to the national average. However, its 1996 figure was well below the national figure and its 2002 figure although substantially better than that of East Nenagh fell well short of the national figure as indicated in Table 9 and 9a.

Table 9a: Relative Affluent and Deprivation in Nenagh Urban District 1991 - 2002



2.10 Education

There are 8 schools in Nenagh, 5 primary schools: St. Joseph's C.B.S, St Mary's No. 2 National School, St. Mary's Convent of Mercy Primary School, St. Mary's Boy's National School and the Gaelscoil, 3 secondary schools: Nenagh Vocational School, St Mary's and St Joseph's.

In addition to the above Teach an Leinn provides adult education and other courses which assist in raising education levels in the town

Table 10 outlines the educational status of the workforce of Nenagh which demonstrates that those educated to beyond upper second level within the workforce is below the national average (third level included). These figures do not, however, demonstrate the overall level of attainment of the

town's population in that over 90% of young people progress onto third level education. A significant number of this group will not return to work in the Development Plan area because of the lack of suitable employment.

Table 10: Educational Status of the Labour Force for Nenagh Vs National Average

Educational Status	Nenagh %	Ire. %
No Formal or Primary Only	20.9	17.6
Lower Secondary	25.3	21.3
Upper Secondary	34	33.4
Third Level No Degree		12.1
Third Level Degree or Higher		13.3
Not Stated		2.3
Total	100.0	100.0

In the fast changing world of information technology it is possible that many of these migrants may be encouraged to return to the Nenagh area, as entrepreneurs or employees of outsourced units, operating businesses that are not location dependent.

2.11 Employment and Unemployment

The level of unemployment in the Nenagh local office decreased from 1991 to 1996 and again from 1996 to 2002. In Nenagh the level of unemployment between 1991 and 2002 has decreased by almost 14% from 379 to 326.

Table 11: Live Register data from Nenagh Local Office

Year	No.
1991	379
1996	362
2002	326

Source: CSO

Table 11 shows that the numbers of unemployed between 1991 and 2002 has fallen. However, this fall in unemployment can not be attributed solely to a significant rise in local employment generation but largely to workers commuting to work outside the Plan area.

2.12 Land Budget

Land budget: A calculation of the amount of zoned land available and how many factories/businesses/houses can be developed on that land.

2.12.1 Residential Land Budget

This relates to land zoned Residential (High Density) and Residential (Low Density) in the Draft Nenagh Town Development Plan 2005.

2.12.2 Capacity of Residential Lands

The Plan provides for 155 ha of residentially zoned land in Nenagh. On the basis of a gross housing density of 8 /acre or 20/hectare there is sufficient residentially zoned lands to cater for 3100 houses, taking an average household size of 3 persons per household this equates to a population capacity for 9,300 people within the residentially zoned lands in Nenagh. The present population of Nenagh is approximately 6,400 persons.

At current estimates, the population of Nenagh will reach at most, approximately 7,200 persons by 2011, this will create a demand for approximately 700 housing units (Taking account of falling headship, migration and household subdivision). The land zoned for residential use is thus far in excess of present and future requirements.

2.12.3 Comparison of Capacity and Demand for Residentially Zoned lands

The zoning allocation has provided significant opportunities for low density housing. This will reduce the capacity of total land to deliver housing in the Plan period Even allowing for a ten year cycle and 40% headroom the current supply of residentially zoned land exceeds the likely demand for such land by 300%.

This oversupply of residential land can potentially have a number of serious consequences for the future of Nenagh including unsustainable development on the edge of the town, poor community integration, high infrastructural costs, high social costs, increased car travel and the danger that Nenagh will become a commuter town.

For these reasons, it is proposed that there be no further increase in the residential land budget over the Plan period and if feasible that a reduction in residential land be achieved.

2.12.4 Industrial/Commercial Land Budget

This relates to land zoned Industrial/Commercial in the Draft Nenagh Development Plan 2005.

The Plan proposes 128 hectares 316 Acres of Commercial and Industrially zoned land in the Nenagh. Over 80% of the land is undeveloped at present and on that basis, the land zoned for industrial use should be sufficient to provide for the normal demands of industry. It is evident that since the last development plan, little of the Industrial land has been developed. This may be an issue of lack of industrial development but may also be an issue of incorrectly zoned land or problematic accessibility to the zoned land.

In order to increase industrial development in Nenagh, the Council will zone lands at key locations in the town, thus improving accessibility and reducing HGV traffic through Nenagh while also providing for the zoning of Commercial parks and land for incubator units on industrial lands to take advantage of the growth in small and medium sized units and the "Knowledge Economy" in Ireland

2.12.5 Zoning Objectives

The aim of the zoning recommendations is to control the types of land use that should be allowed on certain portions of land within Nenagh.

The zoning of land for particular land uses in a town the size of Nenagh is no guarantee that the zoned land will be developed as envisaged. The Council's policy will be to encourage the use of the land, as far as practical and sustainable, according to the zoning designation contained in this document. However, where there is no commitment by the landowner to develop zoned land within the life of the Plan period, the Council may consider rezoning such land to a non-development use when preparing the next Plan.

The Council has zoned sufficient land for development during the Plan period. The Plan also indicates areas suitable for future development. In the event that some of these areas are required during the Plan period the Council will carry out a variation of the Plan.

Key Zoning objective aims:

D.1 To zone land within Nenagh according to various uses, in order to facilitate the demands of the population.

D.2 To encourage development complementary to the environment of the town through the use of Masterplans and site development briefs.

D.3 To reserve lands within the town boundary for future development. No development will be allowed on this land except where by variation of the town plan and in accordance with the strategic requirements of the town.

2.13 Town Centre Strategy

This section of the Plan seeks to outline a Strategy for the improvement of the attractiveness and competitiveness of the town centre of Nenagh.

2.13.1 Town Structure

Nenagh is a market town. Its central core is based around Kenyon Street, Pearse Street, Kickham Street, Mitchell Street, Summerhill, Martyr's Road, Falvey's Lane, Silver Street and Sarsfield Street.

This forms an attractive and sustainable mixed-use area which can provide all the benefits of urban living with shops, services, facilities and houses all within easy walking distance of each other. Recent Peripheral development at Stereame and the Borrisokane Road has altered the original structure of the town leading it West and North.

Development on the periphery of the town must not be allowed to undermine the town centre instead, development must concentrate on the central core where possible. **In this**

regard, **Infill development and development of “Opportunity sites” must take precedence over green field site development.** This Plan will examine a number of sites with development potential in the town core in order to encourage these type of developments

The structure of the central core is largely intact and must remain so in order to preserve the cultural and historical integrity of the town. The town is lacking in ‘green space’, a comprehensive plan to provide green space and green links will be initiated by the Council. A number of policies and objectives in this plan will encourage and facilitate the development of ‘green spaces’.

A Plan of Open Space Networks must also be created; open space networks connect employment and amenity uses, through both pedestrian and cycle corridors, and work against the isolation of sole activity nodes in a townscape. These networks will consolidate and control growth to a sustainable level while providing for much needed relaxation space.

2.13.2 Main focal points

There are a number of focal points in Nenagh. The Court House and Gaol complex dominates the town with the Castle being seen from almost every point in the town. St Mary’s CoI and St Mary’s RC church are other dominant features of the townscape as is the Franciscan Friary at the junction of Friary Street and Abbey Street

Pearse Street and Kenyon Street are the focal point for traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian and these streets contain good examples of market rural main streets. Summerhill also provides some excellent examples of 3-storey terraced market town streetscapes.

The built environment of Nenagh is of significant archaeological and historical importance and, with proper promotion, could reap a huge amount of benefit for the locality and the county.

This Plan will seek to address the deficiencies in open space in Nenagh. Public open spaces frequently serve as places where people choose to meet, relax, spend time and socialize with friends, family, or acquaintances. Parents bring their children to the public playgrounds, individuals come to recreate or spend time by themselves, and groups often engage in a range of active and passive activities. The shopping experience is enhanced where there are squares, and public spaces free of traffic and with seating and outdoor facilities.

Public spaces combine activity nodes with quiet zones of rest and a successful Urban Realm Framework gathers both these concepts.

Key Central Core aims include:

- (i) To seek the implementation of the County Retail Strategy and to include the provisions of the Strategy,

into the Town Development Plan.

- (ii) To improve the urban environment for pedestrian use.
- (iii) To provide for increased ‘green areas’ and tree planting throughout the town.

2.13.4 Streets, Character and Layout

Houses and housing developments are generally permanent features, meaning they will have an initial impact on their surroundings and will continue to have an impact for years, even decades to come. It is therefore important to ensure that the design and layout of developments and buildings are sustainable, in keeping with the character of the town and will not have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the town or the amenities of its inhabitants.

In regard to this, appropriately designed and placed housing and other mixed use development will have a better chance of being accepted by the Council. In this regard Nenagh Town Council will support the preparation of a North Tipperary Design Guide for Housing and mixed use developments.



Examples of well designed, high density dwellings

While higher densities are generally encouraged, this must not be achieved at an unacceptable amenity cost to the receiving or surrounding environment. A high quality of design and layout and a good quality living environment are essential if increased residential densities are to be acceptable. The density of a proposed development will largely depend on the following:

- a) Proximity to the town centre;
- b) Impact on the surrounding area;
- c) Efficient use of the site;
- d) Capacity of public utilities to service the site.

This Plan will provide opportunities for low density housing development. This will serve to counter-balance the demand for urban generated housing and will provide an opportunity for those who wish to move up the housing ladder or those will aspirations for self-build projects.

2.14 Opportunity Sites

Opportunity sites are sites that have the potential to significantly enhance the environment of a town, they may

be derelict, under used or unused sites or buildings.

A number of sites have been listed and development briefs prepared in this Plan for the purpose of regeneration and redevelopment, particularly in the core of the town (See Opportunity Sites Map and Development Briefs). The Council will develop obsolete sites and buildings themselves, or as part of a public/private joint venture. If the owner of the site is unwilling to improve the derelict site then it is in the powers of the Council, under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990 to have the site rendered non-derelict.

Key Opportunity Sites aim:

(i) Identify and secure the redevelopment of obsolete areas. Included are areas of back-land, derelict sites and incidental open spaces which are or will be identified in development briefs as opportunity sites for development.

2.15 Pedestrian Priority

This section outlines comprehensive approach to planning, urban design and management, to provide areas of pedestrian priority in the town centre and to mitigate against the amenity impacts of current high levels of traffic in the town.

The town centre strategy will specify a clear network of open space provision and would require the Town Council to implement an urban realm strategy to create comprehensive pedestrian priority' and 'green' pedestrian routes in the town centre. Important elements such as street furniture, public art, lighting and signage need to be looked at in tandem, in order to create a calm and unified streetscape. There is considerable opportunity to develop 'lanes' throughout the centre of the town, and to create pedestrian priority areas as part of new town centre development.

2.16 Streets & Pavements

Nenagh can be a safe and enjoyable town for pedestrians. At present, large volumes of vehicular traffic hinder the creation of a pleasant atmosphere for those walking in the town. A town of this beauty is best enjoyed by walking around it and so encouragement must be given to pedestrian traffic.

Key Streets and Pavement Aims:

- (i) To prepare a plan for an enhanced pedestrian zone within the town centre;
- (ii) To seek the development of new streets and lanes which will have pedestrian priority;
- (iii) To update and implement the Traffic Management Report 2001, which includes the pedestrianisation of certain streets and the increased use of off street parking.

2.17 Street Furniture & Signage

The design and positioning of bins, seats, signage posts, bollards and telephone booths help define the character of an area. There is a need for an improvement in signage throughout the town for the benefit of residents and tourists alike. Signage for historical sites, tourist destinations, civic centres and buildings is vital if Nenagh is to increase its tourism trade while clear direction signs would assist the movement of people around the town.

At present, there is a lack of public seating in Nenagh. Public seating encourages increased use of the public sphere which has a number of benefits e.g. improved safety, increased communal atmosphere etc.

A clear gateway signscape will encourage more people to travel into Nenagh.

2.18 Lighting

Lighting can have a positive effect on an urban environment. There are three different kinds of lighting; ambient 'safety' lighting, floodlighting and feature lighting. All of these create nighttime "effect" but are also visible during daylight hours as "objects." This Plan proposes that the improvements already carried out to lighting will be continued so that all lighting in the town core be replaced. In particular traditional lighting should be placed on the streets in the central area.

2.19 Keeping the Streets Clean

While Nenagh is a well-kept town, improvements can be made. Litter greatly reduces the appeal of a town and discourages people from making a return trip there. An increase in the frequency of clearing of litterbins, particularly around the Central area would benefit the core greatly. If needed, private enterprises should be able to place litterbins outside their premises as long as they are in keeping with the area. The gateways into Nenagh are required to be clean, distinctive and memorable for they are the first thing people see when they travel to the town.

2.20 Town Identity

The architecture, monuments, shops and street layout have combined to give the core of Nenagh a distinct identity. It is a fine example of a market town and must remain this way. An improvement of the streetscape in the core would have a positive effect on the town's identity; service wires should be removed from overhead, uniform traditional public lighting should be erected on the streets, particularly across the central area. As part of town centre strategy the council has prepared a number of key town centre sites and prepared development briefs to provide guidance as to their future development.

2.21 Greening

With the exception of Castle Field, there is a lack of pocket parks and open space in the town is an issue. Parks provide a place for people of all ages to relax and generally improve the environment of a town.

- The development of Castle Field as a central Park;
- To provide pocket parks on opportunity sites around the town where possible;
- This plan will identify locations for parks throughout the town as specific objectives attached to zoning

2.22 Possible Use of the River

The Nenagh river is under used as an amenity for the town.

The river has potential to provide a place for relaxation and leisure activities. Development of the riverbank will be central aspect of the town Plan.

2.23 Overall Development Strategy

Nenagh has a significant role within the County Plan strategy. Nenagh is our County town and is a regional nodal centre with a combined catchment population of 35,000 in the County and will be promoted as the primary growth centre for medium-scale and high-growth industries, and as a primary retail centre.

The National Spatial Strategy supports the strategy to guide the spatial and economic development of the Midwest region. It builds on the engine of Limerick/Shannon as the gateway, the coming together of a number of road and rail transport corridors, and the presence of the Shannon International Airport and the seaports in the Shannon Estuary. Nenagh is the county town and the NSS promotes county towns as a key building block in achieving balanced regional development.

In light of the above analysis the following key issues have been identified:

- a) Requirement for a young population injection into Nenagh;
- b) Requirement to address the social and economic imbalances between the east and west of the town;
- c) Requirement for an improvement of the quality and range of housing development within the town;
- d) Requirement for an increase in employment opportunity and activity;
- e) Requirement to improve the public realm in the town centre through an increase in pedestrian priority areas, parks and the built environment in the town centre;
- f) To maintain and enhance the existing strong community spirit through social inclusion.

The town of Nenagh, however, will be influenced by the social, economic and environmental trends of the wider county and therefore should recognise the county dimension and the importance of integrating the Town Development Plan with the County Plan.

Strategic Policy 1: To seek an increase in the residential provision within the town by ensuring high quality housing neighbourhoods with a range of house types.

Strategic Policy 2: To improve the overall attractiveness of the town as place to invest in commercial and residential development.

Strategic Policy 3: To enhance the role of Nenagh as the principal and county town, the gateway to mid-Lough Derg, as “Nenagh, the Market Town” to be an engine to drive future economic, social and cultural development.

Strategic Policy 4: To ensure that all development in the town centre protects and enhances the 19th century character and appearance of the town centre.

Strategic Policy 5: To ensure the competitiveness and sustainability of the Town Centre through the provision of high quality, well designed strategically placed car parking.

2.24 General Development

It is important for the long-term sustainability of Nenagh that all development is appropriately located within the town. This applies to all development within the town, be it new development (e.g. residential, commercial, etc.), infill or renewal development, domestic extensions, advertisement signage, new roads, or public spaces. Furthermore, no development will be allowed that would have a detrimental impact on the surrounding built, historic or natural environment.

Key General Development Aims:

- (i) To ensure that all development must be appropriately located, and must not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding built, historic or natural environment, residential or visual amenity, traffic generation, or the character or appearance of the town (See Zoning Map and designations).