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meath county council

MEATH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2027-2033

CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

PRE-DRAFT CONSULTATION

22nd January 2026

Meath County Council

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Review of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and Preparation of a New Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033

Chief Executive's Report

Pre-Draft Consultation Process

Report to Council under Section 11 (4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, (as amended).

Chief Executive's Report Pre-Draft Consultation Process

Chief Executive
Kieran Kehoe

Dated: 22/01/2026

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT.

Part 1

1.1 Introduction

Meath County Council gave notice of its intention to review the existing Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and to prepare a new County Development Plan for the period 2027-2033 on 22nd September 2025 in accordance with Section 11 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). A Strategic Issues Paper was prepared to stimulate debate on the key strategic issues that the new plan will need to address.

The preparation of the Development Plan is one of the most important functions of the Council acting as a blueprint for the development of County Meath from a physical, economic, social and environmental viewpoint over the lifetime of the Plan. The Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033 will set the long-term vision for the County's future.

The process to prepare a new Development Plan for the period 2027-2033 will take almost two years, finishing in Quarter 4, 2027.

This report relates to submissions and observation received from the public and prescribed bodies during an eight-week consultation period between 22nd September to 18th November 2025, following the publication of the statutory notice and Strategic Issues Paper for the Pre-Draft stage of the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033.

1.2 Purpose and Contents of the Chief Executive's Report.

The purpose of the Chief Executive's Report is to present the outcomes of the initial consultation process carried out prior to the preparation of the Draft Development Plan. This report forms part of stage 1 of the statutory process of making a new Development Plan. Its primary function is to list and summarise the main issues raised in the submissions received during the Pre-Draft consultation process and to provide recommendations on the policies to be included in the Draft Development Plan. This report will be issued to the Elected Members of Meath County Council for consideration.

The report is divided into a number of parts as follows:

- **Part 1** outlines the purpose and legislative requirements of this report, provides details on the Pre-Draft consultation process and provides an executive summary on the submissions received. It also includes information regarding the Draft Core Strategy, by way of outlining the Proposed Settlement Hierarchy for the Daft CDP 2027-2033.

- **Part 2** summarises the submissions from Prescribed Bodies and gives the Chief Executives response to these submissions.

- **Part 3** contains summaries of the submissions received, the Chief Executive's response and the Chief Executive's recommendations on the policies to be included in the Draft Development Plan.

- **Part 4** contains the Chief Executive's policy recommendations.

- **Part 5** contains Appendices A-E
  - Appendix A: Public Notice
  - Appendix B: Prescribed Bodies and Other Bodies Informed
  - Appendix C: Persons/Bodies that made Written Submissions
  - Appendix D: Matters that must be included in the Development Plan and those Matters that may be included.
  - Appendix E: Statutory Timeframe for the Preparation of the new Meath County Development Plan.

1.3 Next Steps

The next step involves the Elected Members considering the report within a period of up to 10 weeks. Following this, the Members may issue directions to the Chief Executive regarding the preparation of the Draft Development Plan. Any such directions shall be strategic in nature and shall take account of the statutory obligations of any Local Authority in the area, and shall take account of any relevant Government or Ministerial policies or objectives. Members will be briefed on guidance relating to submitting motions. In accordance with section 11(4)(f), in issuing directions the Elected Members shall be restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the Development Plan relates. Within 12 weeks following the receipt of any directions from the Elected Members, the Chief Executive shall in accordance with Section 11(5)(a) of the Act, prepare a Draft Development Plan and submit it to the Members of the Planning Authority for their consideration. The Members are required to consider the Chief Executive's Draft Plan within 8 weeks of its submission to them and approve the Draft Plan to go out on public display. Within 2 weeks of consideration of the Draft Plan by the Members, the Chief Executive is required to publish notice of the preparation of the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033 to go out on display in September 2026. The Draft Meath County Development Plan will be on public display for a period of 10 weeks from September to November 2026. An indicative timeline for the preparation of the new Meath County Development Plan is provided below.

Table 1: Indicative timeline for the preparation of the new Meath County Development Plan

STAGE 1	**Pre-Draft Plan Stage** **(September 2025 – August 2026)** **IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS**: During this Pre-Draft Plan public consultation stage (8 weeks) people are invited to offer their suggestions and ideas on how the County should develop and how we should respond to the trends and challenges identified in the Issues Paper. The focus at this stage is on strategic or high-level issues. **Please note that at this stage, submissions on site-specific issues or the zoning of land cannot be considered.**
STAGE 2	**Draft Plan Stage** **(September 2026 – May 2027)** **THE DETAIL:** During this stage, a Draft County Development Plan is prepared and made available for public consultation (10 weeks). The public will be able to view the Plan and make submissions on the Draft Plan and zoning maps including site specific issues and zoning of land.
STAGE 3	**Amendments to Draft Plan** **(May 2027 – October 2027)** **CHANGES**: During this stage, any amendments to the Draft County Development Plan are made by the Elected Members. This amended version of the Draft Plan is made available for public consultation (4 weeks). Submissions can be made by the public on the amendments to the Draft Plan.

Explanatory Note:

For the purpose of this report, the term 'current Plan' refers to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the term 'Draft Plan' refers to the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033.

1.4 Legislative Background for the Meath County Development Plan.

The prescribed process and timetable for the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033 is outlined in Appendix E of this report. The process set out in

the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) gives a ninety-nine-week period for the adoption of the Plan and involves public consultation at three separate stages, which are indicated on the timetable above. The first stage of public consultation ran from 22nd September 2025 to the 18th of November 2025.

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) sets out mandatory objectives which must be included in a Development Plan. These include, inter alia, objectives for the zoning of land, the provision of infrastructure, Core Strategy and Housing Strategy, the conservation and protection of the environment, climate change adaptation and the integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population. Other non-mandatory objectives are also referred to in the Planning Act. There is also a requirement for a Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment of the new Plan.

1.5 Legislative Background for the Chief Executive Report.

Section 11 (4)(a) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), sets out the requirements in relation to the preparation of a Chief Executive's Report. The Chief Executive's Report is required to deal with any submissions or observations received on foot of the notifications and consultations (carried out under Section 11(2) and (3) of the Act), with, inter alia, the public, prescribed bodies, service providers and the Board.

In accordance with Section 11 (4)(b) the Chief Executive's Report must:

(i) List the persons or bodies who made submissions or observations, as well as any persons or bodies consulted by the authority.

(ii) Summarise the issues raised in the submissions and during the consultations, where appropriate, but shall not respond to a submission (or portion of) relating to a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purpose.

(iii) Give the opinion of the Chief Executive on the issues raised, taking into account the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area, and any relevant policies or objectives from the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government, and

(iv) Finally, the report shall state the Chief Executive's recommendations on the policies to be included in the draft development plan.

In accordance with Section 11 (4)(c), the Chief Executive's Report must be submitted to the Elected Members of the Planning Authority for their consideration.

Following consideration of the report the Elected Members may then issue directions to the Chief Executive regarding the preparation of the Draft Development Plan (Section 11(4)(d)).

These Directions shall be strategic in nature, be consistent with the Draft Core Strategy and shall take account of the statutory obligations of the Local Authority in the area and any relevant policies or objectives of the Government or of any Minister of the Government.

Section 12(18) of the Act defines statutory obligations:

"statutory obligations includes, in relation to a Local Authority, the obligation to ensure that the development plan is consistent with –

(a) the National and Regional development objectives specified in –

(i) the National Planning Framework, and

(ii) the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and

(iii)specific planning policy requirements specified in guidelines under subsection (1) of section 28

(b) in relation to a local authority that is a coastal planning authority, the obligation to ensure that the development plan is, in addition to being consistent with the obligation referred to in (a), consistent with the National Marine Planning Framework.

1.6 Pre-Draft Consultation Process.

The first consultation phase (Pre-Draft phase) commenced on the 22nd September 2025 and concluded on the 18th November 2025, with the publication of a 'Section 11 notice' indicating Meath County Council's intention to review the existing Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 and to prepare a new Meath County Development Plan for the period 2027 – 2033. This notice was placed in the Irish Independent on 19th September, 2025), The Meath Chronicle (27th September, 2025) and the Drogheda Independent (24th September, 2025). See Appendix A.

The Strategic Issues Paper provides the context for preparing the proposed Development Plan and identifies how the proposed Plan fits within the hierarchy of legislation, including the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

The Strategic Issues Paper presents an overview of the main planning and development issues in Meath and seeks to encourage public debate on what broad issues should be considered in the new Plan. The Meath County Development Plan presents an opportunity for the general public to shape Meath for the future and 'have your say' when it comes to important issues such as housing, economic development, community and heritage.

The Strategic Issues Papers addressed eight key themes:

- Theme 1: Settlement & Housing
- Theme 2: Employment & Economy
- Theme 3: Transport & Movement
- Theme 4: Infrastructure & Utilities

- Theme 5: Community Services
- Theme 6: Rural Development
- Theme 7: Cultural & Natural Heritage
- Theme 8: Climate Chage

A total of 167 no. submissions received. We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all those who made submissions, all those who gave of their time to attend our virtual webinar and engaged with officials and Elected Members. The content of all submissions has been considered in full in the preparation of the Chief Executive's Report.

A communications strategy was drafted to ensure that awareness of the plan process spread through the County and beyond. Central to this was the social media campaign, traditional advertising avenues such as newspapers and radio were also used. Engagement in the process was therefore actively encouraged through various measures. The suite of measures utilised is detailed below:

- **Social media**
  A social media campaign to publicise the Development Plan process engaged with Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube, which included updates on public consultation events and recordings of the webinar.

- **Webpage and Online Portal**

  A dedicated webpage was established to provide information with the ability to make online submissions through the consult portal https://consult.meath.ie/en/consultation/meath-county-development-plan-2027-2033-pre-draft-strategic-issues-paper.

  The consult portal displayed the key elements in terms of content and included the following:

  - An introduction to what a County Development Plan is,
  - How does the Meath County Development Plan affect me?
  - How is a Development Plan prepared?
  - How long does it take to prepare a Development Plan?
  - Information on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Rish Assessment (SFRA).
  - Link to access the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Papers
  - Details on how to make a submission via the various different means, including via post or the online portal.
  - (insert information relating to public consultation events)

167 submissions were received during the consultation period. 20 of these submissions were received via the post. Eight submissions were subsequently withdrawn. An executive

summary of the submissions is provided in the report below and provides summaries of the submissions, including the Chief Executive's response are contained in Part 3 of this report.

- **Issues and Background papers**
  A Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper with nine themes was published and made available on our dedication portal https://consult.meath.ie/en/consultation/meath-county-development-plan-2027-2033-pre-draft-strategic-issues-paper. The nine themes are: Core Strategy, Settlement & Housing, Employment & Economy, Transport & Movement, Infrastructure & Utilities, Community Services, Rural Development, Cultural & Natural Heritage and Climate Change.

The Strategic Issues Paper presents an overview of the main planning and development issues in Meath and seeks to encourage public debate on what broad issues should be considered in the new Plan. The Meath County Development Plan presents an opportunity for the general public to shape Meath for the future and 'have your say' when it comes to important issues such as housing, economic development, community and heritage.

- **Consultation with Prescribed Bodies & Others**
  Notice of the review of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the commencement of the new Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033 was issued to prescribed bodies and other organisations. These were issued by email on 22ng Septembers, 2025
  (Table attached in appendix B)

- **Public Access to Submissions**

  All submissions (including attachments) are available, in full, online through the Meath Consultation Portal at https://consult.meath.ie/en/browse. This enables members of the general public, and others, to view each submission electronically.

1.7 Strategic Policy Context.

Since the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, a number of new policy documents have been issued for land use planning and development in Ireland. This section provides a general overview on key policies at a National and Regional level which will inform the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033.

In terms of the national hierarchy of spatial plans, the overarching plan is the National Planning Framework (NPF) 2025, the NPF Implementation Housing Growth requirements (July 2025) Section 28 guidelines, with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) setting out the regional framework and mechanism for implementation and delivery of the NPF. In the absence of a revised regional and Spatial Strategy, the Council must be guided by the existing strategy in place at the time of writing.

The RSES also includes the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) which sets out the growth strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). Individual County Development Plans set out an overall strategy at a local level, and these Plans must be consistent with both the NPF and RSES. Meath is identified in the RSES within the Eastern Region and is partly situated within the MASP area.

The Development Plan sits within the hierarchy of plans and is required to have a Core Strategy which will show that the objectives within the Development Plan are consistent with the objectives set out in National and Regional Strategies.

Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan

Project Ireland 2040 is the Governments overarching policy initiative for the Country and is made up of the National Planning Framework (NPF) to 2040, and the National Development Plan (NDP)

National Development Plan (NDP)

The updated National Development Plan was published on 22nd July 2025, setting out the investment priorities to secure Ireland's future, unlock housing, upgrade water and energy infrastructure, deliver more roads, and provide better public transport. The review includes an additional €34 billion relative to the previous 2021-2030 NDP including equity funding of €10 billion to 2030 to fund large strategic projects in energy, water and transport.

Ireland 2040 Our Plan – The National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic vision for shaping future growth and development in the entire country out to the year 2040. The NPF, published in 2018, replaced the National Spatial Strategy as the overall spatial planning and development strategy for Ireland. Planning legislation provides for the Government to revise or replace the NPF every six years. Following a decision of Government in June 2023, the preparation of a revised National Planning Framework commenced. The Revised NPF was published in April 2025 taking into account the changes that have occurred since it was published in 2018 and to build on the framework that is in place. The vision, as set out in the NPF, is to be delivered by way of a regionally focused strategy for managing growth and linking this growth to the NDP, to provide a counterbalance to the established concentration of growth in the Greater Dublin Area. The NPF sets out a targeted pattern of growth for the Eastern and Midland Region including County Meath and these growth figures inform the delivery of national policy expressed in the NPF and the delivery of the RSES. The NPF identifies ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) for the future growth and sustainable development of Ireland to 2040 which will be a central consideration in shaping the new Meath County Development Plan.

The NPF has a very clear focus on achieving compact growth and, more specifically, brownfield infill development which translates into encouraging more people, jobs and activity generally within existing built-up areas rather than new greenfield areas. (National

Policy Objective (NPO) 7). This growth strategy will allow better use of underutilised serviced land and buildings, including infill and brownfield land, with more high-quality and higher-density mixed-use development accompanied by enhanced amenities, education, health and social services, all supported by sustainable mobility.

The NPF acknowledges the significant contribution that rural areas make to Ireland's identity and to overall national development in economic, social, cultural and environmental terms. The NPF replaces a major focus on rural areas in relation to strengthening Ireland's rural fabric and supporting existing communities, planning for the future growth and development of rural areas, supporting job creation, addressing connectivity gaps and better co-ordination of existing investment programmes dealing with social inclusion, rural development and town and village renewal.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area sets out a strategic plan and investment framework to shape development and manage planning in the Region. The RSES translates the NPF objectives and the growth and settlement strategy at the regional level, ensuring coordination between the NPF and each County Development Plan.

The RSES identifies the region's challenges as the need to sustain economic growth whilst transitioning to a low carbon society and the requirement to align population growth with the location of homes and jobs whilst creating healthy attractive places and an enhanced quality of life. The RSES is underpinned by three cross-cutting principles; healthy placemaking, climate action and economic opportunity, which will be incorporated into all facets of our new County Development Plan.

The growth strategy for the Region supports the continued growth at more sustainable rates, while providing for increased employment and improved local economies, services and functions to allow towns to become more self-sufficient and to create the quality of life to attract investment.

The RSES recognises the strategic location of Drogheda on the Dublin-Belfast rail corridor and the M1 Motorway in proximity to both the metropolitan centres of Dublin and Belfast. Key priorities of the RSES are to promote the continued sustainable and compact growth of Drogheda as a regional driver

of city scale with a target population of 50,000 by 2031. The objective is to provide for the regeneration of the town centre, the compact planned and co-ordinated growth of the town's hinterland along with enhancing Drogheda's role as a self-sustaining strategic employment centre on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

Also relevant to Meath is the identification of Navan as a Key Town, functioning as a dynamic urban centre and the focal point of economic, cultural and social development of County Meath. As the County Town, Navan acts as a key employment centre with potential

to further strengthen the retail, employment and service function of the town through the consolidation and expansion of the town centre along with new strategic development areas, and to improve connectivity, sustainable transport and public realm.

The Metropolitan Area Strategy identifies Strategic Development Areas in Meath, including:

Residential

- Dunboyne – Sequential development prioritising zoned and serviced lands near the railway station and town centre and at Dunboyne North / M3 Parkway station

Employment/Mixed Use

- Dunboyne - Mixed-use 'live-work' development at Dunboyne North.
- Maynooth – Land at Moygaddy within the Maynooth Environs is identified for science and technology-based employment.

1.8 Draft Core Strategy.

The Planning and Development Act (as amended) requires an evidence based 'Core Strategy' to be included in all County Development Plan. The key purpose of the Core Strategy is to ensure that an appropriate amount of land is reserved in the right locations to meet housing and population targets. This is done through the articulation of a medium to long-term quantitative strategy for the spatial development of the area, which must be consistent with National and Regional policy objectives set out in the NPF and RSES for the mid-east region.

In essence, the Core Strategy must ensure that an appropriate quantum of zoned land is available and provided at the right locations within the County to ensure new homes can be built with supporting services and facilities provided to serve them. In effect, the Core Strategy forms the basis for all development within the County, extending from higher order plans such as the Development Plan.

Section 11 (4)(d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) provides that, following the consideration of the Chief Executive's Report on submissions for the Pre-Draft consultation stage, the members of the Planning Authority may issue directions to the Chief Executive regarding the preparation of the Draft Development Plan. The legislation provides that any such directions shall be strategic in nature, consistent with the Draft Core Strategy, and shall take account of the Local Authority's statutory obligations and any relevant policies or objectives for the time scale of the Government or of any Minister of the Government. In accordance with this statutory requirement, an indicative and 'strategic' level Draft Core Strategy is set out below, in order to ensure that 'strategic' directions issued by members may be consistent with National and Regional policy.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), which includes the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP), are key determinants for the Core Strategy. The NPF has a clear focus on achieving what is called brownfield/infill

development, which translates into encouraging more people, jobs and activity generally within the existing built-up areas. In line with this focus on compact growth, it is a target of the NPF that half of future national population growth will be focused in the existing five Cities and their suburbs, National Planning Objective (NPO) 4, and furthermore, that at least half of all new homes, that are targeted in the five Cities, will be within their existing built-up footprints. The County Development Plan Core Strategy will focus future development in a manner that delivers the national compact growth agenda.

The NPF introduces a requirement for a two-tier approach to land zoning. Tier 1 lands are serviced, and in general, part of or contiguous to the built-up footprint of an area. Tier 2 lands are not currently sufficiently serviced to support new development but have potential to become fully serviced within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. Tier 2 lands may be positioned within the existing built-up footprint, or contiguous to existing developed lands or to Tier 1 zoned lands. The NPF requires that the County Development Plan must carry out an infrastructural assessment of the required services to support new development on any Tier 2 lands, and the assessment must be aligned with the delivery program of infrastructural providers such as Irish Water and the National Transport Authority. The NPF states that lands that cannot be serviced during the lifetime of the County Development Plan should not be zoned for development. The Draft Plan will include a more detailed assessment of enabling infrastructure requirements.

The RSES sets out a settlement hierarchy for the Region and identifies key growth areas which will see significant development up to 2031 and beyond. Local Authorities are required to determine the County level hierarchy of settlements in accordance with the RSES settlement hierarchy. The table below sets out the RSES settlement hierarchy as it applies to County Meath, which aligned the Plan with the NPF and the RSES.

Settlement Typology	Description	Core Region
Regional Growth Centre	Regional Growth Centres are large towns with a high level of self-sustaining employment and services that act as regional economic drivers and play a significant role for a wide catchment area.	Drogheda
Key Towns	Large economically active service and/or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers	Navan, Maynooth

	to complement the Regional Growth Centres.	
Self-Sustaining Growth Towns	Self-Sustaining Growth Towns with a moderate level of jobs and services – includes sub-county market towns and commuter towns with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining.	Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, Dunboyne/Dunboyne North
Self-Sustaining Towns	Self-Sustaining Towns with high levels of population growth and a weak employment base which are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services, and which require targeted 'catch up' investment to become more self-sustaining.	Laytown, Bettystown-Mornington-Donacarney, Ratoath, Enfield, Stamullen, Kilcock, Duleek.
Towns and Villages	Towns and villages with local service and employment functions.	Athboy, Oldcastle, Ballivor, Longwood.
Rural	Villages and the wider rural region	Baile Ghib, Carlanstown, Carnaross, Clonard, Clonee, Crossakiel, Donore, Drumconrath, Gormanstown, Julianstown, Kentstown, Kilbride, Kildalkey, Kilmainhamwood, Kilmessan, Moynalty, Nobber, Rathcairn, Rathmolyon, Slane, Summerhil

Table 1: Meath Settlement Hierarchy

The Core Strategy in the Draft Plan will align with the NPF and the RSES, including the MASP. While the RSES has yet to be revised, the revised NPF has envisaged that EMRA will grow by 470,000[1] persons by the year 2040 to comprise a region of 3 million people. In this context, the ESRIs *Population Projections, The Flow of New Households and Structural Housing*

[1] As per Table 10.1 National Planning Framework Phased Population Growth, National Planning Framework First Revision.

Demand (*Jul 2024),* predicts that Meath will grow to 266,900 and at a baseline annual growth rate of 1.1%. A high-migration scenario would grow Meath to 315,400 by 2040.

Area	**Population 2022**	**Projected Population 2040**
Meath	220,826	266,900-315,400

Table 2: Population Projection for Meath: Source: *ESRIs Population Projections (July 2024).*

Census data revealed a household size of 2.74 in 2022[2] while ESRI modelling suggests that the average household will fall to 2.6 by 2040.[3] In order to gather an assumption of the household size in the period up to 2034, it is considered reasonable to assume a slight fall in household to 2.7.

In line with the Section 28 Guidelines on the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements, published in July 2025, Meath is required to deliver 2,942 units annually and 1,362 units thereafter. This amounts to an additional 29,420 households between 2025 and 2034 and 37,592 households between 2025 and 2040. Contrary to previous population growth publications, this includes both future housing requirements and existing unmet housing demand.

Area	**Additional Housing Requirements to 2034**	**Additional Housing Requirements to 2040**
Meath	29,420	37,592

Table 3: Housing Requirements for Meath

In line with the Section 28 Guidelines, MCC will undertake a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA). The results of the HNDA will inform the policies and objectives of the new Development Plan in such areas as housing location, tenure, mix of housing and typologies (apartments, sheltered housing, housing for the elderly etc). This, in turn, will help to inform the provision of sufficient land supply to meet housing demand going forward.

The Draft Core Strategy of the Draft Plan will focus growth in the Metropolitan Area (Dunboyne and Maynooth), the Regional Growth Centre of Drogheda and the Key Town of Navan, with more sustainable localised growth to take place in the remaining identified growth settlements. The Draft Plan will include a Core Strategy Map, the contents of which will be guided by the statutory requirements of Section 10 (2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

[2] Central Statistics Office, Census 2022
[3] Population Projections, The Flow Of New Households and Structural Housing Demand, Esri, July 2024

The Draft Core Strategy will form the basis for all development within the County through evidence-based analysis of population projections, land availability, water, wastewater and energy infrastructure and services, and upcoming transportation planning. The Draft Core Strategy will be formulated in line with the preparation of the Draft Development Plan and will align with the Section 28 Guidelines on the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements and policy objectives outlined in the NPF, the RSES and any revision thereof.

1.9 Executive Summary of Issues Raised

Core Strategy

Submissions to the Pre-Draft consultation highlight the central importance of the Core Strategy as the mechanism for managing County Meath's future growth in a manner that is plan-led, evidence-based and aligned with national and regional policy. A dominant point raised was concerns on the scale of population and housing growth now required under the revised National Planning Framework and Housing Growth Requirements, which represent a substantial increase on previous targets. Many submissions highlighted that the Core Strategy must reflect both future growth and existing unmet housing demand, while ensuring a maximum headroom is allocated for residential land supply to allow for delivery constraints, infrastructure phasing and market viability.

A recurring strategic tension is the balance between compact growth and the need to deliver sufficient housing. While there is strong support for the national objective of prioritising infill, brownfield and consolidation within existing settlement footprints, submissions caution that an overly restrictive interpretation could undermine housing delivery if infrastructure capacity, land availability or viability limits development in core areas. The application of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 zoning approach is therefore seen as critical, with emphasis placed on aligning zoning decisions with realistic timelines for the delivery of water, wastewater, transport and energy infrastructure.

The settlement hierarchy emerges as a key point of debate. Submissions seek clarity and consistency in how growth is distributed across Regional Growth Centres, Key Towns, Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and smaller settlements. Many argue that settlements such as Navan, Drogheda, Dunshaughlin, Trim, Duleek and others with existing services, transport links and critical mass should play a stronger role in accommodating growth to avoid further commuter-led development and to strengthen local employment bases. Concerns are raised that failure to appropriately allocate growth could reinforce dormitory patterns, increase congestion and place pressure on infrastructure without delivering balanced, self-sustaining communities.

Infrastructure capacity is repeatedly identified as a fundamental constraint shaping the Core Strategy. Water and wastewater availability, public transport provision (including the delivery and timing of the Navan Rail Line and DART expansion), road capacity and social infrastructure all feature prominently. Submissions emphasise that housing and

employment growth must be explicitly tied to confirmed or deliverable infrastructure investment, and that settlements experiencing infrastructural deficits should not continue to absorb growth without coordinated upgrades.

There is also a strong call to integrate climate action and renewable energy considerations directly into the Core Strategy, rather than treating them solely as supporting policies. Respondents highlight the need for compact, transport-oriented development, reduced car dependency, and recognition of rural areas as critical to renewable energy generation and grid infrastructure, all of which influence spatial growth choices.

Overall, the issues raised point to the need for a robust, flexible Core Strategy that balances national growth targets with local delivery capacity, supports compact and sustainable settlement patterns, ensures infrastructure-led zoning decisions, and strengthens the role of key settlements in delivering housing, employment and services in a coordinated and climate-resilient manner.

Settlement & Housing

The submissions highlight the scale and urgency of housing need within the County and the requirement for the Development Plan to respond to the updated national housing targets. Many respondents note that existing zoned residential land is limited, constrained by infrastructure capacity, or already committed through existing permissions, and that additional residential zoning will be required to meet projected demand over the plan period.

A common theme is the need to significantly increase housing supply in a timely and deliverable manner, with particular emphasis on ensuring that sufficient land is zoned in locations that are serviced, accessible and capable of early activation.

Many submissions advocate for housing growth to be focused within existing towns and larger settlements, particularly those with public transport connectivity, employment opportunities and established services, in line with compact growth and sequential development principles. There is also support for the identification of strategic growth locations capable of accommodating larger-scale residential development supported by infrastructure and community facilities.

The need to provide a diverse mix of housing types is repeatedly raised, including family housing, apartments, social and affordable housing, and accommodation suitable for older persons and smaller households. Affordability and accessibility are highlighted as key issues, with submissions calling for policies that facilitate viable delivery and support balanced communities.

Concerns are also expressed regarding the mismatch between housing delivery and the provision of supporting infrastructure, with calls for stronger mechanisms to ensure that water services, transport, schools, healthcare and community facilities are delivered in tandem with residential development.

Employment & Economy

Numerous submissions proposed additional employment zoning in various settlements throughout County Meath. Various submissions raised concerns with job creation in County Meath, particularly the retention of local jobs in County Meath given the proximity of Dublin. A mixture of concern and support was exhibited for proposed port-related employment in Bremore. Some submissions highlighted the potential of the film industry and the need to support the film industry in the Development Plan.

In relation to tourism, the submissions recommended greater support for campervan travel, heritage related tourism facilities, cruise tourism, the Gaeltacht areas and a dedicated chapter for tourism in the Development Plan.

In relation to retail, the submissions highlighted issues relating to indigenous enterprises, trade leakage, a lack of flexible retail spaces, e-commerce, retail warehouse zoning and retail vacancy.

Linkages to employment centres neighbouring County Meath, particularly Drogheda, were highlighted in numerous submissions.

The interconnectedness with and co-dependence of economy and employment activities on transport, climate and housing are highlighted throughout the submissions. In this respect, numerous submissions stress the importance of facilitating economic and employment and development where there is planned housing growth.

Transport & Movement

The submissions highlight the importance of progressing modal shift to sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport as alternative to private car, consolidating urban generated development through compact growth and the integration of spatial land use and transport planning.

Improving accessibility and connectivity to key destinations and to rural areas within the County through improved public transport provision is required. In this regard, supportive polices must be provided in the new Plan to support and facilitate the timely delivery of key enabling infrastructure projects such as Navan Rail Line, DART+ North and DART + West. The protection of strategic road corridors within Meath are considered critical for the future prosperity of Meath, the Greater Dublin Area and mid-east region.

Many of the submissions outline support for the provision of high-quality, fully connected pedestrian and cycling facilities to encourage more active mobility across the County as well as improving the attractiveness of the public realm for walking and cycling. To influence travel choices and create a change in travel behaviours to more sustainable modes, measures such as controlled parking management, demand management measures, mobility management plans for new developments and behavioural change programmes as well as initiatives for safe travel to school by active modes are suggested. The application of the universal design approach and accessibility for all are regarded as key considerations in

the planning and development of mobility schemes. Submissions identified a number of specific areas within the County where improved roads infrastructure, greater traffic management and enforcement matters could be implemented to alleviate traffic congestion.

Infrastructure & Utilities

The submissions consistently emphasise the critical role of infrastructure provision in supporting sustainable growth, compact development and the delivery of housing and employment across County Meath. A strong recurring theme is the need for infrastructure planning to be closely aligned with the settlement hierarchy, Core Strategy and population growth projections, ensuring that development is directed towards locations that are appropriately serviced or capable of being serviced within the lifetime of the Development Plan.

Water supply and wastewater infrastructure capacity feature prominently, with submissions highlighting existing constraints in several settlements and the importance of ensuring that zoning and growth ambitions are informed by realistic assessments of servicing capacity. The need for early and ongoing engagement with Uisce Éireann is repeatedly referenced, alongside calls for coordinated investment planning to support residential, commercial and industrial development, particularly in towns experiencing strong growth pressure.

Flood risk management and climate resilience are identified as key considerations, with submissions stressing the importance of a precautionary, plan-led approach to development in flood-prone areas. The application of the sequential approach, informed by updated flood risk assessments and climate change projections, is widely supported. The role of nature-based solutions, surface water management, green infrastructure and integrated catchment management is also highlighted as an essential component of climate adaptation and sustainable infrastructure delivery.

Energy infrastructure and renewable energy development represent a significant area of focus within the submissions. The importance of strengthening the electricity network to address existing capacity constraints and facilitate future growth is consistently raised, alongside calls for the early identification and protection of strategic infrastructure sites. Submissions support the inclusion of clear, plan-led policy frameworks to facilitate renewable energy development, including onshore and offshore wind, solar energy, energy storage and grid infrastructure, while ensuring appropriate consideration of environmental, landscape and community sensitivities.

Natural resources, including quarrying and mineral extraction, are addressed in a number of submissions, which highlight the importance of safeguarding access to essential construction materials to support housing delivery and infrastructure development. At the same time, submissions emphasise the need for robust environmental protection, appropriate buffer zones, and effective regulation of extraction activities to protect residential amenity, water quality and biodiversity.

The provision of enabling social infrastructure, including schools and community facilities, is also identified as integral to infrastructure planning. Submissions stress the importance of early site identification, flexibility in zoning provisions, and the integration of education and

community infrastructure with new and existing residential areas to support sustainable communities.

Overall, the submissions demonstrate broad support for an integrated, evidence-based Infrastructure & Utilities chapter that promotes coordinated infrastructure delivery, strengthens collaboration with statutory infrastructure providers, and ensures that growth is supported by timely, resilient and sustainable infrastructure investment across County Meath.

Community Services

The submissions highlight the need for significantly improved provision of community and social infrastructure to support existing communities and planned population growth across the County. A recurring concern is that the delivery of housing has not been matched by timely essential services, resulting in pressure on healthcare facilities, schools, childcare facilitates and community infrastructure in many settlements.

The need for additional community facilities, including community centres, youth services, facilities for older people and spaces for social gathering, is frequently raised. Submissions also stress the importance of accessible and high-quality recreational infrastructure, including parks, playgrounds, sports facilities, walking routes and indoor leisure facilities, as a key component of quality of life and community wellbeing.

A number of submissions raised the need for a more coordinated and proactive approach to the delivery of community services; whereby social infrastructure is planned and delivered in parallel with residential development rather than retrospectively. There is also a strong emphasis on inclusive design and the provision of facilities that meet the needs of vulnerable groups, including older people, people with disabilities and young people.

Rural Development

A significant thread of submissions received support future development of a scale and type that is consistent with the existing rural character of areas and the capacity of local infrastructure. Many submissions advocating for rural economic development that reflects the existing rural nature of the area, supports local employment and avoids placing undue strain on community services. A number of submissions acknowledging a town/villages relationship with its surrounding rural hinterland and calling for a framework to ensure growth in town/villages supports surrounding rural communities while protecting the countryside from urban sprawl.

Concerns were also raised regarding pedestrian safety in rural locations where narrow roads, limited verges, high traffic speeds and the absence of footpaths create risks for walkers, including children, young people and other vulnerable road users attending training sessions, matches and community events etc.

Reference was also made to the importance of GAA Glubs in rural areas highlighting they frequently serve as primary community hubs in villages and rural areas. Requests were made to protect existing rural sports facilities and to support modest expansion.

Several submissions also related to the Gaeltacht areas in County Meath, highlighting the difficulties Gaeltacht areas are experiencing in keeping the Irish language a viable everyday language.

Suggestions have been made seeking for the Draft Plan to include alternatives to traditional one-off rural housing for people seeking to live in rural areas.

Cultural & Natural Heritage

Submissions relating to cultural and natural heritage highlighted the need for the County Development Plan to place stronger emphasis on the protection, management and strategic use of Meath's environmental and cultural assets as part of future growth and development. A recurring theme was the importance of ensuring that statutory environmental, biodiversity and ecosystem protections are fully integrated into the planning framework, particularly in relation to sensitive habitats, landscapes and designated sites, so that development is guided by robust environmental assessment and precautionary principles.

Respondents also stressed the need for a more proactive approach to heritage-led regeneration, particularly through the re-use and adaptation of protected structures and historic buildings to support sustainable development, town centre vitality and cultural continuity. This was linked to calls for the Development Plan to retain and strengthen existing heritage and conservation policies, rather than weakening protections as pressures for growth increase.

Tree cover and green infrastructure emerged as key strategic concerns, with submissions calling for the preparation of a County-wide Tree Strategy to address low canopy cover, support climate resilience, enhance biodiversity and improve the quality of towns, villages and rural landscapes. There was strong support for ensuring that public realm initiatives, Town Centre First Plans and the Meath Biodiversity Action Plan are embedded within the Development Plan, so that environmental and placemaking objectives are delivered in a coordinated and consistent way.

Cultural heritage issues were also raised, particularly in relation to the preservation of Irish as a living community language in Gaeltacht areas, highlighting the need for planning policies that support cultural identity alongside physical development. In addition, submissions sought improved mapping and identification of heritage and natural assets, so that planning decisions are better informed and cumulative impacts on these resources can be more effectively managed.

Finally, many submissions recognised the potential of Meath's natural and cultural heritage to support tourism and recreation, provided that this is accompanied by appropriate visitor management and conservation measures to protect sensitive sites and maintain their long-term sustainability

Climate Change

The submissions consistently emphasise the need for the forthcoming County Development Plan to respond robustly to the climate emergency through the integration of climate mitigation and adaptation measures across all chapters of the Plan. A strong alignment with national and regional climate policy is sought, including the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Acts, the National Climate Action Plan, and the Eastern and Midland Regional Climate Action Strategy. Submissions highlight the importance of ensuring that climate action objectives are embedded within the Core Strategy and settlement hierarchy, particularly in directing growth towards locations that can support compact development, reduced travel demand and lower carbon emissions.

A recurring theme relates to climate adaptation and resilience, with particular emphasis on flood risk management, coastal change, surface water management and nature-based solutions. Submissions stress the need for the Plan to apply a precautionary, plan-led approach to development in areas at risk of flooding, informed by updated flood risk assessments, climate projections and the sequential approach. The role of green infrastructure, blue-green corridors and ecosystem services in climate adaptation, biodiversity enhancement and improved placemaking is widely supported.

Energy and decarbonisation are also prominent, with submissions advocating for policies that facilitate the transition to renewable energy, energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies. This includes support for renewable energy generation, grid infrastructure, district heating, retrofitting of the existing building stock and the integration of climate-positive design principles in new development. Submissions highlight the importance of balancing renewable energy delivery with environmental protection, landscape character and community considerations through a clear and transparent policy framework.

The importance of reducing transport-related emissions is repeatedly referenced, with submissions linking climate action to compact growth, sustainable settlement patterns and modal shift to public transport, walking and cycling. Climate change is also raised in the context of sustainable water management, wastewater capacity, resource efficiency and the circular economy, with calls for coordinated infrastructure planning to support climate objectives.

Overall, the submissions demonstrate broad support for a strengthened, evidence-based Climate Action chapter that provides clear policy direction, measurable objectives and cross-cutting integration throughout the Development Plan, ensuring that climate considerations are central to decision-making and the long-term sustainable development of County Meath.

Miscellaneous

A number of issued that arose in submission received fell within the 'Miscellaneous' category.

Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

Several submissions received in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment provided general advice, comments, and information on legislation and access to information. Several submissions raised issues in relation to protecting European sites, biodiversity, riparian buffer zones and addressing flood management.

Part 2

Part 2: Summary of Prescribe Bodies Submissions & Chief Executives Response & Recommendations

Part 2

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR (OPR)

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-144: Office of the Planning Regulator

Summary of Submission:

The submission received from the Office of the Planning Regulator acknowledges and welcomes the publication of the Issues Paper and Meath County Council's work in advancing the review of the County Development Plan. The Office has set out some broad areas to be considered in the formulation of the draft County Development Plan (CDP) as follows:

1. Consultation Strategies

- The OPR welcomes Meath County Council's early engagement efforts.
- Encourages continued use of innovative consultation methods to broaden participation.
- Recommends applying:
    - The OPR's *Public Engagement Toolkit* for development plans.
    - The EPA/OPR guidance on improving public participation in SEA.
- Emphasises meaningful, accessible communication throughout the plan process.

2. Core Strategy & Settlement Strategy

- The core strategy must align with:
    - The revised NPF (2025),
    - The RSES,
    - Section 28 Guidelines,
    - National Planning Statements.
- Notes Meath's Housing Growth Requirements:
    - 2,942 units annually (2025–2034),
    - 1,362 units annually (2035–2040),
    - Plus 50% headroom when zoning.
- Settlement hierarchy must be evidence-based and consistent with RPOs 3.1 and 4.1.
- Meath spans three RSES regions (Dublin Metropolitan, Core, Gateway), requiring nuanced policy alignment.

3. Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)

- MASP is a key driver for integrated land use and transport planning.
- Core strategy must address:
    - Strategic development areas in the North-West corridor,
    - Employment density guidance,
    - Strategic employment location principles.
- Notes emerging RSES revisions may introduce new TOD opportunities.

4. Compact Growth & Zoning

- NPO 9 requires 30% of new homes in non-city settlements to be within existing footprints.
- RSES emphasises brownfield/infill development and active land management.
- Key towns (Navan, Maynooth, Drogheda) have strong compact growth potential.
- Settlement Capacity Audits (SCAs) must underpin zoning.
- Distinguish serviced vs serviceable land (NPO 101).
- Infrastructure cost estimates required (NPO 102).
- Lands not serviceable within the plan period should not be zoned (NPO 103).
- Close engagement with Uisce Éireann and the Housing Activation Office is essential.

5. Lower Tier Plans

- LAPs will be replaced by Urban Area Plans, Priority Area Plans and Coordinated Area Plans.
- CDP should identify which settlements will require these plans.
- Drogheda Joint Urban Area Plan is a priority under RPO 4.11.
- Work already underway (SEA, LTP) is acknowledged.

6. Economic Development & Employment

- Meath's strategic location and workforce are key strengths.
- Economic strategy must be evidence-based and climate-aligned.
- Employment zoning must:
    - Be justified,
    - Reflect servicing capacity,
    - Support compact growth,
    - Align with transport accessibility.

- Low-intensity uses should be near strategic roads; high-intensity uses near public transport.
- Retail strategy must align with RSES retail hierarchy.

7. Transport

- CDP must reduce car dependency and promote sustainable mobility.
- Should include modal shift targets and implementation measures.
- Must protect the strategic function of national roads.
- Employment zoning near national roads should be reviewed.
- DMURS implementation is encouraged.

8. Infrastructure

- CDP must support high-quality physical infrastructure.
- Water and wastewater upgrades in Maynooth and Dunboyne are critical.
- Strong collaboration with Uisce Éireann required.
- SUDS should be maximised in line with RSES objectives.

9. Rural Development

- Meath's rural areas have diverse functions (agriculture, equine, tourism, villages).
- CDP must:
    - Address rural decline,
    - Support compact growth in rural settlements,
    - Prevent urban-generated rural housing.
- Should promote serviced sites and regeneration within rural settlements.

10. Flood Risk Assessment

- A full SFRA is required.
- Must liaise with OPW and consider flood relief schemes.
- Zoning maps should overlay flood risk mapping.
- Zoning must not impede flood relief works.

11. Climate Action & Energy

- CDP must address section 10(2)(n) obligations on climate mitigation and adaptation.
- Should integrate land use and transport to reduce emissions.

- Must plan for renewable energy capacity allocations under RSES review.
- Should support wind, solar and other low-carbon energy.
- Coastal change impacts must be considered.

12. Implementation & Monitoring

- Monitoring is increasingly important under NPF and RSES.
- OPR's forthcoming PN06 will guide development plan monitoring.
- CDP should include:
    - Clear monitoring indicators,
    - Digital tools for tracking compact growth and plan delivery.

Chief Executive Response

1. Consultation Strategies

Meath County Council welcomes the OPR's recognition of the work undertaken to date in preparing the Issues Paper and in initiating early public engagement. The Council is committed to broadening participation throughout the plan-making process and will continue to employ a mix of traditional and innovative consultation methods to reach a diverse audience, including younger people, hard-to-reach groups, and communities with limited prior engagement in planning processes. The Council will integrate the OPR's *Public Engagement Toolkit* and the EPA/OPR SEA participation guidance to ensure that consultation is accessible, transparent, and meaningful. This includes clearer communication of planning concepts, improved visual material, and more interactive engagement formats. The Council will continue implementing digital engagement methods to complement in-person events.

2. Core Strategy & Settlement Strategy

The Council acknowledges the central importance of the core strategy and will ensure full alignment with the revised NPF, the RSES, Section 28 Guidelines, and any forthcoming National Planning Statements. The Housing Growth Requirements and the associated 50% headroom will be incorporated into the zoning and land supply analysis. An evidence-based settlement hierarchy will be developed, informed by demographic trends, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, and the county's unique position across three different regions in the RSES (Dublin Metropolitan Area, Core Region and Gateway Region). The Council will ensure that growth allocations reflect the strategic roles of settlements, support compact development, and align with regional growth enablers. Close collaboration with EMRA will be maintained throughout the RSES review to ensure consistency between regional and local policy.

3. MASP

The Council recognises the MASP as a key framework for integrating land use and transport planning within the Dublin Metropolitan Area. The core strategy will address the strategic development areas identified in the North-West corridor and will incorporate the employment density guidance and strategic employment location principles set out in the RSES. The Council will also monitor emerging policy directions from the ongoing RSES review, particularly regarding potential new Transport-Oriented Development (TOD) opportunities. Engagement with EMRA, the NTA, and other stakeholders will continue to ensure that the CDP supports the delivery of sustainable, well-connected communities within the metropolitan area.

4. Compact Growth & Zoning

The Council is committed to delivering compact growth in line with NPO 9 and the RSES. A comprehensive Settlement Capacity Audit has been undertaken to assess the availability of serviced and serviceable lands, infrastructure capacity, and opportunities for brownfield and infill development. The Council will apply the serviced vs serviceable distinction (NPO 101) and will prepare infrastructure cost estimates (NPO 102) to ensure that zoning decisions are realistic, deliverable, and aligned with infrastructure investment priorities. Lands that cannot be serviced within the plan period will not be zoned (NPO 103). The Council will work closely with Uisce Éireann, the Housing Activation Office and other infrastructure providers to identify and address infrastructure constraints and to support the timely delivery of housing and economic development.

5. Lower Tier Plans

The Council notes the transition from Local Area Plans to Urban Area Plans, Priority Area Plans, and Coordinated Area Plans under the Planning and Development Act 2024. The draft CDP will identify the settlements where such plans are required and will prioritise their preparation based on strategic importance, growth pressures, and infrastructure needs. The Drogheda Joint Urban Area Plan and Local Transport Plan remains a key priority, and the Council will continue to collaborate with Louth County Council, EMRA, and the NTA to advance this work.

6. Economic Development & Employment

The Council will prepare a robust, evidence-based economic strategy that reflects Meath's strengths, emerging economic trends, and national climate objectives. The strategy will identify opportunities for employment growth in key towns and strategic locations, while supporting the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy. Employment zoning will be reviewed to ensure that it is strategically located, appropriately serviced, and aligned with transport accessibility. The Council will apply the OPR's Practice Note PN04 to assess existing and proposed employment lands, ensuring that zoning decisions are justified, deliverable, and consistent with compact growth principles. The retail strategy

will be updated to reflect the RSES retail hierarchy and to support vibrant, sustainable town centres and will have regard to the national Retail Planning Guidelines.

7. Transport

The Council supports the national and regional objectives to reduce car dependency and promote sustainable mobility. The CDP will integrate land use and transport planning to support modal shift, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve accessibility. Modal shift targets will be included, supported by implementation measures such as enhanced walking and cycling networks, improved public transport integration, and land use policies that prioritise development in accessible locations. The Council will protect the strategic function of national roads and will review employment zoning near national routes to ensure that land use decisions do not undermine transport investment. DMURS principles will continue to guide the design of streets and public spaces.

8. Infrastructure

The Council recognises the importance of the availability of high-quality physical infrastructure in supporting sustainable development. The CDP will identify key infrastructure priorities and will work closely with Uisce Éireann to address water and wastewater constraints, particularly in Maynooth and Dunboyne. The Council will promote the widespread use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in line with RSES objectives and will ensure that surface water management is integrated into land use planning and development design. The Council will also continue to engage with all other relevant infrastructure providers.

9. Rural Development

The Council acknowledges the diverse functions of rural areas in Meath and will develop a rural strategy that supports rural communities while protecting the open countryside from urban-generated housing pressures. Policies will focus on revitalising and regenerating rural towns and villages, promoting serviced sites, and facilitating housing within existing settlement footprints. This approach will provide viable alternatives to one-off housing and will support the delivery of compact, sustainable rural settlements. The strategy will align with NPOs 24, 26, 27, 28, and 29 and will support the long-term vitality of rural communities. One-off rural housing will continue to be supported where there is a demonstrated social and economic need.

10. Flood Risk Assessment

The Council will prepare a comprehensive Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with national guidelines and will work closely with the OPW to ensure that zoning decisions are informed by up-to-date flood risk information. Flood mapping will be integrated with zoning maps to ensure transparency and to support robust

decision-making. The Council will ensure that zoning and development policies support, rather than impede, flood relief schemes and climate adaptation measures.

11. Climate Action & Energy

The Council will embed climate action across the CDP in line with section 10(2)(n) of the Act. Informed by the Meath Climate action Plan, the plan will support the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient county through compact growth, sustainable mobility, renewable energy development, and climate adaptation measures. The Council will plan for renewable energy capacity allocations arising from the RSES review and will strengthen policies to support wind, solar, and other low-carbon energy sources. Coastal change and climate adaptation considerations will be integrated into relevant policies, consistent with NPOs 53 and 54.

12. Implementation & Monitoring

The Council recognises the importance of monitoring and will develop a comprehensive monitoring framework aligned with NPOs 105–108 and the forthcoming OPR Practice Note PN06. The framework will include measurable indicators, clear reporting mechanisms, and digital tools to track compact growth, housing delivery, infrastructure progress, and climate action. This approach will support transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous improvement throughout the plan period.

Part 2

EASTERN AND MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (EMRA)

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-47: Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
Summary of Submission:

1.0 Overall Context

The submission by the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and sets out observations and recommendations to ensure the Development Plan is materially consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region and relevant national policy.

The submission outlines the statutory role of EMRA within the planning hierarchy and notes recent legislative changes arising from the Planning and Development Act 2024, including new provisions governing Development Plans and the requirement for regional oversight to ensure consistency with the RSES. It is stated that the Development Plan must align with Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework (NPF), the National Development Plan and other national and regional strategies.

2.0 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The RSES frames growth around three cross cutting principles (Healthy Placemaking, Climate Action, Economic Opportunity) and 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs). It synchronises with the NPF/Project Ireland 2040, coupling growth with targeted infrastructure investment. Settlement policy (from Dublin City Region and Growth Centres through to Key Towns, Self Sustaining Towns and Rural Places) is the backbone for how population, housing, employment, services and transport are to be distributed and phased.

3.0 Legislative Context

On 22 September 2025, Meath County Council notified the Regional Assembly of its intention to review and prepare a new County Development Plan under Section 11(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Act requires the CDP to be consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), ensuring alignment between local, regional, and national planning policy.

Under Section 54(8) of the Planning and Development Act 2024, the Regional Assembly must submit a report to the Planning Authority outlining:

1. Matters to be considered in preparing the draft plan.
2. Recommendations to ensure the draft plan is materially consistent with the RSES.

Additionally, Section 30 of the 2024 Act requires the Regional Assembly to commence a review of the RSES within six months of 2 October 2025 and prepare a new RSES in line

with updated national policies, including Project Ireland 2040, NPF 2025, NMPF 2021, and NDP 2025.

4.0 Submission

4.1 Ensuring Consistency with the RSES – Key Areas

Notwithstanding the requirement of the Planning Authority to ensure, when making the CDP, that the Plan in its entirety is consistent with the RSES, the following are key areas that the Assembly would like to bring attention to in order to inform the preparation of the Meath CDP 2027-2033. Furthermore, the submission states that the Council should be aware of Section 29 of the Planning and Development Act, 2024, as amended, which sets out the matters for which the RSES is required to make provision and with which the CDP will be required to be materially consistent.

- **Vision (4.1.1):** CDP vision should explicitly reference RSES RSOs and NPF NSOs which are important for future funding eligibility.
- Spatial Alignment (4.1.2): Apply the RSES settlement hierarchy, including recognition of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre and Navan as a Key Town, and the importance of the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC).
- **Growth Strategy (4.1.3):** Use RSES Growth Enablers mapped to Functional Urban Areas (Dublin Metropolitan Area, Core Region, Gateway Region), and DBEC/Eastern Corridor enablers relevant to Meath.
- **Sustainable Compact Growth (4.1.4):** Meet or exceed 30% compact growth inside existing footprints; identify regeneration lands; assemble a brownfield database; practice active land management; and embed TOD principles alongside the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022–2042 (GDATS) and the All Island Strategic Rail Review 2024.
- **Settlement Strategy (4.1.5):** Use RSES typologies; coordinate growth with enabling infrastructure; consider the Asset Based Approach for lower-tier settlements; leverage EMRA's 15 Minute City/10 Minute Town implementation pathway.
- **MASP (4.1.6):** For the Dublin Metropolitan Area extents in Meath (Clonee, Dunboyne; Maynooth/Kilcock environs), phase compact growth with enabling public transport and active travel, consistent with GDATS and RSES RPOs.

4.2 Issues Paper Themes

- **Core Strategy (4.2.1):** Should be grounded in evidence; must set population/household projections, residential/mixed use land quantum, HNDA update required, and align with NPF housing growth requirements (Meath 2,942 dwellings p.a. to 2034).

- **Settlement & Housing (4.2.2):** Reinforce hierarchy; focus on healthy placemaking, infill/brownfield and services proximity.
- **Employment & Economy (4.2.3):** Consolidate Navan as the County's employment anchor, Drogheda as regional engine; convert Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) connectivity into jobs; address outbound commuting; support clusters (e.g., Boyne Valley Food Hub).
- **Transport & Movement (4.2.4):** Prioritise walking/cycling/public transport; embrace TOD; plan for rail opportunities (Navan, DART+ corridors); conduct permeability audits; link active travel with schools and Public Transport nodes.
- **Infrastructure & Utilities (4.2.5):** Plan led infrastructure sequencing; embed resilience (flood, energy, digital, water/wastewater); embedding spatial alignment in infrastructure decision-making and adopting a multi-criteria, spatially aware prioritisation framework
- **Community Services (4.2.6):** Healthy, inclusive communities through access to childcare, education, healthcare, arts/culture aligned to Healthy Placemaking RPOs.
- **Rural Development (4.2.7):** Sustain rural vitality; diversify rural economy (digital, agri food innovation, green economy); connect smaller towns/villages.
- **Cultural & Natural Heritage (4.2.8):** Protect/restore biodiversity, develop ecological networks, integrate green infrastructure, promote heritage led urban regeneration and greenways.
- **Climate Change (4.2.9):** Develop an integrated climate policy to address the need for decarbonisation of the transport, built environment and energy sectors; plan for regional onshore wind/solar allocations; align with Climate Action Plan and RSES Climate Strategy; use GHG impact tools.

4.3 SEA, AA and SFRA

EMRA supports strong environmental assessment (SEA, AA, SFRA) with robust climate testing of spatial/transport scenarios, engaging early with statutory bodies, and using NTA modelling plus tools like QGasSP.

The Regional Assembly advises that Meath County Council pays particular attention to the following issues in the preparation of the draft CDP in order to ensure consistency with the RSES, and any future RSES that may be adopted during the CDP review process, and makes the following recommendations:

Recommendations

1. **Ensure CDP aligns with RSES and MASP:** All policies must be consistent with regional and national frameworks.
2. **Follow new legislative requirements:** Demonstrate compliance with the Planning and Development Act and Project Ireland 2040.

3. **Integrate transport and settlement policies:** Apply Transport-Oriented Development (TOD), support rail projects, and coordinate with NTA/TII.
4. **Settlement hierarchy review:** If revisited, use the Asset-Based Approach from RSES for lower-tier settlements.
5. **Protect cultural and natural heritage:** Align with NPF biodiversity objectives and upcoming Nature Restoration Plan.
6. **Embed climate action:** Ensure CDP reflects RSES Climate Strategy, Climate Action Plan, and Meath CAP 2024–2029.
7. **Plan for renewable energy:** Include policies to meet regional targets for wind and solar energy.
8. **Environmental assessments:** Conduct SEA, AA, and SFRA early and robustly, including climate impact analysis.

The following are observations by the Regional Assembly that should be taken into consideration in the preparation of the County Development Plan.

Observations

1. **Update Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA):** Use national tool to forecast housing needs by tenure.
2. **Use Regional Development Monitor (RDM):** For evidence-based planning and monitoring.
3. **Apply 15-Minute City principles:** Promote integrated land use planning for services and amenities.
4. **Leverage Sustainable Mobility Academy:** For active travel and sustainable transport best practices.
5. **Consider EMRA's infrastructure delivery guidance:** Adopt spatially aligned prioritisation for capital projects.
6. **Support rural innovation (ORIGINN project):** Encourage agri-food, digital hubs, and green economy initiatives.
7. **Integrate green infrastructure and ecosystem services**: Use EMRA resources for mapping and policy.
8. **Use GHG impact tools (QGasSP):** Quantify climate impacts of spatial scenarios and integrate into SEA.

Chief Executive Response

1.0 Overall Context

Meath County Council acknowledges EMRA's statutory role and the requirement for material consistency with the RSES. The CDP will be prepared in full compliance with the Planning and Development Act 2000. A dedicated compliance statement/matrix will be included in the draft CDP to demonstrate alignment with regional and national policy

objectives. Regular engagement with EMRA will continue throughout the plan-making process.

2.0 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The CDP will embed the three key principles (Healthy Placemaking, Climate Action, and Economic Opportunity) into all policy areas. The 16 RSOs will be cross-referenced in the Core Strategy and thematic chapters. Settlement policies will reflect the RSES hierarchy, ensuring balanced growth and infrastructure delivery. Monitoring indicators will be developed to track progress against RSES objectives.

3. Legislative Context

The CDP review will fully comply with the Planning and Development Act. A legislative compliance statement will be prepared and published as part of the plan documentation. The CDP will remain adaptable to any updates arising from EMRA's review of the RSES during the plan-making timeline.

4.0 Submission

- **Vision:** The CDP vision will explicitly reference RSOs and NSOs to ensure strategic alignment and eligibility for future funding streams.
- **Spatial Alignment:** Drogheda will be designated as a Regional Growth Centre and Navan as a Key Town in compliance with the RSES. The regional importance of the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor will be integrated into economic and transport strategies of the Plan.
- **Growth Strategy:** Growth Enablers and Functional Urban Area priorities detailed in Section 3.2 of the RSES will be considered and will inform the Core Strategy and zoning approach.
- **Compact Growth:** The CDP will target at least 30% of new homes within existing footprints, prioritise brownfield and infill development, and apply TOD principles. A brownfield site register will be developed, informed by the RZLT and Derelict Sites Register.
- **Settlement Strategy:** The Asset-Based Approach will be considered for lower-tier settlements to ensure sustainable growth.
- **MASP:** Development in Clonee, Dunboyne, and Maynooth/Kilcock environs will be phased with enabling infrastructure and active travel measures, consistent with Greater Dublin Area Transport Study.

4.2 Issues Paper Themes

- **Core Strategy:** The CDP will include an updated HNDA and incorporate the revised NPF housing targets (2,942 units annually to 2034). A housing delivery roadmap will be prepared.

- **Settlement & Housing:** The Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, prioritising the consolidation of existing urban areas and the efficient use of serviced lands in order to support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl.
- **Employment & Economy:** Navan will be strengthened as the primary employment hub; Drogheda's regional role will be supported through cross-boundary coordination.
- **Transport & Movement:** TOD principles and active travel will be embedded in the Draft Plan. Local Transport Plans will be prepared for Drogheda, Ashbourne, and Navan in accordance with RPO 8.6 of the RSES. The Navan and Drogheda LTP's have already commenced preparation. Rail projects will be prioritised and the strategic function of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor as a driver for regional economic development within the Region is promoted in the RSES and will be strongly emphasised in the CDP.
- **Infrastructure & Utilities:** It is recognised that the CDP must put in place a framework that promotes and provides high quality physical infrastructure to allow development to progress in a sustainable manner. The availability of infrastructure such as water, wastewater, surface water drainage, energy, and telecommunications networks will play a key role in securing economic investment, delivering homes and community facilities. The Council will continue to engage with all relevant infrastructure providers in this regard.
- **Community Services:** Policies will be included which promote inclusive, healthy communities with improved access to childcare, education, and healthcare. A Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure, and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.
- **Rural Development:** The draft Plan will promote rural places for new economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity and indigenous innovation and enterprise as well as more traditional natural and resource assets (e.g. food energy, tourism), underpinned by a quality of life offering. Support for rural innovation and connectivity will be included, leveraging digital hubs and agri-food initiatives.
- **Cultural & Natural Heritage:** Biodiversity protection and green infrastructure will be integrated into development standards. The Plan will contain a dedicated chapter to Cultural and Natural Heritage specifying a range of policies and objectives to protect and safeguard the unique heritage of the county.
- **Climate Change:** The Council notes the requirement for the Plan to support the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient county through integrated land-use and transport planning, compact growth, and reduced reliance on private car

use, in line with Regional Strategic Outcomes relating to climate action. The submission's references to decarbonisation of the built environment and transport sectors, the facilitation of renewable energy infrastructure in accordance with national and regional targets, and the use of evidence-based tools to assess greenhouse gas impacts of spatial planning scenarios are noted. These matters will inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033

4.3 SEA, AA and SFRA

The CDP will incorporate robust SEA, AA, and SFRA processes, including climate impact assessments. Engagement with statutory bodies (EPA, NPWS, OPW, Uisce Éireann) has commenced and will continue be prioritised to ensure compliance and reduce delays.

1. **Alignment with RSES and MASP:** The Planning Authority will ensure, when making the County Development Plan, that it is materially consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region (RSES) and any future RSES that may be adopted during the CDP review process. A conformity statement will be included in the CDP to demonstrate compliance.
2. **Legislative Compliance:** The Development Plan will be prepared in accordance with the existing and any new legislative requirements and will be consistent with Project Ireland 2040 and other national policies. A compliance statement detailing how the CDP complies with all relevant legislation and guidelines will be published alongside the draft plan.
3. **Transport Integration:** The Council will ensure that transport and settlement policies are aligned with the Transport Strategy and MASP as set out in the RSES and considers strategic investment priorities including additional public-transport infrastructure and the recommendations in the All-Island Strategic Rail Review 2024. The Plan will support integrated land use and transportation planning objectives including the application of Transport Orientated Development (TOD) principles and the Council will coordinate with nearby adjoining authorities, EMRA, the NTA and TII to ensure consistent regional frameworks.
4. **Settlement Hierarchy:** Section 3.1 *Developing a Growth Strategy for the Region* and Appendix A of the RSES which sets out *The Asset-Based Approach* will be considered and guide any revisions to settlement hierarchy.
5. **Cultural & Natural Heritage:** The Council will ensure that the CDP is prepared in full alignment with relevant national planning policies and measures pertaining to biodiversity and natural heritage including the National Planning Framework, National Biodiversity Action Plan and the Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030.

6. **Climate Action:** The Planning Authority will ensure, when making the County Development Plan, that the cross-cutting climate action aspects presented are consistent with the RSES Climate Action Strategy, the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act, the National Climate Action Plan and the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. A Climate Action chapter will set measurable targets aligned with Meath CAP.
7. **Renewable Energy:** The Planning Authority will ensure, when making the County Development Plan, that the renewable energy aspects presented take account of and are consistent with the RSES Climate Action Strategy, the National Climate Action Plan and the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. The Planning Authority are aware that each Regional Assembly will prepare a Regional Renewable Electricity Strategy (RRES), whereby additional detail will be outlined on how the regional renewable electricity capacity allocations for the region can be best achieved in a consistent and sustainable manner, including the identification of specific targets for each of the constituent local authorities. The Council will engage with EMRA regarding the specific requirements in this regard.
8. **Environmental Assessments:** The Council will prepare a comprehensive Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with national guidelines and will work closely with the OPW to ensure that zoning decisions are informed by up-to-date flood risk information. A comprehensive SEA and AA Report will also be prepared and the Council will work closely with all relevant stakeholders and bodies in the preparation of same.

Response to Observations

1. **HNDA:** The Planning Authority is aware of its obligation under the NPF to prepare/update a Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) to align with updated data sources, in order to support the preparation of housing strategies and all related housing policy outputs, including the County Development Plan. Significant background work has already commenced in this regard and will be published as part of the evidence base.
2. **RDM:** The Council utilises on a regular basis and highly commends the Regional Development Monitor (RDM). Data from the RDM will be utilised to inform policy formation in the County Development Plan. The Planning Authority also has a detailed and robust CDP Monitoring database and dashboard which was developed as per the Annual Core Strategy and Commercial Monitoring requirements of the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2022. This data will ensure that policy is fully informed and based on up-to-date evidence.

3. **15-Minute City:** The Council commends the Assembly on producing the *15-Minute City Implementation Pathway* report and will consider the principles and concepts detailed in same in developing urban design policies and the land-use zoning approach in the County Development Plan.
4. **Sustainable Mobility Academy:** The Council welcomes and notes the Sustainable Mobility Academy. Best practices will inform active travel and public transport policies.
5. **Infrastructure Delivery Guidance:** The Council notes the Assembly submission to the Public Consultation on *Accelerating Infrastructure Delivery* by the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation which identifies barriers to infrastructure delivery in the context of the RSES and proposes a range of solutions to address those barriers. Significant work to identify barriers to development has already commenced by the Council at a local level in the preparation of a Settlement Capacity Audit which identifies physical servicing infrastructure capacity and shortfalls across the county. The Council has been engaging with the Housing Activation Office, Uisce Eireann, ESB as well as other infrastructure providers to address such barriers. A Social Infrastructure Audit will also inform the County Development Plan and will identify the social infrastructure requirements for the lifetime of the CDP.
6. **Rural Innovation:** The Council note the *Interreg Europe ORIGINN* project which is working to promote the economic and social transformation of rural areas through innovation, with a particular focus on digitalisation, green economy, industrial sustainability, social innovation, and soft innovation in the agri-food sector. ORIGINN project insights will help inform rural development objectives.
7. **Green Infrastructure:** The Council notes the range of resources developed by the Assembly to support the implementation of RSES objectives for ecosystem services and green infrastructure. EMRA resources will be used by the Council to map ecological networks and integrate GI into zoning.
8. **GHG Impact Tools:** The Council notes the *ESPON QGasSP Targeted Analysis Project* and the resulting *Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment Tool* and case study pilots, including the Ireland Case Study Pilot which focused on Co. Meath which will assist with the climate assessment in the SEA.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-136: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Summary of Submission:

The submission provides key recommendations to assist the Planning Authority in meeting its obligations in relation to nature conservation, European Sites, biodiversity and environmental protection in the process of reviewing and preparing the County Development Plan.

Key Recommendations

1. Biodiversity & Legislative Compliance

Embed biodiversity in the CDP's core policies to create healthy, sustainable communities.

Comply with EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), and Wildlife Act 1972–2023.

Integrate Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA), and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) into the plan-making to ensure there is no deterioration of habitats.

Apply the precautionary principle to prevent habitat deterioration and species decline.

2. National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP)

Implement and monitor actions from the NBAP 2023–2030.

Adopt a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to biodiversity.

Include objectives for biodiversity data sharing with the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

3. Climate Change & Green Infrastructure

Incorporate Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) strategies which use nature as a defence against climate impacts.

Align with Meath Climate Change Action Plan 2024–2029 and National Peatlands Strategy.

Develop Green Infrastructure (GI) strategies across local authority boundaries.

Retain hedgerows, riparian zones, and natural features during development to prevent loss of flora and fauna.

4. Threats & Mitigation

Water Quality: Protect the Boyne-Blackwater SAC/SPA and other rivers; discourage culverting of water courses and where necessary, to use ecologically friendly box culverts; promote riparian setbacks.

Invasive Species: Include measures to control Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, Giant Hogweed which occur along watercourses.

Nitrogen Deposition: Assessment of the impacts on Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence; Consideration should also be given to monitoring nitrogen deposition in the Strategic Environmental Assessment**.**

Light Pollution: Consider the inclusion of a Light Pollution Policy within the Development Plan. This should include identifying existing dark sky areas which need protecting and including Street Lighting Policy and Development Lighting Policies. The colour of the spectrum produced by LED installations should be considered when specifying and installing exterior lighting. In keeping with Dark Sky Ireland Lighting Recommendations, the Submission suggests that, generally, LED luminaires with warmer colours (i.e., CCT values at or below 2700K) be specified for future installations to avoid environmental impacts associated with blue-rich LED light.

It is recommended that before any lighting proposals in such situations are permitted, their potential impacts on bat species should be assessed.

Greenways: The submission recommends that proposals are subject to route/site selection processes to ensure that impacts to biodiversity and nature conservation interests are avoided. The submission notes the need to apply the precautionary principle when screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) and/or undertaking AA for greenways. Two greenways proposed for County Meath in particular, the Boyne Greenway and the East Coast Greenway, have the potential to have adverse effects on flora, fauna and ecologically significant habitats.

Coastal Sites: Manage increased recreational pressure on SACs/SPAs near Bettystown, Laytown, Mornington. The submission outlines provision will also have to be made for the management of the coastal SACs and SPAs by the Council, in as far it is its

responsibility, to mitigate the negative impacts on them of their increased use for recreation.

5. Monitoring & Reporting

The submission advises that particular attention should be paid to the requirements of Article 10 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC, whereby Member States are required to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of Development Plans. The submission would welcome a clear and specific Monitoring Plan to be included with the Strategic Environmental Report that would outline how it is proposed to record the impacts of Plan implementation on biodiversity, both in terms of biodiversity loss and biodiversity enhancement during the lifetime of the CDP.

The submission encourages the publication of Strategic Environmental Reports, and other biodiversity plans or reports (such as the results of ecological surveys) on the Council's website.

Chief Executive Response

The Council acknowledges the submission received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The issues raised in the submission, including nitrogen deposition, coastal site management, green infrastructure, invasive species control, monitoring and reporting under Strategic Environmental Assessment, and lighting impacts on biodiversity, are noted and will be duly considered in the preparation of the Draft Plan.

These matters are also relevant to climate change mitigation and adaptation and align with the objectives of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029, particularly in relation to ecosystem resilience, nature-based solutions, climate adaptation, and the protection of sensitive environments. Such considerations will inform the evidence-based preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 and will be addressed through the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, and other relevant statutory processes.

Biodiversity protection and green infrastructure will be integrated into development standards. The Plan will contain a dedicated chapter to Cultural and Natural Heritage specifying a range of policies and objectives to protect and safeguard the unique heritage of the county. The Council will ensure that the Draft Plan is prepared in full alignment with relevant national planning policies and measures pertaining to biodiversity and natural heritage including the National Planning Framework, National Biodiversity Action Plan and the recently adopted Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030. A Climate Action chapter will also set measurable targets aligned with Meath CAP 2024-2029.

Part 2

NATIONAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY (NTA)

MH-C203-SIP-139-National Transport Authority (NTA)

Summary of Submission:

The NTA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Strategic Issues Paper and bases its submission on the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022–2042. The aim is to ensure integration of land use and transport planning to achieve compact, sustainable growth. The NTA urges Meath County Council to embed sustainable transport principles in the Development Plan, prioritising compact growth, public transport integration, and active travel infrastructure.

Key Recommendations

1. Guiding Principles

- Prioritise development within or adjacent to existing urban areas over remote locations.
- Sequential residential development: focus on areas most accessible by walking, cycling, and public transport.
- Larger trip-intensive developments (offices, retail) should be in central urban locations.
- Promote walking, cycling, and public transport through permeable layouts and retrofitting where possible.
- Apply maximum parking standards for non-residential developments and consider area-wide caps in high-intensity zones.
- Require travel plans for major employment sites and schools.

2. Inter-Settlement Movement

- Conduct an assessment of travel patterns between settlements and to Dublin to inform land use and transport policies.

3. Local Transport Plans (LTPs)

- Prepare LTPs for higher-order settlements using NTA/TII Area-Based Transport Assessment guidance.
- LTPs should integrate land use and transport, assess current conditions, and plan for efficient movement of people and goods.

4. Bus Service Provision

- Recognise and support bus networks, including Connecting Ireland.
- Ensure public transport infrastructure (bus stops, layover facilities) is considered in all major developments and urban and public realm plans.

5. Rural Transport

- Expand Local Link Rural Transport Programme to improve connectivity and reduce social exclusion.
- Integrate rural transport with other services (HSE, school transport).

6. Navan Rail Line

- Seeks support for the proposed Navan Rail Line study, its recommendations & completion. The NTA looks forward to further liaison with Meath County Council as the project proceeds through the planning and design phases and future allied development Transit-Oriented Development near stations.
- Recommends that policies and objectives in support of rail-focused development consolidation should be included in the Development Plan.

7. Strategic Road Network

- Protect the strategic function of national roads per Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012) and maintaining the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads network including planning for future capacity enhancements.

8. Parking Standards

- Application of maximum car parking standards for non-residential land uses should be used. The NTA contends in locations where the highest intensity of development occurs, an approach that caps car parking on an area-wide basis should be applied.
- The Development Plan should include specific policies on cycle parking in the urban realm and in private developments. In this regard, the NTA recommends the *Standards for Cycle Parking and Associated Cycling Facilities for New Developments* document issued by Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

9. Accessibility

- Promote universal design in transport and urban planning to improve social inclusion and safety. Making the external built environment accessible to all can facilitate and promote the greater use of public transport, walking and cycling. The

use of universal design in the external built environment can benefit all within society including those with specific mobility issues and requirements.

10. Guidance Documents

- Use NTA resources such as Cycle Design Manual, Permeability Guide, Workplace Travel Plans, and Area-Based Transport Assessment.

11. Development Plan Indicators

It is recommended that the Development Plan includes sustainable transport indicators, including modal share, for the purpose of monitoring the efficacy of policies and development objectives against a range of sustainable development indicators.

Chief Executive Response

1. Guiding Principles

Meath County Council (MCC) has a key role to play in the implementation and facilitation of sustainable transportation through both its infrastructure and land use policies. At a strategic level, MCC continues to integrate land use and transportation to achieve sustainable development through the progression of a number of Local Area Plans, Masterplans and Public Realm Plans in line with National and Regional Policy objectives including the NTA's GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042. In this regard, higher density development is taking place within plan frameworks along existing transport corridors. Current land use policy has also been developed in anticipation of planned strategic public transport investments that will directly benefit the County.

Through MCC's role in Development Management, permeability is a key objective in all new developments and in particular residential development, maximizing the ability of future residents to avail of public transport and active modes of travel. Filtered permeability is deployed on a regular basis as standard practice within all new developments. MCC's Active Travel Department is focused on providing key connections through existing developments to improve permeability for walking, cycling and access to public transport. Significant active travel measures have transformed Ashbourne with the development of a cycle network along the R135 in Ashbourne connecting the Pilo Roundabout to the Ninemile Stone Roundabout. The works introduced cycle lanes in both directions and increased the existing footpath widths on both sides of the road, making it more pedestrian and cyclists friendly. In addition to Ashbourne, initiatives such as Martha's Bridge to Circular Road Cycle and Pedestrian Scheme, funded by NTA and is part of the Navan Cycle Network. This project is progressing with the following works completed to date, a new concrete footpath has been constructed from the Circular Road Junction to the Academy Street Junction on the eastern side of the R147, installation of ducting, public lighting columns and cabling: and, excavation of the existing footpath

between the Academy Street Junction and the Martha's Bridge Junction on the eastern side of the R147 is ongoing. The Draft Plan will continue to support these policies and implement these measures throughout the course of the CDP.

2. Movement at Inter-Settlement Level

It is a strategic aim of the current Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduces the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. The Draft Plan will continue to support and encourage sustainable and compact forms of development which reduces the need to travel for employment and services. Growth will be prioritised in areas that are served by public transport in order to generate and reinforce sustainable patterns of development in the County that reduces the need to travel by car.

As part of the preparation of the Draft Plan, MCC have carried out a detailed planning history assessment on each of the 38 settlements in the County. This assessment illustrates where active development is occurring in the County. In addition, MCC have prepared a Settlement Capacity Audit that assesses whether a town or area has enough available infrastructure and services to support planned future development. This involves auditing the development capacity of lands zoned/unzoned for different uses, such as residential, employment, or mixed-use, and evaluating them against criteria such as access to infrastructure, and services like water, transport, and social infrastructure. The audit helps inform zoning decisions and ensures that development is sustainable and coordinated with infrastructure planning.

When assessing travel patterns, the Council will rely on census data of County Meath, recent internal assessments carried out and the National Household Travel Survey Research Report 2023 to inform land use and transport policies

3. Movement at Settlement Level – Local Transport Plans (LTP)

MCC currently requires developments for industrial, office, warehousing, business parks and new schools to undertake mobility management plans, supported by current plan objectives. It is also currently an objective of MCC to prepare and commence implementation of Local Transport Plans, in conjunction with the NTA and relevant stakeholders, for Drogheda (in conjunction with Louth County Council as part of the Joint Urban Plan, currently underway), Ashbourne, Navan, Ratoath and other settlements where Local Area Plans are undertaken, having regard to the Area Based Transport Assessment Guidance Notes. As this recommendation is already being addressed, the Draft Plan will continue to underpin these requirements through supportive policy and objectives.

4. Planning for Bus Service Provision

There have been significant improvements to the quality and frequency of bus services to and from the urban centres of the County to Dublin and to other regional centres. The

current County Development Plan contains policies and objectives on supporting and developing public transport routes throughout the county through collaboration with NTA (MOV POL 8). The significant investment in infrastructural projects that have taken place to date and that are planned for the county are all very welcome and add to the attractiveness of Meath as a place in which to live, work, do business and recreate. It is also currently an objective of the Plan to ensure that new developments in Regional Growth Centres, Key Towns, Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns are laid out so as to facilitate the provision of local bus services and the provision of Park and Ride facilities as appropriate. The Draft Plan will continue to underpin these requirements through supportive policy and objectives.

5. Provision of Public Transport Services in Rural Areas

It is recognised that maximising accessibility to rural areas within the County through expansion of local link bus services is essential to addressing social exclusion, isolation and improving connectivity and mobility within rural areas. The Council are committed to working with public transport providers including the NTA in relation to the Local Link Rural Transport Programme and provision of the NTA's Connecting Irelands Mobility Plan to identify areas most in need. In this context, the Council will continue to engage with the NTA and other relevant transport providers relating to the provision of rural transport services.

6. Navan Rail Link

The comments made in relation to the proposed Navan Rail Line are very much welcomed and Meath County Council look forward to further liaising with NTA as the project proceeds through the planning and design phases. The Draft Plan will support the proposed Navan Rail Line Study and for the delivery of the Navan Railway Line. The Council recognises the importance of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in maximising the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure spaces in close proximity to high quality transport services. Two settlements have been identified as a strategic location for TOD, with sites in Drogheda and Dunboyne selected. The Draft Plan will include policies and objectives in support of rail-focused development consolidation.

7. Strategic Road Network

The protection of strategic transport corridors within the County is considered critical for the future prosperity of Meath as well as at a wider regional and national level. The current Plan includes objectives to protect the core strategic road network, and this policy approach will be carried through to the new Plan.

8. Parking Standards

Car parking and cycle parking standards were recently revised in the current plan under variation No. 3, in response to Section 28 guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2024. The

Draft Plan will continue to align with National and Regional policy on regards to parking standards.

9. Accessibility

Accessibility and access for all abilities is a key issue for County Meath in the provision of new infrastructure. MCC will continue to work closely with the NTA, and other stakeholders as required to improve accessibility for all in the Draft Plan.

10. National Transport Authority Guidance Documents

In striving to encourage, facilitate and deliver sustainable transport provision, the Council regularly refers to the NTA documents as listed in the delivery of new infrastructure, forward planning and land use considerations as well as the Development Management function of the Council. The preparation of the Draft Plan will be informed by NTA guidance documents such as those listed. Meath's current cycling and walking infrastructure is guided by the National Cycle Manual and the GDA Cycle Network and will continue to be guided by these documents and any revision thereof under the new plan.

11.Development Plan Indicators – Mode Share

The Written Statements of all settlements in the current CDP includes a set of measurable and achievable targets for each settlement to track progress in achieving our climate change goals through the modal shift. These targets will be re-set and updated for the next CDP period.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-23: Office of Public Works
Summary of Submission:
The author of this submission, the Office of Public Works (OPW) wishes to address flooding and flood risk management, particularly in light of the National Planning Framework's (NPF) objectives. The goal is to promote sustainable development by ensuring that flood management informs land use planning. Two key principles are emphasised: The first, avoiding inappropriate development in flood-risk areas and the second, considering climate change impacts on flooding. The Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management provide a framework that outlines a three-stage Flood Risk Assessment process for planning authorities. The stages are: 1. Flood Risk Identification: Identify any potential flooding issues related to the proposed development sites.

2. Initial Flood Risk Assessment: Confirm potential flood sources, assess existing information, and create flood zone maps. Evaluate how proposed developments might affect flooding elsewhere and scope necessary detailed assessments.
3. Detailed Flood Risk Assessment: Conduct an in-depth review to create Flood Zone maps based on detailed analysis of flood risks and to explore potential mitigation measures.

When preparing the Draft Development Plan, the OPW emphasises following specific guidelines regarding planning principles, the sequential approach to development, and conducting a 'Justification Test' for land with moderate or high flooding risks. Clear commitments to flood risk management and review by experts on flood risk assessments are recommended.

The sequential approach prioritises selecting development sites in low flood risk zones. If no suitable sites are available, higher-risk areas can be considered. Flood zone maps must clearly show land use zonings with flood zones. The Justification Test dictates that highly vulnerable developments should not occur in high-risk zones unless risks are carefully managed. Meath County Council (MCC) should outline necessary measures and address any residual risks associated with proposed developments. Inappropriate developments not meeting the Justification Test should not be considered.

The OPW, along with Meath (MCC) and other councils, have created Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) and flood maps through the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment & Management Programme (CFRAM Programme). These FRMPs are part of the National Development Plan under Project Ireland 2040 and aim to manage flood risks in several areas, including Ashbourne and Drogheda. MCC is advised to consider ongoing flood relief projects in its Development Plan for 2027-2033, ensuring that zoning and development support these efforts. The OPW is responsible for maintaining completed flood relief schemes, which should be protected in the Development Plan. Additionally, planning authorities are encouraged to use the flood maps produced in this program for better planning and development decisions. These maps also incorporate future climate change impacts and are accessible on the OPW portal for reference.

The flood mapping process under the National CFRAM Programme may need updates due to changes in physical conditions that impact watercourses and floodplains. Some areas may have insufficient past flood event records to properly calibrate the models, and new evidence could suggest larger or smaller flood extents than currently shown. Detailed local assessments may exist that provide better flood risk evaluations compared to the national maps. The Office of Public Works (OPW) regularly reviews and updates these maps, particularly in Ashbourne, Clonee, Dunboyne, and Ratoath, which are currently under review.

The National Indicative Flood Mapping was created to help identify areas at risk of

flooding nationally, following the European Union (EU) 'Floods' Directive. These indicative maps are not entirely accurate at a local level and should not solely define the Flood Zones or inform planning policy. The National Indicative Fluvial Mapping (NIFM) project offers flood hazard information for watercourses larger than 5km², based on improved analysis, but does not incorporate channel survey data or consider flood defences. The OPW contends that Planning Authorities must conduct their own assessments for smaller catchments.

Updated coastal flood hazard maps, based on new data, have replaced older maps from the 2012 PFRA. The National Coastal Flood Hazard Mapping (NCFHM) 2021 project provides these new estimates for flood extent and depth across various scenarios, ignoring existing flood protections. Further user guidance and details on these mapping projects can be found online the OPW website.

Geological Survey Ireland created groundwater flood maps during the 2016-2019 GWFlood Project. The Groundwater Flood Probability Maps focus on potential flooding in limestone areas, especially turloughs, while the Historic Groundwater Flood Map is based on the significant winter 2015/2016 flood. The Pluvial Flood Mapping will not be updated as national-scale assessments are deemed unreliable; local assessments are preferred. The OPW contends that Local Authorities should consider past flood events in planning decisions.

It is noted that the potential impacts of climate change on planning and development, highlighting the need to consider increased rainfall, flooding, and rising sea levels for future planning. It emphasises the importance of assessing flood risk in planning areas, recommending that authorities avoid development in flood-prone regions, provide space for flood defences, and set minimum floor levels.

This submission also addresses coastal change, urging planning authorities to recognise areas at risk of erosion due to climate change factors like sea level rise and increased storms. A government report has led to the establishment of a group to manage coastal change. Local Authorities should identify vulnerable coastlines, consider erosion studies, and create policies to limit development in these areas to prevent increased risks.

The OPW recommends including nature-based solutions in development plans to reduce water run-off and enhance water quality and biodiversity. This applies to both existing and new development by incorporating Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). Meath County Council (MCC) should reference specific guidance documents for implementation. The guidelines also suggest that Strategic Flood Risk Assessments outline suitable SuDS techniques for key sites while promoting integrated solutions over individual ones. The OPW offers flood mapping resources and datasets for planning and risk management, accessible via their flood information portal or the National Open Data

Portal. The author of this submission notes that users can request specific datasets by completing a Data Request Form and contacting the OPW for further assistance.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council welcomes the submission received from the Office of Public Works. Meath County Council (MCC) has a key role to play in the implementation and facilitation of flood mitigation measures through both its infrastructure and land use policies. Meath County Council in partnership with the OPW wishes to continue to take a proactive approach towards flooding mitigation. The planning Authority will continue to rely upon flood risk maps that identify any potential flood issues related to a proposal for development.

The information and data provided by the OPW, such as the flooding maps, Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment & Management Programme (CFRAM Programme) and the Groundwater Flood Probability Maps (GFPM) will continue to form part of the Planning Authority's flood risk assessment that would Confirm potential flood sources, assess existing information, and create flood zone maps. This in turn will allow MCC to evaluate how proposed developments might affect flooding elsewhere and scope necessary detailed assessments.

Meath County Council as the Planning Authority will continue to take direction from the information and research provided by the OPW with regard to conducting in-depth reviews to create the various flood zone maps based on detailed analysis of flood risks and to explore potential mitigation measures.

These maps produced by the OPW will crucially inform land use planning in future and be used in for the formation of the next Meath County Development Plan.

In the context of climate change, the Council notes that projected increases in the frequency and intensity of rainfall events and associated flood risk will continue to inform flood risk management and land use planning over the lifetime of the next County Development Plan. The Draft Plan will be informed by climate adaptation principles, national climate policy and the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029, ensuring that flood risk assessments, mitigation measures and spatial planning decisions are robust, evidence-based and responsive to climate change projections.

Meath County Council also wishes to highlight that the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems is included as part of all new developments in County Meath, following on from the GDSDS the local authorities in the GDA introduced new policies in relation to surface water drainage. These provisions included a commitment to the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) in all new public and private developments; effective implementation of this policy will ensure that any future development does not increase flooding or pollution of water bodies. The use of SuDS is already incorporated as part of the development management section of the current County Development Plan.

Part 2

HERITAGE COUNCIL

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-26: The Heritage Council

Summary of Submission:

The Heritage Council submits that this is the optimal time to make a comprehensive submission on matters within its remit. The author's submission covers matters that both directly and indirectly impact on heritage. These will be divided along the following themes:

1. Strategic Planning, Climate Change and Heritage
2. Natural Heritage (inclusive of biodiversity, ecology, geology)
3. Archaeological and Cultural Heritage
4. Landscape, Public Rights of Way, Tree Preservation Orders
5. Architectural Heritage (including the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas).

The Heritage Council contends that effective management of heritage resources must be supported by strong policies and clear objectives in county development plans. These policies should be evidence-based to ensure their soundness. The Heritage Council emphasises that policies should set clear expectations for development management. While there can be aspirational objectives in the development plan, efforts like listing rights of way should ideally be completed during the plan-making process. Additionally, the Heritage Council suggests that plans should be accessible, concise, and include visual elements, such as zoning maps. These should accurately reflect land use designations after the plan's adoption.

Strategic Planning, Climate Change and Heritage

The Heritage Council identified the following relevant questions from the Issues Paper.

- Where do you think new housing should be located without contributing to urban sprawl and ensuring consolidated sustainable growth? (under 'Settlement and Housing')
- How should we ensure the protection of the countryside and the regeneration of our towns and villages while providing for sustainable rural housing? (under 'Settlement and Housing')
- What is needed to make your town and village a more desirable place in which to live under 'Settlement and Housing'?
- What policies should be introduced to further support town centre retail and commercial activities? (under 'Employment and Economy)
- How can the plan best promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport, and what improvements can be made? (under 'Transport and Movement')

- How can the Plan best address the challenges of climate change (under 'Climate Change')
- Where should renewable energy developments be located given the national targets in this sector? (under 'Infrastructure')

The Heritage Council considers that poor land use planning negatively affects natural and cultural heritage. Compact growth helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protects heritage by minimising land use. The Heritage Council supports the reuse of brownfield sites and designated and non-designated buildings for development. While it's unlikely to address all housing needs through brownfield sites, the plan should prioritise these before considering greenfield expansion. Efficient use of greenfield land, with necessary homes and transportation-friendly designs, is also important.

The Heritage Council contends that optimising land use supports climate action and biodiversity, and recognises climate change as a heritage issue. The Heritage Council asserts that the county development plan should integrate transport and land use, favouring developments near transport infrastructure and existing services. Development should avoid ecologically sensitive sites identified through environmental analysis. Preference should be given to existing brownfield sites within urban boundaries and around small rural areas.

The County Development Plan should promote the reuse of heritage buildings, enhance pedestrian-friendly spaces, and support high-quality designs for village and town living. Renewable energy sites should avoid sensitive environmental locations and preserve heritage assets while considering economic factors. Flood defences should be managed at a catchment level using nature-based solutions to mitigate risks while promoting biodiversity.

Placemaking, Design and Heritage

The Heritage Council contends that every county development plan should include clear design goals. Comments are provided on how natural and cultural heritage can shape place design. Recommended strategic objectives include protecting County Meath's heritage and creating sustainable communities with accessible development while avoiding sensitive environmental areas. The following two objectives are examples of how this can be framed.

Strategic Objective X.X - Protect and enhance the built and cultural heritage resource of Meath, ensuring that development proposals, both in the wider landscape and in settlements, are informed by the historic context. Heritage-led regeneration and placemaking will be promoted and supported

Strategic Objective X.X - Establish sustainable communities in a manner that consolidates development and amenities within walking and cycling distance, while ensuring that development avoids the most environmentally sensitive sites in the locality.

Renewables Directive III and areas suitable for renewables

The Heritage Council is aware of the changes from the Renewable Energy Directive 2023/2413 being implemented in Irish law, particularly regarding permit procedures that affect environmental and heritage considerations in planning applications. The directive introduces "Renewable Acceleration Areas," which will likely align with existing "Areas Suitable for Wind Energy." The Heritage Council insists that planning for these areas must consider heritage features and conduct a thorough environmental constraints analysis to find suitable sites while avoiding sensitive landscapes, Natura 2000 sites, and cultural heritage sites. The Heritage Council recommends publishing the constraints analysis with the draft plan, providing clear reasons for site selections.

Natural Heritage

Biodiversity policies in County Development Plans (CDPs) can be divided into site-based and non-site-based policies. Some sites are designated, while others may not be. Local Authorities should consider this division in their policies. They should also think about using "catch all" policies to cover multiple ecological features instead of listing each one individually, which may overlook important features. The Heritage Council recommends adding specific strategic objectives to the plans, such as the following.

Strategic Objective X.X – It is the objective of Meath County Council to conserve and restore the ecological network of Meath by protecting sites of local, national and international importance and ensuring that development proposals seek to retain natural features which are important for the biodiversity of the county.

The Heritage Council identifies that the EU Nature Restoration Law aims to restore at least 20% of EU land and sea areas by 2030, impacting county development plans. National Policy Objective 84 of the National Planning Framework (NPF) 2024 requires local authorities to support the National Nature Restoration Plan. Strategic objectives in county plans should focus on conserving ecosystems and protecting natural heritage sites. The National Nature Restoration Plan will identify ecological restoration locations which need to be included in county plans to prevent future development issues. Nature restoration projects must be scientifically grounded to ensure success and should include the following objective.

Policy Objective X - Proposals for nature restoration projects need to demonstrate that the project has been based on the best available scientific data and best practice.

The author of this submission, the Heritage Council, outlines that Section 50 (2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2024 states that strategies for biodiversity must align with the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP). It is advised to consult the NBAP 2024 and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), which should be included in the county development plan. The Heritage Council encourages identifying actions needing planning

support in LBAPs, with policy measures included in the county development plan, in coordination with the local authority's Biodiversity Officer.

The Heritage Council notes that Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) are important international designations under the Natura 2000 Network. Policies must specify when an appropriate assessment or screening opinion is needed. The Heritage Council found that many applications lack the required screening opinions. It's recommended that policies for SACs/SPAs include notifications of these requirements during pre-application discussions.

National designations include Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), proposed NHAs (pNHA), and National Nature Reserves (NNR). A separate policy should clarify the differences between European and national designations. The Heritage Council has noted confusion about assessment requirements. Ecological impact assessments are needed for NHA/pNHAs/NNRs, while SACs and SPAs need appropriate assessments (NIS). Policies should aim to prevent damage to these sites, avoid development within them, and require ecological assessments for proposals that may impact them.

The Development Plans - Guidelines for Local Authorities 2022 highlight the need to protect local biodiversity sites outside designated networks. National Policy Objective 84 supports the protection and restoration of biodiversity in land use plans, prioritising the retention of existing habitats. The Heritage Council will collaborate with local authorities to identify key ecological areas, recommending a policy to establish County Biodiversity Areas within the planning timeline using the following objective as an example.

Policy Objective X.X County Biodiversity Areas - It is the objective of Meath County Council to prevent both direct and indirect damage or deterioration of County Biodiversity Areas. Development proposals which may impact on these sites should be accompanied by an ecological assessment of the features for which the site has been identified as being of county importance.

The Heritage Council notes that some local authorities have plans for ecological restoration on public lands that support national goals. It contends that it is important to identify these sites and create policies that promote habitat improvement and protect future restoration efforts. The Heritage Council suggests using the term 'nature restoration site' for clarity.

Smaller ecological features, like hedgerows and ponds, connect habitats and support the ecological network. It's important to retain these features in site design. Suggested policies are recommended as follows.

Policy Objectives X.X Natural Features, site design, and infrastructure

It is the objective of Meath County to prevent the undue loss of natural features, such has hedgerows, treelines, smaller stands of trees, grass margins and boundary walls that provide habitats for species. The design approach to landscaping and open space in new

developments should retain natural features. How this has been achieved should be detailed in the drawings and design statements submitted with the application.

It is the objective of Meath County that any planting regime as part of site design and landscaping proposals is confined to native species and provenance. While maintenance regimes for hedgerows should be informed by the relevant national guidance e.g. National Biodiversity Data Centre guidelines on hedgerow planting

It is the objective of Meath County that all development proposals are designed with ecology in mind. Infrastructure including public lighting systems should be installed in a manner that prevents significant harm to species.

The Heritage Council states that aquatic environment is crucial for ecology, covering waterbodies, watercourses, and surrounding areas. Many important aquatic locations are protected, but not all fall under specific protections despite being part of broader regulations. The heritage Council considers it vital to recognise that water networks work as a whole, making it necessary for planning policies to safeguard against developments that could harm water quality and aquatic life.

Guidance from organisations like Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) and Local Authorities Water Programme emphasises the connection between surface water management and ecosystem health. For unprotected water bodies, careful management of development is required, focusing on maintaining the quality of pristine catchments. The Heritage Council suggests that County Meath aim to prevent the decline of biological status in waterbodies, requiring development proposals to follow related guidelines.

The Heritage Council notes that protected species may exist outside protected areas, using man-made structures and various habitats. Species specific surveys could be needed based on individual site conditions, and the species list may not be complete, but should include policies and objectives as the following.

Policy Objective X.X Species Specific Surveys - It is the objective of Meath County Council to ensure that applications that may impact on protected species/ species of conservation concern should be accompanied by a species-specific ecological survey, which can be included as part of general ecological assessments. The suitability of the receiving ecological environment to accommodate the following should be assessed e.g. Bat species, Swift and House Martin, Otter, Red Squirrel, Badger etc.

County Geological Sites (CGSs) are important geological features in each county that should be protected. Section 50(2)(j) of the Planning and Development Act 2004 requires county development plans to include a strategy for sites of historical, geological, or scientific interest. Local Authorities are encouraged to promote and protect these sites through listing and policy development.

Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

Section 50 (d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 mandates that plans include objectives for the protection of monuments, wrecks, and archaeological or historic objects as listed under various laws, including the National Monuments Act. Plans must have strong policies to prevent negative impacts on these features, with exceptions allowed only in rare cases. The policies should focus on avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating impacts, promoting preservation of sites.

County Meath's draft County Development Plan includes requirements for assessing impacts on the Brú na Bóinne, World Heritage Property (WHP) Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). Any proposals affecting this value must have a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) based on specific guidelines. Collaboration with the National Monument Service is necessary for these applications, also considering the potential inscription of the Hill of Tara as a World Heritage Property candidate.

The Heritage Council notes some archaeological sites may not be officially recognized yet, but CDPs must include objectives for them as required by law. This includes various archaeological interests defined by the upcoming Historic and Archaeological Heritage Act 2023. Protection for unknown remains is also needed, with policies addressing ground disturbance and accidental discoveries. Identification of archaeological zones and careful construction practices are important, along with pre-design investigations for large sites.

The Heritage Council considers good design should consider existing built, archaeological, and cultural heritage. Preservation of archaeological features should be integrated into site design, including their settings. These features can help create trails and interpretive content for greenways. When preservation by record is needed, incorporating historic archaeology information into design considerations is important, using methods like street naming and public space design. Local authorities should link archaeological and landscape policies, especially in rich archaeological areas. Development, especially large-scale projects, can impact archaeological settings, so policies must ensure that assessments include these considerations.

The Heritage Council contends that successful public realm proposals should highlight existing heritage assets, using them as focal points in new designs. This applies to both architectural and archaeological heritage found in rural and urban areas. By focusing on heritage-led placemaking, public designs can enhance the visibility of archaeological features, such as historic buildings and town defences, thus adding distinctiveness to public spaces.

The Heritage Council suggests that county development plans include strong objectives for public realm, interpretation, and placemaking that promote local archaeological heritage, especially in historic towns like Trim, Kells, Navan, and Athboy. Such policies should emphasize using materials and landscaping that reflect archaeological interests, making these features prominent in design.

Landscape, Rights of Way, Tree Preservation Orders

Section 50(2)(k) mandates county development plans to establish objectives for landscapes, views, and prospects, as outlined in Section 29(1)(m) of the Planning and Development Act 2024. This includes a strategy for categorizing landscapes according to their capacity for development and adherence to management frameworks, including the European Landscape Convention. The Heritage Council supports National Policy Objective 90 of the NPF, which aims to enhance landscape protection and management through a National Landscape Character Map. Local authorities are encouraged to differentiate between inherent landscape character and views. The former should consider cultural, natural, archaeological, and geological aspects, while the latter relates to people's perceptions and tourism. Local authorities should assess landscape sensitivity to change and establish clear development standards, ensuring overall policies are evidence-based to prevent landscape damage from certain development types.

The Heritage Council advises local authorities to prioritise public engagement with natural and cultural heritage in county development plans, notably through access to heritage sites. Section 51(2)(g) of the new Planning and Development Act mandates objectives for preserving public rights of way to areas of natural beauty. Consultation with local archivists and studies librarians is recommended to identify access rights, supplemented by local historical societies for historical documentation. Valuable sources include local government archives, private estate records, and state resources like Ordnance Survey maps. The Heritage Council acknowledges the challenges faced by local authorities and offers support in locating information resources.

Tree Preservation Orders

Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 requires planning authorities to develop strategies for sustainable communities, including the improvement and preservation of amenities and the maintenance of high urban design standards. Section 267 specifically addresses Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), empowering planning authorities to preserve trees for amenity and environmental reasons. Mature trees are valued for their ecological, historical, and aesthetic contributions to both urban and rural settings. The Heritage Council advocates for including TPO objectives in county development plans and emphasizes differentiating between environmental and amenity benefits in policy drafting. Community involvement is encouraged for identifying significant historical trees, reinforcing the need for local authorities to recognize TPOs primarily for public realm enhancement.

Design of Green Infrastructure

The Heritage Council endorses outdoor recreation that enhances people's connection with heritage, including diverse natural sites while promoting engagement with nature and culture, various infrastructures can inadvertently damage heritage assets. The

National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-2027 emphasises minimising such impacts, particularly on ecological, archaeological, and architectural sites. It stresses the necessity for biodiversity assessments in project planning. Different environments require tailored approaches for trail design, as established by the Irish Sports Council's trail classification system. The Council advocates for active travel that respects heritage while underscoring compliance with county development plan policies to safeguard biodiversity and heritage assets in both public and private developments.

The Planning and Development Act 2004 mandates objectives for architectural conservation in development plans, focusing on both designated and non-designated structures integral to the local heritage. The Heritage Council emphasizes the need to protect Meath's built heritage and recommends auditing settlements for architectural conservation area (ACA) designations, placing importance on the entire historic environment rather than individual buildings. Furthermore, it calls for a review of existing ACAs and the identification of new ones, accompanied by Character Appraisal/Synopsis. Policies should aim to minimize demolition in ACAs and encourage the ongoing use of historic buildings while altering development standards to support such conservation efforts.

The Heritage Council expresses concerns that some planning considerations may undermine strategic planning objectives for heritage buildings. It stresses the need for a more accommodating planning environment regarding quantitative management standards. The Council encourages local authorities to review the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) for potential additions to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and to engage local communities with knowledge of non-designated assets. Specific policy requirements related to the RPS should be included in county development plans, with an accessible listing and interactive mapping of structures. Furthermore, policies for structures in ruinous states should balance restoration efforts with ecological considerations, requiring documentation from a qualified Conservation Architect and a thorough assessment of the building's historic significance.

Special Areas of Planning Control, as outlined in Sections 335-338 of the Planning and Development Act 2024, recognize the architectural, historical, cultural, and social significance of urban areas. Many areas of Ireland are key to civic life but have suffered from underappreciation due to car dominance in urban planning, leading to a decline in pedestrian spaces. The Heritage Council emphasizes the need to restore these civic areas, advocating for innovative placemaking linked to heritage-led regeneration. Areas of special planning control can serve as effective legal tools for preserving not just historic buildings but also enhancing civic spaces and landscapes for community use.

Placemaking is not necessarily confined to new placemaking, but also the places that already exist. Within this context, it should be recognised in policy that such buildings contribute to ‘place’ beyond their specific site location. And when abandonment is

prevented, when a use is retained, or as a minimum, a pathway for future use is established, this brings a significant benefit to the historic environment in the immediate environs, and how such a landscape and townscape is perceived.

The Heritage Council suggests that Local authorities should actively encourage the re-use of such buildings and ensure that planning applications are reviewed flexibly to ensure a responsive planning environment. Concurrently, there is a need for applications for development on sites where such buildings are present to establish a clear pathway for the re-use of such buildings as part of the proposed scheme. It is not acceptable that such buildings are merely left abandoned, while other areas of the site are progressed3. A campus type approach to such sites is needed, where the planning gain could be the continued use of protected structures and the enhancement of other historic assets on site. The following objective is therefore recommended in this regard:

Objective X: Enabling Development for Historic Structures:

It is the objective of Meath County to ensure that historic buildings and structures are reused and enhanced as part of development proposals. Schemes which fail to ensure continued appropriate re-use of historic buildings on site within the ownership boundary will not be supported. If historic structures and buildings are not conducive to operational requirements, a clear pathway for their re-use will need to be established before permission is granted.

Proposals which seek to comply with this policy will be supported by flexibility in terms of development standards, commensurate with the level of importance of the protected structure/historic building in question.

The identification of key heritage sites should be an essential part of the mapping that accompanies the written statement of a county development plan. This should include:

- Record of Protected Structures
- Architectural Conservation Areas
- Natura 2000 sites
- NHAs, pNHAs, Nature Reserves and County Biodiversity Areas
- Landscape and seascape character areas
- Recorded Monuments and Places

At the national level, there is a lack of a consolidated database for heritage sites, making it difficult to access various planning-related designations, particularly for RPS, ACAs, and landscape/seascape character areas. While NPWS and NMS provide mapped data for monuments and nature designations, county development plan sites are not easily accessible. Heritage Maps serves as an interactive tool for identifying heritage sites across Ireland, with local authorities contributing data. Additionally, Strategic Environmental

Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) will be conducted for the plan, emphasizing high standards in evaluating policies, mapping, and designations to identify suitable environmental sites for renewable development and infrastructure. The Heritage Council will prioritize the quality of these assessments in its feedback on the draft plan.

The Heritage Council concludes that they welcome the initiation of the Meath County Development Plan, emphasising the strategic importance of heritage in future development and land use planning. It is crucial for the plan to protect and enhance heritage and the environment while meeting development needs. It is the Heritage Council's contention that the local authority will consider these recommendations during the planning process.

Chief Executive Response

In relation to compact growth, the Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, compact and sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. In this regard, the current County Development Plan already has policies to support compact growth on infill and brownfield sites including Policy SH POL 2 that seeks to promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced lands through the prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference to the edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl. The Draft County Development Plan will build on this policy approach and will continue to support compact growth.

Regarding the author's comment on zoning land near transportation and community services, a Settlement Capacity Audit is currently being prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit will determine serviced and serviceable lands across the county that could accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

In addition, the Council notes the strong interrelationship between heritage protection and climate action, particularly in the context of climate adaptation, nature-based solutions, and ecosystem protection. The Draft County Development Plan will continue to recognise the role of natural, built, archaeological, and geological heritage in supporting climate resilience, flood risk management, biodiversity enhancement, and sustainable land-use planning, in alignment with national climate policy and the Meath Climate Action Plan.

In relation to renewable energy, the Council acknowledges the concerns of the submitter regarding the protection of heritage assets and sensitive environmental areas in the designation of suitable sites for renewable energy. The Council is not currently in a position to designate suitable sites for renewable energy as the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern & Midland Region is under review, in accordance with the recent enactment of the Planning & Development Act 2024 (as amended), which requires Regional Assemblies to allocate renewable energy quantities and targets to each Local Authority. In the interim, the Council will ensure that heritage assets and sensitive environmental areas are appropriately protected, in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Development Plan and existing national planning policy, when evaluating any applications for renewable energy development.

Meath County Council acknowledge the matters raised in relation to outdoor recreation and promoting engagement with nature without damaging heritage assets. In this regard, the Draft County Development Plan will aim to include policies and objectives to ensure that recreational developments are delivered in a manner that protects environmental sensitivities and cultural heritage.

The Council, in consultation with its Heritage and Conservation team, aims to promote the reuse of heritage buildings through policies and objectives **HER POL 7, HER OBJ 10, HER POL 15, HER POL 18, HER POL 21, HER POL 24** in the existing Development Plan. The effectiveness of these policies and objectives will be reviewed, in consultation with the Council's Heritage and Conservation team, as part of the Development Plan review process. In relation to natural heritage, the submitter will be aware that the Council has recently adopted the Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 which includes numerous actions relating to natural heritage which are intended to be incorporated into the new Development Plan, in consultation with the Council's Biodiversity Officer. In this respect, the Council will consider the proposed policies and objectives set out in this submission relating to cultural and natural heritage, along with recommendations relating to, inter alia, ecological impact assessments, nationally and internationally protected sites, county biodiversity areas, nature restoration sites, species specific surveys, unprotected waterbodies and County Geological Sites.

Regarding built heritage, the Council has adopted numerous Public Realm Plans within the lifetime of the current Development Plan with Public Realm Plans or Strategies now in place for Navan, Ashbourne, Kells, Athboy, Duleek, Oldcastle, Laytown and Bettystown. These plans and strategies will help to encourage the preservation and promotion of built heritage assets, as set out in this submission. The Council notes recommendations within the submission regarding, inter alia, the requirement for a Heritage Impact Assessment in the Brú na Bóinne area, special areas of planning control, consideration of ground disturbance and accidental discoveries. These recommendations will be considered as part of the Development Plan review process. The Council will also be reviewing the existing Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and Architectural Conservation Areas

(ACAs), in consultation with the Council's Heritage & Conservation team, as part of the Development Plan review process. The Draft Plan stage of the Development Plan review process will allow for public engagement on any revised ACAs and RPS.

The Council notes the legislative requirements to engage with relevant bodies regarding landscape, protected views and rights of way through the Development Plan process and will endeavour to do so, in consultation with the Heritage Council. Regarding the submitter's recommendations relating to Tree Preservations Orders, it is noted that the Council intends to undertake a Tree Strategy as part of the new Development Plan. This is an action emanating from the newly adopted Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030. Existing TPOs will be reviewed as part of the Development Plan review process.

Part 2

UISCE ÉIREANN

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-29: Uisce Eireann (Irish Water)

Summary of Submission:

Uisce Éireann (UÉ) thanks Meath County Council for the consultation and outlines key policy updates, infrastructure considerations, and collaboration needs for the upcoming County Development Plan.

National & Regional Policy Alignment

• Uisce Éireann (UÉ) supports the National Planning Framework and the Eastern & Midlands, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

• Emphasis on sustainable water management and alignment with Regional Policy Objectives.

• Ongoing cooperation with the Council to identify required water services for planned growth.

Key Uisce Éireann Policies & Plans

Strategic Funding Plan (2025–2029)

•Approved by the Minister in Nov 2024; pending Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) regulatory approval.

Capital Investment Plan fourth regulatory control (RC4) period (2025–2029)

•Sets budget priorities based on national policy and Uisce Éireann's strategic objectives.

•Includes ongoing refinement of projects depending on funding, environmental constraints, and approvals.

Regional Water Resources Plan – Eastern & Midlands Region

•Provides a roadmap for improving water supply resilience and interconnection and to support quality, quantity, and enable future economic development.

Drinking Water Source Protection

•UÉ applies World Health Organisation (WHO)-aligned Drinking Water Safety Plans to improve source-to-tap water quality protection.

River Basin Management Plans (RBMP)

•UÉ collaborates with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) on catchment management.

•Actions in Ireland's Water Action Plan 2024 (Ireland's third cycle RBMP) are integrated into investment planning.

•Developing Sectoral Action Plans (SAPs) for all 46 national catchments.

Sustainable Drainage, Green-Blue Infrastructure & Circular Economy

•UÉ supports SuDS and green-blue infrastructure to manage stormwater sustainably.

•No new surface water discharges to combined sewers permitted; removal of stormwater from combined systems strongly encouraged.

•Encourages circular economy initiatives such as wastewater reuse, biogas production, and sludge reuse.

3. Water Services Infrastructure Capacity

Water Supply

•Annual Water Supply Capacity Registers indicate generally good supply in the county.

•Some constraints exist in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) linked areas, especially during times of drought.

•Uisce Éireann are continually progressing leakage reduction, mains rehabilitation, and lead replacement works.

Wastewater Treatment

•Multiple plants serve the county; capacity varies.

•Constrained areas are serviced on a first-come, first-served basis unless developer-led upgrades occur.

•Some towns (e.g., Ashbourne, Dunboyne) depend on Greater Dublin Drainage (GDA) for long-term growth.

•Network constraints in places (e.g., Farganstown, South Drogheda) link to progressing (Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) projects.

Upcoming Regulatory Requirements

•New EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive will require Integrated Urban Wastewater Management Plans (IUWWMPs) by 2035 for settlements greater than 10,000 population and will require joint drainage planning between UÉ and Local Authorities.

Land Development Considerations

•UÉ encourages sequential development where existing capacity and infrastructure exist.

•Masterplans for large areas should include phasing and timelines to guide strategic water services planning.

•Upgrades or network extensions often developer-led unless UÉ has committed projects.

Development Constraints

•Wastewater networks in some areas have small diameters (150mm) requiring upgrades for new load.

•Sensitive developments near WWTPs must consider existing and future plant operations.

•UÉ prefers development in areas served by public systems; private wells or treatment plants not generally supported.

Serviceability of Settlements

•UÉ urges use of GIS mapping from the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) assessment to help identify serviceable land. Lands greater than 500m from a network will typically be flagged as "Red" (infrastructure not readily available).

Notes for New Developments

•All new developments must go through UÉ's Connections and Developer Services process.

•Existing infrastructure on development sites must be protected or diverted via formal agreements.

•Public maps of UÉ assets are available on their ArcGIS viewer (guidance only).

Planned Road & Public Realm Projects

•Early engagement is important to avoid conflict with existing infrastructure and ensure UÉ can plan appropriately.

•Road and public realm improvements may require asset protection, diversion, or adjustment of planned UÉ upgrade works.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council welcomes the submission received from Uisce Éireann in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033, with regard to the provision of water services in the County. Meath County Council as the Planning Authority will continue to liaise with and take direction from Uisce Éireann with regard to National and Regional Policy Alignment and key Uisce Éireann policy, plans and Capital Investment Plans (CIPs)

Meath County Council will continue to monitor and enforce its existing polices related to the protection of potable drinking water. MCC is continuing its implementation of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) in line with the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), that will result in the protection of and improvement of water quality and also enhance Drinking Water Source Protection.

MCC will continue to work with Uisce Eireann in developing a safe, stable and sustainable supply of potable water and efficient wastewater treatment system throughout the County, in line with all national and European Union regulatory requirements.

Meath County Council will have regard to the water services capacity available in each settlement when considering the merits and viability of any planning proposal being assessed. All applications received by the Planning Authority will continue to be referred to Uisce Eireann as part of the statutory pre connection agreement, in particular new developments and any future planned road and public realm projects.

Meath County Council as the Planning Authority will continue to liaise with and take direction from Uisce Éireann with regard to information provided regarding wastewater treatment capacity register, water supply capacity register for the future serviceability of settlements throughout the county. This approach is supported by existing the numerous water services policies already incorporated into the existing County Development Plan, eg.

INF OBJ 1: *To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water to promote the sustainable development of water supply axnd drainage infrastructure in the county and the region, in accordance with the objectives and recommendations set out in the Greater Dublin Drainage Study and Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan.*

INF POL 11: *To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water during the lifetime of the Plan in the provision, upgrading or extension of wastewater collection and treatment systems in the County to serve existing and planned future populations and enterprise in accordance with the requirements of the Core and Settlement Strategies.*

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IRELAND (TII)

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-30: Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Summary of Submission:
The submission by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), a statutory consultee under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), relates to the review of the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 and the preparation of the new County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission addresses the strategic role, protection and management of the national roads network within County Meath, including the M1, N/M2, N/M3, M4, N51 and N52, and its importance for inter-urban, inter-regional and international connectivity, including TEN-T routes. TII notes that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper does not sufficiently reference or identify the national roads network within the "Transport & Movement" section and asserts that the Draft County Development Plan must be fully aligned with national and regional policy, including Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan 2021–2030, the National Sustainable Mobility Policy, the

Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022–2042.

The submission outlines a number of detailed observations and recommendations under three thematic headings. Under statutory guidance and exchequer investment, TII emphasises the need for the Draft Plan Core Strategy to explicitly recognise the strategic function, capacity and safety of the national roads network and to safeguard past and future public investment in accordance with Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines: *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoECLG, 2012).

TII submits that land use zoning and development strategies must be informed by the carrying capacity and operational efficiency of the national road network. In this regard, the submission requests that the Draft Plan include clear policies to avoid the creation of additional access points onto national roads outside urban speed limit zones, carefully manage development at or near national road junctions and interchanges, and ensure that development proposals do not undermine the strategic transport function of these routes.

The submission also raises the importance of evidence-based land use and transport integration, particularly in urban areas, and supports the use of Area-Based Transport Assessments (ABTA) and Local Transport Plans for key settlements, including Navan, Ashbourne, Dunboyne and Drogheda. TII notes ongoing and forthcoming transport assessments and strategies and expresses willingness to continue engagement with the Council and the National Transport Authority in this regard.

In relation to infrastructure and utilities, TII highlights potential interactions between national road infrastructure and energy, water, and telecommunications networks. The submission requests that Draft Plan policies ensure the protection of national roads infrastructure when routing utility services, including electricity transmission infrastructure, and that such works comply with relevant guidance and consultation frameworks.

TII further submits that the Draft Plan should recognise and require compliance with TII Publications (Standards and Technical Documents) for any development or works affecting the national roads network, including requirements for Traffic and Transport Assessments, Road Safety Audits, design standards and technical approvals.

The submission identifies several existing and proposed national road schemes within County Meath, including projects under the National Development Plan, and requests that the Draft Plan safeguard identified route corridors and scheme options from development that could prejudice their future delivery. TII also advises that any locally led improvements to national roads should be subject to consultation and TII's agreement.

The submission concludes by requesting that the Draft County Development Plan fully reflect national and regional policy relating to national roads, that TII continue to be

recognised as a key stakeholder in the Plan-making process, and that ongoing engagement take place in relation to transport strategies and assessments.

Chief Executive Response

The submission received from TII is acknowledged and the Chief Executive confirms that the Draft Plan will be in compliance with national and regional policy including Project Ireland 240, the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan 2021-2030, the National Sustainable Mobility Policy, the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042.

Comments made regarding the core strategy to explicitly recognise the strategic function, capacity and safety of the national roads networks and to safeguard past and future public investments in accordance with Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines: Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2012 is noted. Reference to these guidelines is currently made in the existing County Development Plan in Section 5.3 of Chapter 5 on Movement, and the future plan will continue to align with these guidelines and any other relevant TII publications (Standards and Technical Documents)

In response to the recommendation for the Draft Plan to include clear policies to avoid the creation of additional access points onto national roads outside urban speed limit, the current plan contains policy MOV POL 24 which 'safeguards the capacity and safety of the National road network save in accordance with agreed 'exceptional circumstances listed in MOV POL 33'. This will be reviewed as part of the new Draft Plan.

Meath County Council note the importance of Area Based Transport Assessments (ABTAs), particularly in higher-tier settlements that are likely to grow during the next CDP period. The Chief Executive wishes to highlight that ABTAs are currently underway for the settlements of Drogheda and Navan and the Council will also give consideration to carrying out an ABTA for the settlements of Ashbourne and Dunboyne. In the interim, the Council will rely on the Transportation Study at Dunboyne and Environs. The Council look forward to continuing engagement with TII on the preparation of the Draft Plan and Local Transport Plans for key settlements.

In relation to infrastructure and utilities, the Draft Plan will continue to ensure the protection of national road infrastructure when routing utility services, and that all works comply with relevant guidance and consultation frameworks by including an objective to ensure the necessary consultation is carried out with respect to the routing of utilities affecting national roads in addition to the proper reinstatement of affected road infrastructure.

Projects recognised in the National Development Plan will receive specific policy support in the Draft Plan and will be safeguarded from any development that would compromise their delivery.

The Draft Plan will safeguard identified route corridors, including National and Regional plans. Meath County Council will also ensure that any locally led improvements to national roads are carried out in consultation with TII.

FÁILTE IRELAND

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-66: Fáilte Ireland

Summary of Submission:

This submission relates to tourism in County Meath and is submitted by the national tourism development authority – Fáilte Ireland.

The submission seeks to establish a meaningful framework for enhancing tourism in County Meath. The submission reiterates Fáilte Ireland's vision, which seeks to promote an economically resilient tourism sector, regional dispersal of visitors, delivery on climate action targets, visitor satisfaction, contributions to local communities, career opportunities for staff, and a sustainable approach to destination development. The submission highlights the importance of tourism for other sectors of the economy and in contributing to the enhancement of quality of life, which aligns with the Regional and Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES). In this respect, the submission encourages the inclusion of tourism as a central aspect of the new Development Plan.

The submission points out that tourism is not referenced in the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper, despite a comprehensive reference to tourism in the existing Development Plan. In this respect, the submission recommends the inclusion of a dedicated chapter for tourism in the new Development Plan. The submission highlights the importance of the recently established Brú na Bóinne National Park and the UNESCO Brú na Bóinne site which reinforces this. In addition, the submission proposes numerous sections to be included in the proposed tourism chapter. The submission further proposes that the new Development Plan include a tourism strategy that develops a sustainable, regenerative approach to increasing seasonality and dwell time.

The submission lists numerous additional tourism considerations relating to:

- Acknowledgement and realisation of the economic importance of tourism.
- Support for quality and diverse accommodation.
- Support for improved facilities for camper vans.
- Provision of supporting infrastructure.
- Promotion of sustainable travel in tourism, including integration of the County's transport and tourism strategies.
- Support for the enhancement of telecommunications infrastructure.
- Protection and enhancement of the tourism resource.
- Provision of adequate electric vehicle charging stations.

- Support for park and ride facilities in known congestion spots.
- Support for improved access to the coastline.

The submission proposes the use of mapping to set out tourism policies and objectives and to illustrate key nodes of tourism activity in the County, existing transport links between nodes and identified trails, strategic tourism centres where key services are located, sensitive environments and branding such as Ireland's Ancient East.

Regarding renewable energy, the submission suggests that the Renewable Energy Strategy should be reviewed and updated, however, no such Renewable Energy Strategy is in place for County Meath. The submission also suggests that a Landscape Character Assessment for County Meath should be incorporated into the new Development Plan, and it should align with the National Landscape Strategy 2015-2025. The submission infers that landscape and visual impacts on key tourist amenities should be considered when reviewing objectives in the Development Plan.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission from the Failte Ireland and notes the detailed observations submitted.

Failte Ireland have been involved in the adoption of the Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy document 2024 – 2030, which addresses a number of the observations outlined in the submission.

The current County Development Plan chapter on Economy and Employment Strategy contains a dedicated section covering Tourism and it is intended that this will be developed and enhanced as part of the new CDP, incorporating the key objectives and recommendations from that recent Tourism Strategy, as it is widely recognised that Tourism is one of the key economic drivers within the County.

The Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2024 – 2030 contains plans for 6 transformative projects as follows:

1. Boyne Valley (Bru na Boinne) National Park
2. Boyne Valley Food Development
3. Coastal Trail and Tourism Development
4. Accommodation growth (to include sustainable accommodation models)
5. Development of Greenways
6. Heritage Assets

It also includes 7 strategic objectives, which will also feed into the Economy chapter of the new plan. These include the aim to be a Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism Leader, to champion Accessible Tourism Development and to progress Tourism dispersion and Festival/Experience/Attraction development.

All of these existing aims will form part of the new draft CDP. The aim is to position Meath as a compelling year-round Tourism destination leader in Ireland, highlighting the wide range of natural, cultural and built assets that can meet the needs of this sector on a national and global scale.

The submission's proposal regarding the key nodes of tourism activity and highlighting transport links and proximate key services is helpful and will be considered when completing the Tourism element of the Economy and Employment Strategy Chapter.

Meath County Council has an overarching role in progressing a sustainable energy future for the County. International, EU and National policies all promote a more energy-efficient society relying on sustainable renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar. Section 9.2 of the National Planning Framework (NPF) states "Ireland's national energy policy is focused on three pillars: (1) sustainability, (2) security of supply and (3) competitiveness. This policy not solely related to wind and solar, but extends to Bioenergy, Biomass, Geothermal and Hydro and wave where applicable.

DEPARTMENT OF CLIMATE, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-102: Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment

Summary of Submission:

The submission received outlines the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE) observations in respect of a number of policy areas for which the Department is responsible. The submission outlines the Government is commitment to achieving climate neutrality no later than 2050, with a 51% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030. These legally binding objectives are set out in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (the Climate Act).

The Department asks that Meath County Council take the material outlined in this submission into consideration when drafting the Development Plan, which align with their Statement of Strategy for the period 2025-2028, Le Chéile 28, which itself sets out their vision, mission, and five strategic goals in key policy areas. The Department also asks that Meath County Council take into consideration the framework of Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their respective targets, in the overall drafting of the Plan, as well as the following 17 recommendations outlined below;

Climate Action

<u>Recommendation 1</u>

The Development Plan should support the implementation of the national Climate Action Plan, the Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions, the National

Climate Objective, the National Adaptation Framework, NPO 69 of the revised NPF and the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals through the preparation of effective objectives and actions for climate action in Development Plan area.

Recommendation 2

The Department recommends that an objective and / or policy is included in the Development Plan to support the implementation of CAP25 (and annual revisions thereof).

Local Authority Climate Action Plan

Recommendation 3

The Department recommends that the Development Plan include objectives and / or policies to ensure the implementation of the Meath County Council LACAP, DZ priority areas and related actions, thereby ensuring consistency and alignment between both Plans.

Renewable Energy

Recommendation 4

The Department recommends that the Local Authority prepare a Renewable Energy Strategy as part of the Development Plan, having regard to the Regional Renewable Energy Strategy (RRES) and the revised methodology for LARES (when published).

The Department also notes the following objectives of the NPF:

- *'Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a climate neutral economy by 2050'.*
- *'Support the development and upgrading of the national electricity grid infrastructure, including supporting the delivery of renewable electricity generating development'.*

Recommendation 5

The Department recommends the inclusion of an objective of the Council in the Development to promote the development of renewable energy installations, and to support the development of additional supporting grid infrastructure. It is crucial that all future development seek to increase their contribution to the national renewable electricity generation target and, where possible, aim for developments that are carbon or energy use neutral.

The Department also asks the Council to consider the particular targets set out in Agenda 2030 regarding SDG7 - Affordable and Clean Energy.

Recommendation 6

The Department recommends the inclusion of a specific objective of the Council to promote the repowering and extension of the lifetime of existing wind power installations and to enhance the development of additional renewable energy infrastructure in the County, including solar as well as supporting grid infrastructure.

Marine Planning

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that the Development Plan include a policy to facilitate land-sea interactions and support sustainable marine-related development in appropriate locations.

The Development Plan should be consistent with the policies and objectives of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), which outlines the Government's vision, objectives and marine planning policies for each marine activity. The NMPF sets out the vision for Ireland's seas and oceans to be managed strategically, in a manner that supports and enables broader maritime activities and the public's needs. NMPF Infrastructure Policy 1 supports appropriate land-based infrastructure which facilitates marine activity (and vice versa). Proposals for appropriate infrastructure that facilitates the diversification or regeneration of marine industry should be supported.

The consideration of land-sea interactions in the plan will support the implementation of NMPF Infrastructure Policy 1, support the sectoral policies of the NMPF and the implementation of Designated Maritime Areas Plans (DMAPs), including for Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) such as the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (SCDMAP) for ORE and future National DMAP for ORE.

Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE)

Recommendation 8

Any policies within the Development Plan should not undermine the objective of the various plans and frameworks related to ORE.

Electricity Grid

Recommendation 9

The Department recommends that the Development Plan should include reference to:

- Shaping Our Electricity Future 1.1, EirGrid's updated roadmap for the development of the transmission grid out to 2030 to deliver on the 80% renewable energy targets.
- ESB's Networks Strategy: Networks For Net Zero, which sets out ESB Networks' role in enabling the delivery of the Government's Climate Action Plan 2023 and supports the decarbonisation of the electricity system by 2040.

Energy Security

Recommendation 10

The Development Plan should include objectives supporting local and community based renewable energy projects to address Government policy and strategy for sustainable, secure and affordable energy.

Built Environment and Heating

Recommendation 11

The Department recommends that the Local Authority continue to implement policies such as the Social Housing Energy Efficiency retrofit programme, to support the ambitions of the National Residential Retrofit Plan, in particular, the development of the electrification of heating, having regard to the CAP25, the RSES and the NPF.

This also aligns with SDG targets relating in particular to SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities and SDG 7 – Affordable and Renewable Energy.

Compact Growth and District Heating

Recommendation 12

The Department recommends that the Local Authority examine the potential of district heating, including district heating derived from waste heat and geothermal energy, where available, technically feasible and cost effective and commit to carrying out a feasibility exercise and the use of heat mapping in support of same in the draft policies, having regard to the CAP25, RPO 7.38 of the RSES, NSO 8 and NPO 68 of the revised NPF, the National Heat Study and the Government's Policy Statement on Geothermal Energy for a Circular Economy. As such, policies in support of same are encouraged in the Development Plan.

The SEAI Centre of Excellence for district heating has been established and is available to provide guidance and support in this regard.

Circular Economy

Recommendation 13

The Local Authority should support circular economy principles in the Development Plan and implement policy for same.

Waste Management

Recommendation 14

The Development Plan should have regard to the guidance "Best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource & waste management plans for construction & demolition projects" and give effect to them through the objectives of the plan.

Geoscience Policy

Recommendation 15

We would encourage the Local Authority to consider the policy where relevant for the Development Plan area.

Transport

Recommendation 16

The Local Authority is requested to consider the measures within the CAP25 relating to sustainable mobility and reducing the demand for transport journeys by private vehicles (Avoid-Shift -Improve Framework) through more effective land use and transport planning integration and compact growth principles when drafting the Development Plan

Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry

Recommendation 17

The Local Authority is requested to consider the Actions of the Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 including Action 5.1, as relevant for the plan area, when drafting the Development Plan, and consider the related SDG.

Air Quality

The Department encourages the Local Authority to have regard to the Clean Air Strategy for Ireland, bearing in mind the impacts of measures adopted in the draft Development Plan on current and future air quality. The Local Authority is requested to have regard to limits on air pollution and ensure that any measures set out in the Development Plan will not negatively impact on future air quality. The Local Authority is requested to be mindful if any potential measures are required to meet these air pollution limits in future plans.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges comprehensive submission from the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment and notes the statutory and policy context outlined in respect of climate mitigation and adaptation. The Council notes the Department's emphasis on alignment with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, the National Climate Action Plan, the National Adaptation Framework, carbon budgets, and Ireland's legally binding climate targets to 2030 and 2050.

The Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 will be informed by the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 and relevant national and regional climate policy and will integrate climate action considerations across land-use planning, renewable energy, energy efficiency, climate resilience, circular economy principles, and sustainable transport, subject to appropriate environmental assessment and statutory requirements.

The Council specifically notes the Department's recommendations regarding:

Renewable Energy: The Department's recommendations regarding preparation of a Renewable Energy Strategy, informed by the Regional Renewable Energy Strategy and the revised LARES methodology (when published), and the renewable electricity targets of 80% by 2030, including 8GW solar PV capacity and 9GW onshore wind capacity. The Council will have regard to these targets in preparing appropriate policies and objectives to facilitate renewable energy development at suitable locations, including support for community-based renewable energy projects, microgeneration, and necessary grid infrastructure upgrades.

Decarbonising Zones: The Department's request to ensure the Development Plan reflects the Decarbonising Zone priority areas and related actions identified in the Meath County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, ensuring consistency and alignment between both plans.

Built Environment and Heating: The recommendations regarding support for the National Residential Retrofit Plan targets, electrification of heating, and the examination of district heating potential, including heat mapping and feasibility assessments, having regard to the SEAI Centre of Excellence for district heating guidance.

Circular Economy: The Department's emphasis on supporting circular economy principles throughout the Development Plan, having regard to the Whole Government Circular Economy Strategy, the Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022, and the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy. The Council notes NPO 76 regarding sustainable waste management and circular economic principles.

Sustainable Transport: The measures outlined in CAP25 relate to sustainable mobility, reducing transport emissions by 50% from 2018 levels, and the Avoid-Shift-Improve Framework through effective land use and transport planning integration and compact growth principles.

Marine Planning: The recommendations regarding land-sea interactions and alignment with the National Marine Planning Framework, noting Meath's coastal interface and the potential implications of offshore renewable energy development.

The Council will work to incorporate all of the above recommendations into the Draft Plan.

The Council also acknowledges the supplementary submission from Geological Survey Ireland and notes the range of geoscience datasets available for use in plan preparation and environmental assessment, including those relating to land and soils, water, climate change, cultural heritage, material assets, landscape, natural geo-hazards, and natural heritage. The Council will have regard to the County Geological Sites identified in the Geological Heritage of Meath audit (2007) in preparing the Draft Plan.

The Council welcomes the Department's offer of official support and consultation during plan preparation and may avail itself of this expertise in the areas identified. The Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033 will seek to give effect to relevant national climate,

energy, and environmental policy in a manner appropriate to County Meath's role and function, having regard to the settlement hierarchy, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, and the sustainable development of the county.

DUBLIN AIRPORT AUTHORITY (DAA)

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-122: Dublin Airport Authority (DAA)

Summary of Submission:

The Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) makes a strategic submission to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033, welcoming the opportunity to engage in the preparation of the new Plan and acknowledging the positive policy context established under the current Meath County Development Plan 2021 in relation to the ongoing development and operation of Dublin Airport.

The submission strongly emphasises the strategic national and regional importance of Dublin Airport and highlights County Meath's proximity to the airport as a key spatial, economic, and infrastructural advantage. DAA notes that the current Development Plan appropriately aligns with national and regional policy frameworks, including the National Aviation Policy, National Planning Framework, National Development Plan, and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), and requests that this progressive policy approach be carried forward into the forthcoming Plan.

The submission outlines the multifaceted contribution of Dublin Airport to County Meath, particularly in terms of employment generation, tourism, international connectivity, inward investment, logistics, and overall quality of life. Reference is made to the Meath Local Economic and Community Plan (2023), which identifies proximity to Dublin Airport as a key county strength, and to the Meath Economic Development Strategy Roadmap (2023), which recognises the airport as a strategic national asset underpinning economic resilience, innovation, and sustainable growth. DAA supports the Strategic Issues Paper's recognition of Dublin Airport as a contributor to maximising Meath's "spatial advantage" and strongly endorses the objective of promoting global connectivity and regional accessibility as part of an integrated land-use and transport strategy.

A significant component of the submission relates to airport safeguarding and land-use management in the vicinity of Dublin Airport. DAA requests that the Development Plan continue to include robust safeguards to protect the safe and efficient operation of the airport, including the management of airport noise zones, public safety zones, and obstacle limitation surfaces. The submission seeks strengthened policies requiring noise-sensitive development within designated noise zones to be supported by site-specific Aircraft Noise Impact Assessments, appropriate mitigation measures, and clear disclosure of noise exposure to future occupiers.

The submission also raises aviation safety considerations in relation to development proposals within defined distances of Dublin Airport. DAA recommends strengthened consultation requirements with relevant aviation authorities for developments that may pose risks to aviation safety or operations, including tall structures, solar PV arrays (with glint and glare assessments), mineral extraction, landfill, bird-attracting uses, large water bodies, and drone-related activities.

Overall, the submission seeks the continuation and enhancement of existing Development Plan policies that recognise Dublin Airport as a critical national asset, while ensuring coordinated land-use planning, infrastructure provision, economic development, and safeguarding measures are embedded within the forthcoming County Development Plan.

Chief Executive Response

The submission received from Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) is welcomed and Meath County Council recognises the strategic national and regional importance of Dublin Airport and the proximity of the airport to County Meath creating key spatial, economic and infrastructural advantage for the county. The Draft Plan will continue to align with national and regional policy frameworks, including the National Aviation Policy, National Planning Framework, National Development Plan, and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

The Chief Executive recognises that the safeguarding of Dublin Airport is fundamental to the future expansion of the airport and in turn, the economic growth of the County given its proximity to Dublin Airport. In this context, the following will be taken into account by the Council when preparing the Draft Plan, the inclusion of robust safeguards to protect the safe and efficient operation of the airport, including the management of airport noise zones, public safety zones, and obstacle limitation surfaces.

Regarding noise impact assessments, the objectives set out in the current plan are derived from a 2019 review of the noise zones carried out for Dublin Airport, the outcome of which was incorporated into the Meath CDP 2021-2027. The alteration of flight paths arising from the opening of the north runway in 2022 significantly altered the quantum of lands affected by airport noise in Meath, leading to an outdated noise policy. Meath County Council has sought clarity from both daa and the Noise Regulator (ANCA) on which noise contours it should rely on for effective land-use planning, but has received no correspondence. In the absence of clear guidance, the council have had to remain consistent with the policy of the CDP, while advising applicants located within the 45-54db range of the 2023 day-evening-night noise contour mapping, by way of an advice note on any grant of permission, of the benefit of carrying out an Inward Noise Impact Assessment to protect the applicant/developer from potential noise nuisance associated

with aircraft flying overhead and to generally safeguard the developments current and future residential amenity.

In accordance with the recommendations of this submission from DAA, the Council wishes to strengthen its objectives to protect noise-sensitive development from Aircraft Noise. Accordingly, Meath County Council ask that the daa engage with the Forward Planning Department to establish clear noise boundaries upon which the Council should rely in the Development Management process.

The exposure contour maps for 2024 have been published by Aircraft Noise Competent Authority (ANCA), detailing the annual average noise exposure in areas around Dublin Airport. The southern settlements of County Meath including Ashbourne, Ratoath and Dunshaughlin who were previously relatively unaffected by airport noise, are now exposed to over 45dB. As part of the review and preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033, the Council seeks for further engagement and guidance from DAA on land-use planning and management of lands affected by aircraft noise in order to provide a clear disclosure of noise exposure to existing and future residents.

Lastly, in regard to aviation safety considerations in relation to development proposals within defined distances of Dublin Airport, Section 5.12 'Aviation Sector' of the current County Plan contains a list of objectives in relation to proposed development in close proximity to the airport. These objectives will be reviewed as part of the preparation of the Draft Plan in line with national and regional policy.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & YOUTH

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-138: Department of Education & Youth

Summary of Submission:

The Department's submission emphasises collaboration with Meath County Council to ensure adequate school accommodation in line with National Planning Framework (NPF) objectives for compact growth and sustainable communities

Key Points & Recommendations

Population Growth & Planning requires early engagement to plan for new schools and expansions including identifying opportunities for long-term education needs in existing developed areas once the population and housing data is available.

The Submission seeks explicit support in the Plan for the provision of new schools, expansion of existing ones and the development of community infrastructure to complement schools.

The submission further outlines the increased need for Special Education Needs (SEN) provision at primary and post-primary levels and seek clear support for SEN accommodation.

In line with the submission's request for school provision in built up areas to match intensified residential development, suggestion is made that buffer zones and land use designations near existing schools for future expansion as it outlines that infill and brownfield development could strain school capacity.

Regarding site acquisition and zoning the submission identifies challenges in acquiring sites where zoning does not exist. The Department requests zoning and mapping of existing and future school sites on GIS systems, specific Local Objectives for identified school sites and permitted schools (permanent and temporary) in as many zoning categories as possible.

The submission states schools are enabling infrastructure for housing, requesting all enabling infrastructure (roads, utilities, sustainable transport, active travel) should be provided before school development. Support is sought for urban-design schools which would facilitate reduced requirements for onsite parking and set down and to support access to off- site public amenities.

The Department requests that Meath County Council would actively facilitate the principle of permitting schools, both permanent and temporary in as many zoning categories as possible**.** Where a designated school site forms part of a wider development area or plan that is being implemented incrementally, or divided into phases by the developer(s), then the Department requests that the granting of permission for any part or phase of that wider development be contingent upon the full consideration and provision of infrastructure and services to the school site as part of that development.

The Department submission welcomes future engagement regarding the draft plan regarding technical guidance on site identification.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledge the submission received from the Department of Education and Youth.

Regarding schools and wider community infrastructure, the Council notes the points raised in the submission in respect to forward planning for education provision, including the need for early identification of sites, accommodation for Special Educational Needs, and the integration of school provision with new and existing communities. The planning

for such facilities will be informed by the County-wide Social Infrastructure Audit, which is being prepared in parallel with the Draft County Development Plan and will assess existing and future requirements for schools, childcare, healthcare and other community facilities in line with projected population growth.

The Council will continue to engage with the Department of Education and Youth and other relevant stakeholders throughout the preparation of the Draft Plan to ensure that the spatial strategy for growth is aligned with the timely delivery of appropriate social and community infrastructure. The Council will also welcome continued engagement with the Department in relation to site identification, infrastructure requirements and the accommodation of Special Educational Needs provision.

Regarding site acquisition and zoning the submission identifies challenges in acquiring sites where zoning does not exist. The Department requests zoning and mapping of existing and future school sites on GIS systems, specific Local Objectives for identified school sites and permitted schools (permanent and temporary) in as many zoning categories as possible. As part of the Social Infrastructure Audit, all existing and proposed school sites is being identified and mapped. Through continued engagement with the Department, the Council will identify specific sites required for future schools in settlements across the county and will apply specific Local Objectives. The request for buffer zones and land use designations near existing schools for future expansion is noted and the Council will duly consider same in the review of land use zoning.

The Department requests that Meath County Council would actively facilitate the principle of permitting schools, both permanent and temporary in as many zoning categories as possible. The existing zoning matrix in current County Plan permits educational facilities in a significant number of zoning categories including A2 New Residential, B1 Town Centre, C1 Mixed Use, G1 Community Infrastructure in addition to all employment zonings. The provision will be carried forward into the Draft Plan.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-151: Department of Transport
Summary of Submission:
The Department of Transport welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the review of the Meath County Development 2027-2033 and highlights a number of key points which are summarised under the following headings: **1. Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning (SUMP)** • SUMPs are EU-driven frameworks for integrated, multimodal transport planning.

- Revised TEN-T Regulation (EU 2024/1679) mandates urban nodes to implement SUMPs by 31 December 2027.
- Ireland's equivalent are Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies (MATS), including the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy.
- A National SUMP Programme and SUMP Network have been established for local authority collaboration.

2. National Sustainable Mobility Policy (SMP)

- Published April 2022; sets targets to 2030:
  - +50% daily active travel journeys;
  - +130% daily public transport journeys;
  - -20% total vehicle kilometres;
- SMP goals include:
  - Safe and green mobility;
  - People-focused mobility.
  - Better integration of land use and transport planning.

3. Climate Action & EV Infrastructure

- Fleet electrification is the largest mitigation measure (4.72 MT CO_2 abatement).
- Local Authorities must develop EV Infrastructure Strategies (2025–2030) aligned with:
  - National EV Charging Network Plan (2024–2030)
  - AFIR and Climate Action targets.

Objectives include delivering public EV charging strategies, leveraging private sector, and addressing environmental barriers.

4. Integrated Land Use & Transport Planning

- Strong commitment to Transport-Oriented Development (TOD) under the National Planning Framework.
- TOD aims to cluster housing, employment, and services near high-quality transport.
- Meath should align with TOD opportunities identified in the Eastern Region Report and Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy.
- Potential TOD locations: Dunboyne & Navan as it is proposed to extend the rail system from the M3 Parkway terminus station to Navan town serving Dunshaughlin and Kilmessan along its route and

- Potential investment in DART+ to Drogheda could serve potential TOD locations there.

In summary, the submission from the Department makes the following key recommendations:

- Engage with the National SUMP Network and align with EU and national transport frameworks.
- Ensure the Development Plan reflects SMP goals and evolving Climate Action targets.
- Integrate TOD principles and prioritise compact growth near transport corridors.
- Support EV infrastructure rollout and sustainable mobility initiatives.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission from the Department of Transport and notes the strong emphasis placed on climate mitigation through sustainable mobility, transport electrification and integrated land-use and transport planning. Transport-related emissions represent a significant component of national greenhouse gas emissions, and the role of spatial planning in supporting behavioural change and low-carbon travel choices is recognised.

The Council notes the relevance and importance of the National Sustainable Mobility Policy, Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning (SUMP) frameworks and Transport-Oriented Development (TOD) principles in reducing transport emissions and supporting compact growth. These approaches align with the objectives of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029, which identifies modal shift, reduced car dependency and electrification of transport as key climate mitigation measures.

The Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 will continue to integrate climate action objectives across land-use zoning, settlement strategy and transport planning, including support for active travel, public transport accessibility and the rollout of EV charging infrastructure, subject to environmental assessment and infrastructure capacity. Climate considerations, including emissions-reduction targets and resilience to climate impacts, will inform alignment of the Development Plan with national and regional transport and climate policy frameworks.

Part 3: Summary of submissions & Chief Executive's Response & Recommendations

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-1: Mark Keane
Summary of Submission:
This submission queries the density of residential developments in County Meath and raises concerns on housing being constructed too close to busy roads, as seen in Navan and Trim. This approach creates safety concerns and an undesirable environment for families. While developers pursue density due to the high cost of land and councils aim for service efficiency, the author suggests that a more holistic urban planning perspective is necessary.
Chief Executive Response
The Chief Executive notes the comments from this submission and wishes to respond as follows: The Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033 must be consistent with the '*Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* published in 2024. These are Section 28 Guidelines and effectively govern the density requirements for each settlement based on the settlement size and thus placement within the settlement hierarchy. The current County Development Plan 2021-2027 was varied (Variation 3) in order to incorporate these guidelines and the density ranges are set out under Objective DM OBJ 14 of the existing CDP. In relation to road safety and in locations where the speed limit is 60km/h or less, the principle document guiding the design of roads and streets and how they relate to housing is, '*The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019)', (DMURS*). DMURS is referenced in Chapter 11 of the current County Development Plan 2021-2027, and urban street designs must be consistent with DMURS when carrying out a Traffic and Transport assessment and preparing an urban design layout. Meath County Council is required to comply with the above documents, which set out the permitted density range for a given site and the proximity of houses to streets/roads.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-2: Cormac Corr PC
Summary of Submission:
The Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 should include policies to increase access to green spaces and dog parks in towns. These areas would promote physical and mental health, foster community connections, and enhance the environment. Given community interest, especially in Kells, the plan should address these needs in its strategic issues and land-use objectives.
Chief Executive Response
In relation to public open space, Meath County Council has maintained a strong focus on enhancing community infrastructure. Outdoor amenity provision has progressed well throughout the current CDP with parks and playground projects advancing in settlements such as Duleek, Clonee, and Stamullen, and a planning application lodged for a new public park in Laytown. The Rural Regeneration Team, which was established during the lifetime of the current CDP, has taken on several community infrastructure objectives relating to village enhancement, playground delivery and amenity walkways. For community groups interested in growing or developing more green spaces in their area, several grant schemes are also available and details of these schemes and application forms are available on the Meath County Council website at https://www.meath.ie/council/council-services/community/community-grants-and-initiatives/community-grant-scheme The priority for outdoor recreation in Meath over the next five years is to work in partnership with stakeholders and communities to secure and sensitively develop additional greenspaces for all residents and visitors to access. This will take place alongside improving, managing and maintaining existing water and land-based amenities, while protecting and conserving our environment and rich heritage. Overall, community infrastructure, cultural development and recreational amenities continue to grow in line with the county's expanding population. The Council's strategic approach, supported by inter-departmental coordination and national funding mechanisms, will ensure continued incremental delivery that strengthens community

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-3: Lisa Carroll
Summary of Submission:
We need a swimming area by the River Boyne in County Meath, as there are many calm spots suitable for swimming. A lido is necessary as many swimmers travel to Dublin for swimming, while we have local rivers here in County Meath. Open water swimming is gaining popularity for training and pleasure, benefiting social well-being. Many people, including the author of the submission, swim in the River Boyne and Lough Bracken, and other lakes in Meath.
Chief Executive Response
Meath County Council acknowledges the recreational, health, and social well-being benefits associated with swimming and other water-based activities. The River Boyne, Lough Bracken, and other water bodies are recognised as valuable natural amenities that enhance the quality of life and recreational opportunities in the county. The potential demand for designated swimming areas and lido-style facilities is noted. However, such proposals would require careful consideration in the context of environmental protection, water quality, public safety, access, and compliance with relevant national and regional policies. Such locations would also need to be on lands owned by Meath County Council to pursue this. Meath County Council is currently carrying out an Outdoor Recreation Plan that will provide a 5-year strategic framework to identify opportunities to enhance outdoor recreational offerings throughout the county. Once finalised, the recommendations of this plan will be incorporated in the Draft County Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-4: Lisa Carroll
Summary of Submission:
Beo Park in Navan offers excellent facilities for walking, running, and cycling but lacks an outdoor swimming option. There are ample lands and parking available for a Lido pool or eco pool, similar to those found in the UK. The author is an open water swimmer and travels to Dublin every weekend to train and compete, which is time-consuming and costly. Many other swimmers also travel to Dublin for events and social swimming activities. The author submits that a Lido pool in Navan would allow locals to swim without the burdens of travel. Navan has several calm river areas for swimming, which provide recreational benefits and support positive mental health. A Lido pool would enhance Beo Park and would attract more people to the area.
Chief Executive Response
Meath County Council acknowledges the range of recreational facilities currently available at Beo Park and notes the submissions request for an outdoor swimming option such as a lido pool or eco-pool facility. The submission also highlights the growing participation in open-water swimming and the time and cost of travelling outside the county to access suitable facilities. The Chief Executive notes the increasing popularity of outdoor swimming in the county. Sea swimming has also become increasingly popular in recent years, and residents of Meath can avail of such activities in Laytown, Bettystown, and Mornington. These beaches generally have excellent water quality, with regular testing by the Council and weekly testing during the bathing season to assess the microbiological quality of the water and minimise public health risk. Meath County Council will continue to work with the EPA to monitor bathing water quality in coastal areas. Water quality in rivers tends to be poorer, with water quality management plans in place for the River Boyne to improve its status. While a proposal for a new outdoor swimming facility is desirable, Navan presently benefits from the Aura Leisure Centre, which features a 25m swimming pool for its residents to enjoy. To maximise investment and all-year-round use, it is likely that indoor swimming facilities will be prioritised and located in settlements where a need has been established. A Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of swimming facilities and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective to deliver a swimming facility. The delivery of any swimming facility will be subject to funding from the Minister of State at the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-5: Marc Cahill
Summary of Submission:
In this submission, the author emphasises the need for a holistic approach to the future County Development Plan, advocating for a focus on sustainable development that prioritises climate and environmental considerations over merely infrastructure and economic growth. The author critiques previous plans for failing to integrate sustainability effectively and suggests that the current plan could address these shortcomings for future generations. Central to the proposal is the prioritisation of urban development to enhance density and minimise urban sprawl, which would simultaneously reduce land use and improve access to public transport. Such a strategy could foster the creation of green spaces and amenities, thereby strengthening community cohesion. Additionally, this approach could lower emissions through reduced dependency on private vehicles and support for district heating initiatives while promoting urban greening projects. The author also highlights the importance of transitioning to a Circular Economy, advocating for increased support and awareness for businesses to adopt circular principles. With upcoming EU legislation, there is an opportunity for Meath to position itself as a leader in circular practices, thereby transforming waste management into resource processing and enhancing innovation and self-sustainability. Ultimately, the submission calls for reconfiguring development priorities to embed sustainability at the core of future growth strategies.
Chief Executive Response
Meath County Council welcomes this submission and acknowledges the submitter's observations on integrating climate action and sustainability principles into the Development Plan process. The points raised align strongly with the Council's commitment to climate action and sustainable development, as outlined in the Meath County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and the Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas Guidelines, which were incorporated into the County Development Plan as part of Variation No. 3 to the existing Plan. The concerns and recommendations raised will be given full consideration in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033. The Council is committed to ensuring that sustainability, climate mitigation, climate adaptation, and biodiversity protection are not treated as standalone issues but are integrated across all aspects of the Plan, from the settlement strategy and housing to economic development, transportation, and infrastructure provision.

The transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient, and biodiverse county requires a fundamental shift in how growth and development are conceived and delivered. This Plan presents an opportunity to embed these principles at the heart of planning policy for Meath, ensuring a sustainable and resilient future for current and future generations.

In relation to urban development and combating urban sprawl, it should be noted that the current County Development 2021-2027 was varied (Variation 3) to incorporate the densities set down in the 'Sustainable Residential and Compact Settlements Guidelines' published in 2024. DM OBJ 14 of the current CDP 2021-2027 specifically refers to this. The key principle of these guidelines is to prioritize higher densities with the aim of reducing urban sprawl, reducing dependency on private vehicles, and supporting sustainable development. The Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033 will be consistent with the 'Sustainable Residential and Compact Settlements Guidelines' and any revision thereof.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-6: Mark Finnegan

Summary of Submission:

The new County Development Plan outlines critical 'green infrastructure' strategies to be implemented in County Meath. Three key objectives include:

1. Preservation of Natural Landscape Features:

Development of a Tree Strategy focused on the professional management of urban and open space trees and woodlands. This includes setting canopy cover targets per Local Electoral Area (LEA), protecting trees and hedgerows in development sites, especially within historic landscapes.

2. Accessible Public Open Spaces:

Formulation of an Open Space Strategy to ensure a hierarchy of public spaces, from regional parks to residential green spaces. This necessitates zoning lands for future open spaces, including play and sports facilities in Local Parks. A review of the transfer process of public spaces within residential developments is required to prevent development, suggesting measures like a Deed of Dedication to secure public open spaces held in trust, in particular a designation of a Special Amenity Area Order for the Boyne Valley.

3. Provision of Play Spaces:

Development of a Play Policy to ensure that all villages and towns have play facilities for children under 12, with a focus on combining development objectives with larger destination play spaces in Local and Regional Parks.

Chief Executive Response

In regard to public open space and play spaces, Meath County Council is strongly focused on enhancing community infrastructure. Outdoor amenity provision has progressed well

throughout the current CDP with parks and playground projects advancing in settlements such as Duleek, Clonee, and Stamullen, and a planning application lodged for a new public park in Laytown. The Rural Regeneration Team, which was established during the lifetime of the current CDP, has taken on several community infrastructure objectives relating to village enhancement, playground delivery and amenity walkways.

Meath County Council is currently carrying out an Outdoor Recreation Plan, which will provide a 5-year strategic framework identifying opportunities to enhance outdoor recreational offerings throughout the county. Once finalised, the recommendations of this plan will be incorporated in the Draft County Development Plan. The implementation of this plan will be supported by the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), or other funding programmes which provides funding mechanisms for the delivery of projects identified within the Outdoor Recreation Plan**.**

For community groups interested in growing or developing more green spaces in their area, several grant schemes are also available and details of these schemes and application forms are available on the Meath County Council website at https://www.meath.ie/council/council-services/community/community-grants-and-initiatives/community-grant-scheme

Overall, community infrastructure, cultural development and recreational amenities continue to grow in line with the county's expanding population. The Council's strategic approach, supported by inter-departmental coordination and national funding mechanisms, will ensure continued incremental delivery that strengthens community resilience and supports inclusive, sustainable growth.

Regarding the submitter's proposal for the future development of a Tree Strategy for County Meath, the Council recognises that the tree cover in County Meath ranks as one of the lowest in the country. Notwithstanding this, the Council is endeavouring to protect existing trees through, for example, Tree Preservation Orders, and promoting tree planting in suitable sites through the recently adopted Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030. The Council also encourages tree planting and protects hedgerows through the implementation of policies and objectives in the existing Development Plan (**HER OBJ 29, HER OBJ 36&38, HER POL 38, HER POL 40-42**, **RD OBJ 18**). The Council will review the effectiveness of these policies and objectives, in light of County Meath's low tree cover and the recently adopted Meath Biodiversity Action Plan, as part of the Development Plan review. In this respect, the Council intends to promote more tree planting on Council-owned lands as a matter of priority and to implement a Tree Strategy for the County, which is an action set out in the Meath Biodiversity Action Plan and supported by the Meath County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-7: Francesca Anderson
Summary of Submission:
No further developments in Enfield should occur until the ongoing water issues are resolved, as the current water system is inadequate for residents and businesses. Irish Water (Uisce Éireann) has notified residents of daily water outages, highlighting long-standing problems since I have lived there for 16 years. It is incomprehensible that Meath County Council has permitted previous developments without addressing these water concerns. Additionally, eliminating the toll on the M4 for trucks could help reduce traffic in Enfield.
Chief Executive Response
Uisce Éireann is Ireland's national water utility, responsible for providing and managing all public water and wastewater services, including infrastructure (pipes, treatment plants), supply, maintenance, and investment in upgrades for homes and businesses across the country. Heretofore, planning applications submitted to Meath County Council that require water infrastructure have been referred to Uisce Éireann to advise on water and/or wastewater availability. These recommendations inform the local authority's planning application decision. This referral process remains a standard operational procedure in the planning application assessment. In addition to this, and to inform the future zoning of residential lands, the Council has carried out a Settlement Capacity Audit for all settlements within the county. This formal assessment evaluates whether land has the necessary water/wastewater infrastructure to be zoned for development. To determine this, Meath County Council engages with Uisce Eireann to advise the local authority on the status of lands, which in turn, informs the zoning process. This engagement occurs regularly to ensure upgrades and changes in land status are captured. As water and wastewater supply and management are under the remit of Uisce Éireann, the Council can only engage with Uisce Éireann and use its recommendations to inform the future delivery capacity of lands. The management of the M4 toll is the responsibility of Eurolink Motorway Operation Limited, a private company operating under a public-private partnership (PPP) contract with the Irish state, which is overseen by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). The operation and management of the M4 Toll is outside the remit of the Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-8: Colin Vaugh
Summary of Submission:
County Meath has enormous potential to attract tourists, particularly through motorhome tourism, which enhances local economies. However, current parking facilities in Trim are inadequate, therefore deterring visitors. The Púca festival could see increased attendance with improved parking. Motorhome tourism provides substantial income, especially in areas with limited hotel accommodation. Essential facilities such as wastewater disposal and water supply are necessary to encourage this form of tourism. Furthermore, access barriers limiting access to larger vehicles are hindering local economic support at attractions like Lloyd's Tower (Spire of Lloyd), Johnathan Swift Street and Bective Abbey. While there are hotel and B&B options, greater efforts are needed to support passing visitors, as exemplified by successful motorhome-friendly initiatives elsewhere in Europe, such as Beaux, France.
Chief Executive Response
The concerns raised in this submission are noted, and parking provision in towns with significant tourism potential will be discussed with the economic and transportation sections. The Puca festival in Trim has seen significant growth in recent years, and additional parking has been provided through the creation of temporary car parks, along with all-day traffic management and parking support. These measures have been very successful to date and will be revisited by the event organizers annually to ensure adequate parking is in place for visitors. In relation to the provision of Campervan Travel, which is notably more popular on the continent that in Ireland, Chapter 11 of the current County Development Plan 2021-2027 identifies the various zoning categories where motorhome/campervan travel are permissible and open for consideration. Caravan parks and camping facilities are currently permitted in principle under D1 Tourism zonings and RA Rural Areas, while caravan parks are identified as 'open for consideration' on A2 New Residential and in Rural Nodes. This allows for the development of such uses in a wide array of locations and demonstrates the Council's support for such attractions at a land use level. Accordingly, it is considered that there are several options for a person to pursue the development of a caravan and camping facility.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-9: Johnstown Football Club

Summary of Submission:

Johnstown FC is submitting a document to Meath County Council (MCC) regarding the 2027–2033 County Development Plan (CDP). They aim to highlight the urgent need for community and sports infrastructure in Johnstown, Navan, which has seen rapid population growth but lacks essential community facilities. Despite an increase from nearly 12,895 to over 15,931 residents between 2011 and 2022, Johnstown has no public playgrounds, community halls, or sports pitches. This submission emphasizes the area's deficits and calls for Johnstown to be prioritised for investment in infrastructure in the upcoming plan.

The author states that the Johnstown has experienced significant expansion, driven by new housing developments, and is characterised by a young and diverse population. The area houses several schools, yet the author of this submission contends that there is a complete lack of recreational and community infrastructure. Residents must travel as far as 5km to access basic facilities, which presents an unfair situation compared to other urban areas in the county. The lack of amenities affects youth development, limits physical activity, and adds pressure to families and schools. It also goes against the objectives of the CDP focused on developing sustainable communities and public health.

The author states that providing local sports and recreation facilities could ease traffic congestion and lower carbon emissions, aligning with County Meath's transport and climate goals. The Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper acknowledges the need for equal access to community infrastructure, aiming for healthy and well-served communities, alongside accessible open spaces for physical and mental wellbeing. Current proposals have not addressed the investment needed in Johnstown, despite the growth and contribution of the area to Navan.

Johnstown FC, as the area’s largest volunteer organisation with over 450 active members, proposes a comprehensive community sports hub in response to this infrastructure gap. The author proposes a facility would include a multi-use games area, running and walking tracks, portable facilities, such as toilets and dressing rooms, a full-sized sports pitch, a permanent community centre, a playground, and other amenities. This proposed community-designed plan aims to meet immediate needs and align with the Council's own strategic vision.

The proposed facility would support the Meath County Council's goals for youth engagement, public health, education, and economic development by providing structured activities to reduce anti-social behaviour and offering a shared civic space to enhance community identity. It will cater not only to sports but also serve as a hub for

events and activities, fostering community connections in a rapidly growing area without a civic core.

Johnstown FC requests that the next Meath County Development Plan recognises Johnstown as a priority area for community infrastructure investment. They seek to secure appropriate locations for future sports and recreational facilities and specific objectives for public amenities in partnership with local organisations. Furthermore, they urge support for funding partnerships to realise the Johnstown Community Sports Hub.

The proposal aims to bridge the infrastructure gap in Johnstown, promoting sustainable community development. Johnstown FC encourages the Council to take action in the upcoming Development Plan to address the disparity in recreational and community infrastructure, ensuring Johnstown can thrive as an interconnected urban community.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the need for community and sports infrastructure in Johnstown and recognises that there are parts of the County like Johnstown in Navan that saw unprecedented residential growth over the last decade and beyond and are playing catch-up in relation to social infrastructure. The provision of local sports pitches, multi-use games areas, playgrounds, and community spaces is recognised as essential to meet the needs of the young and diverse population in Johnstown and to support youth engagement, public health, education, and social cohesion.

The planning for such facilities will be informed by the County-wide Social Infrastructure Audit, which is being prepared in parallel with the Draft County Development Plan and will assess existing and future requirements for schools, childcare, healthcare and other community facilities in line with projected population growth.

For information purposes, there is an upcoming Part 8 application for a proposed community park at Dunville, Johnstown. The community park will include play spaces, 5-a-side 3G Pitch, 3x3 basketball court and a sensory garden**.**

The Council is supportive of initiatives that enhance outdoor recreation activities and amenities and notes the role of local organisations, including Johnstown FC, in supporting community development. The Council will consider the potential for collaborative partnerships to facilitate the provision of sports and recreational facilities in the area.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-10: Aoife Smith

Summary of Submission:

The author welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the pre-draft consultation regarding priorities for Dunshaughlin, focusing on themes from the Issues Paper, such as

compact growth, community infrastructure, and sustainable transport. The author contends that, despite its growth, Dunshaughlin lacks essential amenities, particularly a public swimming pool and a modern gym, which would aid in promoting health, well-being, and youth engagement.

Repurposing vacant buildings in the town centre could address these needs, aligning with goals for placemaking and sustainable land use while revitalising the town core.

Additionally, while the author supports the Council's alignment with the National Transport Authority's DART+ program, the author urges prioritisation of the Navan Railway Line and the proposed station at Dunshaughlin, as this infrastructure is crucial for reducing car dependency and facilitating compact, transport-oriented development consistent with national climate and mobility objectives.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the request for the provision of community amenities in Dunshaughlin, including a public swimming pool and modern gym facility. A Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of public swimming facilities and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective to deliver a swimming facility. The delivery of any public swimming facility will be subject to funding from the Minister of State at the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. The delivery of gym facilities is not within the control of the local authority, as such services are generally driven by privately run businesses.

Furthermore, the Draft County Development Plan will promote a town centre first approach to development, prioritising the reuse and regeneration of existing buildings and brownfield sites with town centres such as Dunshaughlin. The introduction of the RZLT, which now captures the Vacant Site Levy, as well as the Derelict Property Tax, which is due to be replaced by the Derelict Sites Levy, aims to activate vacant properties by charging owners a levy of 7% of the property value, which should encourage owners to bring derelict properties back into use. This is further supported by Vacant Property Refurbishment grants, which provide up to €70,000 in grants. It is hoped that these measures will, in time, bring back the vacant buildings in Dunshaughlin.

The prioritisation of the Navan Railway Line and the proposed station at Dunshaughlin is a key focus of Meath County Council. The Council is supportive and fully committed to the delivery of this key piece of infrastructure, which is recognised as essential to expanding the public transport network, reducing carbon emissions, addressing congestion, and supporting sustainable development in County Meath. Policies and objective will be

included in the Draft Plan which support and facilitate the provision of this key infrastructure project.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-11: Peter Shortland
Summary of Submission:
The author suggests that no further housing development should be permitted in the Mornington area until the sewage/drainage network is upgraded. The author contends that the area's sewer system frequently backs up, causing sewage to flood gardens and houses. Effluent is also discharged from one of the pumping stations (pump station 2, Golf Links Road, Mornington) to the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (SAC 001957) during periods of high demand on the sewage system.
Chief Executive Response
The Chief Executive notes the author's concerns relating to the sewerage and drainage network in Mornington. Uisce Éireann is now the national water utility body, responsible for providing and managing all public water and wastewater services, including infrastructure (pipes, treatment plants), supply, maintenance, and investment in upgrades for homes and businesses across the country. In respect of the potential of Mornington to accommodate further housing, the Council has conducted a Settlement Capacity Audit for all settlements within the county, including Mornington. This formal assessment evaluates whether land has the necessary water/wastewater infrastructure to be zoned for development. To determine this, Meath County Council engages with Uisce Eireann to advise the local authority on the status of lands, which in turn informs the zoning process. This engagement occurs regularly to ensure upgrades and changes in land status are captured. As water and wastewater supply and management are under the remit of Uisce Éireann, the Council can only engage with Uisce Éireann and use its recommendations to inform the future delivery capacity of lands. The Chief Executive also recognises the concerns relating to the pumping station being discharged to the Boyne Coast and Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This issue will be referred to the Environmental Department for further investigation.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-12: Eoin Walsh
Summary of Submission:
The author wishes to address concerns regarding vehicular traffic affecting commuters living in Ashbourne and Ratoath. The author proposes several suggestions that may alleviate some of the pressures in this area.

1. A short-relief road linking Ballybin Road to the R125 and potentially Kilbride Road, with a large roundabout in between, or two roundabouts to avoid the current junction. The benefit of rationalising this junction will become more evident once the Ratoath Outer Relief Road that is currently under construction is completed.
2. Add a new on and off ramp (in the Dublin direction at least) to the M2 Motorway where the Ballybin Rd currently crosses, that will link to the Donaghmore Ashbourne GAA club, and estates to the western side of Ashbourne.
3. Increase links and connections between housing estates in Ashbourne to alleviate traffic being funnelled through Main Street.
    a. Removing the blockages between Alderbrook and Garden City estates with a relief road linking Churchfields, Garden City and Cherry Lane.
    b. Archerstown Road should connect to The Oaks, The Maples and Milltown Manor and road-widening improvements where required.
    c. Connections from Baldara Ct through to Crennigans's Bánóg, across the Main Road and on towards Hickey's Lane.
    d. Racehill Road to Hunter's Lane, and Racehill to Rath Lodge forming an eastern outer relief road linking Archerstown Road and possibility for opening up lands for future estates.

Given the levels of growth and development in Ashbourne, the author contends that if roads are not possible, providing the connecting pedestrian routes would do so much to improve the quality of life in the town.

The author has provided 6 attached map images with this submission, which mark the locations of the potential connections and links between the existing developments in Ashbourne and Ratoath.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive acknowledges the concerns and suggestions raised regarding vehicular traffic affecting commuters living in Ashbourne and Ratoath, and will engage with Transportation Department on these suggestions as part of the preparation of the Draft Plan.

The Draft Plan will continue to support compact growth and retain policy objectives that require high-density developments adjacent to good-quality public transport corridors, together with strong permeability links. As part of the review process, a Settlement Capacity Audit will be carried out by Meath County Council to inform plan policy relating to the growth of Meath's settlements in line with National and Regional planning objectives for compact sustainable growth and enhanced resilience. In this context, a key component of the study will include an assessment of areas within the walkable catchment of town centers as well as areas close to good quality transport links and displaying high levels of accessibility.

Regarding the suggestions to alleviate pressure in Ashbourne and Ratoath, Meath County Council plays a key role in facilitating and implementing sustainable transportation through its infrastructure and land-use policies in the County Development Plan and subsequent delivery of its Capital Programme. The Meath Capital Programme is a three-year rolling programme that identifies infrastructure projects that include new & upgraded roads, footpaths, cycle routes and public transport facilities. All of the projects that make up the Capital Programme are derived from the transport and movement policies within the current Plan, as well as regional and national policy objectives, including NTA's GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042 and the National Planning Framework (NPF). Permeability is a key priority of street design and is supported in SH POL 3 and MOV OBJ 30 of the existing CDP, which supports the creation of healthy and sustainable communities that encourage and facilitate walking and cycling and general physical activity through the implementation of best practices in urban design that promote permeability and interconnecting spaces. The Council are also guided by 'Permeability Best Practice Guide, NTA (2015) in the assessment of the layout of residential developments and this policy and guidance will be carried over into the next CDP

With respect to the M2, Meath County Council will continue to maintain and protect the safety, capacity, and efficiency of the strategic road corridors. Specifically, local access to the M2 road network continues to be managed and restricted through the development management process to protect the function of national roads and to discourage use by local traffic for short trips. The Council also continues to collaborate with the NTA and TII towards the implementation of demand management measures on national routes. Policies and objectives to support and facilitate the protection and management of the national road network for the movement of strategic traffic in line with relevant National and Regional policy will be an important aspect of transport policy in the new plan.

It is acknowledged that road infrastructure plays a central role in the overall transportation network, serving the movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. In undertaking transport policies, the Council will strive to provide, maintain, and enhance road infrastructure in the County in accordance with National and Regional policies and objectives.

Submission No. MC-C203-SIP3-13: Eoin Walsh

Summary of Submission:

The author proposes establishing a park-and-ride facility at the Nine Mile Stone roundabout south of Ashbourne. This location could offer express bus access to the IFSC via the Port Tunnel in 20 minutes, providing a more efficient route to the City Centre than alternatives from other parts of Meath. Such a service would benefit commuters, particularly Ratoath residents who are currently being routed through Ashbourne. This

facility could also support future local bus routes and ease the load on the existing route 103.

Additionally, there is potential for a smaller park-and-ride at Kilmoon Cross to alleviate congestion at R155/N2, though its success would depend on implementing a bus lane. Overall, these initiatives could significantly reduce commute times and emissions for commuters in surrounding areas.

The author attached an image with the submission, highlighting a potential park and ride location to the southwest of the Nine Mile Stone roundabout in Ashbourne.

Chief Executive Response

The suggestion to establish a park-and-ride facility at the Nine Mile Stone roundabout south of Ashbourne and at Kilmoon Cross is noted. It is currently the objective of the Plan to identify a suitable location for a bus-based Park and Ride facility in Ashbourne (ASH OBJ 5) and Meath County Council will continue to engage with the NTA and other relevant stakeholders regarding the identification and development of Park and Ride facilities at appropriate locations.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-14: Colm Gogan

Summary of Submission:

The author of this submission has lived in Meath all their life and is frustrated with its poor management despite its potential. The author believes Meath can be the best county but requires more ambition and a long-term development plan for the next 100 years. Current plans, like the 5-year development plan, are in their opinion insufficient. The author contends, that there is a lack of cooperation between local councils, leading to underdeveloped infrastructure such as roads and footpaths. Towns and villages are poorly maintained, with many vacant or derelict buildings, particularly in Clonee. The author urges measures to develop these properties responsibly and to plan for sustainable development, avoiding hasty decisions driven by short-term gains. The Boyne Greenway should be developed quickly as it would become a significant asset for the community.

The author states that the Navan rail line route needs a fundamental re-evaluation. It should include the large populations of Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, and Ashbourne, which are currently poorly connected. A park-and-ride station should be built between Dunshaughlin and Ratoath, with improved roads to better access.

The author of this submission outlines the following as measures that should be undertaken by the local authority. The author of this submission has included several annotated maps, with particular routes and projects identified.

The author has devised a route regarding a railway connection to Navan. The line would continue from M3 Parkway to a point between Dunshaughlin & Ratoath. This negates a future requirement for a spur to Ratoath / Ashbourne which in turn makes the economic / viability of the line easier to make.

- A new road network should connect a large park and ride facility to Dunshaughlin, Ratoath & Ashbourne.
- The author asserts that these measures should vastly improve the public transport facilities in these villages while making the viability of the line more acceptable given the increased patronage.
- Tayto Park would also be in close proximity to a station here.
- A public transport shuttle bus could connect the train station with the surrounding towns and villages.
- Much needed upgrade to the R125 included in the scheme.
- A straighter rail alignment would facilitate higher line speeds / lower journey times.
- The line would then continue north with a possible stop in Kentstown which is a village with a growing population.
- The line would then enter Navan town via the existing Boyne viaduct.
- Navan train station would be centrally located within the town. Easy walking distance of town centre.
- No land would need to be acquired in Navan itself, saving a lot of money
- Existing train station buildings/land are already in place.
- Best use of existing infrastructure/heritage etc.
- 2 no. park and ride facilities could be located east and west of the town.
- Possible future rail extension north facilitated.

The author of this submission contends that, in general, the Bus Éireann service and facilities around the county is quite poor. A complete overhaul of Bus Eireann and its operation in County Meath should be completed, similar to what has been done with Dublin Bus (BusConnects Project).

The author lists the following as areas that are to be addressed.

- RTPI (Real Time Passenger Information) not working or present
- Bus stops in poor condition
- Poor service frequency generally
- Poor journey time reliability
- Poor punctuality
- Busses get caught in general traffic
- Timetable / route number legibility is very poor in villages / on footpaths
- Footpaths and the pedestrian environment are generally in a poor state of repair in Meath's towns & villages.

- The private car dominates our towns and villages to such an extent that pedestrians feel vulnerable going about their daily business. This has to be addressed.
- Footpaths are often narrow, and gullies are silted up, potholed and dangerous.
- Would-be pedestrians use their cars rather than walking because pedestrian infrastructure is not in place or in a poor state or repair / narrow.
- Lots of neighbourhoods are disconnected from each other due to poor facilities or linear obstacles (Walls / Motorways / Rail-lines etc). Housing estates are designed such that something 50m away is only accessible via a circuitous car journey.
- Footpath / Cycle lane here would link Dunboyne / Kilbride.
- The footpaths in Clonee / Dunboyne are particularly poor, with pedestrian crossings missing at strategic locations.
- Vehicles are regularly parked on footpaths impairing pedestrian movement.
- Dirt / silt on paths never cleaned.
- Overgrown hedges protruding out into the carriageway. Budlia growing out of derelict buildings,
- Generally water ponds on paths, or there are loose / missing paving slabs.
- There are missing dropped kerbs for mobility impaired road users.
- Public lighting is also generally very poor in villages throughout the county.
- A road user audit should be carried out on every single town and village in the county to pick up on the following;
    - Pedestrian facilities
    - Drainage issues
    - Public lighting issues
    - Accessibility issues
    - Broken kerbs
    - Missing infrastructure

If we have any hope in meeting our climate related targets we simply have to encourage cycling and walking to a much greater degree than we have been doing until now. This is something that MCC needs to take more seriously.

The author continues to discuss road maintenance concerns and outlines the following as key points that require redress.

- Vehicular traffic should be reduced; alternatives to cars are necessary.
- Many local roads are under-maintained and need major repairs.
- Some roads are becoming unsafe for walking and cycling due to overgrown hedges.
- Certain local roads, like the L1010, require reclassification due to high traffic complexity.

• Meath County Council should prioritize full reconstruction over temporary fixes.

The author concludes that a comprehensive assessment of local roads is needed to address urgent repair and reclassification issues.

The author continues with a potential proposal for road improvements and cycle network development in County Meath and outlines various proposals for road improvements and the establishment of a cycle network in a county, aiming to enhance transportation safety and efficiency.

Key Points:
•Build a cycle network along regional roads.
• Construct a new road connecting M3 and M2 to reduce local traffic congestion.
• Upgrade the Littlepace interchange and build a second bridge similar to a previous upgrade.
• Fully realign the dangerous R125 Dunshaughlin - Ratoath road.
• Provide a cycle track and footpath between Clonee and Ongar on the R149.
• Upgrade and maintain poorly aligned roads, like the R156 and R157.
• Consider adding a slip road from the M3 at Ard Cluain/Dunboyne.
• Address dangerous conditions of Ballybin Road and improve road junctions in Ratoath Village.

The author contends that these proposals aim to address safety concerns and improve traffic flow, supporting future development and enhancing pedestrian and cyclist access.

The author's final element of the proposal regards the concept of sustainable development and outlines that, in their opinion, infill developments should be preferred over green-field sites. Development should be compact to prevent land waste. Businesses should avoid rural areas to stop the growth of heavy industry, which increases traffic on small roads.

Chief Executive Response

The Council recognises the concerns expressed in this submission in relation to transport and movement, particularly in Dunshaughlin, Ratoath and Ashbourne, and will continue to engage with the Transportation Department on these suggestions as part of the preparation of the Draft Plan.

Regarding the suggestions to alleviate pressure in Dunshaughlin, Ratoath and Ashbourne, Meath County Council plays a key role in facilitating and implementing sustainable transportation through its infrastructure and land-use policies in the County Development Plan and subsequent delivery of its Capital Programme. The Meath Capital Programme is a three-year rolling programme that identifies infrastructure projects that include new and upgraded roads, footpaths, cycle routes and public transport facilities. All of the

projects that make up the Capital Programme are derived from the transport and movement policies within the current Plan, as well as regional and national policy objectives, including NTA's GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042 and the National Planning Framework (NPF).

Permeability is a key priority of street design and is supported in SH POL 3 and MOV OBJ 30 of the existing CDP, which supports the creation of healthy and sustainable communities that encourage and facilitate walking and cycling and general physical activity through the implementation of best practices in urban design that promote permeability and interconnecting spaces. The Council are also guided by 'Permeability Best Practice Guide, NTA (2015) in the assessment of the layout of residential developments and this policy and guidance will be carried over into the next CDP.

The comments made in relation to the Navan Rail Line are also noted. Meath County Council is continuing to liaise with Iarnród Éireann and NTA as the project proceeds through the planning and design phases. Consultants have been appointed as a multidisciplinary design team for Phases 1 and 2 of the Navan Rail Line Project, and works are currently underway on the route option selection, with the opportunity to make a further submission once the emerging preferred route is on public display. The Draft Plan will continue to support the proposed Navan Rail Line Study and the delivery of the Navan Railway Line.

The suggestion to establish a park-and-ride facility in Ashbourne and Navan is noted. It is currently an objective of the Plan to identify a suitable location for a bus-based Park and Ride facility in Ashbourne (ASH OBJ 5) and Navan (NAV OBJ 18), and Meath County Council will continue to engage with the NTA and other relevant stakeholders regarding the identification and development of Park and Ride facilities at appropriate locations.

With respect to the M2 and M3, Meath County Council will continue to maintain and protect the safety, capacity, and efficiency of these strategic road corridors. Specifically, local access to the M2 and M3 road network continues to be managed and restricted through the development management process to protect the function of national roads and discourage local traffic from using them for short trips. The Council also continues to collaborate with the NTA and TII towards the implementation of demand management measures on national routes. Policies and objectives to support and facilitate the protection and management of the national road network for the movement of strategic traffic in line with relevant National and Regional policy will be an important aspect of transport policy in the new plan.

In regard to the concerns expressed about the provision of bus services and facilities in the County, it is noted by Meath County Council. Bus Éireann currently operates the majority of commuter services in the County, and there have been significant improvements to the quality and frequency of bus services to and from the urban centres of the County to Dublin and to other regional centres. The current County Development

Plan contains policies and objectives on supporting and developing public transport routes throughout the county through collaboration with NTA (MOV POL 8). The Draft Plan will continue to underpin these requirements through supportive policy and objectives. Meath County Council will continue to cooperate with the NTA and other relevant agencies to have ongoing reviews of the network of bus routes in Meath, and will continue to support and encourage public transport operators to provide improved bus services and facilities in, and through the County.

It is acknowledged that road infrastructure plays a central role in the overall transportation network, serving the movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. There is a total of 3620 km of road network in Meath, with 220km of national and 3,400km of non-national roads. The Transportation (Roads) Department is responsible for the planning, design and maintenance of the regional and local roads within County Meath, with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) having ultimate responsibility for the National roads. In undertaking transport policies, the Council will strive to provide, maintain, and enhance road infrastructure in the County in accordance with National and Regional policies and objectives.

The suggestions raised seeking the County Development Plan to prioritise the development of the Boyne Greenway are noted. The Council has successfully rolled out several greenway programmes in the County with the success of the Boyne to Lakelands Greenway. Background works are ongoing regarding the Navan to Oldbridge portion of the Boyne Greenway, with the preferred route published for consultation in December 2023. Work is currently ongoing on preparing the Preliminary Design and the Council are continuing to liaise with relevant stakeholders. The Draft Plan will continue to support the development of a network of Greenways in the County in accordance with national and regional policy.

In relation to sustainable development, the Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, compact and sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. In this regard, the current County Development Plan already has policies to support compact growth on infill and brownfield sites including Policy SH POL 2 that seeks to promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced lands through the prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference to the edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl. The Draft County Development Plan will build on this policy approach and will continue to support compact growth.

The submitter's comments on businesses avoiding rural areas are noted. Whilst national policy encourages compact growth and sustainable development, the sustained growth and maintenance of agricultural practices, for example, to support such growth is required. In this respect, the Council notes that County Meath comprises a large rural

population which relies on a diverse range of rural businesses alongside urban-generated employment. Thus, the Council is of the view that it is not feasible to wholly preclude businesses from locating in rural areas. In respect of the submitter's concerns surrounding the expansion of heavy industry and accompanying traffic issues, it is noted that proposed developments of this type and scale would be required to submit Transport Impact Assessments and Mobility Management Plans in support of any planning application (see **MOV OBJ 13** and **ED POL 11** of the existing Development Plan).

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-15: HSA (Health and Safety Authority)

Summary of Submission:

The author, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) prescribed under Article 12 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 – 2015 is required to be consulted in relation to Development Plans under sections, 11 -13 & 24 of the Act. The Author refers to a document titled "Guidance on technical land use planning advice"

The HSA expects the planning guidelines to contain

1. An indication of planning policy in relation to major accident hazard sites notified under the regulations, which reflects the intentions of Article 13 of Directive 2012/18/EU.
2. The consultation distances and generic advice, where applicable, supplied by the Authority to Kildare County Council in relation to such sites (has been included for Intel). These distances to be indicated on the various maps included in the plan, as well as any more specific distances and advice supplied to by the Authority.
3. A policy on the siting of new major hazard establishments, taking account of Article 13 and the published policy of the Authority in relation to new developments, including developments in the vicinity of such establishments.
4. Mention of the following notified establishments.
    A. Establishment 1 Boliden Tara Mines
    B. Establishment Unilin
    C. Establishment Grasslands Agro
    D. Establishment Kemek

The HSA is satisfied that the information set out in the points has been provided in the Meath County Development Plan and has no further comments to make.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council note the submission from the HSA. Section 13 of the Meath County Development Plan identifies Seveso Sites both within the County and sites where consultation distances extend into the County. These are also mapped on Map 11.1 and

consultation distances are identified in Table 11.5 of Chapter 11 of the Meath County Development Plan.

Meath County Council notes the comments in relation to consultation distances in relation to Intel. Meath County council will review whether Intel needs to be included in the list and map mentioned above in this regard.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-16: Anthony Burke
Summary of Submission:
The author submits concerns regarding flooding issues in the Newtownmoyaghy, Kilcock area of County Meath, linked to incomplete flood defense works. These unfinished projects have disrupted water flow, exacerbating flooding during heavy rainfall by acting as barriers that retain or redirect surface water towards properties and land. The submission highlights the necessity for the County Development Plan to incorporate comprehensive approaches to flood management, advocating for: 1. The requirement for full completion and commissioning of flood defenses and drainage projects before operational status. 2. Implementation of post-construction monitoring and maintenance to prevent exacerbation of flooding due to incomplete or obstructed systems. 3. Adoption of catchment-based flood planning to avoid transferring water issues from one area to another. 4. Creation of a clear process enabling residents to report and monitor flooding incidents. The author requests that the Council review the flooding situation in Upper Ditch, Newtownmoyaghy, as part of its upcoming flood risk assessment, and consider these issues in the development of future drainage and infrastructure policies.
Chief Executive Response
Meath County Council acknowledges this submission regarding flooding issues in the Newtownmoyaghy area of Kilcock and the concerns raised in relation to incomplete or inadequately functioning flood defense and drainage works. Flood risk management in County Meath is guided by the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and informed by the Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study. The Council collaborates with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Uisce Éireann on flood relief schemes, drainage infrastructure, and surface water management.

The submission's emphasis on the need for complete commissioning of flood defense works, post-construction monitoring and maintenance, and a catchment-based approach to flood risk management is noted and supported. The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that flood mitigation measures do not inadvertently exacerbate flooding elsewhere within the catchment.

The specific issues raised in relation to Upper Ditch, Newtownmoyaghy, will be referred to the relevant Section for further assessment and follow-up, in consultation with the OPW and Uisce Éireann as appropriate.

The Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 will include robust policies to ensure that new development does not increase flood risk, that sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are incorporated where appropriate, and that flood risk management is addressed in a coordinated and strategic manner.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-17: Kevin Mullan
Summary of Submission:
The author states that is important to assess the current community needs and infrastructure while identifying areas for improvement alongside increased housing developments in local towns. Enfield has seen significant housing growth, which is likely to continue due to national pressure. However, it faces major issues with key services like water and sewerage. The author contends that Enfield would be an ideal commuter town, but challenges remain, such as extending Dart services, finding a suitable park-and-ride facility that won't disrupt the town centre, suitable locations for bus stops, and managing tolls for local residents using the M4. These requirements need attention. The author also contends that new housing developments must incorporate essential community infrastructure, including childcare and recreational facilities, green spaces, and retirement housing that cater to residents' needs. It is also important to protect and enhance existing canal park and greenway while improving monitoring of canal and river water quality for environmental protection.
Chief Executive Response
Meath County Council acknowledges the submission regarding the need for community infrastructure in Enfield alongside housing growth. New developments should provide essential facilities such as childcare, recreational spaces, green areas, and housing for older residents to support sustainable communities and in this respect of SOC Pol 6 requires any residential developments of 50 units or more to be accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) to determine if social and community facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents (of all age cohorts).

Childcare is one of the key issues that the Council wishes to improve, and measures are currently being considered to ensure childcare facilities built by developers are fit-for-purpose and handed over expeditiously to end users. Age-Friendly policies have also recently been updated by way of Variation No.3 to the existing CDP, whereby new developments are now required to increase their 15-30% of dwellings and apartments in new residential developments of ten units or more to be Age-Friendly Lifetime Adaptable Homes. These units are suitable to accommodate or adaptable to provide accommodation for people with disabilities and older people and will be reviewed and carried over into the next CDP.

In respect of water and wastewater infrastructure requirements, Meath County Council has undertaken a Settlement Capacity Audit to identify zoned serviced/serviceable lands with residential development potential in all relevant settlements, specifying enabling infrastructure. This enabling infrastructure would include but not be limited to wastewater/treatment infrastructure, roads, schools provision and community facilities. This work is currently under way by Meath County Council and will help inform the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033. Further, a social infrastructure audit will be carried out as part of the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033.

This should allow for a review of the availability, accessibility and capacity of social infrastructure facilities, thereby identifying major deficits going forward.

The comments made in relation to movement are noted. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks. The delivery of the DART+ is via national agencies including TII, NTA and Irish Rail, however, the Council has close cooperation and interaction with these bodies on an ongoing basis to ensure that policy objectives are being addressed through the process. As such, the Draft Plan will include policies which will continue to support the relevant agencies in the development of key public transport in line with the NPF, NDP and the RSES. Whilst operational management of the train services remains a matter for the NTA and the various operators, Meath County Council continues to work with these stakeholders to ensure an efficient and effective public transport network is achieved and the Draft Plan will include specific objectives in this regard.

Meath County Council will continue to engage with the NTA and other relevant stakeholders regarding the identification and development of Park and Ride facilities at appropriate locations.

The operation and management of the M4 Toll is outside the remit of the Plan.

The Council also recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing existing amenities, including the Canal Park and greenway. The draft County Outdoor Recreation Plan recognises the priority for outdoor recreation in Meath. Over the next five years the plan is to work in partnership with stakeholders and communities to secure and sensitively develop additional greenspaces for all residents and visitors to access. This will take place alongside improving, managing and maintaining existing water and land-based amenities, while protecting and conserving our environment and rich heritage.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-18: Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of Colm Sommerville

Summary of Submission:

The author of this submission, made on behalf of Mr Colm Sommerville, a key resident and landowner in Duleek, Co. Meath, responds to the recent Strategic Issues Paper for the County Meath Development Plan review.

The key points, as identified by the author, consist of the following.

1. Focus Areas: The submission addresses areas including Core Strategy, Settlements and Housing, Employment and Economy, Transport, Infrastructure, Community Services, Rural Development, Cultural and Natural Heritage, and Climate Change.

2. Housing Delivery: Informed by the Minister for Housing, the submission emphasizes the urgency of updating development plans and growth targets to enhance housing delivery and identifies suitable locations for new housing.

3. New Housing Requirements: The 2025 NPF Implementation Guidelines necessitate that Meath County Council accommodates 2,942 new homes annually until 2034, marking a substantial increase from previous targets.

4. Duleek's Unique Position: As a Self-Sustaining Town, Duleek's growth is attributed to its strategic location near major employment areas, motorway interchange and affordable housing options. This growth presents an opportunity for further housing development.

This submission in particular advocates Duleek's potential for increased housing development in the County Development Plan, given its unique attributes and current population growth trends. The author of this submission has included an annotated map outlining a number of development sites around the village of Duleek and a table outlining development progress.

The author references that, in response to government guidelines, it is proposed that Duleek's housing target be increased from 336 households (2021-2027) to approximately 88 units per year for the next decade. This adjustment aligns with a total county-wide increase and the National Planning Framework (NPF) objectives for growth.

The key points identified include:

• The need for about 30 hectares of land for development, following a density standard.
• Proposed land should have good access to infrastructure, be flood risk-free, and near amenities and services.
• Development should support the town's revitalisation and yet maintain its character.

The conclusion of this submission suggests that Meath County Council should reassess Duleek's housing allocation in the new county development plan to meet the updated requirements and consider suitable land for logical expansion.

Chief Executive Response

The Council notes the submission and acknowledges the issues raised regarding housing delivery, settlement growth and the evolving national policy context. The Draft County Development Plan is being prepared in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and is required to be consistent with national and regional policy, including the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and relevant Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines.

The Council recognises that updated national guidance places a strong emphasis on increasing housing delivery and ensuring that Development Plans are responsive to revised housing growth requirements. Accordingly, the Core Strategy and Housing Strategy of the Draft Development Plan will be informed by the most up-to-date statutory guidance and underpinned by an evidence-based assessment of population growth, housing need, infrastructure capacity, and environmental considerations.

Duleek is identified within the settlement hierarchy as a Self-Sustaining Town, reflecting its role in providing housing, services and employment opportunities for its local and wider catchment. The Council acknowledges the town's strategic location, accessibility and existing services, which are relevant considerations when assessing its capacity to accommodate additional growth. However, the allocation of housing growth at settlement level and the identification of additional zoned lands must be determined through a comprehensive assessment process, including Settlement Capacity Audit and infrastructure assessments, flood risk appraisal and environmental evaluation, to ensure that development is sequential, sustainable and capable of delivery.

While the Council notes the specific lands and development quantum referenced in the submission, it is noted that the Strategic Issues Paper stage of the County Development Plan review is intended to invite input on high-level strategic issues and policy directions only. Detailed consideration of site-specific matters, including land use zoning proposals and the identification of individual development lands, does not form part of this stage of the plan-making process. Such matters will be considered, where appropriate, during the statutory public consultation stage following the publication of the Draft County Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-19: Martin Curran
Summary of Submission:
The author proposes a strategy for small sites that includes promoting one-off dwellings with a grant of up to €2,500 for completing landscape work. This grant is time-sensitive and contingent on compliance with native planting, biodiversity, natural features, and long-term maintenance, all verified by a qualified horticulturist.
Chief Executive Response
This submission is noted, but it is not clear whether the author is referring to his preference for detached dwellings over semi-detached, terraced, or apartment models of living or whether this submission is related to the promotion of rural housing. However, the creation of grants for landscaping around housing is not a matter for the County Development Plan**.**

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-20: BMA Planning on behalf Carol Barden
Summary of Submission:
The author, BMA Planning, is acting on behalf of their client, Ms. Carol Barden. They have been instructed to submit this response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027 - 2033. The submission can be summarised as follows: - The Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper identifies key issues for the Development Plan 2027 – 2033, particularly the distribution of growth within the county. - The planning and development status of Kilbride Village should be considered, especially its classification within the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy. - Currently classified as 'Rural' in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027, Kilbride is proposed to be elevated to the 'Towns and Villages' category. Reasons for this proposed elevation include: - Kilbride functions as a local service centre for its rural hinterland, providing shopping, schooling, and recreational facilities. - The surrounding area is experiencing development pressure; appropriately scaled development in Kilbride can help manage this growth. - Employment in the agri-food sector is significant, supported by a designated enterprise centre and land zoned for general employment.

- Recent upgrades to water and wastewater infrastructure bolster the capacity for future growth in Kilbride.

The author advises that Kilbride's strategic importance and requests consideration for a higher classification in the settlement hierarchy.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council welcomes this submission and acknowledges the submitter's observations regarding the classification of Kilbride village in the current Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy in the current County Development Plan.

In respect of Kilbride's potential to accommodate further housing and growth, Kilbride is currently designated as a Rural Village in the existing County Development Plan and recorded a est. population of 160 people. The Council has conducted a Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA) for all settlements within the county, including Kilbride, which provides a database of service status and infrastructure availability. The SCA, in addition to its position within the settlement hierarchy, will inform the appropriate quantum of zoning for the settlement.

It should be noted that the current County Development Plan 2021-2027 has a policy specifically related to the development of Kilbride.

KIL POL 1 "To consolidate and strengthen the commercial and residential village centre of Kilbride, and encourage development which will enhance the quality of the public realm, the character and structure of the village core and existing streetscape, to engage and connect with the river and riverbank open space and the wider landscape, while catering for the needs of all within the local community and to provide for development that will allow the village to develop in a sustainable manner, as an attractive place to live, work recreate and visit."

In keeping with this policy, which will also form part of the new Draft Plan, the recommendations raised in this submission will be given full consideration in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-21: Councilor Ronan Moore

Summary of Submission:

The Autism Friendly Town (AFT) initiative, supported nationally by AsIAm (Ireland's autism charity), seeks to create environments where autistic individuals and their families can participate fully in community life. The next Meath County Development Plan (CDP) provides an opportunity for Meath County Council (MCC) to embed autism and neurodiversity-friendly design principles across all aspects of planning, community

development, and public service delivery, thereby advancing inclusion, accessibility, and wellbeing for all residents.

We strongly support the idea of developing an Autism Friendly County, as a strategic goal for County Meath, building on the success of the Autism Friendly Town initiatives already underway.

Strategic Vision: Towards an Autism Friendly County Meath

We propose that Meath County Council adopt a commitment to becoming Ireland's first Autism Friendly County, by mainstreaming neuro-accessibility across policy areas including:

- Planning and development
- Parks and recreation
- Housing and community services
- Transportation
- Education, culture, and libraries

A coordinated "Autism Friendly County Working Group" could be established, bringing together representatives from each Autism Friendly Town (AFT) committee, council departments, and relevant community partners to develop and monitor progress on this goal.

Recommendations for Inclusion in the CDP

1) Built Environment and Planning

- Include neurodiversity and sensory accessibility as a design consideration in all new public buildings and major refurbishments.
- Encourage developers to consult with local AFT committees during the design stage of major community or commercial developments.
- Require quiet rooms/sensory spaces in all new public service buildings, libraries, and community centres.
- Promote the installation of portable sensory pods, such as Cubbie units, in libraries, sports centres, and public offices.

2) Public Realm and Parks

- Designate and develop sensory gardens and low-stimulation zones in public parks and playgrounds.
- Incorporate communication boards (using symbols and plain language) in playgrounds and community spaces.
- Provide clear, consistent signage and wayfinding using colour coding and simple icons to support visual processing needs.

- Install autism-friendly parking spaces close to entrances of major facilities, alongside existing accessibility parking.

3) Community and Cultural Life

- Support the delivery of autism-friendly events (e.g. quiet hours, sensory-friendly screenings, inclusive festivals).
- Encourage all community venues, including leisure centres, libraries, and theatres, to adopt autism-friendly accreditation standards.
- Facilitate countywide awareness and training for council staff, community officers, and event organisers.

4) Mobility and Transport

- Incorporate autism-friendly design principles into transport hubs, bus stops, and pedestrian environments, including clear signage, predictable lighting, and reduced sensory overload where possible.
- Engage with Local Link and other transport providers to ensure training and awareness around neurodiversity.

5) Governance and Implementation

- Establish an Autism Friendly County Steering Group, with representation from each town's committee and key council departments.
- Include autism accessibility criteria within public realm audits and community grant schemes.
- Develop a Meath Autism Friendly Charter, setting countywide standards and commitments.

Alignment with National and Local Policy

This submission supports the principles of:

- The National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030
- The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022–2027
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- Project Ireland 2040 and its emphasis on inclusive, sustainable communities

By embedding these recommendations into the Meath CDP 2027–2033, the Council can ensure that accessibility extends beyond physical design, encompassing sensory, cognitive, and social inclusion for all residents.

The submission calls for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 to make a clear, measurable commitment to building an Autism Friendly County Meath; one where every person, regardless of neurotype, can thrive, participate, and belong. We therefore call on Meath County Council to embed autism and neuro-diversity in every theme of the CDP

2027-2033, not as a specialist add-on but as a core dimension of inclusive planning and design. By doing so, Meath can lead nationally in creating welcoming, accessible, inclusive environments for autistic people and their families, and indeed for all citizens.

Chief Executive Response

The submission highlights the importance of promoting inclusive, accessible and supportive environments for autistic people and those who are neurodivergent and welcomes the progress of Autism Friendly Town initiatives within County Meath. The Council recognises the role of inclusive design, community awareness and coordinated approaches in supporting participation, well-being and quality of life for all residents.

The principles of universal design, accessibility and inclusion are recognised as important policy considerations across a range of chapters, including planning and development, public realm design, parks and recreation, housing, community facilities, transport and cultural services. The potential to further embed neurodiversity-friendly design and practices within the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan will be considered as part of the preparation of the Draft Plan.

The Council notes the recommendations relating to public buildings, parks, community facilities, transport environments, staff training and governance structures. The value of continued engagement with community groups, including Autism Friendly Town committees and relevant stakeholders, is recognised in informing inclusive approaches to planning, service delivery and place-making. Engagement with relevant stakeholders, including Meath Disabled Persons Organisation and community and Autism Friendly Town groups, will take place through the statutory public consultation process at Draft County Development Plan stage.

The objectives of the forthcoming County Development Plan will continue to align with national and international policy frameworks that promote equality, accessibility and inclusive communities, including the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and relevant national strategies. These matters will be considered in the context of developing a plan that supports inclusive, healthy and sustainable communities across County Meath.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-22: Councilor Ronan Moore

Summary of Submission:

The author of this submission addresses the lack of and uneven distribution of community facilities and infrastructure in County Meath as part of the new County Development Plan. The author contends that, despite progress in housing and economic growth, essential community amenities such as multi-use centres, sports facilities, libraries, play

areas, and health services have not kept up with the rising population. This disparity impacts social equality, increases car-reliance, and lowers quality of life, especially for families, older individuals, and those without access to private transport.

The author proposes that Meath County Council conduct a comprehensive audit of community facilities across various settlements and create a standardised framework based on settlement size and function. It is recommended to follow the Settlement Hierarchy model from the National Planning Framework (NPF) to prioritize infrastructure investment. Key actions include auditing existing facilities, setting benchmarks for different settlement sizes (villages, small towns, large towns), identifying gaps through mapping, integrating the framework with development plans, and collaborating with local communities for facilities management.

The author contends that future proposals align with national (National Policy Objectives 12, 14, 26, 38, 41) and regional Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) policies, emphasizing balanced growth and the need for social infrastructure to accompany housing and employment. By implementing a structured approach, the Council can ensure equal access to facilities, enhance quality of life, promote compact sustainable growth, and strengthen support for future funding efforts. It is crucial that infrastructure investment keeps pace with population and housing growth, and that a framework be put in place to foster sustainable and inclusive community development in County Meath.

Chief Executive Response

The Council acknowledges the issues raised regarding the provision and distribution of community facilities and social infrastructure across County Meath. It is recognised that, while population growth, housing delivery, and economic development have progressed in recent years, the delivery of community facilities has not occurred consistently across all settlements.

The submission appropriately highlights the importance of ensuring that social and community infrastructure is planned in parallel with residential and employment growth, in accordance with the principles of compact growth, social inclusion and sustainable settlement development as set out in the National Planning Framework and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

In response, the Council confirms that a County-Wide Social Infrastructure Audit will be undertaken to inform the new County Development Plan. This audit will assess the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth, having regard to population size, settlement function, infrastructure availability, and the provision of community facilities and services.

The audit will inform the development of a more structured and evidence-based approach to community infrastructure provision, including the identification of gaps in facilities and establishing appropriate benchmarks aligned with the settlement hierarchy. The findings will guide community infrastructure prioritisation and future community investment strategies.

The Council also recognises the importance of engaging with local communities and stakeholders in the planning, delivery and long-term management of community facilities. The issues raised are therefore noted and supported in principle and will be considering in the drafting of the County Development Plan objectives relating to social and community infrastructure provision.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-24: Thornton O Connor Town Planning

Summary of Submission:

The author of this submission Thornton O'Connor Town Planning wishes to make the following submission in respect of the *Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper* for the future *Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033*. This Submission has a particular focus on the settlement of Ashbourne, emphasising its importance to the County Meath and its potential to accommodate sustainable new residential and mixed-used development.

STRATEGIC NEED FOR HOUSING

The author contends that recent planning policy changes highlight a national strategic need to increase housing delivery, particularly near existing settlements. The National Planning Framework First Revision (2025) mandates an average of 50,000 new dwellings annually, a 50% increase from 2018. This is further detailed in the Section 28 Guidelines, which allocate housing requirements to specific councils. County Meath's housing target has risen from 2,826 to 2,942 dwellings per year until 2034, now termed 'Annual New Housing Growth Requirement' to emphasise the need for growth rather than limitation of growth. The author notes that, despite these targets, historical shortfalls indicate that housing demand exceeds stated figures. Focused development is recommended in areas with existing infrastructure to ensure sustainability and self-sufficiency.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS AND BASES OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASHBOURNE

The author states that Ashbourne, the second-largest settlement in County Meath with a population of 15,680, offers significant strategic opportunities for development and sustainability. Its robust size enhances resilience to change and supports positive growth. Unlike other nearby towns, Ashbourne has a self-sufficient economic base, positioning it as a sustainable live-work community. The author notes the excellent connectivity via the N2/M2 facilitates access to Dublin, while public transport improvements, including a frequently running Bus Éireann route and potential rail services, further enhance its

accessibility (Ashbourne). The author considers that the proximity to Dublin and the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) underscores Ashbourne's potential as a well-connected outer node, reinforcing its role as both a residential and commercial hub.

PLANNING POLICY AND SPATIAL VISION FOR ASHBOURNE

The author states that in Ashbourne, spatial development has expanded along a north-west/south-east axis, primarily following the R135 regional road, resulting in their opinion, an unbalanced pattern of growth that fosters car dependence and makes the area less walkable. This trend contradicts the Development Plan Guidelines (2022), which advocate for a sequential zoning approach that prioritizes central development before considering peripheral areas. The author's analysis highlights a disconnection between Ashbourne's actual growth and the intended planning policy. The north-eastern side of Ashbourne is deemed preferable for future development due to the adjacent proposed public park, which will serve both recreational and limiting functions, and the presence of the M2 motorway, which necessitates a buffer zone to mitigate noise impacts and prevent congestion. This underscores the importance of adhering to sustainable planning principles in urban development.

The author suggests that Meath County Council (MCC) should prioritise Ashbourne as a key growth centre in County Meath in the next iteration of the Development Plan. The author contends that Ashbourne's location optimally supports growth in relation to Meath, Dublin, and the Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan (MASP), serving as both a residential and economic hub. The author highlights the unbalanced spatial development which currently follows a north-west/south-east axis along the R135 road, contrary to national planning policy. The author suggests promoting sustainable growth and recommends developing two key sequential areas—one to the north-east, preferably due to existing infrastructure, and another to the south-west.

1) For MCC to prioritise the potential of Ashbourne, increasing core strategy population and housing allocations, and areas of land zoned for residential and mixed-use development.

2) For MCC to 'rebalance' the spatial growth and consolidation of Ashbourne, by focusing new zonings to the north-east and south-west.

The author wishes to reiterate our recommendations before the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033 and invite further discussion or inquiries regarding available landbanks.

Chief Executive Response

The Council notes the submission and acknowledges the detailed consideration given to Ashbourne's role within County Meath. The current CDP recognises Ashbourne as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town within the settlement hierarchy, a category that includes towns with a moderate level of jobs and services, including county market towns and commuter

towns with good transport links and the capacity to become more self-sustaining over time.

The Council is aware of the opportunities presented by Ashbourne arising from its population scale, established employment base, proximity to Dublin Airport, and strategic transport connections. These attributes provide Ashbourne with unique employment opportunities compared to other settlements within the county. and are relevant considerations in the context of national and regional policy objectives which seek to promote balanced growth, sustainable settlement patterns and the efficient use of existing infrastructure.

The Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 will review the Core Strategy and settlement framework, having regard to revised national housing targets, the role and function of settlements within the hierarchy, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. The spatial pattern of growth, including the need to promote more balanced and walkable development, will be considered as part of this strategic review.

In relation to transport and movement, the comments are noted. The Council recognises the attractive urban form and compact nature of Ashbourne, which has helped foster a strong walking and cycling mode share from the recently completed pedestrian and cycling upgrade linking Pillo Hotel Roundabout to the Alderbrook junction south of Ashbourne town centre. The existing availability of high-quality public transport mentioned in the submission results in Ashbourne having a high level of accessibility, which is suitable for compact, transport-oriented residential development in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-25: Angela Smith
Summary of Submission:
The author of this submission can address three separate items under the following headings. These are summarized under these headings. **What would make Enfield a more Desirable Place to Live?** The author wished to make a personal submission stating that Enfield is a town with great potential, a strong community, and a strategic location on the Dublin–Sligo rail corridor. However, there has been a significant imbalance between residential growth and the necessary infrastructure and public investment. Local authorities face pressure

due to the housing crisis and national housing targets, working with limited resources. The author acknowledges that Meath County Council (MCC) has supported valuable projects like the Enfield Library and the Enfield Community Hall refurbishment, showcasing successful community partnerships. Yet the author states that progress often relies on volunteer efforts rather than strategic planning by the Council. The author contends for sustainable growth, the next County Development Plan (CDP) should prioritize community infrastructure and amenities as essential parts of development, not as afterthoughts.

The author states between 2002 and 2022, County Meath's population rose from 134,005 to 220,826, a 65% increase, making it one of Ireland's fastest-growing counties. The self-sustaining town of Enfield led this growth with a 242% increase, second only to Stamullen. Other notable towns include Laytown /Bettystown /Mornington/ Donacarney at 179%, Ratoath at 166%, and Ashbourne at 146%. Despite this rapid growth, towns in Meath, including Enfield, suffer from inadequate infrastructure, transport, job prospects, and community facilities. The government's new housing targets for County Meath, raised from 1,090 to 2,942 annually, create concerns about how the local council will meet these goals while aiming to develop vibrant, sustainable communities according to national and regional plans.

The author contends that Meath County Council (MCC) plans to increase residential zoning in Enfield to meet new housing targets, despite the current County Development Plan (CDP) stating that growth should focus on attracting jobs and limiting population rise. The CDP allocated 474 housing units for Enfield, but more than 700 have been approved, with 616 already started. The author contends that MCC intends to provide more zoning without corresponding infrastructure or job commitments, raising concerns about adherence to its policies and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

The author raises a query regarding the 2021-2027 CDP, that required Meath County Council to create Local Area Plans (LAPs) for key settlements, including Enfield. However, the Council has not produced a single standalone LAP, with only a joint plan for Maynooth completed and Drogheda nearing completion. The Council acknowledged its failure to meet its duty to prepare LAPs after a court case from the Protect East Meath group. Although consultants are now engaged to address plans for eight towns, Enfield is not included. The lack of planning has ignored the community's needs; Enfield has seen rapid growth without adequate infrastructure or job creation, and objectives from the current plan remain unmet. The Town Centre First plan has shown minimal results.

The author states that Enfield has experienced rapid population growth but has not received the necessary planning, infrastructure, or employment support needed. The author contends that Meath County Council relies too much on housing delivery as a success measure, neglecting essential planning principles like sustainability and community well-being.

In the author’s opinion, to ensure Enfield's future to be sustainable, the Council must change its approach to be proactive and evidence-based, focusing on planning and local economic growth.

The submission requests that Meath County Council clarify several points:

1. How does it justify expanding zoning and housing in a town designated as "Self-Sustaining. "
2. Why has it not prepared Local Area Plans and how will it ensure future accountability?
3. A timeline for a new Local Area Plan, building on previous work.
4. Infrastructure projects linked to future zoning.
5. Indicators, beyond housing, to measure success, such as local employment and community services.

Transparency in the County Development Plan

The Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 specifies community facilities and schools for Enfield but does not clearly identify them in the plan. In 2022, an inquiry by the Enfield Development Group revealed that specific information about these facilities was not readily accessible, leading to a Freedom of Information request for clarification. Despite receiving some data, questions remained unanswered regarding the inclusion of four preschools and the status of the facilities listed, including a nursing home that was proposed but never built.

Several issues were highlighted: the “Outdoor Activity Centre” is not identified or located, certain sports grounds seem to be double-counted, and missing names for preschools raise concerns about the planning criteria used. The Strategic Issues Paper for the upcoming CDP 2027–2033 mentions many outdoor and cultural facilities; however, there is no accessible list of them.

To enhance transparency and public trust, it is recommended that the Council ensures all data in planning documents is clearly defined and verifiable. This data should be published within the Written Statement or its appendix, including specific names and locations of facilities. Given the funds allocated to consultants for this task, public access to this information is reasonable.

Enfield Population Growth concerns.

The submission highlights key actions for Enfield to be prioritized in the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. It emphasizes the urgent need for a Statutory Local Area Plan (LAP) to integrate growth, infrastructure, transport, public spaces, housing, and economic development within a legal framework.

The author suggests that the plan should implement the Enfield Town Centre First Plan, which includes upgrading the public realm of Main Street by improving paving, lighting, and planting trees, creating a central civic space and market area, establishing a Town Park focused on amenities for teenagers, and enhancing connections for walking and cycling between housing areas, schools, and local amenities. There is also a call for support for local businesses, remote working hubs, and the development of a cohesive brand for Enfield that links its historical and civic features.

Improvements in transport and connectivity are also crucial. The submission proposes extending the DART+ West service to Enfield, upgrading the railway station into a multi-modal transport hub, improving local and regional bus services, and reducing toll charges on the N4/M4. It suggests enhancing active travel infrastructure to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists, exploring the provision of a bypass road to alleviate traffic, and establishing a roundabout at the R148/Johnstown Road intersection.

In terms of housing and community development, the author proposes and advocates for compact growth and diverse housing types within walking distance of the town centre. Quality design and public amenities should be prioritized, along with the protection of land for community facilities. The submission stresses the need for increased Gardaí resources in Enfield to address crime amid population growth.

Infrastructure related to reliable water and wastewater services is another focus area. Housing development should align with existing infrastructure capacity, with an emphasis on sustainable drainage and necessary upgrades to water supply and wastewater systems.

To foster local employment and economic opportunities, a comprehensive plan to reduce reliance on commuting is recommended. This involves developing land for technology and logistics industries and supporting local businesses through reduced rates and improved facilities.

Environmental considerations are stressed, including the creation of safe walking and cycling paths, strengthening green spaces, using sustainable drainage systems, and ensuring that town planning is inclusive for individuals of diverse abilities.

Community involvement in decision-making processes is essential. The submission urges the council to listen to public opinions, implement a clear delivery framework through the LAP, and monitor progress with measurable indicators. Lastly, conducting a periodic

Quality of Life Survey is advocated to assess improvements for residents and gauge the success of the County Development Plan.

Chief Executive Response

The Council notes the submission and acknowledges the issues raised regarding the relationship between population growth, infrastructure provision, community facilities and employment development in Enfield.

Enfield is identified in the current Development Plan settlement hierarchy as a Self-Sustaining Town, reflecting both its growth trajectory and the need to strengthen its employment base, services and infrastructure to better align population growth with local opportunities. This means that Enfield's planned growth will be lower than that of towns higher up in the Settlement hierarchy. The Council acknowledges that rapid population growth presents challenges in ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure and community amenities and recognises the importance of adopting a balanced, evidence-based approach to future development that supports sustainable communities rather than housing delivery in isolation. The Draft County Development Plan will address these matters at a strategic level through the Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy, Community Strategy and supporting policies, which seek to align housing growth with infrastructure capacity, employment provision, transport accessibility and environmental considerations. The Plan also recognises the importance of community infrastructure, social facilities and town centre vitality as integral components of sustainable development and quality of life. With regard to Local Area Plans, the Council notes the submission's comments. The preparation and prioritisation of LAPs has been influenced by statutory requirements, available resources and wider plan-making obligations. In this respect, the unanticipated introduction of the Residential Zoned Land Tax, Sustainable Urban Housing & Compact Settlement Guidance, resourcing constraints and judicial reviews, one of which is mentioned by the Author, consumed considerable resources during the Development Plan period, resulting in delays in the delivery of the LAP programme set out in the County Development Plan. While many factors that led to delays in the LAP making were outside of the control of the local authority, efforts to overcome constraints within the control of the council are being actively pursued to ensure future delivery of the planning programme. Settlement and Housing: In relation to housing and settlement, the Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, compact and sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. In this regard, Policy SH POL 2 of the current County Development Plan seeks to promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced lands through the prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference to the edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl. This approach will be further progressed and reflected in policies and objectives of the Draft County Development Plan.

With regard to zoning lands, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit will determine serviced and serviceable lands within Enfield that could accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation

infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning and will form an appendices to the Draft Plan.

Transparency in the County Development Plan

The Council also notes the importance of ensuring that residential development is supported by appropriate social and community infrastructure. A Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective. This Assessment will also form an appendices to the Draft Plan. The Social Infrastructure Assessment will also include a list and visual map of all existing social and community infrastructure in the key growth settlements. The Council will ensure that the list is up to date and accurate at the time of writing. Infrastructure & Utilities: Uisce Éireann is Ireland's national water utility, is responsible for providing and managing all public water and wastewater services, including infrastructure (pipes, treatment plants), supply, maintenance, and investment in upgrades for homes and businesses across the country. All planning applications submitted to Meath County Council that require water infrastructure are referred to Uisce Éireann to advise on water and/or wastewater availability. These recommendations inform the local authority's planning application decision. This referral process remains a standard operational procedure in the planning application assessment, notwithstanding the recent upgrades to wastewater supply to Enfield. Transport and Movement The concerns and suggestions regarding transport and connectivity in Enfield are acknowledged by the Council. Meath County Council will continue to engage with the NTA and other relevant stakeholders regarding the growing demand for additional rail and bus services to Enfield. The delivery of the DART+ is via national agencies including TII, NTA and Irish Rail, however, the Council has close cooperation and interaction with these bodies on an ongoing basis to ensure that policy objectives are being addressed through the process. As such, the Draft Plan will include policies which will continue to support the relevant agencies in the development of key public transport projects in line with the NPF, NDP and the RSES. Whilst operational management of the train services remains a matter for Irish Rail/NTA, Meath County Council continues to work with these stakeholders to ensure an efficient and effective public transport network is achieved and the Draft Plan will include specific objectives in this regard. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing **objective of Meath**

County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks. The operation and management of the M4 Toll is outside the remit of the Plan. In regards to the comments made seeking the provision of a bypass road to alleviate traffic in Enfield, it should be noted, the town currently benefits from a southern local bypass (Enfield Outer Relief Road) provided to relieve the town centre of strategic through- traffic.

Employment & Economy

The author's submission on the need for local employment in Enfield is noted. The Council aligns its approach to employment development with the requirements set out in the Development Plan Guidelines (DPGs) for Planning Authorities (2022). The DPGs recommend that a job: resident workforce ratio (jobs ratio) is used as a barometer for the need for employment development throughout the County. A jobs ratio refers to the number of jobs available versus the number of resident workers in each town, with a ratio of 1.0 meaning that there is one job for every resident worker. The number of jobs and the resident labour force are calculated based on figures from the latest census. This indicates whether there is enough employment within the town to accommodate the resident workforce thereby demonstrating the level of outward and inward commuting for employment purposes. The Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern & Midlands Assembly 2019-2031 indicates that a jobs ratio of 0.7 or above would be considered acceptable. It is noted that Enfield achieves a jobs ratio of 0.33 in the current Development Plan indicating a need for employment development in Enfield, however, data from the recent census indicates that the jobs ratio for Enfield has improved to 0.45. Notwithstanding the above, it is noted that approximately 37.68ha of land is zoned for employment within Enfield and its environs and approximately 5.76ha of this is developed. The Council is reviewing the delivery and developability of employment-zoned lands across the County, including Enfield, to inform the employment zoning methodology for the new Development Plan, which must align with the provisions of the DPGs. This will consider the need for employment zoning or rezoning in Enfield, in tandem with the need for residential zoning. In addition, the effectiveness of employment-related policies and objectives in the current Development Plan relating to Enfield (ENF OBJ 2, 3, 4) will be reviewed as part of the Development Plan review process. This will be undertaken in consultation with the Council's Economic Development Department who have also engaged 3rd party consultants on this matter.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-27: Drogheda and District Chamber

Summary of Submission:

The author of this submission, the Drogheda and District Chamber, established in 1894, advocates for development across various sectors in County Louth and County Meath. It highlights opportunities in Drogheda, focusing on planning to enhance its reputation in the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

The author contends that the transport strategy for Drogheda aims to enhance the area's transport system by focusing on its location along the North-East coast. The main goals are to improve access to and from Drogheda, promote rail travel, and develop park-and-ride facilities, with a specific time frame of 2027 to 2033 for these actions.

The author wishes to address one of the major concerns regarding transport: the Donore Road toll, which has been a controversial topic for 20 years. With the toll contract ending in 2034, it's important to reassess its impact on the community and whether it still serves its intended purpose. The author states that a report is proposed for 2026 to evaluate the toll's effectiveness, its effect on local businesses, and the possibility of increasing the main M1 toll to close the Donore Road toll.

The author believes that completing the Northern Cross Route by 2029 is a key project that will facilitate direct access from the M1 to Drogheda Port. This will support housing and job growth in the area. A working group is suggested to improve transport conditions, focusing on reducing heavy traffic in Drogheda. Additionally, the introduction of DART services to Drogheda will need careful planning concerning parking, traffic, and potential new stations.

Key future gain projects include investing in road upgrades to enhance safety and alleviate congestion, implementing smart traffic management systems for improved environmental impact, maintaining strong cooperation with Meath County Council (MCC) to align development plans, and continuing investment in digital connectivity to support remote work and limit commuting.

The author contends that the vision for retail development in the Drogheda region is to foster sustainable and diverse growth, making it a lively hub for shopping, leisure, and community engagement. This strategy aims to increase foot traffic on main streets, while also acknowledging the importance of out-of-town retail in creating employment opportunities and ensuring that both types of retail can coexist and mutually benefit.

Drogheda's central retail area requires a dynamic 10-year Town Centre Retail Strategy, updated regularly to adapt to market changes, encompassing a five-year Strategic Plan and annual Action Plans for swift delivery. The strategy must prioritise proactive growth by enhancing foot traffic attractiveness through improved public spaces, green areas,

transport links, lighting, and security. It should also incentivise local, independent retailers, promote the Living Cities initiative sustainably, and ensure the retail locations are vibrant day and night with a unique offering. Additionally, the plan suggests grants or tax incentives for small retailers to compete with larger chains and the implementation of a town loyalty card system to encourage local shopping.

To future-proof retail infrastructure, a focus on digital transformation is essential, offering small businesses training and resources for online platform development. Promoting flexible retail spaces that accommodate changing consumer habits, such as click-and-collect services or pop-up shops, is also crucial. Retail spaces must be accessible to all demographics, including individuals with disabilities, which requires ongoing dialogue with relevant organisations. Furthermore, encouraging and incentivising eco-friendly retail practices, including sustainable sourcing, waste reduction, and green building initiatives, alongside the adoption of renewable energy and support for local products, will contribute to a more resilient retail sector.

The Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan Issues Paper was released in February 2024, with a report on submissions published in June 2025. The Drogheda and District Chamber submitted objectives for the new County Louth Development Plan. The plan aims to empower the community and promote sustainable growth by addressing current needs, which include completing the PANCR by 2028, creating a Special Economic Zone for hotels, enhancing transport links, and building a new train station on the north side.

It is the author’s contention that Drogheda's tourism is limited due to insufficient bus parking and poor connections to tourist sites. The author’s recommendations involve creating a bus parking area, safe pedestrian paths to attractions, and a maritime museum. Additionally, expanding third-level education opportunities, particularly in medical training, is suggested, along with a pilot program for a teen-friendly cafe. The plan also supports ongoing efforts by the Drogheda Implementation Board to boost local sports amenities and job creation in the agri-food sector. The Chamber calls for a dedicated job-creation plan from IDA Ireland and for new economic zones in Drogheda. These submissions will also contribute to the evidence base for Louth and Meath County Development Plans.

The author outlines the need for the East Coast off-shore Wind group aims to promote innovation and benefit Drogheda through the offshore wind industry. The author asserts that Drogheda should focus on developing sporting and recreational facilities, including green spaces for play. A major sporting complex is needed on the northside to support the growing population. Additionally, Drogheda requires a new third-level institution for sustainable education, which should be explored by a special committee.

Drogheda’s role as a Regional Growth Centre requires attention from both Louth County Council and Meath County Council respectively. Public and private collaboration is needed

to implement proposals, with the chamber ready to work with authorities and communities.

Chief Executive Response

The comments made in regard to transport and movement are noted. The Council recognises the strategic location of Drogheda along the Dublin – Belfast corridor. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of the Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks. An Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) is currently being prepared for Drogheda, and both Meath and Louth County Councils will engage with relevant stakeholders, including the National Transport Authority, Irish Rail, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland. The recommendations of this ABTA will inform the policies and objectives of the CDP, as they relate to Drogheda.

While the Donor Road Toll is a recognised concern by the Author, the operation and management of the Donore Road Toll rests with Transport Infrastructure Ireland and is therefore, outside the remit of this Plan.

Whilst the central retail area of Drogheda is not within the remit of the Council, the Joint Local Area Plan (JLAP) for Drogheda will facilitate engagement with Louth County Council on matters such as retail development. Additionally, the Council has engaged 3rd party consultants to undertake a Retail Strategy in support of the new Development Plan. This retail strategy will consider the use of flexible retail spaces and eco-friendly retail spaces, as set out in this submission.

In respect of job creation, the Council regularly engages with the IDA and other employment generators to attract employers to the area. This is supported by the Council's recently established state-of-the-art centre of business excellence (Thrive Centre).

With regard to Offshore Wind Energy production, Meath County Council (the Council) will continue to support and encourage the principle of development of offshore wind energy, in accordance with Government policy.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-31: Drogheda Port Company

Summary of Submission:

The submission by Drogheda Port Company relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and sets out the strategic role of Drogheda Port in supporting employment, economic activity, and infrastructure within County Meath and the wider region. The submission notes that over 40% of the Port's workforce resides in

County Meath and highlights the Port's importance in facilitating the export of construction products and the import of agricultural inputs, including feed and fertiliser.

The submission outlines a number of strategic objectives which the Company considers should be reflected in the Draft County Development Plan to facilitate the continued operation and growth of Drogheda Port. In this regard, the submission notes that a Master Plan for Drogheda Port Company is currently being finalised, which proposes to consolidate and expand port operations on the north bank of the River Boyne, and states that this Master Plan will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

In relation to employment and economic development, the submission requests that the Draft Plan support the continued development of Drogheda Port Company to attract new shipping markets and foreign direct investment opportunities, and to support the strategic objectives of the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor as a key economic driver for the region.

The submission also raises the issue of future port capacity and requests that the Draft Plan include an objective to support the development of a new deepwater port at Bremore on Ireland's east coast. In this context, it is requested that lands at Gormonston be designated as a suitable site for an Urban Development Zone to facilitate the development of a modern deepwater port and associated landside and hinterland development. The submission notes that any such development should be delivered in an integrated and planned manner, while safeguarding the natural and archaeological heritage of the area and ensuring that proposals are subject to appropriate environmental assessment, including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and Natura Impact Assessment, as required.

The submission further outlines opportunities relating to community, recreation and tourism, including the potential for Drogheda and East Meath to develop as a cruise destination. It is suggested that specialist cruise facilities could be accommodated at Tom Roes Point as part of port expansion, with tender reception facilities at Mornington to facilitate larger cruise liners. The submission also references recommendations of the Drogheda Implementation Board regarding the development of riverside community and recreational facilities, utilising the River Boyne as a shared tourism asset for Drogheda, Meath and Louth.

The submission requests that the Draft Plan include objectives to pursue recreation and leisure opportunities along the River Boyne in partnership with Drogheda Port Company, following "Soft Port" principles of community engagement and delivering cultural, environmental and social benefits, and to support Drogheda Port as a cruise location, including the potential development of a cruise landing facility at Mornington, County Meath.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive supports the continued delivery of a comprehensive Masterplan for Drogheda Port Company, recognising the Port's strategic role in supporting employment, economic activity and regional connectivity within County Meath and the wider Eastern and Midland Region.

In this regard, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) supports the role of Drogheda Port under RPO 4.12, and ED Objective 23 of the Draft Meath County Development Plan supports and protects Drogheda Port as a port of regional significance. This includes, in principle, facilitating the potential relocation of Drogheda Port within County Meath, subject to the completion of a feasibility study, appropriate coastal zone management considerations, and compliance with environmental and planning legislation. ED OBJ 23 also supports the future development of the Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR). It is accepted that this objective remains relevant and should be carried forward into the next County Development Plan.

With respect to the request to designate lands at Gormonston as an Urban Development Zone (UDZ), the Chief Executive considers it premature to identify UDZ lands at this stage. The designation of a UDZ must be informed by a Candidate Site Selection Assessment to determine the most appropriate location, having regard to detailed planning, environmental, infrastructural, and heritage considerations. Where a Candidate UDZ is proposed to be designated in a Development Plan, a pre-designation consultation paper must be prepared and the general public consulted in accordance with statutory requirements.

The Chief Executive also notes the submission's reference to the potential development of Drogheda and East Meath as a cruise tourism destination, and to opportunities for riverside community, recreational and leisure facilities along the River Boyne, recognising the river as a shared tourism and amenity asset for Drogheda, Meath and Louth. The Chief Executive acknowledges the range of economic and strategic avenues being explored by Drogheda Port Company in this regard.

Accordingly, the Chief Executive is supportive of including policy provisions in the Development Plan that encourage and facilitate the advancement of the strategic and economic potential of Drogheda Port, including port-related development, tourism, recreation and community-focused initiatives, subject to proper planning and sustainable development, environmental assessment, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders and adjoining local authorities

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-32: National Environmental Health, Health Service Executive
Summary of Submission:
The submission by the Environmental Health Service of the Health Service Executive (HSE) relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and is

intended to support the delivery of a Development Plan that protects and promotes public health and wellbeing. The submission draws on input from a number of HSE departments, including the National Environmental Health Service, HSE Emergency Management, the National Capital Estates Office, the Director of National Health Protection, and the Regional Executive Office Dublin and Northeast.

The submission highlights the strong link between health outcomes and the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, and notes that non-communicable diseases disproportionately affect vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. It emphasises the role of spatial planning in addressing health inequalities through access to safe housing, green and blue spaces, education, healthcare, active travel, and community facilities, and advocates for a "healthy placemaking" approach to inform the Development Plan.

In relation to climate change, the submission states that climate change represents the greatest threat to global health in the current century and that climate action presents significant opportunities for public health gains. It requests that climate mitigation and adaptation be central to the Development Plan, aligned with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, the National Climate Action Plan 2024 and the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029. The submission highlights the need for resilient communities capable of responding to extreme weather events, protection of vulnerable populations, and the integration of green and blue infrastructure, sustainable drainage, rainwater harvesting and waste management measures to reduce public health risks.

The submission also addresses inclusivity and social equity, requesting that the Development Plan take account of the needs of older persons, persons with disabilities, children and young people, disadvantaged and marginalised groups, and the evolving cultural and demographic profile of the County. Reference is made to the importance of age-friendly environments, universal access, safe public spaces and inclusive community design.

In relation to physical activity and sustainable movement, the submission strongly supports the prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport in line with the transport hierarchy. It requests that the Development Plan promote active travel, safe and accessible pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and connectivity between residential areas, employment locations, services and recreational spaces. The submission references a range of national policies and strategies, including the National Sustainable Mobility Policy, Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030 and Healthy Ireland initiatives, and highlights the importance of behavioural change and community engagement in achieving modal shift.

The submission further raises issues relating to air quality, noise, water quality and wastewater capacity, waste management and the circular economy. It requests that the Development Plan seek to achieve the highest attainable air quality standards, identify and mitigate air quality and noise hotspots, protect water bodies from pollution, and

ensure that water services infrastructure can accommodate population growth. The submission also supports alignment with national waste policy, promotion of waste reduction and reuse, and measures to support sustainable diets, tobacco-free environments and reduced alcohol-related harm through the planning process.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission from the Health Service Executive and acknowledges the strong interrelationship between climate change, public health and spatial planning. The Council notes that climate change represents a significant and increasing risk to human health and wellbeing, and that effective climate action presents an opportunity to deliver long-term health, social and environmental benefits.

The Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 came into effect in January 2024 and will inform the policies and objectives of the Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033, in accordance with national and regional climate policy, including the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Acts and the National Climate Action Plan. Climate mitigation and adaptation will be embedded as cross-cutting principles across the Plan to support the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable county by 2050, with interim targets to 2030.

The Council acknowledges the importance of integrating climate action into the planning system in line with National Planning Objective 54 of the National Planning Framework. This includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions through compact growth, sustainable transport, energy-efficient building design, and the promotion of active travel, alongside measures that support behaviour change and community participation in climate action. During the existing CDP, the Climate Action team has grown significantly and is responsible for reducing the council's operational emissions from council-owned buildings, vehicle fleets, and public lighting, as well as supporting low-carbon initiatives in communities across the county.

The Council also recognises the need for robust climate adaptation measures to protect communities from the impacts of severe weather events, including flooding, heatwaves, storms and other climate-related hazards. The Draft Plan will be informed by relevant evidence, including national climate risk assessments, and will include policies to enhance resilience, protect vulnerable populations, and promote nature-based solutions such as sustainable drainage systems and green infrastructure.

The Chief Executive recognises the essential need for inclusivity and social equity, particularly in respect to the needs of older persons, persons with disabilities, children and young people, disadvantaged and marginalised groups, and the evolving cultural and demographic profile of the County. Recognising this need, Variation No. 3 to the existing

County Development Plan was adopted in 2025 to incorporate updated Age-Friendly housing policies to increase housing options for older populations and persons with disabilities, as outlined in national housing plans. Meath County Council is home to the national Age Friendly Ireland (AFI) Shared Service and engage frequently with this service to ensure that land-use measures to support the health, well-being, and participation of older adults are incorporated into the Draft CDP.

The issues raised in this submission in relation to inclusivity, social equity, universal access, healthy placemaking, and sustainable mobility are noted. Targeted initiatives will also be implemented in the annual Healthy Ireland Programme and underpinned the successor to the Healthy Ireland Local Strategy 2023-2025.

Meath County Council strongly supports the prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport in line with the transport hierarchy. In 2021, Meath County Council established the Active Travel team with funding support from the National Transport Authority. This unit continues to deliver walking and cycling infrastructure and promote sustainable travel across the country. The Draft Plan will continue to promote active travel, safe and accessible pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and connectivity to encourage and facilitate the necessary cultural shift toward sustainable modes of travel.

In relation to communities, the issues raised in this submission regarding inclusivity, social equity, universal access, healthy placemaking, and sustainable mobility are noted. TFI Local Link Louth Meath Fingal is a community-based public transport service funded by the National Transport Authority (NTA) that provides essential travel options for people living in rural areas who lack access to main transport routes, specifically targeting students, people with disabilities, and older adults. Under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan, this service has undergone significant expansion in recent years to increase frequency and reach arising from studies undertaken by the NTA in conjunction with Meath County Council. The Draft Plan will continue to support the expansion of this service across the county over the development plan period.

The current Meath County Development Plan includes strong policies and objectives in this regard, including SH POL 6, which seeks to promote inclusive communities, universal design and accessible neighbourhoods, supported by high-quality public spaces and sustainable movement patterns. The preparation of the Draft County Development Plan will continue to build on inclusive and social equity policies and objectives.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-33: Kevin Moore
Summary of Submission:
The submission by Kevin Moore relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and raises a number of local infrastructure and service concerns in Enfield in the context of existing and future residential development. The submission states that if additional housing development is to take place in Enfield, improvements to existing infrastructure and community services are required to support population growth. The submission highlights concerns regarding the adequacy of the local water supply, noting that supply pressure is weak and unreliable. It is submitted that water services infrastructure must be addressed prior to further residential development. The submission also requests the provision of additional community amenities, including a community park and playground facilities. In relation to transport, the submission seeks improvements to public transport services, including enhanced park-and-ride facilities and improved rail connectivity, and requests that the DART be extended to serve Enfield. Concerns are also raised about reliance on private bus services. In terms of community services, the submission notes a lack of general practitioners in the area, requesting provision beyond a clinic setting, and seeks the reopening of a full-time Garda station operating seven days a week. The submission raises concerns regarding crime and security within existing housing estates, particularly in the context of further residential expansion. Additional issues raised include a shortage of childcare facilities and limited availability of part-time employment opportunities for college students within the local area.
Chief Executive Response
Meath County Council acknowledges the submissions comments regarding the need for adequate community infrastructure and services to support existing and future population growth in Enfield. In respect to water and wastewater supply, Uisce Éireann is now Ireland's national water utility responsible for providing and managing all public water and wastewater services, including infrastructure (pipes, treatment plants), supply, maintenance, and investment in upgrades for homes and businesses across the country. In zoning for future residential development, it is crucial that the selected lands have the necessary infrastructure to facilitate residential development. To address this, Meath County Council has undertaken a Settlement Capacity Audit to identify zoned serviced/serviceable lands in all relevant settlements, specifying enabling infrastructure. This enabling infrastructure includes, but is not limited to water/wastewater treatment

infrastructure, roads, school provision and community facilities. Information on waste and wastewater is provided by Uisce Éireann and guides the location of future residential development. Should Uisce Eireann advise of water infrastructure constraints on lands with no timeline for upgrading the supply, Meath Council will not proceed with zoning on these lands.

The Council recognises that accessible and well-designed community facilities, including parks, playgrounds, and other local amenities, play a central role in promoting social interaction, wellbeing, and inclusive, healthy communities. In this respect, a Town Centre First Plan led by the Town Regeneration Team alongside Enfield Town Team was created for Enfield, which will inform policy-making, funding applications, and projects planned for the town. Amongst a range of proposals are plans to secure, co-design, and advance lands for a town park in the coming years. The Regeneration Team, which was established during the lifetime of the current CDP, has taken on several community infrastructure objectives related to village enhancement, playground delivery, and amenity walkways, and will continue to deliver projects in the coming years, subject to continued national funding.

For information purposes, a Social Infrastructure Audit is currently underway for the county to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

In relation to transport, Meath County Council will continue to engage with the NTA and other relevant stakeholders regarding the identification and development of Park and ride facilities at appropriate locations. The Council will also continue to liaise with NTA regarding the growing demand for additional rail services to Enfield.

Finally, while Meath County Council can work to support the delivery of certain services, such as childcare, by way of effective land use management, GP services, and Garda stations are outside the control of the local authority. Notwithstanding this, the council continues to engage with the HSE to make them aware of areas planned for significant growth, so they may incorporate them into their future healthcare strategies.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-34: Fiona Woods
Summary of Submission:
The submission by Fiona Woods relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and expresses strong support for the delivery of a Regional Park in Ashbourne, County Meath. The submission references the decision under the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 to zone lands at Killegland Farm as Open

Space for a Community / Regional Park and notes that, while supported by elected members in 2021, the park has not yet been realised.

The submission outlines the context of population growth in Ashbourne and its role as a service centre for a wider catchment area, citing Census 2022 data and noting an increasing proportion of young people and older residents. It is submitted that the provision of a regional-scale park, with a minimum size of 80 acres, is required to address a historical undersupply of public open space and recreational amenities, with residents currently travelling outside the town to access regional parks.

The submission highlights the health and well-being benefits associated with access to high-quality green space, referencing national health and physical activity policy, and supports the role of a regional park in promoting active lifestyles, mental well-being and social interaction across all age groups.

In relation to climate action and biodiversity, the submission states that the development of a regional park would support national climate policy objectives through carbon sequestration, enhancement of urban biodiversity, tree planting, wetland and water features, and the provision of environmental education opportunities. The submission also notes the role of green infrastructure in improving air quality, water quality and climate resilience.

The submission further highlights the social and community value of open green space, distinguishing between formal sports facilities and the benefits of informal recreation, unstructured play and community gathering spaces. It is suggested that a regional park would enhance social cohesion, inclusivity and quality of life, and provide a shared amenity for Ashbourne and the surrounding communities.

Economic benefits are also referenced, including the potential for increased property values, support for local businesses and contribution to the local economy. The submission advocates for an inclusive and accessible park design, catering for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, and proposes a range of potential uses and facilities, including walking and cycling trails, play areas, community gardens, cultural spaces and wellness activities.

The submission concludes by requesting that Meath County Council prioritise the delivery of a regional park in Ashbourne as part of the County Development Plan, supported through collaboration between the local authority, community groups, developers and other stakeholders.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council recognises the need for a Town Park to serve the residents of Ashbourne, and this objective is included in the current County Development Plan. The land located south of Ashbourne (MP 21) has been designated as F1 ‘Open Space’ to include the development of a new town park. Meath County Council intends to acquire

approximately 20 acres of the MP 21 lands for the Town Park. Meath County Council is actively working toward this initiative, with Landscape Architect Consultants engaged to develop a high level 'Conceptual Plan' for the park. Various studies/surveys have also been conducted. The insights gained from this work will help guide the development of the park.

The plan to establish a public park will continue to be a priority in the upcoming Development Plan. It is noteworthy also that the proposed Town Park will complement the existing Ashbourne Linear Park, which has seen recent enhancements.

The Council also recognises the importance of collaboration with community groups and other stakeholders in informing the planning and delivery of community and recreational infrastructure. These matters will be considered in the context of developing policies and objectives to support healthy, inclusive and well-served communities across the county.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-35: RMLA on behalf of An Post

Summary of Submission:

The submission has been prepared by RMLA on behalf of An Post in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission welcomes the opportunity to engage in the preparation of the new Development Plan and outlines the role of An Post as a key national public service provider operating postal, logistics and retail services across County Meath and nationally.

The submission notes that An Post operates a network of post offices, delivery service units and logistics facilities throughout the County and highlights ongoing changes within the postal sector, including the continued growth of e-commerce and parcel volumes. It is submitted that these trends necessitate the modernisation, expansion and adaptation of postal and logistics infrastructure to meet current and future operational requirements.

The submission outlines An Post's operational requirements within County Meath, which may include the expansion or consolidation of existing facilities, redevelopment or replacement of outdated premises, acquisition of adjoining lands or relocation to more suitable sites, and the integration of sustainability measures such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure, energy-efficient building design and low-emission fleet operations.

It is requested that the Draft County Development Plan include policies to support the provision, expansion and modernisation of postal and parcel facilities, recognise postal infrastructure as an essential component of social and economic development, and facilitate the integration of appropriate postal facilities within new and existing

communities in accordance with the settlement hierarchy and sustainable transport principles.

The submission also raises issues relating to car parking and access requirements associated with An Post facilities. It is submitted that parking standards should apply to staff and visitor parking only and exclude operational vehicle storage used for delivery purposes. The submission further highlights the need for flexibility in access arrangements, including 24-hour access where required, adequate loading bays and unrestricted vehicular access to support the delivery of postal services.

The submission requests ongoing engagement between Meath County Council and An Post during the preparation of the County Development Plan and related Local Area Plans to ensure that the operational requirements of postal and logistics services are appropriately considered in the context of population growth, settlement expansion and sustainable transport objectives.

The Chief Executive notes the comments from An Post's operational requirements within County Meath. However, the issues raised are not a matter for the County Development Plan and will be addressed during the planning application stage as An Post's needs arise.

The Council have engaged 3rd party consultants to undertake a Retail Strategy in support of the new County Development Plan. This Retail Strategy will consider matters such as e-commerce, as outlined in this submission.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-36: Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of John Levins
Summary of Submission:
This submission has been prepared by Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of John Levins, a landowner in the Southern Environs of Drogheda, in response to the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper. The submission is primarily concerned with Core Strategy and Settlement and Housing matters, with a particular focus on housing delivery in the Southern Environs of Drogheda as part of Drogheda's role as a Regional Growth Centre. The submission refers to recent national policy direction and guidance, including correspondence from the Minister for Housing (May 2025) and the Section 28 *National Planning Framework (NPF) Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* (July 2025). It is submitted that Meath County Council is now required to plan for significantly increased housing delivery relative to the current adopted County Development Plan targets, with the potential for additional provision/headroom to support deliverability. The submission states that, given Drogheda's position at the top of the settlement hierarchy, increased delivery should be encouraged in the Southern Environs of Drogheda.

The submission outlines a “baseline assessment” of the current position in South Drogheda and contends that housing delivery since the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 has been constrained by an insufficient quantity of land zoned for residential development on the Meath side. It is stated that this has resulted in accelerated growth on the northern side of the town in County Louth. The submission includes a figure identifying the residentially zoned sites in South Drogheda and notes that a number of these sites are either built out, inactive, subject to delays, or are unlikely to come forward for housing delivery (including a site currently in use as a school sports pitch).

It is submitted that, in order for South Drogheda to contribute to revised housing targets and to support the function of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre, additional serviced lands within the settlement boundary and contiguous to the built-up footprint should be identified for residential development. The submission suggests that the selection of lands should consider proximity to schools, availability of existing water and wastewater infrastructure, and access to multi-modal public transport. The submission further suggests that land ownership and the likelihood of delivery within the life of the plan should be taken into account when identifying lands for residential development.

The submission also requests that the Draft Plan promote the Southern Environs of Drogheda as a counterbalance to recent delivery and investment in the Northern Environs, and that a sufficient scale of development be facilitated to support infrastructure investment, compact growth, town centre revitalisation, and regeneration objectives in accordance with national planning policy.

In addition, the submission requests that the Draft Plan include a specific objective to support the delivery of additional rail stations in the area in the context of the DART+ Northern extension, including reference to a proposed “Drogheda South (Colpe)” station and a station at Bettystown.

Chief Executive Response

Drogheda is the only regional growth centre located partially in County Meath. It sits at the top of the county's planning hierarchy and has been identified as a key economic growth centre. In recent years, it has experienced rapid population growth.

The submission highlighted concerns regarding housing delivery with the Southern Environs of Drogheda, including the availability and deliverability of zoned residential lands, the capacity of existing infrastructure, and the role of South Drogheda in contributing to revised housing targets in accordance with the recently published Section 28 Guidelines on the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements published in July 2025. For information purposes, a variation to address these revised housing requirements is currently underway on the current County Development Plan and is due to be placed on public display in Q1 2026. These Housing Growth Requirements will also

set out the housing allocation for the County Development Plan over the next 6 years and beyond.

The submission states that additional serviced lands within the settlement boundary and contiguous to the built-up footprint should be identified for residential development. The revised housing growth requirements require that at least 40% of new development be located within the built-up footprint of existing settlements. Accordingly, the Draft CDP will ensure that lands of this nature are given priority, subject to their having access to the necessary infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, roads, and public lighting.

The Chief Executive notes the request for a strategic policy objective to provide an additional train station and supports its inclusion in the Draft Plan. Furthermore, an Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) is currently being prepared for the town to inform the preparation of the Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan, during which both Meath and Louth County Councils will engage with relevant stakeholders, including the National Transport Authority, Irish Rail, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland. This will provide a policy framework for transport related developments in the town including the potential requirement for additional Train Stations. The Meath CDP currently includes an existing objective supporting the provision of a new rail station at Bettystown, and this will be reflected in the new Draft Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-37: Comharchumann Ráth Chairn
Summary of Submission:

The submission by Comharchumann Ráth Chairn relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and focuses on the protection, promotion and long-term sustainability of the Irish language as the community language within Gaeltacht Ráth Chairn. The submission outlines the historical development of the Gaeltacht, the role of Comharchumann Ráth Chairn as the representative community organisation, and the range of social, cultural, educational and economic services provided through Irish within the area.

The submission highlights the statutory planning context for Gaeltacht areas, including the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Gaeltacht Act 2012, the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010–2030, the National Planning Framework, and the Section 28 *Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2022). It is submitted that the County Development Plan has a statutory obligation to include objectives for the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht, including the promotion of Irish as the community language.

The submission requests that the Draft Plan include a comprehensive and dedicated Gaeltacht section, incorporating mapping of Gaeltacht boundaries and Language Planning Areas, policies aligned with the approved Gaeltacht Language Plan, and objectives that

support the role of settlements within the Gaeltacht in sustaining the Irish language and cultural identity. The submission also emphasises the need for coordinated policy approaches where Gaeltacht areas intersect with administrative boundaries.

A central element of the submission relates to housing and development management within Gaeltacht Ráth Chairn. It is submitted that development proposals should be assessed having regard to their impact on the linguistic and cultural sustainability of the Gaeltacht, with reference to the scale, type and pace of development. The submission requests that the Draft Plan prioritise small-scale, incremental residential development and avoid large housing schemes that could undermine the use of Irish as the community language.

The submission further requests the introduction of language impact assessments for development proposals within the Gaeltacht, to be carried out by suitably qualified and independent experts, in order to assess whether the proposed development would have a positive impact on the linguistic and cultural heritage of the area. It is also requested that planning policies recognise Irish language proficiency, including TEG B2 level, in the assessment of local housing need within the Gaeltacht, while ensuring that local residents are not unduly restricted from building homes within their own community.

Additional requests include the application of language-related occupancy and resale conditions on certain residential developments, the involvement of Údarás na Gaeltachta in the implementation of language conditions through appropriate legal mechanisms, and support for community, cultural, educational and tourism-related development that contributes to the vitality of the Gaeltacht. The submission also references proposals to facilitate Irish-language family housing, community facilities and an Irish Language Hub within Ráth Chairn.

The submission concludes by requesting that the Draft County Development Plan actively support the implementation of the Gaeltacht Language Plan for Ráth Chairn and contribute to the objective of increasing the number of daily Irish speakers within the Gaeltacht community.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council (The Council) thanks Comharchumann Ráth Chairn for its submission on the Strategic Issues Paper. The Council notes the cultural importance of the Irish language and the Gaeltacht areas to County Meath and the nation. In respect of County Meath, the Council supports the continued use of the Irish language, specifically within Gaeltacht areas in the County such as Ráth Cairn, as it is recognised that the Irish language functions as a community language in these areas.

The Council will endeavour to reflect the importance of the Irish language as a community language in the new Development Plan. The Council will engage and consult with the relevant statutory bodies and community organisations to ensure that any policies and

objectives relating to the Gaeltacht and/or the Irish language in the new Development Plan align with the statutory planning policy approach, as outlined in this submission. The Council also notes the government commitment in its 'Delivering Homes, Building Communities' 2025-2030 Housing Plan to publish a National Planning Statement on Gaeltacht Planning, which will further inform the Development Plan. Notwithstanding this, the Council is not responsible for delineating Gaeltacht boundaries or Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas. This function lies with the Department of Rural & Community Development and the Gaeltacht under the Gaeltacht Act 2012. The Council will, however, reflect these boundaries in the Development Plan, where appropriate.

Whilst the importance of conserving and supporting the Irish language as a community language in the Gaeltacht areas is recognized, the Council is also obliged to align with national planning policy approaches to sustainable development and compact growth. Thus, the Council cannot wholly preclude large housing schemes in Gaeltacht areas. However, it will commit to reviewing the local needs approach to one-off housing in the Gaeltacht areas to determine whether a tailored approach could be applied in these areas based on linguistic and cultural factors. In this respect, the Council notes the need to engage Irish language organisations to ascertain linguistic parameters for such a tailored approach, if considered justifiable and legally implementable.

It is noted that the current Development Plan includes a policy objective which requires a linguistic impact study for any proposed housing developments in Gaeltacht areas **(RD OBJ 19)**. It is also noted that the current Development Plan includes objectives to support Irish language-based economic uses in the Gaeltacht areas **(GHIB OBJ 5 & RATHC OBJ 4)** and an objective to examine the feasibility of an Irish language and cultural experience within the Gaeltacht areas **(RATHC OBJ 6)**. These policy objectives will be reviewed, in consultation with the Council's Irish Language Officer, as part of this Development Plan review process.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-38: Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of The Burke Family
Summary of Submission:
This submission has been prepared by Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of the Burke Family, significant landowners in the Southern Environs of Drogheda, in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission focuses primarily on Core Strategy and Settlement and Housing issues, with reference to Drogheda's role as a Regional Growth Centre within the settlement hierarchy. The submission references recent national planning policy direction, including correspondence from the Minister for Housing (May 2025) and the Section 28 *National Planning Framework (NPF) Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* (July 2025). It

is submitted that Meath County Council is now required to plan for significantly increased housing delivery, including provision for additional headroom to support deliverability, and that these revised targets must be reflected in the Core Strategy and settlement-level allocations in the new County Development Plan.

The submission contends that, given Drogheda's position at the top of the settlement hierarchy, a proportionate share of the increased housing requirement should be directed to the Southern Environs of Drogheda. It is stated that housing delivery in South Drogheda, since the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027, has been constrained by an insufficient supply of residentially zoned land, resulting in accelerated growth in the Northern Environs of the town in County Louth.

A baseline assessment of South Drogheda is provided, including a map identifying fourteen sites currently zoned for residential development. The submission states that several of these sites are either built out, inactive, delayed, or unlikely to come forward for housing delivery within the life of the plan, including a site currently in use as a school sports pitch. It is submitted that the existing zoning pattern lacks coherence and does not adequately support housing delivery in line with revised national targets.

The submission requests that additional serviced lands within the settlement boundary and contiguous with the existing built-up area be identified for residential development. It is suggested that land selection should have regard to proximity to schools, availability of water and wastewater infrastructure, access to multi-modal public transport, land ownership patterns and the likelihood of delivery within the plan period.

The submission further requests that the Draft Plan promote the Southern Environs of Drogheda as a counterbalance to development in the Northern Environs, facilitate development at a sufficient scale to support infrastructure investment and compact growth, and contribute to town centre regeneration in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives.

In addition, the submission requests that the Draft County Development Plan include objectives to support the delivery of additional rail stations in the context of the DART+ Northern extension, including a station at Drogheda South (Colpe) and a station at Bettystown.

Chief Executive Response

Drogheda is the only regional growth centre located partially in County Meath. It sits at the top of the planning hierarchy for the county and has been identified as a key economic growth centre. In recent years, it has experienced rapid population growth.

The submission highlighted concerns regarding housing delivery with the Southern Environs of Drogheda, including the availability and deliverability of zoned residential lands, the capacity of existing infrastructure, and the role of South Drogheda in contributing to revised housing targets in accordance with the recently published Section

28 Guidelines on the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements published in July 2025. For information purposes, a variation to address these revised housing requirements is currently underway on the current County Development Plan and is due to be placed on public display in Q1 2026.

The submission states that additional serviced lands within the settlement boundary and contiguous to the built-up footprint should be identified for residential development. The revised housing growth requirements require that at least 40% of new development be located within the built-up footprint of existing settlements. Accordingly, the Draft CDP will ensure that lands of this nature are given priority, subject to their having access to the necessary infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, roads, and public lighting.

The Chief Executive notes the request for a strategic policy objective to provide an additional train station and supports its inclusion in the Draft Plan. Furthermore, an Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) is currently being prepared for the town to inform the preparation of the Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan, during which both Meath and Louth County Councils will be engaging with the relevant stakeholders, including the National Transport Authority, Irish Rail, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland. This will provide a policy framework for transport related developments in the town including the potential requirement for additional Train Stations. The Meath CDP currently includes an existing objective supporting the provision of a new rail station at Bettystown, and this will be reflected in the new Draft Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-39: Tony Bamford Planning on behalf of Lidl Ireland GmbH

Summary of Submission:

This submission has been prepared by Tony Bamford Planning on behalf of Lidl Ireland GmbH in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission relates specifically to the sustainable development of Kells, County Meath, which is identified as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town within the County's settlement hierarchy.

The submission outlines recent population growth in County Meath and in Kells, referencing Census 2016 and 2022 data, and emphasises the strategic role of Kells as a key service centre with capacity for sustainable growth. It is submitted that the Draft County Development Plan should support compact urban growth in Kells through the coordinated delivery of housing, employment, services, and infrastructure.

Significant emphasis is placed on the revised National Planning Framework (April 2025), particularly National Policy Objective 20, which introduces a presumption in favour of development within existing urban areas, subject to appropriate planning standards. The submission supports a shift away from greenfield expansion towards urban infill and brownfield development, and requests that zoning and development objectives within

Kells be reviewed accordingly to facilitate residential development close to the town centre.

In relation to housing, the submission states that new residential development should be prioritised on infill and brownfield lands within or adjacent to the town centre, where services, facilities and infrastructure already exist or can be readily provided. It is submitted that certain centrally located lands, which are suitable for residential development are currently inappropriately zoned and should be reassessed in the new Development Plan.

The submission also addresses transport and movement, noting the need to reduce reliance on the private car for short local trips by locating housing closer to services and amenities. Reference is made to traffic congestion issues at key junctions in Kells, including the Headfort Road/Navan Road junction, and to an existing link road objective which has remained undelivered across successive Development Plans. It is requested that this issue be addressed in the new Plan.

In the context of climate change, the submission supports compact, town-centre-focused development as a means of reducing emissions, supporting active travel and achieving climate and sustainability objectives. The submission concludes that closer integration of housing, services and employment within Kells would contribute to reduced traffic congestion, improved walkability and enhanced quality of life.

Chief Executive Response

In relation to housing, Meath County Council supports the submission's emphasis on compact growth and the delivery of new housing within existing settlements, supported by regeneration, infill and brownfield development.

The revised housing growth requirements require that at least 40% of new development be located within the built-up footprint of existing settlements. Accordingly, The Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, prioritising the consolidation of existing urban areas, subject to their having access to the necessary infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, roads, and public lighting. The efficient use of serviced lands will expedite housing delivery, support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl. This approach is currently supported by existing housing policy, including Policy SH POL 2, which seeks to promote the consolidation of settlements and the creation of compact urban form through the utilisation of infill and brownfield lands in preference to edge of centre and greenfield locations. The Draft County Development Plan will continue to build on and strength this policy direction.

The comments made highlighting the need to reduce reliance on private cars for short local trips is acknowledged. The Council recognises that current transport trends in Meath and the Greater Dublin Area with regards to levels of car use are unsustainable. In 2021, a

dedicated Active Travel team was set up within the Council focusing on designing and building walking, cycling, and public realm infrastructure (like cycle lanes, wider footpaths, traffic calming) to encourage non-car travel for health and sustainability. This will remain a key priority in the upcoming CDP, with continued focus on developing a sustainable transport system.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-40: Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of Desmond and Anita Grant

Summary of Submission:

This submission has been prepared by Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of Desmond and Anita Grant, significant landowners in the Southern Environs of Drogheda, in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission focuses primarily on Core Strategy and Settlement and Housing issues, with reference to Drogheda's designation as a Regional Growth Centre.

The submission references recent national policy direction, including correspondence from the Minister for Housing (May 2025) and the Section 28 *National Planning Framework (NPF) Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* (July 2025). It is submitted that Meath County Council is now required to plan for a significantly increased housing delivery target of 2,942 units per annum to 2034, with provision for up to 50% additional headroom to support deliverability, and that these requirements must be reflected in the Core Strategy and settlement-level allocations of the new County Development Plan.

The submission contends that, given Drogheda's position at the top of the settlement hierarchy, a proportionate share of the increased housing requirement should be directed to the Southern Environs of Drogheda. It is stated that housing delivery in South Drogheda since the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 has been constrained by an insufficient supply of residentially zoned land, resulting in accelerated development in the Northern Environs of Drogheda in County Louth.

A baseline assessment of South Drogheda is provided, noting that progress in delivering housing has been limited and that additional land must be identified to meet revised national housing targets. The submission suggests that South Drogheda's housing allocation should be increased proportionately in line with countywide targets and headroom provisions, and estimates that delivery of approximately 441 units per annum would be required to support Drogheda's role as a Regional Growth Centre.

The submission requests that the Draft Plan prioritise the development of the Southern Environs of Drogheda as a counterbalance to recent growth in the Northern Environs and

that additional serviced lands within or contiguous to the existing built-up area be identified for residential development. It is suggested that land selection should have regard to proximity to schools, availability of water and wastewater infrastructure, access to multi-modal public transport, land ownership patterns and the likelihood of delivery within the plan period.

The submission further states that facilitating development at sufficient scale in South Drogheda would support compact growth, town centre revitalisation and infrastructure investment in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives. It also requests that the Draft County Development Plan include objectives to support the delivery of additional rail stations in the context of the DART+ Northern extension, including stations at Drogheda South (Colpe) and Bettystown.

Chief Executive Response

Drogheda is the only regional growth centre located partially in County Meath. It sits at the top of the county's planning hierarchy and has been identified as a key economic growth centre. In recent years, it has experienced rapid population growth.

The submission highlighted concerns regarding housing delivery with the Southern Environs of Drogheda, including the availability and deliverability of zoned residential lands, the capacity of existing infrastructure, and the role of South Drogheda in contributing to revised housing targets in accordance with the recently published Section 28 Guidelines on the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements published in July 2025. For information purposes, a variation to address these revised housing requirements is currently underway on the current County Development Plan and is due to be placed on public display in Q1 2026. These Housing Growth Requirements will also set out the housing allocation for the next 6-10 years in the county. As the author suggests, a proportionate share of the increased housing requirement will be directed to the Southern Environs of Drogheda.

The submission states that additional serviced lands within the settlement boundary and contiguous to the built-up footprint should be identified for residential development. The revised housing growth requirements require that at least 40% of new development be located within the built-up footprint of existing settlements. Accordingly, the Draft CDP will ensure that lands of this nature are given priority, subject to their having access to the necessary infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, roads, and public lighting.

The Chief Executive notes the request for a strategic policy objective to provide an additional train station and supports its inclusion in the Draft Plan. Furthermore, an Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) is currently being prepared for the town to inform the preparation of the Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan, during which both Meath and Louth County Councils will be engaging with the relevant stakeholders, including the National Transport Authority, Irish Rail, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland. This will

provide a policy framework for transport related developments in the town including the potential requirement for additional Train Stations. The Meath CDP currently includes an existing objective supporting the provision of a new rail station at Bettystown, and this will be reflected in the new Draft Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-41: Institute of Geologists of Ireland

Summary of Submission:

The submission by the Institute of Geologists of Ireland (IGI), the chartering body for professional geologists in Ireland, relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and seeks to highlight the importance of recognising mineral resources, extractive industries and raw material supply within the planning framework of the County.

The submission outlines the national and EU policy context governing mineral extraction, including the EU Critical Raw Materials Act (2024) and the Department of the Climate, Energy and the Environment's Minerals Policy Statement, which promote the responsible and sustainable extraction of raw materials. It is submitted that Development Plans must have regard to Ireland's obligations to secure critical raw materials required for the energy transition, digital infrastructure, defence, construction and wider economic activity.

The submission notes that County Meath has a long-established association with the extractive industry, particularly through the Tara Mines, which is one of Europe's primary sources of zinc, lead and silver. It is submitted that the potential for further mineral discovery exists within the County and that the Development Plan should recognise the role of mining and mineral exploration in supporting national and EU objectives, while ensuring appropriate environmental protection.

The submission highlights increasing global demand for critical raw materials, including lithium, copper and rare earth elements, and notes that limited recycling capacity and long product life cycles mean that mining will remain a primary source of supply for the foreseeable future. It is also submitted that aggregates, which are essential for housing and infrastructure delivery, can often be sourced locally and that Development Plans should ensure adequate provision to avoid supply constraints and cost inflation.

The submission outlines the regulatory framework governing mining and mineral extraction in Ireland, including planning permission, Environmental Protection Agency licensing, abstraction licensing and mineral leasing, and notes that public participation is embedded within each stage of the consenting process. It is suggested that early identification and safeguarding of mineral and aggregate resources within the

Development Plan can help reduce land-use conflicts and streamline future decision-making.

The submission recommends that Meath County Council utilise datasets and mapping provided by Geological Survey Ireland to better understand the location and extent of mineral and aggregate resources within the County and to inform plan-making, environmental assessment and zoning decisions. It also notes the importance of improving public understanding of modern mining practices and environmental controls.

The submission concludes by offering the expertise of the Institute of Geologists of Ireland to support the Council in preparing policies relating to minerals, extractive industries and raw material supply as part of the County Development Plan review process.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges this submission from the Institute of Geologists of Ireland regarding the strategic importance of mineral resources and the extractive industry. The Council recognises the contribution of the extractive sector to the local and national economy and its role in supporting housing delivery, infrastructure development and the wider energy transition. Further, section 11.6.9 of the current County Development Plan 2021-2027 acknowledges the contribution of the extractive industry in supporting jobs in the construction and aggregates section of the County and sets down policies and objectives that will be brought forward into the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033.

The Council notes the national and EU policy context referenced in the submission, including the EU Critical Raw Materials Act and national minerals policy, as well as the Department of the Climate, Energy and the Environment's ("DCEE") Minerals Policy Statement, which outlines the goal of responsible and sustainable extraction in Ireland. The distinction between mineral extraction and aggregate supply is acknowledged, as is the importance of safeguarding mineral and aggregate resources from inappropriate development that could sterilise future extraction.

The Council recognises that extractive developments are subject to a comprehensive regulatory framework, including planning permission, EPA licensing and ministerial consent. The use of Geological Survey Ireland datasets to inform planning and zoning decisions is noted and the Council would welcome further inputs from GSI on policies and objectives relating to minerals, extractive industries and raw material supply as part of the County Development Plan review process. The Council looks forward to further engagement with the GSI on future stages of the CDP process

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-42: Steven Peck Chartered Town Planner on behalf P. Carney Ltd
Summary of Submission:

This submission has been prepared by Steven Peck, Chartered Town Planner, on behalf of P. Carney Ltd., an indigenous manufacturing enterprise located at Crossakiel, County Meath, in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission relates primarily to rural economic development, the circular and low-carbon economy, and planning considerations affecting the future development of the P. Carney facility.

The submission notes that P. Carney Ltd. is the largest employer in Crossakiel and plays an important role in the local rural economy. The facility specialises in the manufacture of high-grade metals from reclaimed non-ferrous metals and is identified as a key component of the circular economy. Reference is made to a recent permitted expansion of the facility and to anticipated further growth arising from continued business development.

The submission responds to a number of questions posed in the Strategic Issues Paper relating to rural economic development and climate action. It is submitted that the continued operation and expansion of the P. Carney facility is supported by national, regional and local policy, including the National Planning Framework, the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the Climate Action Plan, waste and circular economy strategies, and the Meath County Council Climate Action Plan 2024–2029.

A key request of the submission is that the new County Development Plan include express written policy support for the future expansion of the P. Carney facility, consistent with wording contained in the current County Development Plan Crossakiel Written Statement. The submission provides suggested policy wording for consideration, noting that explicit support is important to provide certainty for future investment and employment growth.

The submission also raises two planning-related concerns. Firstly, it notes that virtually all lands within the ownership of P. Carney Ltd. inside the Crossakiel settlement boundary have now been developed, which is identified as a constraint on future expansion. Secondly, concern is expressed that new residential development in close proximity to the facility could give rise to land-use conflict and objections that may undermine the long-term operation and growth of the enterprise.

The submission concludes by requesting that the Draft County Development Plan continue to support the role of P. Carney Ltd. in the rural economy of Crossakiel, facilitate future expansion of the facility, and have regard to the need to protect established rural employment uses from inappropriate adjacent development.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges this submission from P. Carney Ltd. It recognises the facility's role as a significant employer in Crossakiel and its contribution to the circular economy through metal recycling activities. The facility's alignment with national and local climate and circular economy objectives is noted. The submission's request for policy support to facilitate the appropriate future expansion of the facility is acknowledged. The points raised align strongly with the Council's commitment to climate action and sustainable development as outlined in the Meath County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

The Council notes that the current Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 includes policies and objectives in the Economy and Employment Strategy Chapter that support indigenous employment and enterprise development throughout the county. It is intended that the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033 will include equivalent policies and objectives that provide support for the expansion of indigenous employers and enterprise. These policies and objectives will apply to a broad range of businesses across the county, including indigenous enterprises such as P. Carney Ltd. that contribute to local employment and sustainable economic development. This approach ensures consistent and equitable policy support for all appropriate indigenous employment and enterprise development in County Meath.

The Council also notes concerns raised regarding the circular economy. Meath County Council has a policy to facilitate the implementation of National Waste Legislation, National and Regional Waste Management Policy and to promote the circular economy.

The Council also notes the concerns raised regarding land availability within the settlement boundary and the potential for land-use conflict arising from nearby residential development. These matters will be considered as part of the review of the Crossakiel Written Statement and settlement boundary in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-43: Kilcloon Environmental Action Association

Summary of Submission:

The submission by the Kilcloon Environmental Action Association (KEEA) relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and provides a detailed community-based response to a range of strategic issues raised in the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper. The submission focuses on sustainable development, protection of rural areas, climate action, infrastructure capacity, community services and the safeguarding of natural and cultural heritage.

In relation to the Core Strategy and settlement hierarchy, the submission supports compact growth and the consolidation of existing towns, particularly Maynooth, and opposes the zoning of large areas of rural land for urban-scale development solely on the basis of proximity to existing settlements. It is submitted that urban expansion should not encroach into rural areas and that clear urban edges should be maintained to protect the countryside and support sustainable spatial planning.

The submission places strong emphasis on transport and movement, identifying congestion and capacity constraints on M, N, R and L class roads, particularly at peak times. It advocates for significant investment in transport infrastructure, the elimination of bottlenecks, and a rebalancing of road use to prioritise local traffic on L class roads. The submission supports measures to reduce through-traffic and HGV traffic on local roads, the development of alternative routes for commercial traffic, and the prioritisation of walking and cycling through the provision of safe infrastructure and dedicated active travel routes. It also calls for reduced speed limits of 30km/h in villages, towns and on roads serving primary schools.

In relation to infrastructure and utilities, the submission identifies water, wastewater and electricity grid capacity as significant constraints on development. It is submitted that infrastructure provision must be addressed in tandem with development to ensure sustainable growth and avoid placing pressure on existing communities.

The submission addresses community services, noting the importance of schools, childcare, libraries, open space, recreation and health facilities in supporting sustainable communities. It requests that sufficient serviced and zoned lands be reserved for community infrastructure as part of new development and that funding mechanisms, including development levies and external funding, be used to ensure timely delivery. The submission also supports improved coordination with the Department of Education to ensure school capacity is provided alongside residential development, with safe active travel routes to schools.

In terms of rural development, the submission supports development of a scale and type that is consistent with the rural character of areas such as Kilcloon and the capacity of local infrastructure. It advocates for rural economic development that reflects the existing rural nature of the area, supports local employment and avoids placing undue strain on community services.

The submission includes detailed observations on climate change, supporting compact growth, reduced car dependency, and the prioritisation of development in locations served by public transport or active travel. It supports limiting the use of high-quality agricultural land for solar energy development, prioritising poorer quality land, and expresses a preference for offshore wind development over land-based wind turbines.

Flood risk is also raised, with specific reference to flood risk north of the lands zoned at Moygaddy.

In relation to cultural and natural heritage, the submission calls for stronger protection of archaeological features, historic landscapes and built heritage, and advocates for partnership with local historical groups and third-level institutions to support conservation and interpretation. The submission also supports the use of local placenames and Irish-language naming conventions for new developments and public signage and includes detailed Irish-language policy requests aligned with the Council's Language Scheme.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission from the Kilcloon Environmental Action Association and notes the detailed observations relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation, including the promotion of compact growth, reduced car dependency, active travel, and the alignment of land-use zoning with public transport accessibility.

The Council notes the emphasis placed on limiting development-driven emissions, protecting high-quality agricultural land from inappropriate solar development, and prioritising poorer quality lands, as well as the preference expressed for offshore wind energy over land-based turbines. Issues relating to flood risk, climate resilience, and the need to address known flooding constraints, including in the Moygaddy area, are also noted. These matters will be considered through the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033, informed by the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, national climate policy, and relevant environmental assessments.

In relation to community services, a Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure, and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

In line with the NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines 2025, planning authorities are now required to undertake Settlement Capacity Audits to identify serviced/serviceable lands in all relevant settlements, specifying enabling infrastructure, for example, wastewater network or treatment infrastructure, energy infrastructure, roads or public transport capacity and in the case of enabling social infrastructure, schools' provision and community facilities. This dataset has been carried out by work by

Meath County Council, is a live and regularly updated dataset and will inform the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033.

In this context, the preparation of both the Social Infrastructure Audit and the Settlement Capacity Audit will provide an evidence-based assessment of existing and future capacity, enabling Meath County Council to identify the most appropriate zoning location for additional community infrastructure within the County.

In relation to transport and movement, the concerns are noted. A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing factor for travel demand. Meath County Council's aims to provide safe, efficient and accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims, and this will be reflected in the Draft Plan.

In terms of rural development, the Draft Plan will continue to support development of a scale and type that is consistent with the rural character of areas such as Kilcloon, and for rural economic development to reflect the existing rural nature of the area, whilst also supporting local employment.

The Council will review the built and cultural heritage policies and objectives within the existing Development Plan, as part of the Development Plan review process. The effectiveness of these policies and objectives will be considered as part of this review which will be informed by, inter alia, public consultation and Development Plan monitoring reports.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-44: Enfield Town Team
Summary of Submission:
The submission by the Enfield Town Team relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and focuses on the future growth, planning framework and infrastructure needs of Enfield. The submission emphasises the need for a balanced, plan-led and community-centred approach to development, noting that significant residential growth in Enfield over recent decades has not been matched by the timely delivery of infrastructure, services, public realm or community facilities. A central request of the submission is that the new County Development Plan explicitly commit to the preparation of a statutory plan for Enfield, either in the form of a Local

Area Plan (LAP) or Urban Area Plan (UAP), within the lifetime of the Plan. The submission notes that the current County Development Plan 2021–2027 includes an objective to prepare a Local Area Plan for Enfield and references commitments made by Meath County Council in Supreme Court proceedings to prepare statutory plans for a number of settlements by November 2027. It is submitted that Enfield should be included within this cohort.

The submission highlights Enfield's strategic location on the Dublin–Sligo rail corridor and the N4 national route, its rapid population growth and young demographic profile, and its role as a key growth node within the settlement hierarchy. It is argued that a statutory plan is required to ensure compact, coordinated and infrastructure-led development, prevent piecemeal expansion, and enable access to national funding streams, including URDF, RRDF and transport funding.

In relation to settlement and housing, the submission stresses that future residential growth in Enfield should be explicitly linked to infrastructure delivery, growth sequencing and community amenity provision. It raises concern that without robust plan-led controls, Enfield risks becoming a commuter dormitory settlement with increasing car dependency and pressure on services.

The submission addresses employment and economic development, noting the need to support local job creation, town-centre regeneration and small-scale enterprise, particularly in locations accessible by public transport and active travel. It supports the implementation of the Enfield Town Centre First Plan and the reuse of underutilised town-centre buildings for employment and enterprise purposes.

Significant emphasis is placed on infrastructure and utilities, with the submission identifying existing constraints relating to water supply, wastewater capacity, transport congestion, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, public realm quality and the absence of a town park. It calls for infrastructure investment to be planned and delivered in advance of, or in tandem with, further residential development, supported by a statutory transport and mobility strategy.

The submission also highlights deficits in community services and facilities, including the lack of a multi-purpose civic/community hub, limited library provision and inadequate recreational and open space. It requests that land be reserved and zoned for community infrastructure and public amenities as part of a statutory plan, with developer obligations and funding mechanisms used to support delivery.

In relation to rural development, the submission notes Enfield's relationship with its surrounding rural hinterland and calls for a framework to ensure growth in Enfield supports surrounding rural communities while protecting the countryside from urban sprawl. The submission further addresses cultural and natural heritage, advocating for

stronger integration of heritage protection, biodiversity and green infrastructure into future development and public realm projects.

The submission concludes by requesting that the County Development Plan formally recognise the Enfield Town Centre First Plan as a reference document and include clear commitments, timelines and monitoring mechanisms for the preparation and implementation of a statutory plan for Enfield.

Chief Executive Response

The submitter's comments on housing delivery, growth management and the provision of community services in Enfield are noted. The Draft County Development Plan will seek to promote a plan-led and coordinated approach to residential development, ensuring that future housing growth is aligned with community infrastructure and amenities. The Core Strategy also provides a clear framework for managing housing growth across the county. The Core Strategy sets out housing figures for each settlement, informed by population projections, infrastructure capacity and the settlement hierarchy. This approach ensures that residential development doesn't overburden a settlement beyond the capacity of existing and planned community and social infrastructure.

A central request of the submission is that the new County Development Plan explicitly commit to the preparation of a statutory plan for Enfield, either in the form of a Local Area Plan (LAP) or Urban Area Plan (UAP), within the lifetime of the Plan. Since the transposition of the relevant sections of the PDA 2024 on Dec 31st 2025, Local Area Plans are to be replaced by a range of other land use plans, namely Urban Area Plans (UAPs), Coordinated Area Plans (CAPs) and Priority Area Plans (PAPs). UAPs are presently required for Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns. Settlements subject to CAPs and PAPs have yet to be agreed. Enfield is one of the only towns benefitting from the Town Centre First Plan that was completed in 2024. This plan was created on foot of a robust public consultation process and contains a range of measures that would benefit the town, particularly in terms of regeneration, biodiversity and heritage protection. These measures will be considered in the Draft CDP, and more specifically in the Written Statement for Enfield which will include a series of settlement specific recommendations with statutory effect.

The Council, through its Economic Development Department, retains a strong focus on supporting and retaining local employment in County Meath. This is reflected by the Council's endless promotion of County Meath as a place to do business through various Council-led strategies such as Make it Meath, Locate in Meath and the Meath Economic Development Forum. The Council also works with social enterprises such as the Centre of Food Culture Boyne Valley which helps to promote local employment. In support of the new Development Plan, the Council have engaged 3rd party consultants to undertake a

Retail Strategy. This Retail Strategy will include a focus on reducing trade leakages to neighbouring counties, with a specific focus on sequential retail development.

In relation to community services, a Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective. As part of the Social Infrastructure Audit, engagement is required with the Department of Education and the Meath Childcare Committee to obtain up-to-date data on pupil numbers and capacity within schools and childcare facilities.

In line with the NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines 2025, planning authorities are now required to undertake Settlement Capacity Audits to identify serviced/serviceable lands in all relevant settlements, specifying enabling infrastructure, for example wastewater network or treatment infrastructure, roads or public transport capacity and in the case of enabling social infrastructure, schools provision and community facilities. This work is currently under way by Meath County Council and will inform the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033.

In this context, the preparation of both the Social Infrastructure Audit and the Settlement Capacity Audit will provide an evidence-based assessment of existing and future capacity, enabling Meath County Council to identify the most appropriate zoning location for additional community infrastructure within the County.

The comments made in relation to movement are noted. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks. Whilst operational management of the train services remains a matter for the NTA and the various operators, Meath County Council continues to work with these stakeholders to ensure an efficient and effective public transport network is achieved and the Draft Plan will include specific objectives in this regard.

The constraints highlighted in regards to transport congestion, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is also noted. A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing factor for travel demand. Meath County Council's aims to provide safe, efficient and

accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims, and this will be reflected in the Draft Plan.

In terms of rural development, the Draft Plan will continue to support development of a scale and type that is consistent with the rural character of areas such as Enfield, and in aiming towards the creation of attractive efficient compact settlements that support surrounding rural communities whilst protecting the countryside from urban sprawl.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-45: Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of The McNeece Family

Summary of Submission:

This submission has been prepared by Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of the McNeece Family, significant landowners in the Southern Environs of Drogheda, in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission primarily relates to Core Strategy and Settlement and Housing matters, with reference to Drogheda's designation as a Regional Growth Centre within the settlement hierarchy.

The submission references recent national policy direction, including correspondence from the Minister for Housing (May 2025) and the Section 28 *National Planning Framework (NPF) Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* (July 2025). It is submitted that Meath County Council is now required to plan for significantly increased housing delivery targets of 2,942 units per annum to 2034, with provision for up to 50% additional headroom to ensure deliverability, and that these revised requirements must be reflected in the Core Strategy and settlement-level allocations of the new County Development Plan.

The submission contends that, given Drogheda's position at the top of the settlement hierarchy, a proportionate share of the increased housing requirement should be directed to the Southern Environs of Drogheda. It is stated that housing delivery in South Drogheda since the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 has been constrained by an insufficient supply of residentially zoned land, which has resulted in accelerated growth in the Northern Environs of Drogheda in County Louth.

A baseline assessment of South Drogheda is provided, including a review of fourteen sites currently zoned for residential development. The submission notes that several of these sites are built out, inactive, delayed or unlikely to come forward for housing delivery within the life of the plan, including lands currently in use for educational or recreational purposes. It is submitted that the existing zoning pattern does not provide sufficient capacity to meet revised national housing targets.

The submission requests that additional serviced lands within or contiguous to the existing built-up area of South Drogheda be identified for residential development. It is suggested that land selection should have regard to proximity to schools, availability of water and wastewater infrastructure, access to multi-modal public transport, land ownership patterns and the likelihood of delivery within the plan period.

The submission further requests that the Draft County Development Plan prioritise development in the Southern Environs of Drogheda as a counterbalance to recent growth in the Northern Environs, facilitate development at sufficient scale to support infrastructure investment and compact growth, and contribute to town centre regeneration in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives. The submission also requests that the Draft Plan include objectives to support the delivery of additional rail stations in the context of the DART+ Northern extension, including stations at Drogheda South (Colpe) and Bettystown.

Chief Executive Response

Drogheda is the only regional growth centre located partially in County Meath. It sits at the top of the county's planning hierarchy and has been identified as a key economic growth centre. In recent years, it has experienced rapid population growth.

The submission highlighted concerns regarding housing delivery with the Southern Environs of Drogheda, including the availability and deliverability of zoned residential lands, the capacity of existing infrastructure, and the role of South Drogheda in contributing to revised housing targets in accordance with the recently published Section 28 Guidelines on the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements published in July 2025. For information purposes, a variation to address these revised housing requirements is currently underway on the current County Development Plan and is due to be placed on public display in Q1 2026. These Housing Growth Requirements will also set out the housing allocation for the County Development Plan over the next 6 years and beyond.

The submission states that additional serviced lands within the settlement boundary and contiguous to the built-up footprint should be identified for residential development. The revised housing growth requirements require that at least 40% of new development be located within the built-up footprint of existing settlements. Accordingly, the Draft CDP will ensure that lands of this nature are given priority, subject to their having access to the necessary infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, roads, and public lighting.

The Chief Executive notes the request for a strategic policy objective to provide an additional train station and supports its inclusion in the Draft Plan. Furthermore, an Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) is currently being prepared for the town to inform the preparation of the Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan, during which both Meath and

Louth County Councils will engage with relevant stakeholders, including the National Transport Authority, Irish Rail, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland. This will provide a policy framework for transport related developments in the town including the potential requirement for additional Train Stations. The Meath CDP currently includes an existing objective supporting the provision of a new rail station at Bettystown, and this will be reflected in the new Draft Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-46: Genesis Planning on behalf of McGarrell Reilly Group

Summary of Submission:

This submission has been prepared by Genesis Planning on behalf of the McGarrell Reilly Group in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission focuses on Core Strategy, the settlement approach for Stamullen and housing delivery in the town, in the context of revised national housing policy and guidance.

The submission references the revised National Planning Framework (April 2025) and the accompanying Section 28 *NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* Guidelines, noting that housing targets are now minimum requirements rather than caps and that planning authorities are required to provide for up to 50% additional headroom to support deliverability. It is submitted that Meath County Council should plan for significantly increased housing delivery over the plan period and identify additional lands suitable for residential zoning, subject to environmental assessment.

The submission highlights forthcoming changes under the Planning and Development Act 2024, noting that development plans will move to a 10-year lifespan. It is submitted that the quantum of zoned residential land should reflect this longer plan horizon to ensure continuity of housing supply.

In relation to Stamullen, the submission notes that the town is designated as a Self-Sustaining Town under the current County Development Plan and is strategically located adjacent to the M1 motorway and Gormanston Rail Station, with an established employment base at the City North Business Campus. It is submitted that Stamullen is well placed to accommodate additional housing growth in a sustainable manner.

The submission provides an analysis of existing residential zonings in Stamullen and contends that there are no remaining “New Residential” lands that are undeveloped or uncommitted, with existing zoned lands either built out or subject to extant permissions. It is submitted that population growth has exceeded forecasts under the 2021–2027 Plan and that additional residential lands must be zoned in the emerging Development Plan to meet revised housing targets.

The submission further argues that housing delivery in Stamullen should be aligned with the town's employment base, transport accessibility and existing community infrastructure. It requests that the Draft Plan provide for family housing and medium-density development, rather than high-density apartment schemes, and that zoning decisions be informed by deliverability, market demand and infrastructure availability.

The submission concludes by requesting that the Draft County Development Plan identify additional lands for residential development in Stamullen, incorporate appropriate headroom in accordance with Section 28 Guidelines and the Development Plan Guidelines, and avoid reliance on historic population growth trends that may constrain future housing delivery.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive notes the comments in the submission that the growth strategy should be longer-term, given the imminent move to 10-year development plans. By way of update, the Planning and Development Act 2024 was signed into law in October 2024. Chapter 5 of Part 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 details the statutory process for the preparation and making of a Development Plan and the information required to be included in same. Under this legislation, a Development Plan would have a 10-year duration. This section of the Act came into effect on Dec 31st 2025, three months after the commencement of the review of the Meath CDP. Accordingly, this Development Plan is being prepared under the 2000 Act (as amended) and therefore will have a life of 6 years, unless the Council is legally advised otherwise. Notwithstanding this, the Draft Plan will incorporate the Section 28 *NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* Guidelines and headroom of up to 50% will be factored into the calculation for the quantum of residential lands required to meet the housing growth requirements for the County during the lifetime of the Plan. This quantum of headroom is allowed for in the NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines published in July 2025.

Other comments raised in this submission relate to the settlement function, residential zoning and housing delivery in Stamullen. The submission highlights the town's designation as a Self-Sustaining Town, its accessibility to strategic transport infrastructure, and the need to ensure an adequate supply of serviced residential lands, having regard to the revised national housing policy.

Future residential zoning in Stamullen will be determined through a Settlement Capacity Audit, prepared in advance of the Draft County Development Plan process. The audit will determine serviced and serviceable lands within Stamullen that could accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The

findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning of Stamullen and the rest of the county.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-48: Hughes Planning on behalf of Construction Enterprises
Summary of Submission:

This submission has been prepared by Hughes Planning and Development Consultants on behalf of McGreevy Construction Enterprises in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission relates to lands at Gormanston and seeks the identification and zoning of lands for residential development to facilitate the growth of Gormanston as a more consolidated and sustainable settlement.

The submission is made in the context of the revised National Planning Framework (2025) and the Section 28 *NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* Guidelines, which emphasise the need for planning authorities to identify serviced or serviceable lands capable of early housing delivery. It is submitted that Meath County Council must take immediate steps to align the new Development Plan with increased national housing targets and provide sufficient residential zoning to ensure deliverability.

The submission notes that a substantial portion of lands in Gormanston are currently zoned G1 – Community Infrastructure under the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027. It is argued that, in the absence of sufficient residential zoning, these lands cannot fulfil their intended function, as community infrastructure requires a critical mass of population to be viable and effective.

A key element of the submission is the strategic location of Gormanston on the Dublin–Belfast corridor. The submission highlights the availability of high-quality public transport, including frequent bus services, proximity to Gormanston Train Station, and the proposed future DART station under the DART+ Coastal North project. It is submitted that this level of accessibility makes Gormanston highly suitable for compact, transport-oriented residential development in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives.

The submission further highlights recent and significant infrastructure investment in the area, including an €800,000 developer-funded sewer network upgrade and the completion of Uisce Éireann's Stamullen Wastewater Scheme upgrade in 2025, which is designed to accommodate future wastewater flows from Gormanston. It is submitted that these works ensure the lands are capable of supporting additional housing without placing undue pressure on existing infrastructure.

In relation to settlement form, the submission contends that the zoning of appropriate lands would enable the development of a consolidated village centred around existing assets, including the school, rail station, R132 and community infrastructure, while

avoiding ribbon development and protecting the surrounding countryside. It is submitted that Gormanston is well positioned to provide a mix of dwelling types to meet future housing demand and support sustainable rural growth.

The submission concludes by requesting that Meath County Council identify and zone appropriate lands in Gormanston for residential development as part of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033, in order to support compact growth, maximise the use of existing and planned infrastructure, and contribute meaningfully to county and national housing delivery targets.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledge the submission relating to the existing zoning patterns within Gormanston. The Council notes the submissions reference to the extent of lands currently zoned for community infrastructure purposes. The existing zonings within settlements will be examined as part of the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

The submission acknowledges a site currently zoned G1 – Community that cannot be achieved due to the lack of residential development in Gormanston. However, it should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy considerations to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. Submissions relating to site specific lands parcels cannot be considered at this time. Such submissions can be made and considered at Draft stage of the County Development Plan.

In relation to zoning additional residential lands, a Settlement Capacity Audit is currently being prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit will determine serviced and serviceable lands within Gormanston that could accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

In relation to transport and movement, the comments in respect to the strategic location of Gormanston on the Dublin-Belfast corridor are acknowledged. The Council recognises the existing availability of high-quality public transport referenced in the submission that provides potential for Gormanston to have high level of accessibility for compact, transport-oriented residential development in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy

frameworks. While the presence of a train station is of significant value, the quality of the existing road network and other supporting infrastructure requirements will ultimately inform the outcome of the zoning process for residential development over the next plan period.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-49: Edward Savage

Summary of Submission:

The submission by Edward Savage relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and focuses on the promotion, development and structural support of the film and screen sector within County Meath. The submission highlights the cultural, educational and economic benefits associated with film production and notes County Meath's existing strengths, including its range of natural and built locations, a growing creative community and recent local and international screen productions.

The submission references existing supports provided by Meath County Council, including Arts Office programming, small grants for creatives, initiatives under the Creative Ireland Meath Strategy, and investment in cultural infrastructure such as libraries, archives and creative hubs. It is submitted that while these supports are valuable, there is potential to further develop film-specific supports to strengthen the sector and enhance Meath's profile as a film production destination.

A number of recommendations are set out in the submission. These include the establishment of a dedicated fund within the Arts Office or Local Enterprise Office to support film production, short films and professional development for local filmmakers. The submission also proposes the creation of a Meath Film Office to assist with filming permits, location services and coordination between filmmakers, local services and property owners.

The submission further requests support for the development or adaptation of local venues for use as screening spaces, post-production studios, film archives and training facilities. It also advocates for the continued support and expansion of film-related events and festivals, including the Meath Film Festival, Boyne Film Festival and Ashbourne Film Festival, through seed funding, marketing and integration with education and training initiatives.

The submission highlights the importance of collaboration with national and regional bodies, including Screen Ireland and Creative Ireland, to promote County Meath as a filming location, support local employment opportunities and provide mentoring and training pathways for emerging filmmakers. The submission concludes by stating that targeted policies and objectives within the new County Development Plan could support

the growth of a sustainable and vibrant film sector in County Meath, delivering cultural and economic benefits to local communities.

Chief Executive Response

The matters raised in relation to the cultural, educational and community value of the film and screen sector are noted. The Chief Executive recognises the contribution that creative and cultural activities, including film production and related events, can make to community identity, cultural participation and the use of community and cultural infrastructure.

Meath has been home to many film productions including Traitors Ireland filmed in Slane, Blood filmed in Kilcock and Braveheart filmed at Trim Castle amongst others and the Council is wholly supportive of growing County Meath as a location for film production.

The council will continue to support festivals, art initiatives and cultural programming, in partnership with the Arts Office and external agencies. The Draft County Development Plan will continue to support the provision and enhancement of cultural and community facilities, including libraries, cultural spaces, creative hubs and multi-purpose venues, which can facilitate creative activity, learning and community engagement.

With respect to enhancing Meath's profile as a film production destination, the planning team will engage with the Economic Development team and the Local Enterprise Office on any measures that could be incorporated into the County Development Plan. Notwithstanding this, it is worth noting that the Council is undertaking an assessment of employment zoned lands across County Meath to inform the employment zoning methodology for the new County Development Plan. Preliminary results indicate a large amount of undeveloped employment zoned land across County Meath. Film studios and related uses may be considered as light industrial uses which constitute permitted or open for consideration uses on employment zoned lands. Thus, it is considered that the Development Plan includes zoned land that could be activated for film studio and ancillary uses. The Council will ensure that sufficient lands are zoned for employment purposes in the new Development Plan, in accordance with the employment zoning methodology as set out in the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022).

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-50: Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of Buvinda Developments and its Principals

Summary of Submission:

This submission has been prepared by Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of Buvinda Developments and its Principals, significant landowners in the Southern Environs of Drogheda, in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County

Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission primarily relates to Core Strategy and Settlement and Housing matters, with reference to Drogheda's designation as a Regional Growth Centre.

The submission references recent national policy direction, including correspondence from the Minister for Housing (May 2025) and the Section 28 *National Planning Framework (NPF) Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* (July 2025). It is submitted that Meath County Council is now required to plan for significantly increased housing delivery targets, including provision for up to 50% additional headroom to support deliverability, and that these revised requirements must be reflected in the Core Strategy and settlement-level allocations of the new County Development Plan.

The submission contends that, given Drogheda's position at the top of the settlement hierarchy, a significant proportion of the increased housing requirement should be directed to the Southern Environs of Drogheda. It is stated that housing delivery in South Drogheda since the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 has been constrained due to the limited availability of residentially zoned land, resulting in accelerated development in the Northern Environs of the town in County Louth.

A baseline assessment of the Southern Environs is provided, including a review of fourteen sites currently zoned for residential development. The submission notes that a number of these sites are built out, inactive, delayed, subject to existing uses or otherwise unlikely to deliver housing within the life of the Plan. It is submitted that the existing zoning pattern does not provide sufficient capacity to meet revised national housing targets.

The submission requests that additional serviced or serviceable lands within or contiguous to the existing built-up area of South Drogheda be identified for residential development. It is suggested that land selection should have regard to proximity to schools, availability of water and wastewater infrastructure, access to multi-modal public transport, land ownership patterns and the likelihood of delivery within the plan period.

The submission further requests that the Draft County Development Plan prioritise the development of the Southern Environs of Drogheda as a counterbalance to recent growth in the Northern Environs, facilitate development at sufficient scale to support infrastructure investment and compact growth, and contribute to town centre regeneration in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives. The submission also seeks flexibility in the application of masterplan requirements to allow early phases of development to proceed where lands are serviced and supported by appropriate assessments.

In addition, the submission requests that the Draft Plan include objectives to support the delivery of additional rail stations in the context of the DART+ Northern extension, including stations at Drogheda South (Colpe) and Bettystown.

Chief Executive Response

Drogheda is the only regional growth centre located partially in County Meath. It sits at the top of the county's planning hierarchy and has been identified as a key economic growth centre. In recent years, it has experienced rapid population growth.

The submission highlighted concerns regarding housing delivery with the Southern Environs of Drogheda, including the availability and deliverability of zoned residential lands, the capacity of existing infrastructure, and the role of South Drogheda in contributing to revised housing targets in accordance with the recently published Section 28 Guidelines on the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements published in July 2025. For information purposes, a variation to address these revised housing requirements is currently underway on the current County Development Plan and is due to be placed on public display in Q1 2026. These Housing Growth Requirements will also set out the housing allocation for the County Development Plan over the next 6 years and beyond.

The submission states that additional serviced lands within the settlement boundary and contiguous to the built-up footprint should be identified for residential development. The revised housing growth requirements require that at least 40% of new development be located within the built-up footprint of existing settlements. Accordingly, the Draft CDP will ensure that lands of this nature are given priority, subject to their having access to the necessary infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, roads, and public lighting.

The Chief Executive notes the request for a strategic policy objective to provide an additional train station and supports its inclusion in the Draft Plan. Furthermore, an Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) is currently being prepared for the town to inform the preparation of the Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan, during which both Meath and Louth County Councils will engage with relevant stakeholders, including the National Transport Authority, Irish Rail, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland. This will provide a policy framework for transport related developments in the town including the potential requirement for additional Train Stations. The Meath CDP currently includes an existing objective supporting the provision of a new rail station at Bettystown, and this will also be reflected in the new Draft Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-51: John Spain Associates on behalf of Kingscroft Developments Ltd

Summary of Submission:

This submission has been prepared by John Spain Associates on behalf of Kingscroft Developments Ltd. in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath

County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission focuses on Core Strategy, settlement hierarchy and housing delivery, with particular reference to lands in Navan and Ashbourne.

The submission is framed in the context of the revised National Planning Framework (2025) and the Section 28 *NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* Guidelines, which significantly increase national housing targets and provide for up to 50% additional headroom in residential zoning to ensure deliverability. It is submitted that Meath County Council must plan for a substantially increased quantum of residential development over the plan period and ensure that zoning does not constrain housing delivery.

The submission requests that Navan and Ashbourne retain their current designations within the settlement hierarchy as a *Key Town* and a *Self-Sustaining Growth Town* respectively, noting their existing scale, service provision and strategic importance within the county. It is further submitted that updated population projections based on Census 2022 data should be fully reflected in the Core Strategy.

The submission identifies lands currently zoned F – Open Space at Clonmaggaden Road, Navan and Brindley Park, Ashbourne, which are located within or immediately adjacent to the existing built-up envelopes of both settlements. It is argued that these lands represent sequential, serviced and accessible infill sites, surrounded by established residential development and supported by existing physical and social infrastructure.

A detailed planning history is provided for both locations, demonstrating that the lands were originally intended to accommodate future residential development and that substantial public open space has already been provided within the adjoining estates in excess of current standards. It is submitted that the subject lands offer limited amenity value in their current form and that their development would not undermine open space provision.

The submission contends that zoning these lands for residential development would support compact growth, avoid urban sprawl and make efficient use of existing infrastructure, while contributing to the delivery of much-needed housing in sustainable locations. It is requested that the Draft County Development Plan rezone the identified lands from F – Open Space to A2 – New Residential to facilitate residential-led development in the short to medium term.

The submission concludes by requesting that Meath County Council take account of the revised national housing policy context, provide sufficient residential zoning in Navan and Ashbourne, and ensure that the Development Plan enables the timely delivery of housing in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Chief Executive Response

The Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

The Chief Executive notes the submission requests for Navan and Ashbourne to retain their current designations within the settlement hierarchy as a *Key Town* and a *Self-Sustaining Growth Town* respectively, noting their existing scale, service provision and strategic importance within the county. It is generally accepted that both settlements will retain their position in the settlement Hierarchy while all baseline population data will rely on latest census data available at the time of writing.

The submission requests that F1 – Open Space at Clonmaggaden Road, Navan and Brindley Park, Ashbourne be rezoned for residential development. It should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy considerations to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. Submissions relating to site specific lands parcels cannot be considered at this time. Such submissions can be made and considered at Draft stage of the County Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-52: Edward Savage

Summary of Submission:

The submission by Edward Savage relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and focuses on the role of hiking groups and walking clubs in promoting physical health, social inclusion, environmental awareness and tourism within County Meath. The submission highlights the contribution of established local hiking organisations, including Navan Trekkers and N51 Trekkers, and references the County's existing natural assets such as forest walks, heritage trails and river corridors.

The submission notes existing policy supports and initiatives, including Meath County Council's Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) and the Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025–2029, which are identified as key mechanisms for funding trail development, upgrades, signage and community engagement. Recent investment in walking infrastructure, including the Bettystown–Mornington Boardwalk, is referenced as an example of positive progress.

A number of recommendations are set out in the submission. These include increased Council and national funding for the creation, upgrade and maintenance of walking routes across the County, improved signage and wayfinding, and the provision of supporting facilities such as rest areas and parking. The submission also calls for formal recognition of

hiking groups as stakeholders in policy development and infrastructure planning, and for greater collaboration with volunteer groups in trail maintenance and management.

The submission further supports sustainable access to natural areas, emphasising the need to integrate environmental standards and heritage protection with recreational use. It also recommends outreach initiatives to promote hiking among people of all ages and abilities, including guided walks and community events, and proposes stronger collaboration with tourism bodies to promote Meath's walking routes, link trails with local attractions and accommodation, and support walking festivals and regional tourism initiatives.

The submission concludes by stating that increased investment, consultation and partnership with local hiking groups would support the development of accessible and sustainable outdoor recreation across the county.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council recognises the value of accessible recreational infrastructure, including trails, boardwalks, and heritage routes. The amount of funding towards recreational infrastructure comes from a national level and is therefore outside the control of the Local Authority. However, Meath County Council will continue to seek funding where appropriate for community-related projects.

The Draft County Development Plan will continue to support the provision, enhancement and maintenance of community-based outdoor recreation infrastructure, in line with the Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025–2029 and relevant funding schemes. The importance of collaboration with local volunteer groups, community organisations and relevant stakeholders in the planning, management and upkeep of recreational trails is acknowledged.

The recommendations relating to increased funding, improved signage and wayfinding, provision of supporting facilities, and enhanced collaboration with volunteer groups are acknowledged. The Council also notes the importance of balancing recreational access with environmental protection and heritage conservation, in line with the principles of sustainable development.

The potential role of hiking and walking infrastructure in supporting tourism, local economies and community well-being is also recognised. Accordingly, the Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 will work to further support the development of sustainable outdoor recreation, green infrastructure and active travel, in collaboration with community groups, landowners and relevant agencies. The Draft County Outdoor Recreation Plan states the priority for outdoor recreation in Meath. Over the next five years the plan is to work in partnership with stakeholders and communities to secure and sensitively develop additional greenspace for all residents and visitors to access. This will

take place alongside improving, managing and maintaining existing water and land-based amenities, while protecting and conserving our environment and rich heritage.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-53: Edward Savage
Summary of Submission:
The submission by Edward Savage relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and addresses the need for safe and accessible pedestrian infrastructure in rural areas, with particular reference to walking routes serving sports, community and educational facilities such as Boardsmill GAA pitch near Trim. The submission highlights concerns regarding pedestrian safety in rural locations where narrow roads, limited verges, high traffic speeds and the absence of footpaths create risks for walkers, including children, young people and other vulnerable road users attending training sessions, matches and community events. It is submitted that existing safety measures, such as roadside fencing and localised road widening, are insufficient without the provision of continuous, dedicated pavements. The submission references policy support within the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 for high-quality pedestrian infrastructure in rural nodes and near local amenities, as well as wider active travel and road safety initiatives implemented by the Council. It also refers to objectives within the Rural Development Strategy that support the inclusion of footpaths where appropriate in the interests of safety and sustainable rural living. A number of recommendations are made, including prioritising the planning and funding of pavement extensions from village centres and housing clusters to key amenities such as GAA pitches, schools and community facilities. The submission requests that footpaths, traffic calming and public lighting be treated as standard components of upgrades to rural amenities, and that the Council engage directly with local clubs, schools and residents to identify priority routes and safety issues. The submission further recommends that pavement extensions to rural amenities be included in applications for Active Travel funding, Sports Capital funding and the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, in order to leverage national and local resources. The submission concludes by stating that improved pedestrian infrastructure would enhance safety, health and inclusivity within rural communities across County Meath.
Chief Executive Response
The concerns and recommendations raised in this submission regarding pedestrian safety in rural locations are noted. The need to facilitate and support safe walking and cycling routes is recognised, and existing principles and policies will be reviewed during the

preparation of the Draft Plan. It is intended that the Draft Plan will support the creation of sustainable communities in the future and require safe connectivity between key amenities in all settlements.

The further recommendation to extend pavement access to rural amenities to be included in applications for Active Travel Funding is outside the remit of the Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-54: Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of The Clinton Family

Summary of Submission:

This submission has been prepared by Brady Hughes Consulting on behalf of the Clinton Family, significant landowners in Kells, in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission primarily relates to Core Strategy and Settlement and Housing matters, with reference to Kells' designation as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town within the County settlement hierarchy.

The submission is framed in the context of recent national policy direction, including correspondence from the Minister for Housing and the Section 28 *National Planning Framework (NPF) Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* Guidelines (July 2025). It is submitted that Meath County Council is now required to plan for 2,942 housing units per annum to 2034, with provision for up to 50% additional headroom to ensure deliverability, representing a significant increase on current Development Plan targets.

In relation to Kells, the submission notes that the town is strategically located on the M3 corridor and has been identified for compact growth and town centre regeneration under the current County Development Plan. However, it is submitted that housing delivery in Kells has been slow, with limited progress across existing residentially zoned lands. Of the eight sites currently zoned for new residential development, it is stated that four have been developed, three have not advanced, and one has planning permission but has not delivered housing units.

The submission contends that the remaining capacity of zoned residential land in Kells is insufficient to meet revised national housing targets. Applying Kells' proportional share of county-wide housing delivery to the revised targets and headroom provisions, the submission suggests that Kells should target delivery of approximately 176 units per annum over the next ten years.

The submission requests that the Draft County Development Plan adopt an ambitious and proactive approach to promoting Kells within the settlement hierarchy, identify additional lands for residential development, and increase housing allocations in line with revised NPF requirements. It is submitted that land selection should prioritise logical and

sequential extensions to the settlement boundary, with lands that are well-served by road access, water and wastewater infrastructure, and that are not constrained by flood risk. Proximity to schools, shops, amenities and the town centre, and suitability for medium-density residential development, are also identified as key considerations.

The submission concludes by requesting that Meath County Council align the Core Strategy and settlement-level allocations for Kells with national housing policy, facilitate compact and infrastructure-led growth, and support the sustainable development and regeneration of the town over the lifetime of the Development Plan.

Chief Executive Response

The Council notes the submission and acknowledges the issues raised regarding housing delivery, land supply, and the role of Kells within the settlement hierarchy. The Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 is being prepared in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and is required to be consistent, insofar as practicable, with national and regional planning policy, including the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and relevant Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines.

The Council recognises that recent national guidance places a strong emphasis on increased housing delivery and on ensuring that Development Plans provide sufficient capacity to meet revised housing growth requirements while supporting compact growth and town centre regeneration. In this context, the Council acknowledges that, having regard to revised national housing targets and longer-term growth requirements, the remaining residentially zoned lands within Kells under the current County Development Plan are unlikely to be sufficient to meet housing needs beyond the existing plan period. The Draft County Development Plan will therefore review the Core Strategy and settlement-level housing allocations for Kells, informed by updated population projections, Settlement Capacity Audits, infrastructure capacity assessments and environmental considerations, to ensure that future growth in Kells is plan-led, sequential and deliverable.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-55: John Spain Associates on behalf of the Burton Family

Summary of Submission:

This submission has been prepared by John Spain Associates on behalf of the Bruton Family in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission relates to lands at Newtown, Dunboyne, and focuses on Core Strategy and Settlement and Housing matters, having regard to Dunboyne's designation as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town within the settlement hierarchy and its location within the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP).

The submission is framed in the context of the revised National Planning Framework (2025) and the Section 28 *NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* Guidelines (July 2025), which significantly increase housing targets and require planning authorities to provide additional residential zoning headroom to ensure housing delivery. It is submitted that Meath County Council must plan for substantially increased housing delivery over the plan period and ensure sufficient zoned land is identified to meet revised targets.

The submission highlights Dunboyne's strategic role within the MASP, noting its strong public transport connectivity, including the Dublin–Maynooth rail line and the approved DART+ West project, which includes the electrification and upgrade of the rail corridor serving Dunboyne. It is submitted that this level of public transport accessibility presents a significant opportunity for Transport-Oriented Development (TOD) and compact growth in accordance with national and regional policy.

The subject lands at Newtown are described as comprising two parcels located partly within and adjoining the existing settlement boundary of Dunboyne. Under the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027, part of the lands are zoned A2 Phasing – Residential land not available for development until post-2027. It is submitted that these lands represent a logical, sequential extension to the existing built-up area and are suitable for early residential development over the forthcoming plan period.

The submission requests that the Draft County Development Plan adopt a more balanced and sequential approach to the future growth of Dunboyne, including expansion to the south-west of the town centre. It is contended that the zoning of additional residential lands in this location would support compact growth, maximise the benefits of public transport investment, and contribute to the delivery of a mix of housing types supported by appropriate infrastructure and community facilities.

The submission concludes by requesting that Meath County Council review and adjust the settlement strategy and residential zoning framework for Dunboyne in line with revised national housing policy, the MASP, and Transport-Oriented Development principles, and that the subject lands be considered for inclusion within the residential zoning framework of the new County Development Plan.

Chief Executive Response

The Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

The submission refers to specific parcels of land in Newtown Dunboyne, including lands identified as A2 residential post-2027, and promotes their suitability for early residential development. The submission also make reference to future growth to the southwest of Dunboyne. Such site-specific zoning, phasing and growth direction matters cannot be

considered at this stage of the process and the Author is advised that submissions relating to site-specific zoning, phasing and growth direction can be made at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

In relation to transport and movement the comments are noted in regards to the strategic location of Dunboyne within the MASP. The Council recognises the existing availability of high-quality public transport mentioned in the submission resulting in Dunboyne having a high level of accessibility which is suitable for compact, transport-oriented residential development in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks.

The Council also recognises the importance of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in maximising the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure spaces in close proximity to high quality transport services. The Draft Plan will include policies and objectives in support of rail-focused development consolidation.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-56: Aishing Monaghan
Summary of Submission:
The submission by Aishling Monaghan relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and focuses on supporting the development of film, digital media and community-based creative activity within County Meath. The submission highlights a growing interest in filmmaking, digital storytelling and creative collaboration across schools, youth groups and local communities. The submission emphasises the importance of providing accessible spaces for creative activity, alongside opportunities for training, workshops and skills development. It is submitted that support for community film groups, media literacy programmes and creative learning initiatives would strengthen cultural life and provide meaningful opportunities for people of all ages to engage in creative expression. The submission also highlights the potential contribution of film and digital media to Meath's cultural identity, tourism and economic development. It is suggested that showcasing local stories through short films, community screenings and youth-led creative projects could promote Meath's heritage in a modern and engaging way. The submission encourages collaboration between schools, community groups, local creatives and cultural organisations to help build a sustainable and inclusive creative ecosystem. It is noted that relatively small-scale supports, such as micro-grants,

mentorship opportunities and the coordination of local creative networks, could play a significant role in enabling emerging voices and projects.

The submission concludes by requesting that the new County Development Plan recognise and support the creative and digital media sector as part of a broader strategy to build long-term cultural capacity and foster a vibrant, inclusive and forward-looking county.

Chief Executive Response

The matters raised in relation to the cultural, educational and community value of the film and digital media are noted. The Chief Executive recognises the contribution that creative and cultural activities, including film production and related events, can make to community identity, cultural participation and the use of community and cultural infrastructure.

Meath has been home to many film productions including Traitors Ireland filmed in Slane, Blood filmed in Kilcock and Braveheart filmed at Trim Castle. Meath County Council is wholly supportive of growing County Meath as a location for film and digital media production.

The council will continue to support film production, in partnership with the Arts Office and external agencies. The Draft County Development Plan will continue to support the provision and enhancement of cultural and community facilities, including libraries, cultural spaces, creative hubs and multi-purpose venues, which can facilitate creative activity, learning and community engagement.

The planning team will engage with the Economic Development team and the Local Enterprise Office on any measures that could be incorporated into the County Development Plan. Notwithstanding this, it is worth noting that the Council is undertaking an assessment of employment zoned lands across County Meath to inform the employment zoning methodology for the new County Development Plan. Preliminary results indicate a large amount of undeveloped employment zoned land across County Meath. Film studios and related uses may be considered as light industrial uses which constitute permitted or open for consideration uses on employment zoned lands. Thus, it is considered that the Development Plan includes zoned land that could be activated for film studio and ancillary uses. The Council will ensure that sufficient lands are zoned for employment purposes in the new Development Plan, in accordance with the employment zoning methodology as set out in the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022).

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-57: Meath GAA

Summary of Submission:

The submission by Meath GAA (C.L.G. na Mí) relates to the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and outlines the role of Gaelic games and GAA facilities in supporting healthy, socially inclusive and resilient communities across County Meath. The submission is made on behalf of the county board, representing a wide network of clubs and facilities in urban and rural areas.

The submission emphasises the importance of sport and physical activity in promoting health, social inclusion, volunteerism and community cohesion. It highlights the contribution of GAA clubs to providing structured physical activity for all age groups, fostering social connection and supporting inclusion across gender and increasingly diverse communities. The submission notes that GAA clubs act as key anchors of community life, particularly in rural areas where alternative facilities may be limited.

In relation to community and sports infrastructure, the submission supports a plan-led approach that ensures the timely provision of sports and community facilities in line with population growth and settlement expansion. It requests that the Draft County Development Plan explicitly recognise GAA and community sports facilities as essential social infrastructure and include objectives to protect, enhance and appropriately expand the network of playing pitches, clubhouses and ancillary facilities. The submission also supports early-phase delivery of sports infrastructure alongside large residential developments and the promotion of shared use of facilities where appropriate.

The submission addresses movement and active travel, highlighting concerns regarding safe access to GAA facilities, particularly for children and young people. It requests that the Plan prioritise safe walking and cycling routes to sports facilities from residential areas, schools, town and village centres and public transport nodes. The submission also supports traffic calming, pedestrian crossings, lighting and junction improvements near GAA grounds, and recognises match-day traffic as a recurring and predictable pattern that should be addressed through strategic transport planning.

In relation to climate change, the submission highlights the role of GAA clubs in contributing to local climate action. It notes ongoing initiatives such as energy-efficient lighting upgrades, solar PV installation, improved building fabric, EV charging infrastructure and climate-resilient pitch design. The submission requests that the Draft Plan support renewable energy and energy-efficiency measures at sports facilities, subject to appropriate planning considerations, and recognise the role of clubs as partners in community climate action and education.

The submission also addresses rural development, noting that GAA clubs frequently serve as primary community hubs in villages and rural areas. It requests that the Plan protect existing rural sports facilities from loss to other uses, support modest expansion where

justified by local need, and align rural housing and settlement policies with the capacity of local sports infrastructure. Improved public transport and demand-responsive transport options for rural areas are also supported to facilitate participation, particularly for young people.

The submission concludes by requesting ongoing structured engagement between Meath County Council and Meath GAA during the preparation of the County Development Plan, including in relation to community infrastructure planning, active travel, climate action and future town and village plans.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission from Meath GAA and notes the detailed proposals outlined in relation to climate action, energy efficiency and climate-resilient facilities. The Council recognises the role of GAA clubs as local leaders in climate mitigation and adaptation, including through measures such as LED floodlighting, solar PV, energy-efficient building upgrades, EV charging infrastructure and improved pitch drainage. The Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 will be informed by the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 and will support, where appropriate, renewable energy, energy efficiency and climate-resilient design in community and sports facilities, including alignment with Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, the use of SuDS and nature-based solutions, subject to proper planning and environmental considerations.

The concerns raised in relation to movement and active travel are noted. A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable movement and transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan to create attractive, efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed are the primary influencing factors for travel demand. Meath County Council aims to provide safe, efficient and accessible cycle and pedestrian networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims, and this will be reflected in the Draft Plan.

The Council recognises the importance of GAA clubs in rural areas and the manner in which they serve as primary community hubs in villages and rural areas. The Council recognises that the provision of good quality community facilities in existing and developing areas is a key element in the development of sustainable, healthy communities across the County. Nationally, there has been, in recent years, an increased focus on fitness, sports and recreation generally. Therefore, the provision of facilities for sports and recreation to serve our growing communities has become an increasingly important planning issue. Thus, the appropriate provision of these facilities will be a key objective in the Draft Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-58: Declan Gannon
Summary of Submission:
This submission relates to transport infrastructure and associated land use planning north of Ashbourne, County Meath, with particular reference to the N2 Rath to Kilmoon Cross scheme. The submission was included as an attachment to a general online submission which refers to the themes of Infrastructure, Employment and the Economy. The submission states that existing national, regional and local policy supports the upgrade of the N2 Rath to Kilmoon Cross, including objectives within the current Meath County Development Plan **(MOV OBJ 38, MOV OBJ 49, MOV OBJ 50, MOV POL 33)**, the neighbouring Fingal County Council Development Plan **(Objective CMO37a)** and relevant national transport strategies. The submission notes that there is growing uncertainty regarding the status, timeline and deliverability of the N2 scheme, and that it may not be delivered within the lifetime of the 2027–2033 Development Plan. The submission contends that this uncertainty risks creating a policy vacuum that could undermine integrated land-use, transport planning, and employment growth north of Ashbourne. The submission further contends that employment growth in this area can be considered a priority, given the success of established pharmaceutical and tech facilities off the M3. The submission outlines that Ashbourne's strategic location, population growth, and limited multimodal transport options require a clear, proactive transport framework to support the use of existing employment-zoned lands north of the town. The submission proposes that the Development Plan should acknowledge the potential delay to the N2 scheme and include objectives to protect the route alignment, the corridor, and the design principles to facilitate future delivery. It further proposes that interim upgrades to the N2 north of Ashbourne should be considered, including junction improvements, safety measures, active travel and public transport enabling works, to improve safety, journey reliability and support phased implementation of the N2 Rath to Kilmoon scheme. In addition, the submission contends that this would enable the phasing and coordinated development of inactivated employment lands north of Ashbourne. In closing, the submission suggests that a coherent interim strategy for the N2 corridor be set out in the 2027–2033 Development Plan.
Chief Executive Response
The concerns raised in this submission regarding the delivery of the N2 Rath to Kilmoon Cross Scheme are noted. Meath County Council is currently working in partnership with Fingal County Council and in association with Transport Infrastructure Ireland, to develop the scheme along a section of the N2 between Rath Roundabout and Kilmoon Cross. This scheme is referenced in a number of policy documents including the National Planning Framework (Ireland 2040), the National Development Plan and the National

Transport Authority's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area. As mentioned in the submission, several policies and objectives support the delivery of this necessary national road upgrade. The Draft Plan will continue to implement policies and objectives on supporting the N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross, and MCC will continue to liaise with TII.

The protection of strategic transport corridors within the County is considered critical to the future prosperity of Meath, as well as at the regional and national levels. The current Plan includes objectives to protect the core strategic road network, and this policy approach will be carried through to the new Plan.

In response to the proposed interim upgrades to the N2, policies and objectives to support and facilitate the management of the national road network, in line with relevant National and Regional Policy, will be an important aspect of the Movement Strategy in the Draft Plan. The Council recognises that the transport network in Meath is heavily reliant on the safe and efficient operation of the road networks. As such, policies to safeguard road movement will be included in the Draft plan.

The Council notes that the employment lands referenced in this submission north of Ashbourne are the subject of a masterplan objective in the existing Development Plan **(MP19).** It is intended to carry forward this objective into the new Development Plan. Regarding a masterplan for this area, the Council is in ongoing engagements with the owner(s) of these lands to facilitate their development through the masterplanning process, with a Draft Masterplan currently under assessment. The Council will encourage the landowner(s) to undertake consultation as part of this non-statutory planning process.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-59: Schira Mullen

Summary of Submission:

The submission relates specifically to the Hill of Tara and its surrounding area stating that the Hill of Tara is of exceptional cultural, historical and spiritual significance and that its unique character should be protected and preserved as a matter of priority. The submission contends that designation of the Hill of Tara as a World Heritage Site could lead to over-commercialisation and excessive development, which may undermine the historic and spiritual essence of the area. The submission proposes that a balanced approach should be taken which promotes sustainable tourism while safeguarding the cultural and natural heritage of the site. The following specific measures are proposed:

- Upgrading of access roads serving the Hill of Tara to better accommodate visitors, while prohibiting roadside parking to improve safety and traffic efficiency and to minimise impacts on the surrounding environment.

- To designate the main road adjacent to the shop at the Hill of Tara as a pedestrian-only zone, creating a safer and higher quality public realm for visitors and local residents.
- An alternative access road should be developed to facilitate traffic movement and support the proposed pedestrianisation, thereby enhancing the overall visitor and village experience.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive notes the exceptional value of the Hill of Tara and accepts that measures are required to protect its cultural, historical and unique character. The Tara Conservation Management Plan was published in 2022 and acknowledges that the Hill of Tara is accessed primarily by cars or coaches which must negotiate narrow country roads, many of which do not have the capacity to cope with heavy vehicular usages and causes safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists. It Is an objective and action of the management plan to '*Implement measures to facilitate sustainable access for arrival to site respecting its setting, significance and environs, having regard to traffic and parking issues, public transport, cycling and pedestrians etc.* **(O3.A1)**'.

Meath County Council will continue to work in partnership with the Department of Heritage , OPW, local community and all relevant stakeholders to address visitor management issues and augment the visitor experience at the Hill of Tara during the new County Development Plan.

Chief Executive Recommendation

To continue to work in partnership with the Department of Heritage, OPW, Local community and all relevant stakeholders to address visitor management issues and augment the visitor experience at the Hill of Tara.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-60: Jackie O'Connell

Summary of Submission:

Public housing for people with disabilities:

The submission states that national policy requires local authorities to facilitate people with disabilities to live independently within their communities and contends that Meath County Council appears to rely on third-party private operators to house people with intellectual disabilities. The submission raises concerns that this approach has resulted in young adults being inappropriately accommodated in residential care facilities distant from their communities or in nursing homes for older persons. The submission notes that adults with disabilities should be supported to remain in their local communities when parents or carers are no longer able to provide care. It asserts that people with

intellectual disabilities can often live independently where appropriate housing and supports are provided, and that such housing should be planned for within the Development Plan for each town in County Meath**.** The submission further asserts that the Meath County Development Plan should incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular Article 19, which relates to living independently and being included in the community.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the importance of providing appropriately located and designed housing to support people with disabilities in living independently within their communities, close to services, family and carers.

The principles of universal design, accessibility and inclusion are recognised as important policy considerations across a range of chapters, including planning and development, public realm design, parks and recreation, housing, community facilities, transport and cultural services.

Variation 3 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 introduced a requirement that between 15 to 30 percent of dwellings and apartments in new residential development of ten units or more must be provided as Age Friendly Lifetime Adaptable homes. These homes must be suitable to accommodate or be adaptable to provide accommodation for older people and people with disabilities, in accordance with national policy and universal design standards. Meath County Council will continue to support and enhance this approach through the Draft County Development Plan, in order to future proof the housing stock and promote inclusive, accessible and sustainable communities.

The objectives of the forthcoming County Development Plan will continue to align with national and international policy frameworks that promote equality, accessibility and inclusive communities, including the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and relevant national strategies. These matters will be considered in the context of developing a plan that supports inclusive, healthy and sustainable communities across County Meath. The Plan will also seek to facilitate the integration of such housing across towns and settlements in County Meath, ensuring access to community services, amenities and supports, in accordance with statutory requirements and national guidance.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-61: Dominic Gradwell on behalf of Boyne Sports Campus

Summary of Submission:

This submission was made by Dominic Gradwell on behalf of the Boyne Sports Campus Community and is included as an attachment to an online submission. The submission

relates to a proposal for a multi-disciplinary municipal sports campus within the Drogheda/East Meath area and seeks the collaborative support of both Meath County Council (MCC) and Louth County Council (LCC).

The submission states that the proposed campus will be community-led and focused on participation and inclusion, in line with the National Sports Policy 2018-2027. The submission outlines that the ethos of the proposed campus will be one of affordability, access and availability with a not-for-profit business model. In the context of national policy, the submission contends that the proposed campus will support increased participation, as set out in the National Sports Policy 2018-2027.

The submission states that the proposed campus will include the following facilities:

- Swimming Pool 35m x 25m.
- Sports Hall capable of hosting elite basketball events.
- Gym.
- Ice Rink.
- Storage and Service Area.
- Meeting and Education Rooms.
- All Weather Hockey Pitch.
- All Weather Tennis Courts.
- All Weather 5 a-side pitches.
- All Weather Basketball Court.
- Cricket Pitch.
- Sensory Area.
- Climbing Wall.
- Running track including Filed Event Space.
- Archery Zone.
- Padel Courts.
- BMX Zone/Skate Park.
- Recreational Walking Track.
- Coffee Shop/Snack Bar.

The submission asserts that the existing recreational facilities in the catchment area of Drogheda/East Meath are insufficient to support the population of the area, which is projected to increase from approximately 80,000 to 100,000. Given this, and the high proportion of DEIS areas with insufficient recreational facilities in the area, the submission contends that the support of both LCC and MCC for the proposed campus is merited.

Regarding women in sport, the submission states that the proposed campus will provide a safe space for women to access sporting facilities. In addition, the submission states that the proposed campus will also provide for access to new sports that are not currently catered for in the area, with the goal of offering as many sports as possible to foster

opportunities for increased participation. The submission further states that the proposed campus will provide the opportunity for swimming lessons to be provided to all children within the catchment area thereby improving water safety in the area.

The submission outlines that many of the sporting groups involved in the proposed campus currently rely on hiring other facilities at a high cost, as they do not have facilities of their own. Thus, the submission asserts that the provision of the proposed campus facility would benefit these clubs from a financial perspective.

The submission raises particular concern with the lack of aquatic sporting facilities within the area and highlights that the existing swimming club and water polo club are overprescribed, which is hindering participation in aquatic activities. The submission raises further concern with the fact that the local cycling and triathlon clubs do not have a base to call their own. Additionally, the submission highlights that no permanent ice rink exists in the country and that the proposed campus will provide a national facility in this respect.

Regarding inclusivity, the submission states that the proposed campus would be fully accessible to all, including people with disabilities and elderly people who wish to remain active.

The submission contends that the catchment area of the proposed campus is similar in extent to that of large regional towns such as Athlone, Ennis, Sligo and Letterkenny but that existing sporting facilities in the area are akin to that of a smaller settlement. The submission further contends that the proposed campus presents an opportunity for collaboration between LCC and MCC to support the provision of a national-standard campus.

The submission states that the proposed campus will be funded through various means including national, local, private and philanthropic investment. The submission further states that the maintenance costs of the proposed campus will be minimized through use of state-of-the-art design and renewable energy such as district heating from the nearby Irish Cement Plant and/or proximate data centres.

Chief Executive Response

The submission regarding the provision of a multi-disciplinary community sports campus in the Drogheda/East Meath area is noted. The Council acknowledges that existing recreational and sporting facilities in the area are limited relative to the area's population and recognises the potential for a community-focused facility to enhance access to sports and physical activity for people of all ages and abilities, including women, children, older people, and people with disabilities.

Notwithstanding this, while the council supports the principle for the provision of a sport campus of this nature; it is noted that there is currently no dedicated funding stream in place for the delivery of a sports campus of this scale. Accordingly, the development of such a facility would depend on the identification of appropriate funding mechanisms, including private and philanthropic sources. Meath County Council would be open to engagement with the developer to discuss how the sports campus could be facilitated by way of appropriate zoning.

It is worth noting that the Seafield Community Facility in Laytown is an example of the type of investment currently being progressed to support community, sport and recreation needs in East Meath. The facility has received significant government funding for major upgrades, including a new 8-lane athletics track, soccer pitches for St. Colmcille's GAA, and enhanced supporting infrastructure such as footpaths and cycleways. These works will transform the site into a key local hub for sport, health and community activity.

For information purposes, a Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist within the county. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of sports campus facility and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective to deliver a sports campus facility.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-62: Peter Brady & Sharon Burke on behalf of Gormanston Community Association CLG

Summary of Submission:

This submission was made by Peter Brady & Sharon Burke on behalf of Gormanston Community Association CLG and is included as an attachment to an online submission. The submission highlights the priorities for Gormanston that reflect the strategic themes outlined in the issues paper.

Strategic Issues & Cross-Boundary Cooperation

The submission supports the preservation of Gormanston's rural and agricultural environment and the identification of Gormanston as a rural village with limited infrastructure and essential services to support housing. The submission proposes that Meath County Council (MCC) works in partnership with neighbouring local authorities to advance and coordinate actions in areas of mutual benefit as part of the new County Development Plan. In the context of Gormanston, the submission suggests that the area would benefit from a partnership between Meath County Council and Fingal County Council on coastal erosion, watercourse management, bridge maintenance, litter control, and interconnecting cycleways and walkways. The submission highlights the Fingal

Coastal Way as an example of a linkage between Gormanston and Balbriggan that should be considered in the new County Development Plan. It is submitted that this linkage would enhance the natural public amenity of the County Meath coastline and attract economic development to this part of County Meath at minimal cost.

Settlement & Housing

The submission proposes retaining the existing objective for Gormanston regarding the main village gateway **(GOR OBJ 11)**. The submission further proposes to include the southern and western approaches within this objective to help further define the village's arrival and identity. The submission suggests retaining and strengthening objective GOR OBJ 13 to include references to Gormanston Nursing Home and the Nua Healthcare facility for those accessing their workplaces on foot.

The submission infers that the importance of the rural and agricultural landscape, in particular Cromwell's Avenue and the land along the Delvin River, should be retained in the County Development Plan. The submission highlights a need for improved links between Gormanston village and the train station as the R132 is not pedestrian friendly, making it difficult for the train station to be accessed on foot. It is suggested that speed limits on the R132 be reduced and that public lighting, footpaths and a safe pedestrian crossing be provided along the R132 to address this issue. The submission further suggests the expansion of car parking capacity at the train station due to increased use of the train station, in light of the recent introduction of Zone 2 Leapcard fares. In addition, the submission proposes the provision of car parking for beach users at Gormanston beach and for all access roads to the beach to be repaired.

Gormanston Beach

The submission asserts, given the significance of the amenity of Gormanston Beach, that it should be designated as a bathing area, in accordance with the Bathing Water Quality Regulations. Additionally, the submission proposes the provision of a Beach Management Plan for Gormanston for, inter alia, environmental, ecological, beach cleaning, parking and maintenance purposes. The submission highlights the recreational importance of Gormanston Beach to Stamullen, Gormanston and Julianstown, and suggests that it should receive similar infrastructural development to that of Bettystown and Laytown in the form of toilet and changing facilities along with general litter collection facilities. The submission highlights the importance of mental and physical health in the context of providing recreational amenities alongside housing development.

Employment & Economy/Infrastructure & Utilities

The submission opposes the proposed development of a deepwater port at Bremore due to the contended environmental, ecological, landscape and coastal erosion impact this would have on surrounding areas which, it claims, would accelerate climate breakdown and remove the opportunity for future generations to experience the natural

environment of the East Meath coastline. The submission further contends that it is likely that the proposed port would lead to oil pollution and other forms of pollution, and that it would negatively impact unexcavated archaeological sites both onshore and offshore and would exacerbate coastal erosion.

The submission highlights the new employment opportunities arising from the recently opened Nua Healthcare facility and welcomes the identification of the ease of access to international airports and ports from this area. Given this, the submission raises concern with the proposed deepwater port at Bremore and the support for this development as set out in the Development Plan **(ED OBJ 23)**, which is considered unnecessary and unjustified. Furthermore, the submission highlights the commitments of Louth County Council (LCC) to the development of its 3 existing ports, including a deep-water port, on its 90km coastline. Thus, the submission asserts that Drogheda Port does not need to be moved to County Meath, as set out under **ED OBJ 23** of the Meath County Development Plan. The submission also considers it inappropriate for LCC to be utilizing its resources in support of the relocation of Drogheda Port outside of its county boundary which it considers to be an ultra vires act. The submission outlines that development of such a port would be of national significance for which there is no existing national policy support, notwithstanding the fact that the government has recently highlighted the need for increased and improved port facilities to support the deployment of offshore renewables. The submission supports investment in existing ports to facilitate offshore renewables and states that the North Sea Irish Array (NISA) project has confirmed that it will not require a new port to facilitate its operations. In addition, the submission asserts that the advancement of the proposed port would be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development, and that no further political support should be provided to the project in the context of the National Planning Framework.

Built Heritage

The submission points to the fact that Gormanston is home to a number of thatched vernacular buildings and suggests that more financial support in the form of grants accompanied by simplified processes need to be put in place to ease the burden on the owners of these properties in maintaining them.

Transport & Movement

The submission supports a transport strategy within the new plan which focusses on more sustainable forms of transport. However, the submission suggests that there is a disconnect between what is espoused by MCC and what it delivers on the ground. In this respect, the submission highlights that the Nua Healthcare facility was permitted without a pedestrian connection from the facility to the village. The submission contends that this is further reflected in the lack of bus shelters at the junction of Delvin Road and the R132.

To decrease levels of traffic on narrow roads within the community, the submission suggests the provision of a direct slip road from Stamullen to the M1.

Litter

The submission states that the Gormanston area has been subject to notable illegal dumping activities in recent times, including the dumping of oil barrels, which detracts from the visual appearance of the area. The submission proposes installing CCTV cameras in the area to identify and prosecute those responsible.

Community Services

The submission claims that the only community facilities currently available to the public in Gormanston is the secondary school and a coffee hut. The submission asserts that there are no other retail outlets in Gormanston and disappointment was expressed that Gormanston Park and Estate are not open to the public considering that the Gormanston College grounds would have traditionally been used as a green space amenity. The submission notes that planning permission has been granted for a new secondary school in Gormanston and asserts that a community contribution should arise from this. The submission further asserts that traffic management issues should be addressed by way of planning conditions associated with the permission for the new secondary school.

The submission suggests that MCC purchase the Cock Tavern Inn building to secure its use as a community facility.

Environmental Protection

The submission strongly supports the designation of all identified marine Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the Birds Directive. In this respect, the submission proposes Gormanston Beach as an SPA due to its importance to protected bird species. The submission queries the rationale for a change to the River Nanny and Shore SPA boundary and seeks clarity on the biodiversity rationale for this change. The submission also states that MCC is required to protect areas adjacent to SPAs, including Gormanston Beach and any future port development in this area. Notwithstanding this, the submission welcomes the recent designation of the North West Irish Sea SPA and suggests that the new Development Plan contains actions to allow for the proper management of this marine protected area.

Natural & Cultural Heritage

The submission points to significant offshore and onshore archaeological sites around Gormanston Beach and argues that no construction should be permitted in this area. The submission proposes that the Built and Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan be strengthened and incorporated into the new Development Plan.

Climate Change

The submission proposes the county-wide promotion of the MCC Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. The submission also proposes that the new Development Plan should include coastal defences that should, at a minimum, slow down the rate of erosion and protect the coastline, including the Knocknagin Passage Grave complex, for the duration of the new Development Plan. Given the high rates of coastal erosion along the County Meath coastline, the submission suggests that a Coastal Erosion Risk Management Study be undertaken, in consultation with the OPW, to inform the new Development Plan.

Chief Executive Response

The Council notes the support expressed for the continued protection of the rural and agricultural character of Gormanston. The Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 provides a settlement hierarchy which recognises the distinct role of rural villages and the need to align the scale and nature of development with the availability of infrastructure, services and environmental capacity. In this context, the draft Plan will seek to ensure that development in rural villages such as Gormanston is proportionate, sustainable and reflective of local character, while safeguarding agricultural land and the wider rural environment.

The Council also acknowledges the importance of cross-boundary cooperation with adjoining local authorities, particularly regarding shared environmental assets, infrastructure, and recreational amenities. The Draft Development Plan will recognise that effective planning for matters such as coastal management, watercourses, green infrastructure, sustainable transport and recreational connectivity will often require collaboration beyond administrative boundaries and will support engagement with neighbouring authorities where appropriate.

The provision of interconnecting greenways, cycleways and walkways will be supported in principle by the Development Plan as part of the promotion of sustainable transport, recreation and quality of life, subject to feasibility, environmental considerations, land availability and funding.

Settlement and Housing

The concerns raised by the author regarding pedestrian accessibility to the train station, the need for the reduction of speed limits along the R132 and for the inclusion of public lighting and pedestrian crossings to be provided is noted by the Council. Meath County Council has a key role to play in the implementation and facilitation of sustainable transportation through both its infrastructure and land use policies. The current Plan seeks to improve linkages between Gormanston village and the railway station by providing new paths/footpaths and crossings at key locations on R132, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders (GOR OBJ 3). The Draft Plan will build on the policies and objectives of the current Plan to enhance the level of walking and cycling infrastructure provision across the County. The establishment of the Environment, Climate Action and

Active Travel Department shows the Council's commitment to advancing a network of walking and cycling routes. In regard to car parking, this will be revisited and revised in the Draft Plan to ensure that the provision of parking will continue to be assessed in terms of public transport accessibility, urban realm and traffic impact.

Employment & Economy / Infrastructure & Utilities

The Council notes the concerns raised regarding potential environmental, ecological, landscape, archaeological and coastal impacts associated with the development of a deepwater port at Bremore. The Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 is underpinned by the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and is informed by Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, all of which provide a framework to ensure that environmental considerations are fully integrated into plan-making.

The reference in the Development Plan to the potential for a port-related development at Bremore (ED OBJ 23) reflects the strategic role of County Meath within the Eastern and Midland Region, its proximity to key transport corridors and the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor, and the need to consider long-term national and regional infrastructure requirements. The objective does not constitute planning permission, nor does it pre-empt the outcome of any future statutory consenting, environmental assessment or national policy decision-making processes.

Any proposal for a deepwater port would be subject to a comprehensive suite of assessments at project level, including Environmental Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, coastal process and erosion studies, archaeological assessment and compliance with national marine, climate and planning policy. Such a development would also require consistency with national policy, including the National Planning Framework and any relevant sectoral strategies, and would be subject to approval by the appropriate consenting authorities.

The Council acknowledges the importance of existing ports and ongoing investment to support economic activity and the deployment of offshore renewable energy. The Development Plan supports balanced economic development, climate action and the transition to a low-carbon economy, while ensuring that major infrastructure proposals are assessed rigorously and transparently.

Transport & Movement

The concerns raised in this submission regarding transport and movement are acknowledged. In respect to the referenced Nua Healthcare facility and the provision of a footpath, Meath County Councils will continue to encourage more sustainable forms of transport, including the provision of new pedestrian paths, public lighting and traffic calming measures to connect the amenities of the village in conjunction with relevant stakeholder as part of the Draft Plan.

In regard to the provision of bus shelters, it is a current objective of the plan to seek to provide bus shelters in conjunction with relevant stakeholders (GOR OBJ 5). Meath County Council will continue to engage with relevant stakeholders regarding the provision of additional bus shelters and will ensure this policy is carried over to the Draft Plan.

Meath County Council continues to maintain and protect the safety, capacity and efficiency of the strategic road corridors including the strategic M1 corridors which is of critical importance for the future economic growth of Meath in collaboration with TII and relevant stakeholders. Specifically, local access to the strategic road network continues to be managed and restricted through the development management process to protect the function of national roads and to discourage use by local traffic for short trips. The Council also continues to collaborate with the NTA and TII towards the implementation of demand management measures on national routes. Policies and objectives to support and facilitate the protection and management of the national road network for the movement of strategic traffic in line with relevant National and Regional policy will be an important aspect of transport policy in the new plan.

Gormanston Beach

The Council acknowledges the importance of Gormanston Beach as a valued coastal and recreational amenity serving the communities of Gormanston, Stamullen and Julianstown. The Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 (as varied) recognises the significance of the county's coastline as a natural, recreational and environmental resource and supports its protection, appropriate management and sustainable use, subject to environmental sensitivities, Natura 2000 designations and the requirements of Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The designation of bathing waters is a statutory function of the Environmental Protection Agency under the Bathing Water Quality Regulations and is based on specific monitoring, usage and water quality criteria. While the Development Plan supports high-quality coastal amenities and recreational use of beaches, the formal designation of bathing waters falls outside the remit of the Development Plan process.

With regard to beach management, the Development Plan supports the preparation of management and conservation-led approaches for coastal areas where appropriate, having regard to environmental, ecological and landscape sensitivities. The provision of ancillary infrastructure such as toilets, changing facilities, parking and litter management must be carefully considered in the context of environmental designations, coastal processes, flood risk and visual impact. Such matters are generally addressed through detailed project-level assessment, coastal management initiatives and inter-agency cooperation rather than through site-specific commitments in the County Development Plan.

The Council also notes the importance of access to green and blue infrastructure for physical and mental wellbeing, which is reflected in the broader objectives of the Plan relating to quality of life, recreation and sustainable communities.

Community Services

Meath County Council acknowledge the concerns raised regarding the availability of community services and facilities in Gormanston.

In relation to Gormanston Park and Estate and the grounds of Gormanston College, it is recognised that these lands have historically contributed to the amenity value of the area. However, access arrangements fall outside the scope of the Draft County Development Plan. A Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of green space facilities and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective to deliver a park facility.

Littering

The installation of CCTV is generally not a matter for the county development plan, but rather is governed by separate legislation, primarily related to data protection, public safety, and planning permissions.

Natural and Cultural Heritage

The Chief Executive notes the submission reference to the Built and Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan Guidance for Local Authorities 2024 and agrees with the recommendations that this guidance document be incorporated into the new Development Plan.

Environmental Protection

Comments in relation to the designation of Gormanston Beach as an SPA are noted but are a matter for the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), a division of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, which is responsible for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in Ireland. The Author is advised to liase directly with the NPWS in respect of securing designation. The submission also states that MCC is required to protect areas adjacent to SPAs, including Gormanston Beach and any future port development in this area. HER POL 32 and HER OBJ 34 protect and conserve the conservation value of candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas as identified by the Minister for the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and any other sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Plan in accordance with the provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives, This policy and objective will be carried over to upcoming Draft Plan.

Climate Change

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission from Gormanston Community Association CLG on climate change and notes the concerns raised regarding coastal erosion, climate resilience, and the protection of vulnerable coastal environments. The Council recognises the submission's emphasis on implementing the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029, the need for increased public awareness and engagement on climate action, and the importance of addressing climate-related risks along the County Meath coastline.

Climate adaptation, including coastal erosion management and resilience to sea level rise and extreme weather events, will be key considerations in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 and will be informed by national climate policy, the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Acts, the Strategic Environmental Assessment process and relevant flood and coastal risk assessments. The role of evidence-based studies, including collaboration with relevant national agencies, in informing climate adaptation objectives will continue to guide the Council's approach in responding to climate change impacts in coastal locations.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-63: Kells Anglers

Summary of Submission:

This submission was made directly by Kells Anglers with a specific focus on Kells Town and Environs, including the Blackwater River Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Special Protection Area (SPA) and its tributary, the Newrath Stream. The submission is summarised thematically as follows:

Core Strategy / Governance:

The submission states that the effective delivery of the objectives and requirements of the current Development Plan are dependent on the Core Strategy. The submission contends that Meath County Council (MCC) has failed to prepare a Local Area Plan (LAP) and accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for Kells, despite repeated commitments in MCC reports and Development Plan statements. In support of this contention, the submission includes numerous screengrabs of legislation, meeting minutes, Development Plan wording and progress reports and the MCC Service Delivery Plan. The submission notes that a recent FOI response from MCC confirmed no records exist for the preparation of the Kells LAP (screengrab included).

Planning Process and Legal Context:

The submission references High Court and Supreme Court proceedings relating to MCC's obligation to prepare LAPs and contends that judicial non-enforcement has emboldened MCC to abandon statutory plans for Kells. Notwithstanding this, the submission points to a recent ruling which reiterates MCC's legal responsibility to undertake an LAP for East

Meath, which, the submission contends, reaffirms the legal requirement to undertake an LAP for Kells. The submission raises concerns that non-statutory plans are being used to facilitate developer-led planning without SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) or Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).

Developer-Led Planning and Zoning:

The submission contends that zoning decisions for Kells over successive Development Plans have prioritised private commercial and retail development over housing, environmental protection and town-centre vitality. The submission notes councillor-led zoning changes facilitating large retail developments in unsuitable locations, including lands within high flood risk zones associated with the Newrath Stream and Blackwater River. The submission asserts that such zoning changes conflict with national retail planning policy and includes screenshots of an article from a local newspaper, Section 3.3 of the Retail Planning Guidelines and the Chief Executive's Report on the current County Development Plan addressing the Councillors' motions.

Non-Statutory Plans vs Statutory Plans:

The submission particularly references the lack of progress on the Kells Public Realm Plan, which has been at the draft stage since 2023 (screengrab included). The submission further notes the fragmented nature of the non-statutory planning approach in Kells, comprising approximately 4 Masterplans, a Town Walls Plan, and a Public Realm Plan. The submission contends that this represents MCC's efforts to avoid the statutory requirement to undertake an LAP for Kells, despite the Guidelines for LAPs specifically highlighting the lack of suitability of non-statutory plans as a basis for planning decisions (screengrab included). The submission questions why a new LAP and accompanying SEA has not been prepared for Kells.

The submission includes a screengrab of the Development Plan zoning map for Kells and the Kells Public Realm Plan, as a comparison, to demonstrate the lack of consideration of the Blackwater River and the Newrath Stream in the Public Realm Plan. The submission criticises the lack of clarity in the Kells Public Realm Plan and notes vague references to development at a future stage which it does not consider to be strategic in nature. The submission highlights a commitment outlined within previously published SEAs relating to the former Kells Development Plan and the current Development Plan which refer to the need to incorporate a 25m buffer in between zonings and the SAC boundary. The submission asserts that this commitment has been overlooked in Kells as such a buffer is not provided around the Blackwater or Newrath Stream. In this context, the submission raises concern with the alleged decline of the Blackwater catchment due to the unmonitored levels of raw sewage entering the protected catchment.

Settlement, Housing, Employment and Economy:

The submission states that Kells has experienced retail decline, high vacancy rates and stagnant socio-economic performance due to poorly located and excessive commercial zoning which has been developer-led. The submission notes the advice of MCC planners to Kells County Councillors to propose motions in a timely fashion, as stated in meeting minutes from a previous Special Planning Meeting. In this respect, the submission refers to late zoning motions submitted by Kells County Councillors in relation to the preparation of the current Development Plan, which included additional zoning within the vicinity of the Newrath Stream and the Blackwater River. The submission contends that this was undertaken without due consideration of the relevant policies and regulations relating to, inter alia, the environment, flooding, housing, infrastructure. Screengrabs of the proposed Zoning Map for Kells and the adopted Zoning Map for Kells are included, for comparison.

The submission claims that previous plans relating to Kells have failed to address the negative impact on the natural environment within and surrounding Kells. In particular, the Blackwater River SAC/SPA and the Newrath Stream. The submission notes that almost half of zoned lands in Kells are commercial or industrial, much of which remains undeveloped for decades, while town-centre regeneration has been neglected. In respect of zoned Masterplan areas in Kells, the submission highlights that none of the four Masterplans in Kells have been progressed and reaffirms their unsuitability on the grounds of nature, size and design.

The submission specifically references previously adopted zoning for a proposed retail park in Kells which it claims is in breach of a multitude of national legislation and the policies and objectives of the Development Plan. The submission contends that the current Development Plan includes unsuitable economic objectives for Kells and highlights examples in a screengrab of the Development Plan 2 Year Progress Report which indicates that these objectives are to be facilitated by a non-statutory plan. The submission further contends that such objectives contravene national retail planning policy.

The submission points to a report from 2014 by Teagasc which indicates a lack of inward investment for towns such as Kells. The submission highlights the heritage importance of the town and claims that its unique selling points (USPs) are not being utilised to attract investment. In particular, the submission refers to Kells Blackwater which is highly regarded as a trout fishing river.

Infrastructure and Utilities:

The submission refers to numerous Uisce Éireann Annual Environmental Reports (AERs) which indicate the need for increased capacity at Kells WWTP. The submission contends that the Kells Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and sewerage network have been operating beyond licensed capacity for many years and that Freedom of Information (FOI) requests indicate that planned upgrades to the Kells WWTP have been cancelled.

Additionally, the submission points to conflicting statements from Uisce Éireann and MCC relating to the capacity of the Kells WWTP. The submission alludes to ongoing untreated sewage discharges to the Newrath Stream and Blackwater River SAC/SPA, inadequate enforcement, and a lack of planned infrastructure investment until at least 2050. The submission suggests that MCC undertake a review of its WWTPs as a result of the above.

The submission raises concerns that infrastructure deficits make further large-scale development unsustainable and that any such development could materially impact the existing sewerage network. The submission notes that the above issues are subject to EPA review, judicial review proceedings and EU-level investigation.

Environment, Natural Heritage and Flood Risk:

The submission contends that MCC has failed to adequately protect the Blackwater River SAC/SPA and the Newrath Stream, including failure to comply with its own planning conditions, EU Habitats, Water Framework and Floods Directives. In this respect, the submission includes a screengrab of the 2015 Kells Sewerage Scheme Preliminary Report with planning permission granted and constructed since 2017 superimposed. The submission asserts that non-statutory plans fail to give meaningful consideration to flooding, water quality, wetlands, and biodiversity. The submission raises public health concerns arising from sewage pollution of protected waters.

Community Services and Public Open Space:

The submission contends that MCC has misrepresented Lloyd People's Park, located approximately two kilometres from the town, as fulfilling Kells' open space requirements. Screengrabs of current and former Development Plan wording and mapping are included in support of this contention. The submission further contends that MCC intends to develop all green spaces, wetlands and the Newrath Stream based on the false pretence that there is existing open space within Kells. The submission suggests that this is being done to facilitate the development of low-value lands on behalf of developers.

The submission notes a significant deficit of public open space, sports facilities and youth amenities within Kells town. The submission proposes that undeveloped floodplain lands within the town should be rezoned for green space and community use, inter alia, to form a central community hub. Screengrabs of the zoning plan within the current Development Plan are included to show the location of the lands. Use of compulsory purchasing powers by MCC is proposed to achieve this. The submission further proposes expanding the town from the south to the southeast to improve accessibility and connectivity.

Built Heritage and Town Centre:

The submission asserts that Kells, as a National Heritage Town, is experiencing neglect, dereliction and inadequate public realm investment. This is reflected by the lack of public bins and regular surface water overflows on footpaths due to blocked drains. The submission raises concerns regarding the lack of basic amenities and infrastructure

investment in the town, derelict buildings not listed on the derelict register, and development decisions undermining heritage assets, including the town walls.

The submission contends that upgrades to the street network have been undertaken by MCC at the behest of the built heritage of the town, and that this has been done to facilitate development of the Backlands. The submission suggests that MCC reconsider its approach to the preservation of the built heritage of Kells.

Planning Enforcement & Case Studies:

The submission outlines numerous detailed examples (inter alia) of alleged unauthorised developments, planning breaches, and failures of enforcement near the Newrath Stream and Backlands adding considerably to the contended loading issues at the Kells WWTP. The submission claims that this has led to appeals to An Bord Pleanála (now An Coimisiún Pleanála) being determined without knowledge of the capacity constraints at Kells WWTP. The submission contends that MCC has failed to investigate or act on repeated complaints, including in relation to sewerage impacts, unauthorised uses, demolition works, in-stream works, heritage and habitat destruction in breach of EU Directives. In particular, the submission refers to the continued use of the Tobair Bán Pump Station which is due to be decommissioned and is allegedly polluting the Newrath Stream as it is no longer fit for purpose. The submission also references instances of alleged malpractice by MCC in assessing zoning changes, planning files and planning enforcement complaints. The submission notes that several of these matters are supported by appendices, maps, photographs and referenced planning files.

The submission claims that the lack of planning enforcement by MCC has led to significant costs accruing to MCC as a result of flooding arising from alleged illegal demolition and construction works. The submission further claims that MCC's alleged malpractice on enforcement matters has led to the deterioration of the protected waters associated with the Blackwater River SAC/SPA. The submission refers to an Appropriate Assessment undertaken on behalf of MCC for a Part 8 application (screengrab included) in Kells which highlights the importance of the Newrath Stream in supporting Atlantic Salmon and Brown Trout species.

Rural Development & Climate Change:

The submission asserts its opposition to temporary or substandard wastewater solutions within new residential developments proximate to the Blackwater or Boyne Rovers and their tributaries. The submission considers that environmental protection is inadequately embedded within the Strategic Issues Paper. The submission suggests that future Development Plans must be based on up-to-date ecological data and strict adherence to EU Directives, particularly in light of impending Water Framework Directive (WFD) compliance deadlines (screengrab of a WFD petition enclosed).

Conclusion:

The submission notes the ecological, social and economic importance of the Blackwater River, including its use for national and international angling events and youth participation. The submission urges MCC to reinstate and complete a statutory LAP and SEA for Kells. The submission contends that without this, continued developer-led, non-statutory planning will further damage the environment, infrastructure, heritage and socio-economic wellbeing of Kells.

It is noted that the submission includes a separate attachment relating to, inter alia, water services infrastructure in Kells, regulatory oversight, environmental impacts on the Blackwater River SAC/SPA, planning policy relating to Kells, and is supported by extensive appendices, including references, correspondence, technical reports, FOI and AIE material, maps, photographs and data tables. This attachment urges MCC to acknowledge infrastructure constraints, halt further development reliant on the existing system, and ensure full statutory assessment, enforcement and remediation measures are undertaken.

Chief Executive Response

The concerns raised regarding Kells Towns and Environs, including the Blackwater River Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/ Special Protection Area (SPA) and its tributary, the Newrath Stream is acknowledged by the Council.

Core Strategy / Governance & Planning Process and Legal Context:

With regard to Local Area Plans, the Council notes the submission's comments. The preparation and prioritisation of LAPs has been influenced by statutory requirements, available resources and wider plan-making obligations. In this respect, the unanticipated introduction of the Residential Zoned Land Tax, Sustainable Urban Housing & Compact Settlement Guidance, resourcing constraints and judicial reviews, one of which is mentioned by the Author, consumed considerable resources during the Development Plan period, resulting in delays in the delivery of the LAP programme set out in the County Development Plan. While many factors that led to delays in the LAP making were outside the local authority's control, efforts to overcome constraints within the council's control are being actively pursued to ensure future delivery of the planning programme.

The authors contention that non-statutory plans are being used to facilitate developer-led planning without Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) or Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is not accepted. As part of the preparation of the current Development Plan 2021-2027, an SEA, AA and SFRA were prepared in tandem with the CDP, in accordance with Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. These reports are currently available to view in Volume 4 '*Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment & Strategic Flood Risk Assessment*' of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. In addition to this, any planning applications submitted to the Council in areas subject to flood risk or adjacent/near to

Natura 2000 sites are subject to Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and designated Nature Impact Assessments, ensuring the appropriate environmental assessments are carried out.

Pursuant to the requirements of Article 13C of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, (as amended) the preparation of the Draft Plan will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment in accordance with the requirements of Directive 2011/42/EC and associated Irish legislation. In accordance with Article 13C of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, the Strategic Environmental Assessment process will be subject to consultation with the specified environmental authorities. Pursuant to the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), stage one Appropriate Assessment Screening and stage two Appropriate Assessment (AA) will also be carried out as part of the overall process.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Development Plan will be prepared based on the methodology as set out in Section 28 Guidelines. The Council will continue to work proactively with relevant authorities, such as the OPW, on the identification of flood risk and development of flood risk management measures where necessary. The SFRA will inform land zoning in accordance with the OPW's 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2009) and will clearly set out measures to mitigate climate change.

Developer-Led Planning and Zoning:

With regard to land zoning in Kells, a Settlement Capacity Audit is currently being prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit will determine serviced and serviceable lands in all 38 settlements, including Kells, that could accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, including any SAC or SPA sites and areas within flood zones, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. These findings, in addition to the application of sequential and compact growth, will inform decisions on future residential zoning. With respect to the location of retail premises, a Retail Strategy will be carried out to inform the CDP, including the location of retail within settlements. The recommendations arising from these reports will guide the Executive in zoning lands for retail use and in the overall preparation of the Draft CDP.

Non-Statutory Plans vs Statutory Plans:

The Chief Executive notes the concerns raised regarding the status of the Kells Public Realm Plan and the use of a range of non-statutory plans to guide development and regeneration within the town. It is acknowledged that a number of non-statutory frameworks, including masterplans, heritage-led initiatives and public realm proposals,

have been progressed in Kells in recent years to address specific place-making, conservation and regeneration objectives.

The preparation of these plans has been designed to take a targeted approach to improvements and land-use management in areas of Kells that require a specific plan-led response, allowing available resources to be focused on priority locations and issues. These non-statutory plans are intended to complement, rather than replace, the statutory Development Plan framework and do not have the status of a Local Area Plan.

Regarding the progress of the Kells Public Realm Plan, work is still ongoing. Initial draft proposals and concepts to be included in the Public Realm Plan were prepared by the Project Team and were presented and discussed at the 2 no. public consultation events in Kells MD Offices. The outcomes of the public consultation events and surveys indicated the need for additional data collection on traffic movements, pedestrian travel patterns, and car parking usage. Unfortunately, this project has experienced setbacks due to available resources and other statutory requirements. In response to the confusion raised regarding the map referred to in the Kells Public Realm Plan, this map was presented as part of a presentation given to the Kells Municipal District Members on 19th June 2023. The presentation was later uploaded by Meath County Council to the dedicated Kells Public Realm and Regeneration Plan webpage, to provide an update to the general public on the status of the project. The map referred to in this submission forms part of the Emerging Design Strategy for the Public Realm Plan and is indicative only. It does not represent a final or fixed design.

The submission highlights a commitment outlined within previously published SEAs relating to the former Kells Development Plan and the current Development Plan, which refer to the need to incorporate a 25m buffer in between zonings and the SAC boundary, outlining that this commitment has been overlooked in Kells and a buffer is not provided around the Blackwater or Newrath Stream. In response to this, the Council highlights HER POL 32 of the current CDP which aims '*To permit development on or adjacent to designated Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves or those proposed to be designated over the period of the Plan, only where the development has been subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process and has been carried out to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife.* The outcome of this Natura Impact Report and Appropriate Assessment set out a series of recommendations for the developer to adhere to in the event of a grant of permission. In this case, recommendations most often include setback distances from adjacent SPAs or SACs. The Council is satisfied that such buffer will be captured at the Development Management stage by way of Appropriate Assessment.

Settlement, Housing, Employment and Economy:

Kells is recognised as an economic focal point for north Meath. Its influence reaches beyond its immediate hinterland to neighbouring Westmeath, Cavan and Louth. In recognition of the potential for Kells to provide additional employment and taking account of the increased interest/take up of businesses choosing to locate in Kells following the REDZ designation, additional employment lands were provided in the town in 2017 as part of Variation no.1 of the Kells Development Plan 2013-19. Approximately 33 hectares of land to the south of the Navan Road was zoned for a strategic employment use, including high-end technology and major campus-style office-based development, as well as to facilitate logistics, warehousing, distribution, and supply chain management. A Master Plan (MP 28) is required to be prepared as part of the development of these lands.

Additional employment lands were zoned adjacent to the Kells Business Park, whilst lands to the rear of the Aldi food store off the Cavan Road, were zoned for a retail warehousing use. These additional zonings were allocated to ensure there are adequate lands available to meet the employment needs of Kells during the lifetime of the current Plan.

In response to the concerns raised with respect to zoning motions occurring during the process of preparing the current County Development Plan 2021-2027, the statutory procedure is outlined in section 11(2)(d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, allows for members to consider the draft plan, including the making of amendments by the members to the initial draft plan.

This is a critical opportunity for elected members to contribute to the content of the draft development plan before its public display and at the material alteration stage of the process. In relation to Masterplans, the number and location of Masterplans will be reviewed as part of the CDP process while all land-use zonings, including commercial and industrial lands in the current CDP will also be reviewed for their appropriateness as part of the CDP review process.

The subject land zoned B2 – Retail Warehouse Park, the objective of B2 zones is to provide for the development of retail warehouse parks. This site was also zoned B2 – Retail Warehouse Park in the previous County Development Plan 2013-2019. There is currently a live planning application on this site, currently with An Coimisiún Pleanála for a proposed development consisting of a retail warehouse park comprising of five units. Due to the status of this application, further discussion regarding this application is outside the remit of this report.

The concerns raised regarding the inclusion of economic objectives in the current Plan is noted and as outlined above, a Retail Strategy, along with an Economic Development Strategy will be carried for the county, which will include Kells and will inform the Daft CDP and land use zonings. All economic and retail policies and objectives will be reviewed as part of the preparation of the new Draft Meath County Development Plan.

Infrastructure and Utilities:

In response to concerns raised regarding Infrastructure and Utilities, as mentioned above, the Council is currently conducting a Settlement Capacity Audit across all settlements in the county. This formal assessment evaluates whether land has the necessary water/wastewater infrastructure to be zoned for development. To determine this, Meath County Council engages with Uisce Eireann, who advises the local authority on the status of lands, which in turn, informs the zoning process. This engagement occurs regularly to ensure upgrades and changes in land status are captured. As water and wastewater supply and management are under the remit of Uisce Éireann, the Council can only engage with Uisce Éireann and use its recommendations to inform the future delivery capacity of lands

Environment, Natural Heritage and Flood Risk:

The Chief Executive notes the concerns raised in the submission regarding the protection of the Blackwater River SAC/SPA and the Newrath Stream, including matters relating to water quality, flooding, biodiversity and public health. The Council acknowledges that these waterbodies are environmentally sensitive and are protected under European and national legislation, including the EU Habitats Directive, the Water Framework Directive, and the Floods Directive.

The Council notes the reference to historic infrastructure projects and non-statutory plans. It is emphasised that statutory planning decisions, infrastructure delivery, and plan-making must comply with relevant environmental legislation, including Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment where applicable, and flood risk assessment, and that such requirements cannot be set aside by non-statutory plans. Non-statutory frameworks are prepared to guide regeneration and place-making objectives only and do not replace or override statutory environmental assessments or regulatory controls.

Community Services:

Meath County Council acknowledges the matters raised in the submission in relation to the provision, distribution and protection of public open space, community facilities and recreational infrastructure within Kells. The Council recognises the importance of adequate and accessible public open space, sports facilities and youth amenities in supporting healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.

The submission makes references to Lloyd People's Park and to lands within the town and its environs. The role and function of public open spaces, green infrastructure, river corridors and environmentally sensitive lands will be considered as part of the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan, having regard to environmental constraints, flood risk management and biodiversity protection.

In this context, Meath County Council is currently undertaking a countywide Social Infrastructure Audit to identify where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of infrastructure, including green space, and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and complemented by an objective to support the delivery of sports facilities.

Built Heritage and Town Centre:

The concerns raised regarding the built heritage and town centre of Kells is acknowledged. The Council recognises the importance of the archaeological and built heritage of Kells and seeks to protect the character and integrity of Architectural Conservation Areas and Protected Structures in the town in order to preserve the heritage character of the settlement. It is an objective of the current plan to preserve the character of Architectural Conservation Areas in Kells and to require that new development proposals have regard to the history, heritage and architectural importance of the town in order to protect and enhance these qualities. (KEL OBJ 20 & 21). The Draft Plan will continue to acknowledge and protect the built heritage in Kells.

The Council notes the submission's reference to perceived deficiencies in public realm investment and town centre management. While operational matters such as drainage maintenance, waste management, and enforcement of the Derelict Sites Act are addressed through separate statutory and administrative processes, the protection, regeneration, and enhancement of Kells town centre remain key objectives of the Development Plan.

Planning Enforcement & Case Studies:

In terms of the issues raised regarding Enforcement. Meath County Council exercises its full powers under the Planning and Development Act & the relevant Environmental Acts where there is a breach of planning and environmental laws and will continue to do so. However, planning enforcement cases are not a matter for the County Development Plan.

With respect to issues raised regarding capacity constraints of Kells Wastewater Treatment Plan, a Settlement Capacity Audit will be carried out as part of the preparation of the development plan. This audit will provide robust evidence to assess Meath Infrastructural Capacity to sustainably accommodate future development over the Plan's lifetime. The findings of which will inform zoning designations and ensure alignment with higher-order regional and national planning policies.

Rural Development & Climate Change:

The preparation of the Draft Plan will be based on the latest and most robust ecological data, and will strictly adhere to the requirements of all applicable EU directives, including those relating to habitats, birds, water and environmental assessments. The issues raised in the submission are noted and will inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan, particularly in relation to heritage protection, town centre

regeneration, environmental safeguards and climate resilience, in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-64: Ad Meliora Management Ltd.

Summary of Submission:

This submission relates to the village of Ballivor. The submission was included as an attachment to a general online submission which refers to the various themes as they relate to Ballivor.

The submission suggests that appropriate development should be promoted in Ballivor as it has the capacity to grow without compromising its character. The submission describes and summarises the village of Ballivor and its associated amenities, industries and accessibility. It notes recent population and economic growth in County Meath which it compares to the traditional agricultural and sub-optimal economic model of growth in the County. The submission further notes the role of the Meath Economic Strategy 2014-2022 in transforming economic growth in County Meath. The submission highlights the challenges facing public bodies in dealing with climate change, protection of amenities and delivering infrastructure in the face of strong economic growth.

The submission states that the new Development Plan must recognise the importance of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) in strengthening the settlement structure of the county, and that this should be translated to actionable policies. The submission notes the requirement of the Development Plan to have regard to Section 28 Guidelines relating to, inter alia, housing growth, design standards for apartments and compact settlements.

The submission proposes the potential re-use of a former industrial facility as an enterprise centre. The submission supports the Ballivor Renaissance Community Plan and recommends referencing specific public realm improvement and streetscape enhancement projects in the new Development Plan. It notes that existing playing pitches in the village are zoned residential and suggests this should be reviewed, given the need for green space and public amenities. The submission supports the development of wind energy projects in the vicinity of Ballivor and acknowledges the community and employment benefits that would arise out of this. The submission further supports a review of the housing strategy for Ballivor, in the context of the NPF and RSES, and encourages revised policies in support a different approach to residential zoning. Regarding the Core Strategy of the new Development Plan, the submission proposes a review of strategically located land to better support the needs of Ballivor. The submission further proposes that the new Development Plan should continue to provide for natural growth in a sustainable manner whilst retaining historic public amenities.

In conclusion, the submission recommends the provision of an Action Plan for Ballivor focussing on the public realm, new economic development, additional residential development, renewable energy, community engagement, investment in the water and wastewater network and including a detailed review of existing land use strategies. The submission indicates that the land use map for Ballivor from the 2013-2019 County Development Plan should be used as a basis for such a review, and includes this land use map along with the land use map from the current Development Plan, for comparison. In particular, the submission references land previously earmarked for development as suitable for development.

Chief Executive Response

The Council notes the submission and acknowledges the detailed consideration given to the future development of Ballivor. The Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 identifies Ballivor within the settlement hierarchy as a town/village with an important local service and employment function and seeks to facilitate sustainable, plan-led growth appropriate to its scale, role and infrastructural capacity. The Plan recognises the need to balance population growth, economic development and the protection of local character, heritage and community amenities.

The Council further notes the importance of consistency with the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and relevant Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines. These documents inform the settlement strategy, Core Strategy, housing policies, and zoning approach of the Development Plan, and provide the framework within which future growth and land-use decisions for Ballivor must be made.

Community-led initiatives such as the Ballivor Renaissance Community Plan are acknowledged as valuable inputs that can inform the prioritisation of public realm and regeneration projects, and the inclusion of detailed project-specific proposals will be considered in Volume 2 of the Draft Plan, which will contain settlement-specific objectives for Ballivor.

In relation to the A2 – New Residential zoning on the former Ballivor GAA playing pitch, Meath County Council notes the concerns raised regarding the provision of green spaces and public amenities in Ballivor. It is noted that the GAA pitch has since relocated to an alternative site to the west of Ballivor. Having regard to the relocation of the Ballivor GAA pitch, the lands are deemed suitable for residential development.

While concerns have been noted regarding the provision of green space and public amenities in Ballivor, these matters are being examined through a county-wide Social Infrastructure Assessment currently underway. The audit shall determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social facilities, including green space, and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-65: John Spain Associates on behalf of Greenwalk Homes Ltd.

Summary of Submission:

General:

This submission was made by John Spain Associates on behalf of Greenwalk Homes Ltd. The submission outlines concerns and recommendations regarding housing need, population growth, and the availability of zoned and serviced land in County Meath.

The submission recognises the need for new housing in County Meath to contribute towards the housing targets set out in the revised National Planning Framework (NPF). The submission contends that such development should be provided in sustainable locations with access to local services and transport links, and where infrastructural capacity exists. In this respect, the submission promotes lands in Bettystown, Laytown and Trim for mixed-use residential-led development.

Promoted Lands:

The submission describes the layout, location, infrastructure capacity, and zoning of the promoted lands, supported by enclosed figures, and recommends rezoning the promoted lands or certain parts of the promoted lands that are serviced. The submission includes proposed layout plans for the development of the promoted lands and predicts that the promoted lands could cumulatively deliver approximately 492 dwellings, a health care centre, creches and 4.63ha of public open space. The submission particularly references historical land zonings supported by enclosed figures, including zonings from the East Meath Local Area Plan 2005, and contends that previous zonings demonstrate the suitability of the lands for residential development. The submission contends that the promoted lands represent Tier 1 serviced lands that can deliver residential development in the short to medium term. In this context, the submission includes a tiered assessment of the promoted lands, in line with the revised NPF's requirements. The submission further contends that a do-nothing approach to the development of these lands would represent a significant under-utilisation of these lands.

In respect of the promoted lands, the submission notes a motion discussed at a Special Council Meeting on the 10th November 2025 regarding the rezoning of all lands previously zoned for residential use under the 2013-2019 Development Plan. The submission supports this approach and suggests that this should be expanded to include lands previously dezoned in plan periods prior to the 2013-2019 Development Plan. The submission suggests that residential zoned lands in Bettystown/Laytown are fully built out and that no zoned lands remain to address the demand for housing in these areas. In

relation to Trim, the submission suggests that undeveloped residential zoned lands are limited to approximately 10ha which are currently unactive.

Housing Need & Population Growth:

The submission states that the revision of the National Planning Framework (NPF) in April 2025 significantly increases national population and housing targets and that these revised figures must be fully reflected in the new Development Plan. The submission contends that this will result in a nearly doubling of the number of households nationally compared to the 2018 NPF figures and a housing deficit of approximately 60,000 dwellings in the Eastern & Midlands Region. In this regard, the submission suggests that current housing targets underestimate actual demand, having regard to Census 2022 data, ESRI projections, and the Housing Commission Report, and that under-provision of land would constrain delivery. The submission further suggests that the existing pent-up demand, as identified by the Housing Commission, should be accounted for in the core strategy of the new Development Plan. The submission contends that planning for higher population and housing growth is more prudent than underestimating need, particularly given migration trends and the existing housing deficit.

NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines:

The submission refers to the publication of the Guidelines in July 2025 and that they are informed by data published by ESRI in 2024. The submission states that the Guidelines estimate an unmet national demand of approximately 140,000 dwellings over the period 2017-2024 and that these figures are included in the housing growth requirements. The submission refers to Policy and Objective 1 and 2 of the Guidelines which requires Meath County Council (MCC) to align its Core Strategy and land zoning with the housing growth requirements set out in Appendix 1 of the Guidelines, including the allowance for up to 50% additional provision. The submission raises concern with the use of the term 'up to' 50% additional provision, whilst noting the requirements of the NPF to focus on infill and brownfield sites within the existing footprint of settlements.

The submission notes that the Guidelines retain the Tier 1 and 2 approach and that Settlement Capacity Audits (SCA) are required to inform the identification of additional zoned lands as part of the Development Plan review process. In this respect, the submission recognises that the guidelines require the suitability of lands for development to be assessed over a 12 year plus period. The submission notes that the Guidelines recommend that long-term sites be considered as further additional provision above the baseline housing growth requirement and that they should not be factored into the housing supply requirements for the area. The submission further notes, both in the context of Development Plan reviews and variations, that the Guidelines emphasise early review of core strategies, settlement strategies, and zoning to address unmet demand along with unmet need. In particular, the submission references the need to account for

the likelihood of land being developed when considering housing delivery capacity in the short to medium term.

The submission contends that housing demand for County Meath over the next 12-year period equates to approximately 45,684 dwellings/1,305ha of zoned land, based on a net density of 40dph or 21,630 dwellings/532.42ha of zoned land, based on the same net density over the next Development Plan period. The submission outlines that the current Development Plan provides for 532.42ha of zoned land and that this demonstrates the substantial need for residential zoned lands. The submission therefore recommends that the new Development Plan should plan for additional growth over and above that included in the existing core strategy. The submission contends that the housing growth requirements in the revised NPF represent a significant shortfall in the required number of dwellings.

Housing Commission and other evidence:

The submission references findings from both the Housing Commission Report (HCR) 2024 and an assessment by Goodbody (2024) which indicate a need for approximately 40,000-70,000 dwellings nationally per annum (enclosed figures demonstrating calculations and a breakdown of available land regionally). The submission therefore claims that the NPF housing growth requirements lie at the lower end of the spectrum of housing need due to the NPF's reliance on conservative data published by ESRI (figure enclosed). The submission restates the urgent need to address the existing housing deficit and lists several factors that have led to the creation of a housing deficit, as expressed in the HCR. The submission notes the recommendation of the HCR to accelerate housing delivery to address this urgent need and includes a representational graph from the HCR addressing the housing deficit within a decade. The submission requests that lands are not phased or de-zoned in self-sustaining growth towns such as Trim and Bettystown/Laytown and that sufficient flexibility is provided in land zoning to allow for surplus zoned land which will account for historically low activation rates.

The submission notes that the HCR acknowledges the role of the Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) in planning but infers that it has not been applied correctly as it has been used to justify a cap on housing development in certain localities. In this respect, the submission refers to the top-down approach to housing delivery in England whereby the government sets mandatory targets for Local Councils, along with timetables for their delivery. The submission also refers to the preparation of core strategies in Development Plans and suggests that it is important that the core strategy does not unduly restrict the zoning of land due to an underestimation of the true housing requirement, as expressed in the HCR.

The submission claims that Dublin and surrounding counties account for 34% of available zoned land nationally despite accounting for 48% of household nationally. The submission includes details (figures enclosed) from the Goodbody (2024) assessment indicating the

reduction in the housing yield of zoned land when comparing the previous Development Plans. The submission contends that the Goodbody (2024) assessment includes a conservative buffer figure of 40% above the minimum land zoning requirement. The submission further contends that said assessment does not consider zoned lands which were not developed due to infrastructural and/or phasing constraints or landownership issues and suggests that this must be accounted for within the buffer to allow for sufficient headroom. In this respect, the submission points to the provisions of the Development Plan Guidelines (DPGs) which encourage Development Plans to provide additional provision for zoned residential lands to appropriately reflect activation and completion rates.

The submission refers to a study undertaken by Savills (2022) which indicates that County Meath has experienced the largest reduction of zoned land in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) (figure enclosed). The submission contends that this, risks discouraging investment in residential land due to the risk of dezoning.

Core Strategy & Settlement Hierarchy:

The submission requests that Trim retain its designation as a 'Self-Sustaining Growth Town' and Bettystown/Laytown as a 'Self-Sustaining Town' in the settlement hierarchy. The submission recommends that an appropriate quantum of residential zoned land should be provided in these locations due to their position within the settlement hierarchy. The submission contends that County Meath has already exceeded population targets set in the current Development Plan and that the new Development Plan must reflect revised national targets**.**

Conclusion:

The submission contends that failure to zone additional, suitably located residential land in settlements such as Trim and Bettystown/Laytown would undermine the ability of MCC to meet national housing targets. The submission suggests that the promoted lands represent logical, sequential, and sustainable opportunities for residential development and should be incorporated into the new Development Plan in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development principles.

Chief Executive Response

Settlement and Housing:

The author of this submission makes reference to three land parcels that are suitable for residential zoning and has submitted proposed layout plans for each location. Two land parcels are located within East Meath, and one land parcel is located in Trim. It should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

Submissions relating to zoning, phasing or growth direction of settlements cannot be considered at pre-draft stage. Such submissions should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

The Council notes the submission and acknowledges the significant policy changes arising from the revision of the National Planning Framework and the publication of the Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines. The Council recognises the scale of the national housing challenge and the importance of addressing both existing housing deficits and future housing need in a manner that supports proper planning and sustainable development.

The Draft County Development Plan is being prepared in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and is required to be consistent, insofar as practicable, with national and regional policy, including the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and relevant Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines. The Core Strategy of the Draft Plan will be informed by the most up-to-date statutory guidance, including the Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, and will incorporate an evidence-based assessment of population growth, housing need and delivery capacity.

The Council notes the submission's reference to unmet and pent-up housing demand and acknowledges that the Guidelines provide for additional flexibility above baseline housing growth requirements, subject to compliance with national policy objectives, compact growth targets and environmental considerations. The Draft Development Plan will apply the Tier 1 and Tier 2 approach and will be informed by Settlement Capacity Audits, infrastructure capacity assessments and environmental constraints to ensure that any additional zoned lands are suitably located, sequential and capable of delivery within the plan period and beyond.

In this context, the Council considers that the zoning of residential land must strike an appropriate balance between providing sufficient capacity to meet housing need and ensuring compact growth, efficient use of infrastructure, protection of environmental assets and alignment with the settlement hierarchy. The identification, phasing or prioritisation of lands will be informed by their likelihood of delivery, infrastructure availability and consistency with national and regional policy, rather than solely by gross land area.

With regard to Trim and Bettystown/Laytown, the Draft Development Plan will continue to reflect the role of settlements within the settlement hierarchy as informed by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, having regard to their function, scale, services and infrastructure capacity. The Council notes the request that these settlements retain their existing designations and that an appropriate quantum of residential land be provided; these matters are being considered as part of the Core Strategy review process.

The Council further notes the wider evidence cited in the submission, including the Housing Commission Report and market assessments. While such evidence is acknowledged as part of the broader housing context, the Development Plan must ultimately be grounded in statutory national and regional policy, ministerial guidelines and an evidence-based Core Strategy that can withstand statutory and environmental assessment.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-67: Ad Meliora Management Ltd.

Summary of Submission:

This submission relates to the village of Slane and the Slane Bypass. The submission was included as an attachment to a general online submission which refers to the various themes as they relate to Slane and the Slane Bypass.

The submission describes and summarises the village of Slane and its associated amenities, industries and accessibility. The submission notes recent population and economic growth in County Meath which it compares to the traditional agricultural and sub-optimal economic model of growth in the County. The submission further notes the role of the Meath Economic Strategy 2014-2022 in transforming economic growth in County Meath. The submission highlights the challenges facing public bodies in dealing with climate change, protection of amenities and delivering infrastructure in the face of strong economic growth.

The submission states that the new Development Plan must recognise the importance of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) in strengthening the settlement structure of the county, and that this should be translated to actionable policies. The submission notes the requirement of the Development Plan to have regard to Section 28 Guidelines relating to, inter alia, housing growth, design standards for apartments and compact settlements.

The submission describes the key features of the proposed Slane Bypass and Public Realm project. It highlights that the proposed project will alleviate noise, air pollution and traffic along with enhancing the public realm. The suggests that the bypass will lead to less congestion in the village thereby making the village a more attractive destination and creating increased development opportunity within the village centre. The submission identifies the protection of the natural environment and landscape, management of traffic flow and parking as future challenges that will need to be addressed alongside the development of the bypass. The submission suggests that these challenges be addressed in consultation with the local community to ensure their needs are met. The submission also suggests that the unique tourism facilities of Slane village can be marketed to a wider audience by utilising the tourism infrastructure of the village.

The submission recommends the provision of an Action Plan for Slane focusing on the public realm, tourism, new economic development, community engagement and evaluation of the impact of development on the village and its environs. The submission claims that there is potential for economic growth opportunities to be realised when the bypass is constructed and that this could lead to population growth and resultant promotion within the settlement hierarchy. The submission further claims that the bypass will allow for protection of the surrounding landscape by making Slane a more attractive place to live and therefore reducing the demand for one-off houses in the rural hinterland.

In conclusion, the submission suggests a review is undertaken of the existing land uses in Slane to assess future opportunities in the areas of tourism and social infrastructure, civic amenities, enterprise and employment, culture, community gain, motorway services and housing. The submission proposes to restrict development in more environmentally sensitive locations. The submission includes a potential land use map as an appendix.

Chief Executive Response

The comments made in relation to the Slane Bypass are acknowledged. The bypass for Slane has been a long-standing objective of the Council and is noted within the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) as a priority for delivery (RPO 8.10). Meath County Council, in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland, are developing the N2 Slane Bypass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme to improve road safety along the N2 through Slane village and to allow the village to thrive and develop without the current levels of vehicular congestion. On the 27th June 2025, An Coimisiún Pleanála made an order to approve the proposed N2 Slane Bypass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme subject to conditions. The Draft Plan will continue to support the delivery of the N2 Slane Bypass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-68: Liam Mac Cóil

Summary of Submission:

This submission relates to the Gaeltacht in County Meath. The submission was included as an attachment to a general online submission which refers to the various themes as they relate to the Gaeltacht in County Meath. The submission was made in English due to concerns that it would be disregarded if it were made in Irish.

The submission restates the importance of the Gaeltacht to County Meath as the only Gaeltacht in Leinster. It highlights that the Irish language in Gaeltacht areas in County Meath is struggling to remain a viable everyday language within these communities. The submission suggests that Meath County Council (MCC) should embrace the responsibility for ensuring the preservation and continuity of the Irish language as a community

language. In respect of planning, the submission infers that current planning policy relating to local needs and one-off housing is serving to detract from the Irish language as a community language.

The submission states that both Baile Ghib and Ráth Chairn are considered as 'rural' areas in the Settlement Hierarchy but asserts that this does not reflect the cultural and linguistic importance of these areas as Gaeltacht areas. The submission therefore proposes that all planning proposals consider the exceptionality of these areas, including their cultural and linguistic distinctions. The submission also proposes that tailored local needs are applied to the Gaeltacht areas in County Meath to allow for Irish speakers with no connection to the area to come and live in the area, as the community has a need for more Irish speakers to sustain the language as a community language in the locality.

In respect of the legal obligation within the 2000 Planning & Development Act to protect the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht, the submission refers to Section 102(m) of the Act. The submission highlights that MCC are obliged to protect and promote the Irish language and to ensure that those who wish to live in the Gaeltacht are proficient in Irish. The submission proposes the application of a minimum level of proficiency of level TEG B2. The submission asserts that policies that do not protect the Irish language could be in contravention of the Planning & Development Act.

The submission suggests consulting with the local community as they retain the most knowledge about local interests. In this respect, the submission suggests consulting with Comharchumann Ráth Chairn, the Office of the Language Planner for the Meath Gaeltacht and other such official bodies. The submission supports the continuation of MCC's bilingual policy regarding signage and documentation. The submission proposes that MCC employ persons with Irish, in accordance with the Official Languages (Amendment) Act of 2021, and that the newly appointed Irish Language Officer be supported in promoting Irish throughout County Meath. The submission further proposes that the County Libraries are promoted as centres of language activities, including the local library in Ráth Chairn.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council notes the cultural importance of the Irish language and the Gaeltacht areas to County Meath and the nation. In respect of County Meath, the Council supports the continued use of the Irish language, specifically within Gaeltacht areas in the County such as Ráth Cairn, as it is recognised that the Irish language functions as a community language in these areas.

The concerns raised regarding the difficulties Gaeltacht areas in Meath are experiencing are acknowledged. It has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to maintain Irish as the language of the community and it is a goal of the current Plan to

ensure the continued survival and development of the Gaeltachts as an area distinct in the linguistic and cultural life of the County.

The current plan sets out policy for applicants seeking to build a one-off house in Gaeltacht areas. Applicants are required to qualify under the rural housing policy, i.e. persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community and who demonstrate compliance with the local housing need criteria as set out in Section 9.4 of the County Development Plan. Additionally, applicants are required to conduct a Linguistic Impact Study before submitting any housing application within the Gaeltacht Area. This study is to identify the applicant's relationship with linguistic or cultural development objectives of groups associated with the development of Gaeltacht areas in order to demonstrate that a given proposal will have a positive impact on the promotion and use of Irish as the language of the community. The Council have already engaged with Gaeltacht na Mí and will consider the challenges and recom109**109**endations raised in the making of the Draft Plan. The Draft Plan will continue to ensure the survival and development of the Gaeltacht areas of Baile Ghib and Ráth Chairn as distinct areas within the linguistic and cultural life of the County, whilst seeking to realise their economic and development potential in a balanced and sustainable manner.

The submission proposes promoting the county libraries as centres for language-based activities. Meath County Council notes this suggestion and advises that the Meath County Council Libraries already support and facilitate a range of language and cultural initiatives, including Irish language activities such as Ciorcal Comhrá sessions. The council will continue to support the role of public libraries as inclusive community hubs.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-69: Brock McClure Planning Consultants on behalf of Kilbride GAA and Alison & James Dillon

Summary of Submission:

The submission relates to the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper and focuses on the future planning, servicing, and long-term sustainability of Kilbride GAA and Kilbride GFC facilities within the wider Kilbride rural community.

The submission outlines the historical role and current function of Kilbride GAA and Kilbride GFC as key community, sporting, and social infrastructure serving Kilbride and its surrounding hinterland. It describes existing facilities, usage levels, and ongoing pressures associated with increased participation, population growth within commuting distance of larger settlements, and evolving standards for sporting, accessibility, and community facilities.

The submission identifies constraints on the clubs' ability to expand and modernise facilities, including land availability, planning policy clarity, infrastructure capacity, and the absence of explicit recognition of rural sports and community facilities within strategic planning frameworks. Reference is made to the importance of providing appropriately located and serviced facilities to support community cohesion, youth engagement, and public health in rural areas.

The submission seeks stronger policy recognition in the forthcoming County Development Plan of the role of rural sports clubs as essential community infrastructure. It requests that the Plan provide a supportive strategic framework for the long-term development, consolidation, and upgrading of existing club facilities, including associated ancillary development such as car parking, training areas, clubhouses, and community spaces, subject to proper planning and environmental considerations.

The submission also raises broader issues regarding rural settlement sustainability, accessibility, and the need to ensure that community infrastructure keeps pace with demographic change. It highlights the importance of aligning sports and community facility provision with settlement patterns, transport accessibility, and service considerations, while maintaining the area's rural character.

No specific zoning proposal is advanced within the submission; rather, it seeks clarity, flexibility, and policy support at a strategic level to enable appropriate assessment of future development proposals relating to Kilbride GAA and Kilbride GFC within the statutory development plan process.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive acknowledges the submission received on behalf of Kilbride GAA and Kilbride GFC and notes the issues raised regarding the role of rural sports clubs as essential community and social infrastructure within the county.

The Strategic Issues Paper is intended to identify the key strategic planning matters that will inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan, including settlement strategy, community infrastructure provision, and the long-term sustainability of rural communities. It does not make zoning decisions or provide site-specific commitments, but rather establishes the policy framework within which such matters can be considered at later stages.

The issues raised in the submission regarding the importance of rural sporting and community facilities, the need for appropriate policy support, and the relationship between community infrastructure and settlement patterns are noted. These matters align with broader strategic considerations relating to rural vitality, social infrastructure

provision, and balanced spatial development, as set out in national and regional planning policy.

The preparation of the Draft County Development Plan will be informed by statutory policy requirements, including the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, as well as by evidence-based assessments relating to population, infrastructure capacity, environmental considerations, and community needs. Within this context, and the preparation of a Social Infrastructure Audit for the county, the location and role of community and sporting facilities in supporting rural settlements and enhancing quality of life will be considered.

Any future proposals relating to the development or expansion of sports and community facilities will remain subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, including environmental assessment, infrastructure capacity, accessibility, and compliance with the policies and objectives of the adopted Development Plan.

The matters raised in this submission will be taken into account as part of the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-70: Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of Ashbourne Visitor Centre Ltd

Summary of Submission:

This submission was made by Declan Brassil on behalf of Ashbourne Visitor Centre Ltd. The submission relates to the environs of Ashbourne.

The submission seeks to retain reference in the Development Plan to a specific theme park facility within the environs of Ashbourne. The submission also expresses a desire for the status of this facility to be enhanced in the new County Development Plan by supporting opportunities for expansion, adaptation and renewal. In this respect, the submission proposes a policy objective encompassing the above.

The submission highlights the heritage themes within the facility, which is reflective of the facility's location within the Ancient East, and points to the proximity of numerous heritage assets. The submission also highlights the accessibility of the facility with accompanying mapping and aerial photography. The submission describes numerous ancillary facilities provided within the facility and illustrates the number of employees within the facility and the estimated yearly visitor numbers for the facility. The submission claims that the facility contributes significantly to heritage-based tourism in County Meath and the wider region. The submission points to international experience which indicates that such facilities require ongoing reinvestment in the visitor experience to maintain and/or increase visitor numbers.

The submission proposes a policy objective that recognizes the regional and national importance of the facility and that supports its continued operation and future expansion, including improved accessibility. The submission contends that an economic assessment undertaken by a 3rd party consultancy demonstrates the economic impact of the facility, including its impact on surrounding areas in terms of accommodation demands arising from visitor numbers and the monetary value of the facility to the economy. Additionally, the submission highlights national **(NPO 34)**, regional **(RPO 4.84 & 6.8)** and local **(Section 4.28.3 and ED POL 8, 22 & 45)** policy support for the growth of tourism in the Ancient East and for the promotion of the facility. The submission also points to local **(ED POL 8, 19 & 22)** policy support for the continued sustainable development of rural communities.

In conclusion, the submission asserts that the economic and community benefits arising from the facility are consistent with national and regional economic, tourism and planning policies and objectives. The submission reasserts that the facility should be supported by policy objectives allowing for complementary visitor accommodation and sustainable transport modes.

Submission Ref: MH-C203-SIP-71: John Spain Associates on behalf of GEM Construction
Summary of Submission:
This is a detailed and comprehensive strategic submission prepared by John Spain Associates on behalf of GEM Construction in response to the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission extends to approximately 38 pages, including appendices, and engages extensively with national, regional and local planning policy, demographic projections, housing delivery requirements and settlement capacity within County Meath. The submission is framed primarily around the themes of Core Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy, and Housing Delivery, with particular emphasis on the capacity of Dunshaughlin to accommodate additional population growth and residential development over the forthcoming plan period. The submission references the National Planning Framework, the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and recent national housing policy including *Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025–2030*, highlighting the scale of housing delivery required nationally and regionally and the role of the private sector in meeting these targets. The submission sets out a detailed analysis of population growth trends within County Meath, noting sustained and projected growth pressures arising from proximity to the Greater Dublin Area, employment patterns, and infrastructure investment. It argues that current housing supply has not kept pace with demand and that the forthcoming

Development Plan must make adequate provision for additional residential development in sustainable and accessible settlements.

A significant portion of the submission focuses on Dunshaughlin, which is identified as a strategically located settlement with established services, public transport accessibility, and potential to support further growth in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. The submission contends that Dunshaughlin is well placed to accommodate additional residential development without undermining the role of larger growth centres, provided that infrastructure and services are planned in tandem.

The submission also addresses infrastructure and transportation, referencing public transport provision, road capacity, and the importance of aligning land-use zoning with existing and planned infrastructure investments. It highlights the need for coordinated planning to ensure that housing delivery is supported by adequate water services, transport infrastructure and community facilities.

In addition, the submission includes commentary on environmental considerations, including flood risk management, sustainable drainage, and compliance with climate adaptation and mitigation objectives. These issues are presented primarily in the context of enabling sustainable residential development rather than as standalone environmental policy proposals.

Overall, the submission seeks that the Strategic Issues Paper and subsequent Draft Development Plan:

- Recognise the scale of housing demand within County Meath;
- Support a settlement strategy that allows appropriately located settlements such as Dunshaughlin to accommodate additional growth;
- Ensure that zoning and housing policy are aligned with national and regional objectives;
- Provide a policy framework that facilitates timely housing delivery while ensuring proper planning and sustainable development.

No specific zoning maps or site-specific rezoning requests are advanced at this stage; however, the submission clearly signals an intention that future plan policy should enable residential development opportunities within Dunshaughlin.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive acknowledges receipt of this detailed strategic submission prepared by John Spain Associates on behalf of GEM Construction and notes the comprehensive engagement with the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper, particularly in relation to population growth, housing delivery, settlement hierarchy and infrastructure planning within County Meath.

The submission is recognised as a wide-ranging and evidence-based representation which draws on national and regional policy frameworks including the National Planning Framework, the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and recent national housing policy. The issues raised regarding housing demand, delivery capacity and the role of appropriately located settlements in accommodating future growth will be key considerations for the forthcoming Development Plan.

It is noted that the Strategic Issues Paper is intended to identify high-level planning matters and inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan rather than to determine zoning outcomes or site-specific development potential. Matters relating to the scale and distribution of population growth, settlement hierarchy, and housing delivery mechanisms are currently under consideration. However, the future delivery of a rail link to Navan, with a proposed station in Dunshaughlin, suggests that the town is strategically located for sustainable transport-based growth. Its housing allocation is currently under consideration as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy, informed by updated population targets, infrastructure capacity assessments, planned future infrastructure, environmental constraints and statutory environmental assessments.

Infrastructure, transport connectivity, flood risk management and climate resilience will continue to form integral components of the Development Plan review process and will be addressed through evidence-based assessments and statutory processes, including Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, as required.

The issues raised in this submission are therefore noted and will be considered further as part of the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the county and the statutory role of the Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-72: Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of Rosalind Hughes

Summary of Submission:

This submission was made by Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of Rosalind Hughes and was included as an attachment to a digital submission. The submission relates to the delivery of the core strategy and housing strategy in the context of the town of Clonee.

The submission includes strategic proposals to align the new County Development Plan with national and regional planning policy which seeks to direct growth towards urban centres and public transport corridors in the interests of compact growth. The strategic proposals are set out in the context of recognising the current and potential role of Clonee in delivering compact growth. The strategic proposals include the following:

- Allocate some of the housing growth requirements for County Meath, as set out in the recently revised National Planning Framework (NPF), to Clonee.

- Prioritise and identify opportunities for urban consolidation, urban infill and compact growth.
- Recognising the strategic importance of Clonee.

The submission points to the fact that the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) notes the pressures associated with housing supply and affordability in both the sale and rental markets; Particularly in the wider Dublin Metropolitan Area within which Clonee is located. The submission also notes that the RSES targets a greater proportion of housing development in or close to existing urban areas. The submission highlights the key guiding principles for the development of the Metropolitan area which include brownfield and infill development and focussing growth along high quality public transport corridors. In this respect, the submission notes the identification of the north-west corridor in the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) as a strategic residential and employment corridor. The submission further notes the importance of the electrification of the existing rail commuter line serving Dunboyne and Clonee (Dart+ West), which is identified in the RSES as a key transport infrastructural improvement and will facilitate sustainable travel.

The submission highlights that Clonee benefits from a high level of public transport connectivity given its proximity to the DART+ West rail line and the servicing of the area by high frequency bus routes. In addition, the submission references several active travel improvements approved by the National Transport Authority (NTA) in the area leading to improved connectivity from Clonee to the surrounding area and the Dunboyne rail station. Additionally, the submission highlights numerous infrastructural, recreational and community resources within Clonee which demonstrates the capacity of the area to accommodate further growth. In particular, the submission references the wastewater treatment capacity in Clonee and proposed upgrades by Uisce Éireann to the supporting wastewater treatment network.

The submission contends that there are accessible major employment centres in proximity to Clonee and that there are suitable lands in the area that could help to achieve the aims of the RSES and the Dublin MASP regarding compact growth. The submission contends that this supports its strategic proposals, particularly the proposal pertaining to the achievement of the housing growth requirements for County Meath set out in the revised NPF.

The submission highlights the priority of the NPF to prevent urban sprawl and to deliver higher density compact growth. The submission outlines the vision for Clonee in the current Development Plan which involves the creation of compact, attractive, sustainable communities whilst focussing on infill, brownfield redevelopment and consolidation. The submission refers to an urban infill consolidation opportunity in Clonee (figure enclosed) and provides a brief history of the opportunity site. The submission also includes a figure demonstrating the walkability of the opportunity site in relation to existing public transport modes.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the matters raised in this submission in relation to settlement strategy and the delivery of housing in Clonee.

The Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, compact and sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. In this regard, the current County Development Plan already has policies to support compact growth on infill and brownfield sites including Policy SH POL 2 that seeks to promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced lands through the prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference to the edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl. The Draft County Development Plan will build on this policy approach and will continue to support compact growth.

In this context, Meath County Council also notes the requirements of the Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, which states that development plans must prioritise the delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of existing settlements through infill and brownfield development, the re-use of vacant and underutilised lands, and the promotion of compact and sequential growth patterns. National Policy Objective 7 seeks the delivery of at least 40% of new homes within the existing built-up areas. The Draft County Development Plan will be prepared in alignment with national policy requirements and will seek to ensure that housing delivery is directed to appropriate locations.

With regard to zoning lands, the author makes reference to lands that are suitable for urban infill within Clonee. It should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. Such submissions should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

In regard to zoning additional lands, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit determines serviced and serviceable lands within Clonee that could accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

The comments highlighted in relation to transport and movement are noted**.** The Council recognises the strategic location of Clonee within the MASP. The Council also recognises the existing availability of high-quality public transport mentioned in the submission

resulting in Clonee having a high level of accessibility which is suitable for compact, transport-oriented residential development in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks.

Uisce Éireann is Ireland's national water utility, is responsible for providing and managing all public water and wastewater services, including infrastructure (pipes, treatment plants), supply, maintenance, and investment in upgrades for homes and businesses across the country. All planning applications submitted to Meath County Council that require water infrastructure are referred to Uisce Éireann to advise on water and/or wastewater availability. These recommendations inform the local authority's planning application decision. This referral process remains a standard operational procedure in the planning application assessment.

Regarding the identification of employment opportunities in the vicinity of Clonee in the Development Plan, the Council is currently undertaking an assessment of the employment zoned lands across County Meath to inform the employment zoning methodology for the new County Development Plan. Preliminary results indicate that there are large tracts of undeveloped employment zoned lands in the vicinity of Clonee. This will be considered, along with the recommendations within the submission pertaining to employment, in the Development Plan review and in accordance with the employment zoning methodology as set out in the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022).

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-73: Declan Brassil & Company of behalf of Glenvela Limited

Summary of Submission:

This submission addresses the strategic role and future development potential of Kilcock, which is designated as a Self-Sustaining Town in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The submission focuses on Kilcock's capacity to accommodate growth given its high-quality public transport connectivity and existing infrastructure.

Three Strategic Proposals:

1. **Recognition of Kilcock's Strategic Importance** - The submission requests that the Core Strategy recognises Kilcock's strategic importance as a Self-Sustaining Town with high-level public transport connectivity and capacity to accommodate sustainable growth. The RSES defines Self-Sustaining Towns as having "high levels of population growth and a weak employment base which are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services, and which require targeted 'catch up' investment to become more self-sustaining." These

towns require "contained growth, focusing on driving investment in services, employment growth and infrastructure whilst balancing housing delivery."

Kilcock benefits from high-frequency bus transportation (Route 115 serving Dublin-Mullingar) and a railway station on the Dublin-Sligo Railway Corridor, which is to be upgraded through the DART+ West Project. The submission provides detailed inventories of social and community infrastructure including primary and post-primary schools, creche facilities, health centres, sports facilities, and community centres.

2. Housing Allocation (3% - 927 units) - The submission proposes allocating 3% of NPF-allocated growth to Kilcock (927 units over the plan period), having regard to its strategic role, designation as a self-sustaining town, capacity to accommodate growth, and performance in delivering on previous allocations. Based on the 2025 NPF Housing Growth Requirements (4,413 units annually with full 50% additional provision), 3% of the 6-year allocation equates to 927 units. The submission notes that only 180 units were allocated to Kilcock for 2021-2027 (all extant from the previous plan), and argues that the increased allocation reflects the settlement's strategic location on a high-frequency rail corridor serviced by DART+.

3. Sequential Urban Consolidation - The submission proposes that future expansion to the northeast of the town centre is consistent with national policy priorities, having regard to Kilcock's existing unbalanced urban form, planned strategic objectives, and concentration of community, commercial, and employment activities. The current Development Plan vision supports development of "a sustainable neighbourhood that integrates with and complements the existing Kilcock Town Centre" and seeks to "support and facilitate the residential development of Kilcock Environs having regard to its proximity to the town centre and available amenities."

The submission identifies that the Built-Up Area (BUA) mapping shows unbalanced urban form to the south of the town centre, historically due to the county boundary formed by the an ye immediately north of the town centre. Northeast expansion would consolidate the town core with strong defensible boundaries (R125 to east/south, Rye Water River to west), provide proximity to the train station, and be accessible by active modes to town centre facilities. The submission includes 15-minute walkability mapping and detailed facility inventories showing accessibility to schools, childcare (6 facilities within 900m-1.7km), healthcare (7 facilities within 500m-1.4km), sports/recreation, and community facilities.

Key Supporting Evidence:

- High-frequency public transport: Bus Route 115, railway station on Dublin-Sligo corridor with DART+ West upgrade
- Educational facilities: 3 primary schools (600m-1.4km), 1 post-primary school (750m), 6 childcare facilities

- Healthcare: 7 healthcare facilities within 500m-1.4km including medical clinics, dental practice, therapy services
- Sports/Recreation: 4 sports clubs, Royal Canal Greenway (700m)
- Community facilities: Community Centre (1.3km), Library (450m), Garda Station (900m), Post Office (500m)
- Unbalanced existing urban form due to county boundary at River Rye
- Sequential development with defensible boundaries (R125, Rye Water River)

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission from Glenvela Limited regarding the strategic role and future development potential of Kilcock.

Kilcock as Self-Sustaining Town

The Council acknowledges Kilcock's designation in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 as a Self-Sustaining Town—a settlement with high levels of population growth requiring targeted investment to become more self-sustaining through driving investment in services, employment growth, and infrastructure whilst balancing housing delivery. The Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033 will also recognise Kilcock's strategic location on the Dublin-Sligo Railway Corridor, its public transport connectivity including the planned DART+ West upgrade, and its cross-boundary relationship with Kildare County Council.

Housing Allocation

The submission's proposal to allocate 3% of NPF-allocated growth to Kilcock (927 units) is noted, based on the settlement's strategic role, public transport connectivity, and infrastructure capacity. The specific housing allocation to individual settlements will be determined through preparation of the Core Strategy, having regard to national and regional policy, the settlement hierarchy, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, and the objective of achieving sustainable settlement patterns. The Council notes that Kilcock is located on the county boundary and that coordination with Kildare County Council regarding growth allocations and infrastructure provision will be necessary, consistent with RPO 4.86 of the RSES which requires joint planning approaches for settlements that straddle local authority boundaries.

Settlement Expansion and Urban Form

The Council acknowledges the submission's identification of northeast expansion as representing sequential development from the town centre, with the submission noting Kilcock's existing unbalanced urban form due to the historic county boundary at the River Rye. The approach to settlement boundaries and land use zoning in Kilcock will be

considered in the Draft Plan, having regard to sequential development principles, compact growth objectives, the Built-Up Area mapping, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, defensible boundaries, and integration with the town centre and public transport nodes. The matters raised regarding rebalancing the urban form and providing development proximate to the town centre, train station, and community facilities will be considered in this context, subject to coordination with Kildare County Council and appropriate environmental assessment.

The Council welcomes Glenvela Limited's engagement. The matters raised regarding Kilcock's strategic role, housing allocation, and sequential expansion will be considered in preparation of the Core Strategy, settlement hierarchy, and development objectives for Kilcock in the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to national and regional policy, cross-boundary coordination requirements, infrastructure provision, and environmental assessment.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-74: John Spain Associates on behalf of Pargo Properties One Ltd
Summary of Submission:
This submission was made by John Spain Associates, planning consultants, on behalf of Pargo Properties One Ltd., and relates to the 'B2 – Retail Warehouse Park' zoning objective. The submission seeks the modernisation and broadening of the B2 zoning framework to reflect contemporary retail trends, evolving consumer behaviour, and current operational requirements of retail warehouse parks. The submission claims that County Meath experiences persistent and measurable retail expenditure leakage, particularly in comparison and bulky goods retailing, exacerbated by strong population growth and proximity to higher-order retail centres outside the county. The submission states that CSO data and expenditure trends demonstrate sustained growth in household consumption categories typically associated with large-format retailing, contending that a significant proportion of this expenditure is being captured outside County Meath due to zoning constraints. The submission outlines the adverse implications of continued retail leakage, including loss of local employment opportunities, unsustainable cross-county travel patterns, weaker local economic performance, and under-utilisation of existing retail park assets within the county. The submission asserts that while Town Centre First principles are supported, town centres in County Meath have limited physical and commercial capacity to accommodate

large-format and bulky goods retailing due to plot sizes, configuration, refurbishment viability and development readiness. The submission further asserts that retail warehouse parks perform a complementary role within the retail hierarchy by accommodating uses that cannot be delivered in town centre environments.

The submission raises concerns that the current B2 zoning matrix of "Permitted in Principle" and "Open for Consideration" uses is overly restrictive and out of step with contemporary retail models, including hybrid retail–service formats, click-and-collect functions, and ancillary leisure or experiential uses. The submission contends that such multi-functional needs are not facilitated within the B2 zoning matrix and that B2 zonings are overly skewed towards town centre sites which are unsuited to the needs of contemporary retail environments.

The submission notes that a comparative review of Development Plans in neighbouring counties demonstrates a broader, more flexible and enabling approach to retail park zoning, placing County Meath at a competitive disadvantage. Such approaches include:

- Broadening the types of permitted uses,
- Recognising the suitability of hybrid commercial and leisure uses in retail parks,
- Supporting ancillary uses within retail parks, and
- Committing to the assessment of emerging retail formats on a case-by-case basis.

The submission highlights, by reference to appended figures and extracts from other Development Plans, that other planning authorities explicitly facilitate a broader range of retail, service, leisure and ancillary uses within retail warehouse park designations.

The submission draws attention to the Headford Road Regeneration Site, Galway Retail Park as a relevant precedent, noting that Galway City Council recognises retail parks as strategically located brownfield assets capable of supporting higher-intensity, mixed-use redevelopment through updated zoning and tailored policy frameworks. In relation to the Headford site, the submission further notes that the site had the opportunity for increased density, diversified mix of uses, improved public realm outcomes, stronger integration with sustainable transport modes and delivery of new homes within walking distance. It is contended that this demonstrates how retail parks can be repurposed to attract a broader range of uses thereby unlocking development that responds to contemporary retails formats, support public transport investment and strengthens urban neighbourhoods.

The submission proposes to broaden the list of uses "Permitted in Principle" and "Open for Consideration" under the B2 zoning objective, with a detailed schedule of proposed uses provided and summarised in a Figure within the submission.

The submission further proposes that an additional policy provision be included to allow uses not explicitly listed to be assessed on a case-by-case basis, subject to compliance with the objectives of the B2 zoning, to future-proof the Development Plan.

The submission concludes that increased flexibility within the B2 zoning objective would assist Meath County Council in retaining expenditure locally, supporting employment, improving the viability of retail parks, and ensuring alignment with national and regional planning policy, while maintaining town centres as the primary focus of the retail hierarchy. The submission asserts that this would align better with the retail zoning practices of neighbouring counties and would provide greater clarity and certainty for retail operators.

The submission appears to mistakenly include wording relating to a proposed zoning change in Newcastle, which is not within the geographical boundaries of County Meath.

Chief Executive Response

The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government published guidelines in 2012 on Retail Planning, setting out requirements for Development Plans and Retailing. In relation to retail warehousing, planning authorities are recommended to carefully consider the zoning of land for any additional retail warehousing development in their areas, given the level of provision of this category of development in recent years in and around the main centres of population, the levels of vacancy in such centres and thus pressure to entertain uses inappropriate to the edge-of-centre locations of many of these developments.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a retail strategy will be prepared as part of the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033. The retail strategy will determine whether there is a need for the provision of additional retail warehousing. If the need for additional bulky format retailing is identified by the development plan on the basis of evidence from the relevant retail strategies, the size and potential location of the additional units will also be specified. This will include a review of the permitted uses under B2, 'Retail Warehousing'.

Chief Executive Recommendation

Review the effectiveness of Land Use Zoning categories as part of the Economic Strategy

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-75: Sally O Shea

Summary of Submission:

This submission focusses on Gormanston and contends that it is a uniquely unspoilt natural area of conservation surrounded by urban areas. The submission suggests that the

Council should be cognisant of this and should seek to protect this area for future generations, particularly the area between the beach and Gormanston College.

Chief Executive Response

The Council notes the submission and acknowledges the importance of Gormanston as a rural village with a distinctive natural, coastal and landscape character. The existing Meath County Development Plan recognises Gormanston as a village with a predominantly rural setting, limited infrastructure capacity, and a strong emphasis on conserving and enhancing its natural environment, landscape setting, heritage assets and coastal hinterland

The current Plan includes specific policies and objectives aimed at preserving the character of Gormanston, protecting trees, woodlands, views, archaeological heritage and the wider natural environment, including lands associated with Gormanston College and the surrounding demesne. The Council also acknowledges the sensitivity of lands between the village, the coastline and Gormanston College, and the need to ensure that any future development proposals are subject to rigorous environmental assessment and comply with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

The issues raised will be considered as part of the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan, including in the context of landscape character, green infrastructure, coastal management and settlement strategy.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-76: Bremore Ireland Port

Summary of Submission:

This submission was made by Bremore Ireland Port (BIP) and was included as an attachment to a digital submission. The submission focuses on the proposed future development of a major port at Bremore, County Meath. The submission states that BIP represents a subsidiary of Drogheda Port Company.

The submission describes the proposed development of a major deep-water port at Bremore and states that it is proposed to be developed in phases, in line with growth in demand across all trade modes such as renewable energy, tourism etc. The submission claims that the proposed development would retain the beach for community and leisure activities. The submission cites national policy on ports, which recognises the significant role that ports play in the development of offshore renewable energy, notwithstanding their primary function as a maritime transport facility. In this respect, the submission suggests that the proposed port would support the achievement of objectives set out in the Climate Action Plan. The submission notes that the national ports policy is currently under review and that the review recognises the drivers and the need for additional port capacity to serve the wider Dublin hinterland. The submission advises that BIP have

submitted a market demand analysis in response to the review of the national ports policy. The submission highlights the interconnectedness of the proposed port to, inter alia, the Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor and the Dublin-Belfast railway line.

The submission further highlights the climate-friendly elements of the proposed port development at Bremore such as:

- Manufacturing offshore wind turbines;
- Producing green hydrogen as an energy carrier; and
- Supplying renewable fuels to shipping, aviation and HGVs**.**

The submission claims that the use of green energy and fuels as part of the proposed port development demonstrates the uniqueness of the development. Further to this, the submission claims that the proposed port development will serve as a central hub for decarbonised transportation logistics. The submission suggests that this will reduce transport journeys, thereby promoting sustainable urban development whilst facilitating regional growth and employment.

The submission cites legislation from the recently enacted Planning & Development Act (2024) and recently published and impending commencement Circulars, which provide for the identification of suitable sites that may be of significant economic, social or environmental benefit to the State and be in the common good to be designated as candidate Urban Development Zones (UDZs). The submission notes that legislation empowers Local Authorities to identify suitable sites and recommends that the site of the proposed Bremore Port be identified as such in the new Development Plan. The submission provides suggested text to be included in the new Development Plan, on this basis. The submission reiterates the criticality of planning for such a development on a long-term basis and that the identification of the site as a UDZ would facilitate such an approach. The submission also notes that the proposed port development would require a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) application to An Coimisiún Pleanála and a Marine User Licence (MUL) application to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA), the latter of which is currently being processed by MARA.

The submission describes the vision for the proposed port development, and suggests that it will encompass the following within a Production & Innovation District:

- Green Manufacturing;
- Added Value Logistics;
- R&D Offices;
- Community Services;
- Residential Areas; and
- A Dynamic Education Hub.

The submission envisages that the proposed port development would form a part of the EU TEN-T core network as an Energy Hub and that it would provide a major regional and national economic and social boost.

The submission points to text in the current Development Plan which refers to previous proposals for a port development in Gormanston.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission received from Bremore Ireland Port (BIP).

The submission outlines proposals for the phased development of a major deep-water port at Bremore, County Meath, including its strategic role in meeting future trade demand, supporting offshore renewable energy, and contributing to Climate Action Plan objectives. It highlights the site's location, transport connectivity, and potential role within the Dublin hinterland, as well as measures to retain community and recreational use of the existing beach.

The climate-related aspects of the submission are noted, in particular, the role of ports in facilitating offshore renewable energy development, supporting the transition to alternative fuels, and contributing to national and regional climate mitigation objectives. These matters will be considered in the context of the Development Plan's climate action strategy, including alignment with national climate policy, the National Planning Framework, the national ports policy, which is due for publication in the first half of 2026, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and the Council's Climate Action Plan, having regard to the need for climate resilience, emissions reduction, and adaptation to coastal and marine climate risks.

With respect to the request to designate these lands as an Urban Development Zone (UDZ), the Chief Executive considers it premature to identify UDZ lands at this stage. The designation of a UDZ must be informed by a Candidate Site Selection Assessment to determine the most appropriate location, having regard to detailed planning, environmental, infrastructural, and heritage considerations. Where a Candidate UDZ is proposed for designation in a Development Plan, a pre-designation consultation paper must be prepared, and the general public must be consulted in accordance with statutory requirements. The Council is now in the early stages of considering potential UDZ lands in the county.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-77: Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of Cairn Homes Properties Ltd

Summary of Submission:

This submission addresses the strategic role and housing allocation for Navan as a Key Town in the settlement hierarchy. Cairn Homes is an active housebuilder in County Meath with 630 homes completed, under construction, and in planning in Navan, with Masterplan-led capacity for an additional 1,450 homes. The company has a proven delivery track record, including substantial completions at Robinrath (MP13) and Swanbrook (MP8), alongside delivery of strategic distributor road infrastructure (LDR1(a) and LDR2(a)).

Three Strategic Proposals:

1. Strategic Importance of Navan as Key Town: The submission requests that the Core Strategy recognises Navan's strategic importance as the County's largest town and designated Key Town (alongside Maynooth) with significant capacity to drive growth and complement the Regional Growth Centre of Drogheda. Navan is designated in the RSES as a Third Tier Key Town, a large, economically active service town with high-quality transport links and capacity to act as a regional growth driver. The submission emphasises Navan's role as the county town, principal employment and service centre, and its designation for future multi-modal access, including the planned Dunboyne/M3 Parkway rail extension.

2. Sustainable Housing Allocation (25.6% - up to 6,792 units): The submission proposes allocating 25.6% of NPF-allocated growth to Navan (up to 6,792 units over the plan period), having regard to RPO 4.26 of the RSES, which requires Core Strategies to achieve a minimum of 30% of housing in Key Towns. The submission references the 2025 NPF Housing Growth Requirements, which increase Meath's annual housing target from 2,862 to 4,413 units (with a full 50% additional provision applied) a 53% increase. The submission proposes that the 30% minimum Key Town allocation should be split 85.5% to Navan and 14.5% to Maynooth, resulting in an annual allocation of 1,132 units to Navan, or 6,792 units over six years.

3. Sequential Urban Consolidation - Prioritise Masterplan Areas: The submission advocates that designated Masterplan areas MP8 (Swanbrook - Trim Road lands, 32 hectares) and MP13 (Robinrath - Commons Road lands, 40 hectares) in Navan's Southern Segment are the most suitable locations to deliver the majority of housing allocation. These lands have agreed Masterplans, development has substantially progressed, and they provide sequential urban expansion from the town centre (approximately 2km distance). The submission requests the removal of phasing restrictions on MP13 lands (currently A2 Phasing - post-2027) to enable full development over the new plan period.

Combined capacity: 1,480-1,565 dwellings, with approximately 1,100 units remaining representing 16.2% of the proposed 6,792-unit allocation.

Supporting Arguments:

- National/Regional Policy Alignment: NPO 7 (40% of new homes within built-up footprints), NPO 9 and RPO 4.26 (30% minimum to Key Towns), NPO 11 (planned growth determined at development plan stage), Development Plan Guidelines (2022) Section 4.4.4 on Long-Term Strategic and Sustainable Development Sites
- NPF Housing Growth Requirements (2025): Increased 50% additional provision effectively obviates the need for phasing where lands can be accessed and serviced during plan's lifetime; allows Long-Term Strategic Sites to be considered as additional provision beyond baseline requirements
- Navan 2050 Vision: Acknowledges Navan's capacity for substantial growth due to geographical position, availability of packaged and serviced development lands with limited environmental constraints, and benefits to the Eastern Region through relieving housing pressures
- Infrastructure Capacity Confirmed:
    - Water services capacity available (Uisce Éireann confirmation)
    - Strategic road infrastructure (LDR1(a) and LDR2(a)) delivered/being delivered in tandem with housing
    - Extensive social infrastructure: 8 childcare facilities (plus 2 approved), 12 primary schools, 5 secondary schools, with significant pipeline school development at Baker Hall, Limekilnhill
    - High public transport connectivity via multiple bus services, including the new Navan Town Bus (N1/N2 routes)
- Population Growth Trajectory: Navan recorded 36.4% growth from 2006-2022 (24,851 to 33,886 persons), with 12.3% growth during 2016-2022. The Revised NPF (April 2025) acknowledges Navan as one of Ireland's fastest-growing larger towns.
- Cairn Delivery Track Record:
    - Robinrath (MP13): Phase 1 of 99 dwellings nearing completion; live application for Phase 2 of 96 dwellings
    - Swanbrook (MP8): Phases 1-2 completed (132 dwellings); Phase 3 permitted for 110 dwellings (March 2025); design commenced on final phase (c.300 dwellings)
    - Delivered significant strategic road infrastructure enabling development

- Sequential Development Rationale: MP8 and MP13 lands provide a balanced counterpoint to Northern Segment growth, leverage distributor road investment, promote compact urban consolidation, and are located 2km from the town centre with excellent accessibility to employment, services, and a future rail station.

Specific Requests:

1. Recognition of Navan's strategic role and capacity as a Key Town in the Core Strategy
2. Allocation of a minimum 25.6% of countywide housing (6,792 units) to Navan, consistent with RPO 4.26
3. Removal of A2 phasing restrictions from MP13 lands to enable full development 2027-2033
4. Prioritisation of agreed Masterplan areas where development has substantially progressed
5. Commitment to funding/implementation mechanisms for required infrastructure
6. Flexibility in infrastructure delivery to avoid unnecessary impediments to housing delivery

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the comprehensive submission from Cairn Homes Properties Ltd and recognises the company's significant track record in housing delivery within Navan, particularly on Masterplan lands MP8 (Swanbrook) and MP13 (Robinrath), where the company has delivered substantial residential development and strategic enabling infrastructure including sections of LDR1(a) and LDR2(a) distributor roads.

Navan as Key Town and Housing Allocation

The Council acknowledges Navan's designation in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 as a Key Town and the special status it holds as the County town, with the capacity to act as a regional driver complementing Regional Growth Centres. The Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033 will continue to recognise Navan's strategic role as the county town and largest settlement in County Meath, in addition to principal employment and service centre.

The submission's analysis regarding RPO 4.26 of the RSES which requires Core Strategies to "achieve a minimum of 30% of housing in Key Towns by way of compact growth" is noted, along with reference to the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines (August 2025) which increase Meath's annual housing requirement to 2,942 units (baseline), with zoning for up to 50% additional provision. To provide clarity to the developer, the NPF Housing Growth Requirements require Meath to deliver 2,942 units up to 2034. These guidelines recommend that the Council zone up to 50% over and above

the quantum of lands required to deliver 2,942 units to recognise that a portion of zoned lands may not be activated for various reasons and zoning additional lands is necessary to ensure there is sufficient provision of sites. It does not increase the number of units to up to 4,413 units, rather, it provides a broader choice of lands upon which 2,942 units can be delivered.

The specific housing allocation to individual settlements will be determined through preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives (NPO 7, NPO 9, NPO 11)
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives, particularly RPO 4.26 regarding Key Towns
- NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines (2025) and Development Plans Guidelines (2022)
- Settlement hierarchy and strategic capacity of individual settlements
- Infrastructure capacity (water services, transportation, social/community facilities)
- Environmental constraints and appropriate environmental assessment
- Demonstrated housing delivery rates and pipeline development
- Achievement of sustainable, compact, and sequential settlement patterns across the settlement hierarchy

Masterplan Areas and Phasing Considerations

The Council acknowledges that Masterplan areas MP8 and MP13 in Navan's Southern Segment were designated for their capacity to deliver residential development and supporting infrastructure at scale. The submission notes that Cairn Homes has prepared agreed and draft Masterplan proposals, has substantially progressed development, with completions and pipeline development totalling over 400 units, and has demonstrated capacity for continued delivery alongside strategic infrastructure provision.

The current Development Plan includes phasing provisions for portions of MP13 lands (approximately 15.6 hectares designated as A2 Phasing - post-2027) linked to the delivery of LDR2(a) road connection. The submission requests the removal of this phasing constraint to enable the full capacity of both MP8 and MP13 landbanks over the 2027-2033 period. The removal of this phasing will be based on the outcome of the assessments and criteria outlined above and zoning requests are not a matter for the issues paper stage of the Development Plan process where submissions should be high-level and strategic in nature.

The Council notes the submission's references to Development Plans Guidelines (2022) Section 4.4.4 on Long-Term Strategic and Sustainable Development Sites, Section 4.4.1

regarding flexibility in phasing, and the increased 50% additional provision under NPF Implementation Guidelines (2025).

The approach to zoning, tiering, and phasing in the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033 will be determined having regard to national and regional policy, sequential development principles, infrastructure delivery capacity, environmental constraints, and compact growth objectives. The review of Masterplan designations, including MP8 and MP13, will consider:

- Established planning framework and agreed Masterplan provisions
- Demonstrated delivery capacity and track record
- Infrastructure capacity and delivery (water services, strategic road infrastructure LDR1(a) and LDR2(a), social/community infrastructure)
- Sequential development principles and urban consolidation objectives, including the role of the Southern Segment in providing balanced growth
- Capacity to contribute to housing targets and compact growth objectives
- Overall quantum of residential zoned land and need for appropriate choice and flexibility
- Consistency with Navan 2050 strategic vision
- Environmental assessment and constraints
- Need to coordinate housing delivery with infrastructure and service provision

Infrastructure and Navan 2050 Alignment

The Council acknowledges the submission's emphasis on infrastructure delivery and Cairn Homes' track record of delivering strategic road infrastructure in tandem with housing. The strategic importance of distributor road infrastructure in enabling sustainable development is recognised in the current Development Plan and Navan 2050 vision. The Draft Plan will include objectives to support the timely delivery of strategic infrastructure, having regard to available funding mechanisms, including development contributions and developer-led infrastructure delivery.

The approach to the southern segment, including MP8 and MP13 lands, will be considered in preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to the overall development strategy for Navan, compact growth and urban consolidation objectives, infrastructure capacity and delivery, environmental considerations, and the strategic vision set out in Navan 2050.

The Council welcomes Cairn Homes' continued engagement and acknowledges the company's contribution to housing delivery and infrastructure provision in Navan. The matters raised including Navan's strategic role, housing allocation, prioritisation of Masterplan areas, and phasing considerations will be considered in preparation of the

Core Strategy, settlement hierarchy, housing allocation, land use zoning, and development objectives for Navan in the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to national and regional policy, infrastructure provision, environmental assessment, and the objective of delivering sustainable, compact, and sequential development.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-78: McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants on behalf of Glenveagh Homes

Summary of Submission:

General:

This is a submission by McCutcheon Halley Planning consultants, on behalf of Glenveagh Homes, focussing on a range of matters including climate, housing, economy, transport, infrastructure and community. The submission includes a short summary and a submission report. The submission summarily suggests that enough land should be zoned to meet the revised National Planning Framework (NPF) targets recently published. The submission highlights several issues with the current Development Plan and contends that these issues prevent the efficient delivery of housing. The submission suggests some changes to the Development Plan in the interests of clarity.

The submission refers to the summary suggestion that more land should be zoned and further suggests that the amount of land to be zoned should take account of land deliverability and the supposed pre-existing shortfall in lands zoned in the existing Development Plan. The submission also refers to an enclosed Appendix which lists numerous objectives from the current Development Plan which it claims are not implementable in the delivery of residential schemes. In particular, the submission refers to objectives that are at odds with national standards, such as standards for separation distances. The submission contends that the introduction of objectives that require multiple house types reduces the efficiency of housing delivery as most housebuilders retain a production and manufacturing process which is focussed on building 'at scale'. The submission also contends that such objectives do not add significant benefits in terms of design improvements.

Policy & Legislation:

The submission highlights numerous legislative requirements regarding the alignment of the County Development Plan with both regional and national plans and policies. The submission cites the revised NPF published in April 2025 which highlights the need to plan for approximately 50,000 housing units per annum, plus an uplift of 50%. In respect of the 50% uplift, the submission refers to Policy Objective 2 of the guidelines on NPF implementation which requires Local Authorities to reflect this in their County

Development Plan housing figures. The submission includes an appendix from the guidelines setting out the housing growth requirements for each Local Authority and infers that Meath County Council is not meeting its requirements, citing a shortfall of approximately 40% in the delivery of units since 2022. The submission suggests that this supposed shortfall should be incorporated into the housing requirement for the new Development Plan, in addition to the 50% uplift. The submission further cites the standardised approach set out in the revised NPF which delineates between zoned lands that are serviced and zoned lands that are serviceable within the lifetime of the Development Plan. The submission suggests that the new County Development Plan align with this approach and that zoning of land for housing be focussed on areas of significant housing demand, where infrastructure and services are readily available or may be readily provided.

The submission refers to the government's recently published Housing Action Plan titled 'Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030' which assigns a greater role to the State in the delivery of housing and targets the construction of 300,000 homes over the lifetime of the Action Plan. The submission therefore suggests that the government's Action Plan reinforces the need for more 'Tier 1' fully serviced residential sites to be identified for development within the lifetime of the new County Development Plan.

The submission highlights provisions within the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) relating to the county town and key service and employment towns in County Meath. In particular, the submission points to the fact that the RSES states that targeted growth of up to 20% can be dispersed from Dublin City to the metropolitan towns of Bray, Maynooth and Swords, where they can demonstrate compact growth on high capacity planned or existing public transport corridors.

The submission references densities for edge of town greenfield lands from the Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024. Specifically, the submission refers to Section 3.3.3 of the Compact Settlement Guidelines which notes that the key priorities for key towns identified in the RSES are to plan for an integrated and connected settlement to deliver sequential and sustainable urban extension at locations that are closest to the urban core.

The submission notes that the Development Plan Guidelines (DPGs) for Planning Authorities 2022 requires the provision of a Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA) distinguishing between Tier 1 (serviced) and Tier 2 (serviceable) lands, to inform residential land zoning decisions. The submission also notes that the DPGs advocate a sequential test for residential zoning to ensure that lands situated within or closest to the settlement core are considered for development in the first instance. The submission also highlights that the DPGs require an infrastructural assessment of lands, covering the categories of access, foul sewerage capacity, water supply capacity and surface water drainage, to accompany the SCA.

Suggestions for the new Development Plan:

General:

The submission asserts that it is important for the new County Development Plan to include supporting policies and objectives that allow for the delivery of housing at scale commensurate with the revised NPF targets. The submission notes recent changes in national planning policy relating to compact development, higher densities, increased building heights and separation distances.

Population & Housing:

The submission references enclosed figures that include data relating to housing completions in County Meath over a 4-year term. The submission states that this data demonstrates an annual shortfall of approximately 1,000 units per annum under the current Development Plan, and that this should be factored into the housing requirements in the new County Development Plan. The submission highlights recent population growth trends based on CSO data which demonstrate an annual population increase of 1.8%. The submission suggests that this compounds the need for a 50% uplift of residential units in the County Development Plan within the lifetime of the new Development Plan.

In respect of optimising the housing return from residentially zoned lands, the submission claims that current Development Plan policies (**SH POL 5, DM OBJ 18 and 19**) obviate the provision of higher densities as they include the following requirements:

- Single storey dwellings in larger developments;
- 22m separation distances in both housing and apartment schemes;
- 2.3m separation distance between detached/semi-detached/end of terrace dwellings: and
- 15% public open space in residential schemes.

The submission claims that the above requirements are overly prescriptive and contradict national guidelines. In respect of references in the existing Development Plan to existing guidelines, the submission states that this should be avoided in the new Development Plan as guidelines can become outdated within the lifetime of the plan. The submission suggests referencing the equivalent superseding guidance material to avoid requiring compliance with outdated national policies. The submission also suggests reducing the prescriptiveness of Development Plan objectives and emphasising reliance on the relevant Section 28 Guidelines to facilitate greater compliance with national policies. For example, reliance on the Compact Settlement Guidelines for separation distances.

Transport & Movement:

In relation to Objectives **DM OBJ 89 and 93** of the current Development Plan, the submission asserts that the imposition of maximum and minimum standards for car and

cycle parking can be counter-productive and that an element of flexibility is required. The submission contends that the requirement for the provision of shared or secured bike parking has resulted in such facilities being provided in prominent locations, thereby negatively impacting residential amenity. The submission also contends that Objectives **MOV OBJ 25 and DM OBJ 93-4** relating to the provision of EV charging are complicated and lead to difficult servicing provisions. The submission suggests that the new Development Plan should include less onerous policies and objectives relating to EV facilities that do not undermine residential amenity.

Infrastructure & Utilities:

The submission notes the inclusion of a Settlement Hierarchy in the Strategic Issues Paper (figure enclosed) and contends that a lack of consistency in infrastructure provision, particularly water supply and wastewater treatment, can undermine the hierarchy and housing provision. The submission outlines that **DM OBJ 7** of the existing Development Plan requires all developments to include SuDS measures. The submission contends that it is not possible to include SuDS in all developments and that this objective should be reworded to provide general support for SuDS and to allow for alternative stormwater infrastructure where SuDS are not feasible.

Community Services:

The submission expresses support for the provision of social and community infrastructure. Notwithstanding this, the submission contends that some objectives in the existing Development Plan require social/community infrastructure as part of residential development which can add to the costs of homebuyers. Specifically, the submission refers to objectives **SH OBJ 24 and SOC POL 6** of the current Development Plan which require the submission of a Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) for new residential developments of 50 units or more. The submission raises concern with this requirement as it is the view of the author that the provision of such services do not fall within the remit of developers. Rather, the submission insists that it is the responsibility of the Planning Authority or the relevant service provider to provide social infrastructure and address any deficiencies in this sector. Furthermore, the submission contends that residential zoned land should not need to be reserved for social infrastructure. The submission recommends that SIAs be required for larger residential schemes only i.e. those subject to EIA and LRD.

Cultural & Natural Heritage:

The submission notes that biodiversity conservation and protection measures are now part of most residential schemes and that whilst they are normally achievable measures, there are instances where flexibility is required to meet other Development Plan objectives. In such instances, the submission suggests that a balanced assessment is required. In relation to the provision of works of public art as part of residential schemes

above 75 units under objectives **SOC OBJ 29 and DM OBJ 38** of the current Development Plan, the submission suggests that this is an onerous requirement and that such a requirement would be more suited to larger developments such as 200 units or more. The submission recommends that the process for the provision of public art should be more streamlined and coordinated to reduce admin at compliance stage. For naming of residential schemes, the submission notes that objectives **DM OBJ 36-7** of the existing Development Plan require 3 draft name proposals at pre-planning stage and that the name be approved by a naming committee. The submission recommends that this be undertaken at compliance stage as it is considered premature to address such naming proposals at pre-planning stage.

Climate Change:

The submission contends that the author's manufacturing process that allows for the construction of housing at scale supports the transition to a low carbon economy.

Employment & Economy:

The submission notes the importance of the need to provide housing in sustainable locations to avoid unsustainable commuting patterns. However, the submission contends that developers do not have control over the location of employment development and housing should not be restricted depending on the provision of jobs in the new County Development Plan.

Appendix 1:

In addition to the aforementioned policies and objectives, the submission includes observations on the following policies and objectives in the existing Development Plan based on residential planning experience:

- **CS OBJ 12 –** This objective could lead to the responsibility for the provision of social infrastructure falling to developers.
- **SOC OBJ 29 –** The requirement to incorporate public art into residential developments is worded in a way that it could be interpreted as a requirement for smaller residential sites.
- **DM OBJ 9 –** This objective should include the word 'generally' to allow for flexibility where such standards cannot be achieved.
- **DM OBJ 1 –** The threshold for a detailed design statement is too low and unnecessarily onerous. Flexibility should be applied to this threshold.
- **DM OBJ 20 –** The requirement to demonstrate adequate separation distances is applied excessively and is unnecessarily vague, undermining the ability of developers to achieve national standards.
- **DM OBJ 23** – Remove reference to 'all' applications and replace with 'larger applications/developments'. A detailed phasing plan is unnecessary for smaller schemes**.**

- **DM OBJ 26 –** The requirement for 15% open space in residential developments is excessive and does not align with national guidelines.
- **DM POL 7 –** The standards set out in this policy are excessive and conflict with national standards.
- **DM OBJ 30 –** The standards set out in this policy are overly prescriptive and do not align with national policy.
- **DM POL 12 –** Questions the need to identify specific locations within County Meath where apartments are acceptable. Suggests flexibility within this policy to consider alignment with Compact Settlement Guidelines.
- **DCE OBJ 9 –** Requirements for masterplans, action plans etc. on zoned residential lands delays the delivery of housing and is considered by the author to be an unnecessary burden.

Chief Executive Response

Development Management and compliance with Section 28 Guidelines

Variation 3 to the current County Development Plan 2021-2027 included an update to the current CDP to take account of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities published in January 2024. The 22 metre separation distance between directly opposing rear or side windows above ground floor in the case of detached, semi-detached and terraced units was reduced to 16 metres (DM OBJ 18 and DM OBJ 19 refers). It is noted under SPPR1 of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines that reference is made to having no specified minimum separation distances at ground level however this is interpreted as being in relation to ground floor windows and not dwelling houses. Therefore, the maintaining of a 2.3 metre separation distance between dwellings is considered in line with the Section 28 Guidelines and is retained in the current CDP to allow for rear access to dwellings.

In relation to public open space Meath County Council will retain 15% public open space generally in residential schemes owing to a need to catch up on the high levels of residential development that has historically taken place in the County and to ensure a high quality of open space provision for the residents of Meath. It is made clear however under section 11.5.11 of the current County Development Plan 2021-2027 that a reduction in public open space provision (not less than a minimum of 10% of net site area) may be considered where an applicant can clearly demonstrate that the existing and proposed public open space provision in the area meets the needs of the potential population increase associated with the development. Thus, in areas where there is adequate public open space provision, it may be acceptable to apply 10% public open space in the new scheme.

Under Variation 3 of the current County Development Plan 2021-2027 an update was also made to both car parking and cycle parking where reductions in both requirements were

made in line with the Section 28 Guidelines. DM OBJ 89 was amended from 2 car parking spaces per dwelling to 1.5 spaces per dwelling/unit in accessible locations and a maximum of 2 car parking spaces per dwelling in intermediate/peripheral locations. Under DM OBJ 96 the requirement for cycle parking was changed from a minimum of 2 spaces to a minimum of 1 private secure bicycle space per bedroom. Reference is also made in table 11.4 to the Section 28 Guidelines. Thus, it is considered that car parking and cycle parking has been amended to be in line with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities. In relation to EV Charging Points of which section 11.9.2 of the current County Development Plan refers, this section of the plan will be reviewed under the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033 in line with up to date policy.

Infrastructure & Utilities:

With respect to the authors concerns relating to the provision of infrastructure to support housing potentially undermining the settlement hierarchy and housing provision, this point is acknowledged. However, the Council will be guided by its Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA), which has been prepared in advance of the Draft County Development Plan. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. While the Settlement hierarchy informs the distribution of housing, it also informs where services and infrastructure should be provided in the future. The Council will avail of the SCA data to only zone serviced and serviceable lands while aligning itself with the settlement hierarchy insofar as practically possible.

The submission outlines that **DM OBJ 7** of the existing Development Plan requires all developments to include SuDS measures and contends that it is not possible to include SuDS in all developments and that this objective should be reworded to provide general support for SuDS and to allow for alternative stormwater infrastructure where SuDS are not feasible. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are a crucial part of modern development because they provide a holistic approach to managing surface water, offering flood reduction, water quality improvement, and environmental benefits. They are increasingly a mandatory requirement for planning approval in many regions as a response to climate change and urbanisation. The effectives of these objectives will be re-assessed as part of the Draft CDP with a view to providing developers with further support on mechanisms for delivery.

Climate Change:

The comments note the submission's comment in respect of the Developers' manufacturing process, which allows for the construction of housing at scale, supports the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Transport & Movement:

The comments made in relation to car and cycle parking are noted. Car parking and cycle parking standards were recently revised in the current plan under variation No. 3, in response to Section 28 guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2024. The Draft Plan will continue to align with National and Regional policy on regards to parking standards. In regard to EV facilities, the Draft Plan will continue to align with national and regional policy on this .

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-79: RMLA Planning on behalf of Melvin Properties Ltd.

Summary of Submission:

General:

This is a submission by RMLA Planning consultants, on behalf of Melvin Properties Ltd., focussing on a range of matters including transport, infrastructure, settlement & housing, the core strategy and community. The submission is included as an attachment to a digital submission.

The submission highlights the potential suitability of lands in Laytown for mixed use development including housing, park & ride, employment and community facilities. The submission contends that this would help to address the future development of the Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington-Donacarney (BLMD) area in the new Development Plan. The submission details the location of the lands via an enclosed figure. The submission notes that zoning considerations cannot be addressed at this stage in the Development Plan process and seeks to address the general development of the Laytown-Bettystown area.

Housing & Employment:

The submission contends that there is a need for Local Authorities to take a proactive approach to the development of settlements considering the government's focus on housing delivery in the recently published national housing plan. The submission further contends that Local Authorities will be required to account for an increased quantum of zoned land in County Development Plans, in accordance with the housing growth targets set out in the revised National Planning Framework (NPF). Following on from this, the submission stresses the need for the adopted housing approach to be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The submission proposes the extension of the settlement boundary for the Laytown-Bettystown area in the new Development Plan. In this context, the submission notes the lack of development to the west of the rail line resulting in the constraint of the urban area between the rail line and the sea (figure enclosed). The submission questions whether this existing pattern of development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The submission notes that the existing Development Plan identifies BLMD as a self-sustaining town, and that the focus of growth in such towns is to attract employment and investment alongside a balanced delivery of housing. The submission also notes that several Strategic Employment Zones (SEZs) were identified within self-sustaining towns throughout County Meath, as envisaged in the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES). The submission highlights that an SEZ is identified on lands in Laytown in the existing Development Plan but that these lands have remained undeveloped as it not possible to deliver employment development on these lands. Thus, the submission recommends that the future development of employment opportunities in this area should consider the continued population growth in the BLMD area. In addition, the submission contends that the SEZ lands in Laytown are isolated and that the future development of the lands should be undertaken in a holistic manner allowing for the delivery of both residential and employment uses. The submission claims that this is consistent with the government's national housing plan which seeks to utilise serviced lands.

The submission includes a table from the existing Development Plan detailing population projections for BLMD in comparison with population statistics from the recent Census. The submission demonstrates that this shows the demand for additional residential development in BLMD as the population exceeds that of the Development Plan population projections. The submission claims that population growth in BLMD has continued despite the lack of employment development in the area. Thus, the submission recommends a review of the policy approach for BLMD under the existing Development Plan which aims to provide for limited population growth alongside increased numbers of jobs. The submission recommends the provision of residential and employment opportunities in BLMD to facilitate housing demand in this location as well as delivering additional jobs to the area. The submission suggests that this would align with the 'live-work' approach in the existing Development Plan.

Transport & Infrastructure:

The submission highlights the delivery of the DART+ Coastal North route as an important infrastructural development for the Laytown area within the lifetime of the new Development Plan. The submission details the infrastructural changes likely to arise out of this project such as the extension of electrified DART services to Laytown and higher frequency rail services. The submission contends that this will provide an opportunity for

increased housing development in Laytown and for compliance with national policy requiring additional housing development. In particular, the submission highlights that this would align with NPO 10 of the revised NPF which aims to deliver transport orientated development (TOD) at scale. The submission states that the delivery of TOD is also promoted in the government's national housing plan and notes that similar patterns of development have been adopted in other countries resulting in the maximisation of public transport infrastructure (figure enclosed). The submission also refers to the development of lands around Portmarnock train station in Fingal County Council as an example of TOD in Ireland (figures enclosed showing a timelapse of development at Portmarnock train station).

The submission sets out that Laytown is well served by existing public transport infrastructure such as rail and bus services, as well as privately operated coach services. The submission notes that the government's housing action plan seeks to locate housing, employment, public services and leisure space in urban areas proximate to high quality transport services. In this respect, the submission recommends developing the area around the train station at Laytown in the new County Development Plan. The submission highlights the existing rail station and community services in the BLMD area. The submission claims that this demonstrates the suitability of the area for additional residential development. Regarding water supply and wastewater, the submission refers to information provided by Uisce Éireann which indicates wastewater treatment and water supply capacity in the BLMD area.

Conclusion:

The submission outlines the proposed Laytown settlement boundary expansion via an enclosed figure and suggests that the expansion area would be developed as a new district over multiple Development Plan cycles thereby allowing for a long-term strategic approach to the development of the lands. The submission notes that some of the lands within the expansion area are already zoned for development in the existing Development Plan and suggests that the development of these lands could constitute phase 1 of the development of the wider expansion area. The submission infers that the proposed settlement expansion could allow for greater pedestrian, vehicular and cycle connectivity between Laytown and Bettystown. The submission also suggests that the proposed expansion area should be considered as a candidate Urban Development Zone (UDZ) which are encouraged on serviced lands proximate to existing settlements and public transport infrastructure, as outlined in the government's national housing plan. In this regard, the submission notes that UDZ designations are reserved for areas with the potential for significant housing development.

Chief Executive Response

The Council notes the submission from RMLA Planning on behalf of Melvin Properties Ltd. and acknowledges the issues raised in relation to the future development of the Laytown–Bettystown–Mornington–Donacarney (BLMD) area.

Housing:

The Chief Executive notes the author's comments regarding housing delivery and the need for a balanced and sustainable approach to residential development, aligned with employment provision, transport accessibility and supporting infrastructure as well as the submission's comment regarding the expansion of the Settlement boundary at Laytown-Bettystown. The Draft County Development Plan will include a review of the Core Strategy and settlement framework for BLMD in light of updated national and regional policy, population trends, infrastructure capacity and environmental considerations. Matters relating to the delivery and suitability of employment lands, including Strategic Employment Zones, and the appropriate balance between residential and employment uses will be considered as part of this strategic review. However, decisions regarding settlement boundary expansion, land use zoning or the reconfiguration of specific employment lands do not form part of the Strategic Issues Paper stage and will be addressed, where appropriate, during the preparation and public consultation of the Draft Plan.

In relation to expansion, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit determines serviced and serviceable lands within the Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington-Donacarney (BLMD) area that could accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit include water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning and expansion.

Transport and Movement

Meath County Council recognises the substantial growth and development in Laytown in recent years, being driven by the settlement's location along the Dublin-Belfast Commuter rail line and the proximity of the settlement to Dublin and Drogheda via the M1 motorway.

The Council also recognise that the delivery of the DART + Coastal North route is a significantly important infrastructural development for the Laytown area, that will improve sustainable travel and compact growth for the area. The County Council will continue to engage with NTA, and any other relevant stakeholders regarding the provision of a train station in Bettystown.

The national policy support for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in maximising the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure spaces in close proximity to high-quality transport services is acknowledged, and it is likely that the delivery of the Dart + Coastal North will further increase demand for housing in the area. However, East Meath has undergone a period of catch-up with respect to community facilities and employment, and it is important that employment opportunities and social infrastructure are planned for alongside population growth so that, as development occurs, communities are supported by appropriate services, facilities and local employment.

The Draft Plan will include policies and objectives in support of rail-focused development consolidation.

Employment:

The author's submission on the need for employment in BLMD is noted. The Council aligns its approach to employment development with the requirements set out in the Development Plan Guidelines (DPGs) for Planning Authorities (2022). The DPGs recommend that a job: resident workforce ratio (jobs ratio) is used as a barometer for the need for employment development throughout the County. A jobs ratio refers to the number of jobs available versus the number of resident workers in each town, with a ratio of 1.0 meaning that there is one job for every resident worker. The number of jobs and the resident labour force are calculated based on figures from the latest census. This indicates whether there is enough employment within the town to accommodate the resident workforce thereby demonstrating the level of outward and inward commuting for employment purposes. The Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern & Midlands Assembly 2019-2031 indicates that a jobs ratio of 0.7 or above would be considered acceptable. It is noted that Bettystown-Laytown achieves a jobs ratio of 0.16 in the current Development Plan indicating a need for employment development in BLMD, however, data from the recent census indicates that the jobs ratio for Bettystown-Laytown has improved to 0.25.

Notwithstanding the above, it is noted that approximately 13.16ha of land is zoned for employment within Bettystown-Laytown and approximately 0ha of this is developed. The Council is reviewing the delivery of employment-zoned lands across the County, including BLMD, to inform the employment zoning methodology for the new Development Plan, which must align with the provisions of the DPGs. This will consider the need for employment zoning or rezoning in BLMD, in tandem with the need for residential zoning. In addition, the effectiveness of employment-related policies and objectives in the current Development Plan relating to BLMD will be reviewed as part of the Development Plan review process. This will be undertaken in consultation with the Council's Economic Development Department who have also engaged 3rd party consultants on this matter.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-80: Iarnród Éireann

Summary of Submission:

General:

This is a submission by Iarnród Éireann focusing on a range of matters including transport and infrastructure.

The submission lists the following high-level measures which it believes should be supported in the new Development Plan:

- Priority for public transport and active travel schemes, particularly high-capacity modes such as rail.
- Support the expansion of heavy rail through the DART+ Programme and the Navan Rail line project.
- Promote Transport Orientated Development (TOD) with mixed-use high-density development at key rail nodes.
- Support ongoing investment in rail infrastructure.
- Support an integrated, user friendly and highly connected public transport network.

The submission stresses the need for a long-term vision when planning for transport infrastructure since policy reform takes a considerable time to implement. The submission highlights the importance of the new Development Plan in planning for sustainable mobility in County Meath. The submission notes the challenges and opportunities presented by climate change in planning for transport infrastructure. Regarding opportunities, the submission notes that the review of the Development Plan would facilitate a more sustainable integrated transport system, advanced local mobility hubs and maximisation of the dynamic impact between housing and transport. In this respect, the submission welcomes the updating of the Development Plan to concentrate on compact growth and alignment with public transport infrastructure developments, as required by national and regional policy.

The submission notes the existing railway network in County Meath which consists of the Northern line and the Maynooth/M3 line. The submission commits to working with Meath County Council (MCC), the Department of Transport and the National Transport Authority (NTA) to further expand and integrate the rail network, subject to funding.

DART+:

Regarding the DART + Programme, the submission outlines that this is the largest heavy rail investment scheme in the history of the state. The submission includes a figure showing the various sub-elements of the DART+ Programme, including the DART+ Coastal North and DART+ West Programmes which traverse County Meath. The submission states that the DART+ Programme will facilitate transformational change to the future public

transport network through infrastructural improvement such as electrification, removal of level crossings, new depots and other works and through additional rolling stock. The submission further states that this will provide significant benefits to rail passengers in County Meath. In this respect, the submission stresses that it is essential that the Development Plan supports the implementation of the DART+ Programme and that its implementation, which is required by the NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), is not hindered. The electrification of rail services and associated infrastructure upgrades are also recognised as contributing to longer-term decarbonisation of the transport sector and improved air quality outcomes.

Navan Rail Line:

The submission sets out the history of the Navan Rail Line (NRL) and refers to a collaborative assessment undertaken by MCC and the NTA to inform the Transport Strategy for the GDA which concluded that the reinstatement of the NRL could provide significant benefits to the Dublin-Navan corridor. The submission also highlights the fact that the NRL project is included in the All-Island Strategic Rail Review (AISRR), jointly commissioned by the Departments of Transport in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and informed by the GDA Transport Strategy (figure enclosed demonstrating AISRR recommendations). The submission sets out the details of the proposed NRL project and points to the fact that Navan is the largest town in County Meath. In this respect, the submission contends that the absence of a direct rail link between Navan and Dublin limits regional integration and access to employment, education and services which would undermine the objectives of the AISRR. The submission further contends that the NRL project will result in improved connectivity which will unlock the economic potential of Navan through TOD, thereby addressing existing inefficiencies in the transport network that limit economic growth. The submission also suggests that the NRL project will benefit other settlements such as Dunshaughlin, through which the rail line is proposed to run. Such an approach also supports climate change mitigation objectives by encouraging compact growth patterns, reducing reliance on private car travel and supporting more sustainable travel choices in line with national climate policy.

The submission claims that the integration of Navan into the rail network will facilitate growth in sustainable mobility alternatives to the private car, will reduce emissions and will improve quality of life for people living along the route. The submission states that the first phase of the NRL project will include scoping, design and route option selection over the next 2 years, which will require public consultation and a Railway Order application to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

Rail Freight:

The submission highlights the opportunities associated with the potential expansion of the rail freight sector including the reduction of carbon emissions and enabling sustainable growth. The submission contends that this reflects the focus of European,

national and regional policy on sustainable development, regional balance and the decarbonisation of transport systems. The submission provides statistical data on the environmental benefits of rail freight in comparison to road haulage and points to the fact that the transport sector accounts for one fifth of all emissions nationally. The submission highlights that the Iarnród Éireann Rail Freight 2040 Strategy has been developed in response to this. The submission outlines that the rail freight network in Ireland represents an underutilised asset.

The submission sets out the following aims of the Rail Freight 2040 Strategy:

- A five-fold increase in the number of rail freight services, including over 100 new weekly services across the network.
- Reduction of 25,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions annually.
- Removing the requirement for 140,000 HGV journeys annually.

The submission includes a figure detailing the rail freight interventions set out in the AISRR and refers to a freight-only route between Drogheda and Tara Mines which supports outbound mining products to Dublin Port. The submission states that this route forms part of the future core freight routes proposed in the AISRR. The submission suggests that MCC consider the findings of the AISRR and the Rail Freight Strategy in the preparation of the new Development Plan, and that the continued operation and enhancement of rail freight services is supported in this regard.

Conclusion:

The submission claims that the identified rail priorities can facilitate the projected population increase for County Meath along with the provision of compact growth, whilst also facilitating the achievement of net-zero emissions by 2050.

Chief Executive Response

The submission received from Iarnród Éireann is very much welcomed and acknowledged by Meath County Council, and the Council looks forward to continued communication with Iarnród Éireann throughout the preparation and duration of the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033. The Council recognises the need for a long-term vision when planning for transport infrastructure and the importance the new Development Plan will have in continuing on planning for sustainable mobility in County Meath that concentrates on compact growth and alignment with public transport infrastructure development, as required by national and regional policy.

DART+:

In regards to the DART+, the Chief Executive acknowledges that this is the largest heavy rail investment scheme in the history of the state, and that DART+ Programme will facilitate transformational change to the future public transport network through infrastructural improvement such as electrification, removal of level crossings, new

depots and other works and through additional rolling stock. The Development Plan will continue to support the work of NTA and Iarnród Éireann in implementing the DART + Programme.

Navan Rail Line:

The comments made in relation to the proposed Navan Rail Line are very much welcomed and Meath County Council looks forward to further liaising with Iarnród Éireann and the NTA as the project proceeds through the planning and design phases. The Draft Plan will support the proposed Navan Rail Line Study and for the delivery of the Navan Railway Line. The Council also recognises the importance of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in maximising the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure spaces in close proximity to high quality transport services, and the Draft Plan will include policies and objectives in support of rail-focused development consolidation.

Rail Freight:

It is acknowledged that a case for rail freight is increasingly warranted given the need to respond to climate change and environmental targets. The Council also acknowledges Iarnród Éireann Rail Freight 2040 Strategy that has been recently developed and the rail freight interventions set out in the All-Island Strategic Rail Review (AISRR) that refers to a freight-only route between Drogheda and Tara Mines which supports outbound mining products to Dublin Port. Meath County Council will consider the findings of the AISRR and the Rail Freight Strategy in the preparation of the new Development Plan, and that the continued operation and enhancement of rail freight services is supported in this regard.

Chief Executive Recommendation

- Prioritise public transport and active travel schemes, particularly high-capacity modes such as rail.
- Support the expansion of heavy rail through the DART+ Programme and the Navan Rail line project.
- Promote Transport-Oriented Development (TOD) with mixed-use high-density development at key rail nodes.
- Support ongoing investment in rail infrastructure.
- Support an integrated, user-friendly and highly connected public transport network.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-81: Tom Phillips + Associates on behalf of GDA Energy Ltd.

Summary of Submission:

This is a comprehensive planning submission prepared by Tom Phillips + Associates on behalf of GDA Energy Ltd., responding to the Meath County Development Plan 2027–

2033 Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper. The submission focuses on the strategic role of energy infrastructure, the digital economy, and data centre development in supporting Meath's long-term economic growth.

The submission highlights Meath's existing strengths in strategic electricity infrastructure, renewable energy generation (particularly solar), and digital connectivity, and argues that these assets position the county to accommodate energy-intensive employment uses, including data centres and related digital infrastructure. It references national and regional policy, including the National Planning Framework (2025 revision), the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres, and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, to support a more explicit and forward-looking policy framework in the forthcoming Development Plan

Key themes include the identification and zoning of energy campuses in proximity to existing high-voltage electricity infrastructure, the co-location of large energy users to improve efficiency and reduce environmental impacts, and the potential for district heating and waste heat recovery to contribute to climate and energy objectives. The submission also outlines the significant economic and employment benefits associated with data centre investment, drawing on Irish and international examples.

In addition, the submission supports continued policy backing for strategic transport infrastructure, including the Navan Rail Corridor, as a means of facilitating sustainable economic development and improving connectivity between employment locations and settlements.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the detailed submission made by Tom Phillips + Associates on behalf of GDA Energy Ltd. and notes the emphasis placed on the strategic importance of energy infrastructure, the digital economy, and energy-intensive employment uses in supporting the county's future economic development. The issues raised are recognised as relevant considerations in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033.

The Council notes the references to national and regional planning policy regarding digital infrastructure, data centres, renewable energy integration, and strategic energy planning. These matters will be considered in the context of ensuring alignment with the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, climate and energy objectives, and the requirement to balance economic development with environmental protection and the promotion of renewable sources of energy and sustainable land-use planning.

In addition, the Council notes the relevance of the issues raised to climate mitigation and adaptation objectives, including the role of renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, waste heat recovery, and low-carbon energy systems in supporting the

transition to a climate-resilient and low-carbon economy. The preparation of the Draft County Development Plan will be informed by the Meath County Council Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 and national climate legislation, ensuring that land-use planning supports the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, climate resilience, and the integration of energy infrastructure in a manner consistent with proper planning and sustainable development.

The Draft Plan will continue to support appropriate employment growth, strategic infrastructure provision, and sustainable development, informed by Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, and other relevant statutory processes. The matters raised regarding energy infrastructure, district heating potential, and strategic transport corridors will be examined as part of the overall plan-making process, having regard to national policy, infrastructure capacity, environmental considerations, and the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-83: John Spain Associates on behalf of Mr. John Browne

Summary of Submission:

This is a substantial and detailed planning submission made by John Spain Associates on behalf of their client, Mr. John Browne, relating to lands at Stirling Road, Clonee, Co. Meath, in the context of the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan.

The submission focuses primarily on Core Strategy, Settlement & Housing, Transport & Movement, and Community Services, while also referencing broader national and regional policy frameworks.

The submission argues that the subject lands, which are currently zoned “RA - Rural Area”, are strategically located within the Dublin Metropolitan Area, immediately adjacent to the M3 Parkway rail line, and close to the County Dublin boundary and the existing Hansfield urban area. It highlights the DART+ West project, including the approved Railway Order, and proposes the provision of a new rail station at Stirling, which would enable Transport-Oriented Development (TOD) at scale.

The submission places strong emphasis on national policy, including:

- The National Planning Framework - First Revision (2025)
- NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements (2025)
- Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines (2024)
- Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030

It notes the significant increase in housing delivery targets for County Meath and contends that there is an insufficient supply of zoned residential land to meet these targets. The submission states that, having regard to the proximity of the lands to high-quality rail infrastructure, water and wastewater services (including the Greater Dublin Drainage Project), and existing urban development patterns, the Stirling lands represent a highly sustainable and sequential growth opportunity.

The submission requests that the new County Development Plan:

- Recognise the strategic potential of the Stirling lands
- Include an objective for a new rail station at Stirling
- Support compact, rail-based residential development in line with TOD principles
- Consider the area for potential designation as an Urban Development Zone (UDZ)

Overall, the submission seeks a policy shift to facilitate future residential development at Stirling, Clonee, aligned with national housing delivery, transport investment, and sustainability objectives.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive notes the submission made by John Spain Associates on behalf of their client in relation to lands at Stirling Road, Clonee, that are suitable for residential development.

The Council recognises the strategic importance of delivering housing in a plan-led and sustainable manner, having regard to the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and the updated Housing Growth Requirements issued under Section 28 of the Ministerial Guidelines.

With this regard, it should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy considerations to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. Submissions relating to zoning cannot be considered at the pre-draft stage. Such submissions should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

In relation to identifying additional land for residential zoning, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit has determined serviced and serviceable lands within Clonee that can accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The

findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

The Chief Executive notes the references to Transport-Oriented Development, the DART+ West project, and the potential role of rail-based infrastructure in supporting compact growth within the Dublin Metropolitan Area. The identification of lands for future development, the zoning of lands, and the inclusion of transport objectives are matters that will be considered through the statutory plan-making process, informed by the Core Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, and consistency with national and regional policy.

The Draft Plan will continue to support the principles of compact growth, sustainable transport, and coordinated infrastructure delivery, while ensuring that land use zoning and development objectives are underpinned by appropriate assessment, including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, and transport and servicing considerations.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-85: Nobber Pride of Place Committee

Summary of Submission:

This submission was made on behalf of the Nobber Pride of Place team. The submission focusses on pedestrian accessibility and traffic calming measures in Nobber. The submission recommends the replacement/upgrading of footpaths in the village and the introduction of traffic calming initiatives at both entrances to the village. In particular, the submission refers to the following issues:

- Kingscourt Road (northern side) – There is an issue with speed in this area coming down a steep hill which runs into a bend onto a bridge. This issue is exacerbated by pedestrians and cyclists crossing the road at this point to access the greenway which has led to many 'near misses'.
- Navan Road (southern side) – There is a continuous issue with cars mounting the footpath coming into the village from this direction and crashing into stone trough/planters provided by Pride of Place. Three separate accidents have occurred here in the last 14 months.

The submission suggests that the above issues need to be urgently addressed.

Chief Executive Response

(Insert CE Response)

The comments made in relation to movement are noted. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and

mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks.

The constraints highlighted in regards to transport congestion, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is also noted. A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing factor for travel demand. Meath County Council's aims to provide safe, efficient and accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims, and this will be reflected in the Draft Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-88: BMA Planning on behalf of Ann Holmes, Brendan Little & Carmel Kelly

Summary of Submission:

This submission was made by BMA Planning on behalf of Ann Holmes, Brendan Little & Carmel Kelly and is included as an attachment to a digital submission. The submission focusses on lands in Enfield, County Meath.

The submission provides ownership and zoning background to the lands in question, including reference to de-zoning of the lands based on Core Strategy projections in the existing Development Plan. The submission highlights that a planning report, dated September 2025, has been provided to the Council in support of rezoning the lands in light of the housing growth requirements set out in the revised National Planning Framework (NPF) published in July 2025. However, the submission notes that zoning or re-zoning requests cannot be addressed at this stage in the Development Plan process and that this can be addressed at Draft Plan stage.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council notes the submission and the planning report submitted in September 2025 in relation to lands in Enfield. The council notes the author's acknowledgement that site-specific zoning or de-zoning requests cannot be considered at the Pre-Draft stage of the County Development Plan review process. Such submission can be made and considered at Draft stage of the County Development Plan.

In addition, the Council wishes to highlight that future consideration of lands for residential development, at the appropriate stage of the Development Plan process, will be informed by climate adaptation and mitigation objectives, including flood risk management, sustainable settlement patterns, and alignment with national climate

policy. Any assessment of lands will be required to have regard to climate resilience, sustainable infrastructure provision, and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development as they relate to climate change.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-89: The Planning Partnership on behalf of Andrews Construction Ltd.
Summary of Submission:
This submission was made on behalf of Andrews Construction Ltd. The submission focusses on housing delivery and the core strategy. The submission outlines that Andrews Construction Ltd. is a long-standing developer of residential properties in County Meath. The submission supports a plan led approach to the delivery of housing and particularly supports the role of the core strategy in this respect. The submission notes the recent publication of the government's housing strategy 'Delivering Homes, Building Communities' which is aligned with the National Planning Framework (NPF) housing growth requirements seeking to increase the supply of residentially zoned lands. The submission points to housing investments by Andrews Construction Ltd. in the towns of Navan and Trim.
Chief Executive Response
The Chief Executive notes and acknowledges the submission and the support expressed for a plan-led approach to housing delivery and the role of the Core Strategy. The Council recognises the importance of the Core Strategy as the primary mechanism through which population growth, housing provision and land zoning are aligned with national and regional planning policy, including the Revised National Planning Framework and its associated Housing Growth Requirements, supported by the government's housing strategy 'Delivering Homes, Building Communities. The issues raised in relation to national housing policy, increased housing delivery and the availability of residentially zoned land are relevant considerations for the review of the County Development Plan. The Strategic Issues Paper stage is intended to inform high-level strategic direction, including the approach to housing growth and the Core Strategy framework. Detailed matters relating to the quantum and location of zoned residential lands will be addressed through the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan, informed by updated housing growth requirements, settlement capacity assessments, infrastructure provision and environmental considerations. The submission is noted and will inform the ongoing preparation of the Core Strategy and housing policies for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-90: Downey Planning
Summary of Submission:

This submission prepared by Downey Planning focuses in particular on the settlement of Duleek, examining its current role within the County's settlement hierarchy and exploring how it can contribute more effectively to meeting Meath's future housing and growth requirements within a sustainable, plan-led framework. This submission predominantly addresses the Core Strategy and Settlements and Housing as well as raising the following observations:

National Planning Context

The submission refers to the recent publication of Section 28 Guidelines on Housing Growth Targets, published in the NPF Implementation Guidelines (July 2025), outlining Meath's new annual new housing growth requirement of 2,942 + 50% additional provision new homes per annum to 2034. A substantial increase on the previously adopted target of 1,090 units per annum.

The submission expresses that these numerical targets do not fully capture the reality of historic under-delivery and the resulting demand that has accumulated across the region. The submission contends the headline figures do not reflect the 'real' level of housing need that exists on the ground, expressing that it is their view that addressing this deficit requires not only more housing, but housing located in settlements with existing infrastructural capacity, strong connectivity, and the ability to achieve the critical mass necessary to function as self-sustaining, resilient communities.

The submission requests for the forthcoming Meath County Development Plan to identify the right settlements, those with established infrastructure, available services, strong accessibility, and a clear role within the regional hierarchy, to accommodate a meaningful share of the county's increased housing requirements.

Duleek Settlement Context

The submission outlines Duleek's position within the settlement hierarchy of Meath as a Self-Sustaining Town that has experienced continuous expansion in population growth with a recorded population of 4,899 residents in 2022 compared to 3,988 in 2011. Notably, this 2022 population already exceeded the Development Plan's Projected 2027 population of 4,719, meaning that the town surpassed its forward projection five years ahead of schedule, representing an ongoing demand for housing within the settlement of Duleek.

The submission asserts that Duleek's strategic location, its established residential neighbourhoods, and its recognised role within the County's settlement hierarchy positions

Duleek as a settlement with clear capacity to accommodate additional sustainable, plan-led residential growth.

The submission refers to Meath's substantial demographic expansion between 2016 and 2022, growing from 195,044 to 220,826 residents, placing Meath significantly above national growth trends and reflects the intense pressure for housing delivery across the County. Furthermore, Duleek's population growth demonstrates that the settlement is absorbing a higher share of the County's overall growth and highlights the need to ensure that sufficient, appropriately zoned and serviceable residential land is available within the town. The submission request for the forthcoming Development Plan to reassess and expand upon the existing residential zoning in Duleek to ensure that growth can continue in a coordinated, sustainable, and plan-led manner.

Settlement and Housing Key Questions Answered

This submission has also given regard to the key questions raised under the Settlement and Housing section of the Strategic Issues Paper. The following addresses each of these matters in turn, demonstrating how Duleek can play a positive and appropriate role in accommodating part of Meath's future housing needs.

Regarding *where new housing should be located without contributing to urban sprawl and ensuring consolidated, sustainable growth,* the submission expresses for new housing to be focused in locations that adjoin the existing built-up area, where development can consolidate the town's form, support local services, and reinforce compact, walkable patterns of growth. Highlighting that Duleek is the most sustainable location for accommodating future residential development, where there is already an established town core and existing neighbourhoods, and where infrastructure, community facilities and transport connections are already in place.

In regard to '*issues relating to housing that should be addressed',* the submission asserts that many issues relating to housing must be addressed in Duleek to ensure that the town can continue to grow in a balanced, sustainable and plan-led manner. Again, the submission outlines the very strong population growth over recent census periods and this mismatch between population growth and available housing supply has resulted in increased pressure on the local market, limited housing choice for different household types, a constrained opportunities for younger households, first-time buyers, and those seeking to remain within the community. Addressing these issues will require the forthcoming Development Plan to ensure that an adequate pipeline of suitable located serviceable residential lands is made available.

In terms of '*what is needed to make towns or villages a more desirable place to live'* the submission outlines the need for continued population growth to be accompanied by coordinated investment in local services, community infrastructure, and sustainable transport options. The submission asserts that Duleek already benefits from a strong

residential base and a rage of amenities, but further enhancements are required to support its expanding population. Improving access to high-quality open spaces, strengthening walking and cycling connections within the town, delivering additional recreational and community facilities, and ensuring convenient access to schools, shops and employment opportunities will significantly enhance the quality of life for residents.

Regarding '*what types of homes are required to meet future demand and how should the new Plan ensure housing choice for all residents'*, the submission notes that future housing demand in Duleek will require the delivery of diverse and balanced mix of homes that reflects the settlements continued population growth. Future provision should include an appropriate blend of family-sized homes, homes for first-time buyers, medium-density units, and accommodation designed for older persons seeking to right-size while remaining within their community.

The forthcoming County Development Plan should therefore promote a flexible but clearly structured approach to housing allocation within Duleek, facilitating a mix of typologies and tenures that broaden demographic diversity and strengthen community cohesion.

The submission further emphasises the lack of remaining development capacity within the existing settlement boundary, asserting all lands currently zoned A1 – Existing Residential have been fully developed or built out, leaving no scope for further infill or intensification. Similarly, the limited areas zoned A2 – New Residential have now been substantially developed, with two of the five pockets already built out and at full capacity. As a result, there is very limited residential zoned lands available to accommodate further housing within the current Development Plan. The submission requests that the next phase of Duleek's development requires the identification of new, sequentially appropriate, and serviceable residential lands that can reinforce the town's core, support its expanding population, and ensure it continues to function effectively within the County's settlement hierarchy.

<u>Conclusion</u>

As demonstrated throughout this submission, enabling targeted residential growth within or immediately adjoining the existing village core, particularly on lands that naturally extend the settlement form, would reinforce the vitality of the village centre, broaden housing choice, and help meet the County's revised housing targets without dispersing development unsustainably into the open countryside.

DOWNEY respectfully requests that Meath County Council consider the matter raised in this submission and acknowledge the important role that Duleek can play in contributing to the County's housing needs over the lifetime of the new Development Plan.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive acknowledges the submission and notes the issues raised regarding the scale of revised national housing growth requirements and the importance of directing housing delivery to appropriate settlements. The Council agrees that the sustainable delivery of housing is best achieved in settlements with established infrastructure, services, accessibility and capacity to support long-term growth in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development principles.

The Draft County Development Plan will be informed by the updated Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, which are underpinned by revised national research and modelling that incorporates both projected demand and previously unmet housing need. The allocation of housing growth and the zoning of lands will be guided by the Core Strategy and an evidence-based assessment of settlement capacity, infrastructure provision, environmental constraints and alignment with the settlement hierarchy.

The Chief Executive acknowledges the submission and notes the detailed analysis of Duleek's recent population growth, settlement role and housing pressures. The Council recognises that Duleek has experienced strong growth and that its designation as a Self-Sustaining Town reflects its function as an important settlement that provides housing, services and community infrastructure for its catchment.

The issues raised regarding compact growth, consolidation of the existing urban footprint, housing supply, and the need to align population growth with services and infrastructure are noted and are consistent with national and regional planning policy objectives. The Draft County Development Plan will consider how settlements such as Duleek can contribute appropriately to meeting future housing needs, having regard to revised national housing growth requirements, the settlement hierarchy, and principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Decisions regarding the scale and location of future residential zoning will be informed by sequential development considerations.

The importance of providing a range of housing types and tenures to meet the needs of different household groups, including families, first-time buyers and older persons, is recognised and guidance on this will be set out in the Development Management chapter of the plan.

The Council further acknowledges that, having regard to recent development activity, the capacity of existing residentially zoned lands within Duleek is limited and that longer-term growth requirements will need to be considered as part of the Development Plan review. The Draft County Development Plan will address these matters through the Core Strategy and Housing Strategy, informed by evidence-based assessments of settlement capacity,

infrastructure provision, environmental constraints and the principles of compact and sequential development.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-91: Dave Anderson (Navan Cycling Initiative)

Summary of Submission:

This submission received from Navan Cycling Initiative (NCI) welcomes the opportunity to submit observations on the Pre-Draft County Development Plan, expressing their core concern is that successive Development Plans have been characterised by aspirational targets that lack clear, measurable, and binding implementation plans, resulting in a near - stagnation of active travel delivery over the past decade. NCI seeks the new plan to represent a step-change in delivery, moving from vague policy objectives to specific, funded, and fast-tracked projects with enforceable standards. NCI require concrete plans that define who, how and when active travel infrastructure will be delivered.

The submission makes the following observations and recommendations under the following headings:

Binding Climate and Modal Share Mandates

The submission refers to the climate and modal share mandates outlining that the previous development plan acknowledged that current transport trends are unsustainable and that this acknowledgment was not translated into binding mechanisms. NCI have suggested the following proposals for binding mandates:

1. The plan must adopt legally binding modal share targets for cycling and walking, specifically for the County's Decarbonisation Zones, and link them directly to measurable emissions reduction targets.
2. Transport planning must integrate directly with the County's Carbon Budget. Every major transport investment (including road improvements) must be assessed against its contribution to meeting or exceeding emissions reduction targets.
3. The Council must commit to annual, transparent public reporting on active travel progress, carbon emissions from transport, and modal shift. The Plan must specify an enforcement mechanism and recourse (e.g. immediate ring-fencing of future road investment funds to active travel) should binding targets be missed.

Accelerated & Enforceable Delivery Mechanisms

The submission expresses concern over the pace of delivery of active travel measures, contending the Greater Dublin Area Strategy was published in 2013, yet Meath continues to deliver at a glacial pace. NCI asserts the reliance on the Part 8 process for all active travel

schemes has proven to be an insurmountable hurdle to timely delivery, and have therefore suggested the following proposals for accelerating delivery:

1. The Plan must acknowledge that the NTA's typical timeline of 48 months for active travel schemes renders the transitional Part 8 process functionally incompatible with the five-year duration of the Development Plan. Meath must therefore transition from using Part 8 as the default delivery mechanism to a model based on fast-track implementation.
2. The Plan must commit to alternative, rapid delivery methods for all local active travel schemes (e.g. Rapid Build Schemes, Temporary/Pilot Schemes, and Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act)
3. Commit to the immediate establishment of a dedication Active Travel Delivery Unit with sufficient engineering and planning resources to manage multiple Section 38 and rapid-build projects simultaneously – fully separated from road or other projects.
4. The Plan must identify mechanisms to safeguard agreed and funded active travel projects from being unduly delayed or vetoed during the public consultation phase, ensuring continuity of delivery over the Plan's lifetime.
5. Explicitly commit to adhering to the National Infrastructure Fund for Transport Infrastructure (NIFTI), ensuring that the maintenance, remediation, and upgrading of existing active travel infrastructure (e.g., fixing non-standard infrastructure, providing dipped kerbs, improving junction designs to accommodate cycle terns) is prioritised and funded above new, non-strategic road projects.

<u>Regulatory Enforcement & Design Accountability</u>

The submission expresses that poor quality, inconsistent, or incomplete active travel infrastructure is a primary barrier to modal shift, asserting this is most evident in new development and that current process fails to ensure that private developments adhere to national design standards. NCI suggests the following proposals for enforcement:

1. The Plan must enforce a zero-tolerance policy on non-adherence to the National Cycle Manual and other Active Travel design standards in all new housing and commercial schemes. Any planning application that lacks complete, standard, and integrated active travel infrastructure must be refused until amendments are made.
2. To compensate for a documented lack of speed and parking enforcement, the plan must mandate that all town and village road designs be 'self-enforcing'. This includes the mandatory adoption of 30kph speed limit byelaws in all urban zoned and the use of physical measures (e.g. bollards, planters, integrated cycle lands) to prevent illegal parking in cycle lanes and on footpaths

<u>User Experience & All-Weather Infrastructure</u>

The submission expresses that the current infrastructure fails to protect users from the elements or secure their bicycles, and has suggested the following proposals for user experience:

1. Mandate the immediate provision of secure, weatherproof bicycle parking in all town and village centres within all Decarbonisation Zones, to be delivered alongside any new public realm investment.
2. Commit to a policy of providing bus shelters with sufficient capacity for target usage, ensuring that commuters are not left standing in the rain, which is a significant deterrent to public transport use.

Strategic Project Focus: The Boyne Greenway as a Catalyst

NCI believes that the delivery of the Boyne Greenway should be the number one priority for the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033, expressing that it is the key to unlocking the full potential of the Boyne Valley region and the catalyst to making this area the number one destination to visit in Ireland. Connecting world heritage site of Bru na Boinne, Battle of the Boyne Visitor centre, Slane Bridge and Castle, Donaghmore, Bective Abbey, Trim Castle and the towns of Drogheda, Slane, Navan and Trim.

The submission also refers to a number of other existing plans, in various stages of development:

- The Pathfinder Navan-Trim scheme is shovel-ready and needs to be completed.
- The Boyne Greenway Navan-Trim-Royal Canal Greenway, and
- The Boyne Greenway Drogheda – Mornington.

NCI encourages Meath County Council to urgently prioritise the delivery of the full Boyne Greenway route from Drogheda to Trim, and further connections to Mornington and Longwood.

Key Projects Acceleration: Navan Rail Link

1. The Plan must commit to all steps within the Councils power to expedite the Navan Rail Link. Crucially, the Plan must treat the Rail Link as the Spine of the sustainable transport network, mandating the simultaneous delivery of high-quality, segregated active travel corridors linking population centres directly to the new stations.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive recognises the importance of the Navan Cycling Initiative for promoting and encouraging cycling in Navan. The observations and recommendations submitted are responded to under the accompanying headings as per the submitted submission.

Binding Climate and Modal Share Mandates

The Written Statements of all settlements in the current County Development Plan includes a set of measurable and achievable targets for each settlement to track progress in achieving our climate change goals through the modal shift. These targets will be re-set and updated in the Draft Plan.

National and regional transport policy recognises that current transport trends in Ireland and the Greater Dublin Area, in particular with regard to levels of car use, are unsustainable. A transition towards more sustainable modes of transport is essential to reduce Ireland's carbon emissions and reach the Government's goal of an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. The Draft Plan will continue to support these policies and implement these measures throughout the course of the CDP which will assist in achieving climate change targets. The Draft Pan will promote the need for a shift to more sustainable travel choices by designing our built environments in a way that prioritises the most carbon efficient modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

In regards to annual public reporting on active travel progress, carbon emissions from transport and modal shift, the Meath County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 was prepared to create a low carbon and climate resilient County. It is a strategic Goal of the Plan to increase active travel usage in town centres through improved sustainable active travel proposals and an enhanced pedestrian and public realm environment (BET1 6). As part of the Climate Action Plan the Council will provide annual progress reports via the Council's website regarding the progress in delivering effective climate action.

Accelerated and Enforceable Delivery Mechanisms

Meath County Council's Active Travel Department is focused on providing key connections through existing developments to improve permeability for walking, cycling and access to public transport. Significant active travel measures have transformed many of our settlements, including Ashbourne, with the development of a cycle network along the R135 connecting the Pilo Roundabout to the Ninemile Stone Roundabout. The works introduced cycle lanes in both directions and increased the existing footpath widths on both sides of the road, making it more pedestrian and cyclists friendly. In addition to Ashbourne, initiatives such as Martha's Bridge to Circular Road Cycle and Pedestrian Scheme, funded by NTA and is part of the Navan Cycle Network. This project is progressing with the following works completed to date, a new concrete footpath has been constructed from the Circular Road Junction to the Academy Street Junction on the eastern side of the R147, installation of ducting, public lighting columns and cabling: and, excavation of the existing footpath between the Academy Street Junction and the Martha's Bridge Junction on the eastern side of the R147 is ongoing. The Draft Plan will continue to support these policies and implement these measures throughout the course of the CDP.

The Part 8 planning process is how local authorities obtain permission for their own public development, including active travel measures being carried out on public roads. This procedure is carried out in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2025. The statutory timeframe for the Part 8 process is maximum 20 weeks; from the day the notice of the proposed development is published to the day the Elected members decide to proceed / not to proceed with the proposed development. There are mandatory steps involved in this process, from public display and consultation stage, to reviewing any submission received on the proposed development and preparing a Chief Executives report for the Elected Members to review before making a formal decision on the proposed development.

A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing factor for travel demand. Meath County Council's aims to provide safe, efficient and accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims, and this will be reflected in the Draft Plan.

Regarding the commitment to adhering to the National Infrastructure Fund for Transport Infrastructure (NIFTI), Meath County Council plays a key role in facilitating and implementing sustainable transportation through its infrastructure and land-use policies in the County Development Plan and subsequent delivery of its Capital Programme. The Meath Capital Programme is a three-year rolling programme that identifies infrastructure projects that include new and upgraded roads, footpaths, cycle routes and public transport facilities. All of the projects that make up the Capital Programme are derived from the transport and movement policies within the current Plan, as well as regional and national policy objectives, including NTA's GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042 and the National Planning Framework (NPF).

Regulatory Enforcement & Design Accountability

In relation to concerns raised regarding the completion and quality of active travel infrastructure being delivered in new developments is noted. Chapter 11 of the current County Development Plan sets out a number of development management standards which are applied in the assessment of planning applications to ensure that development takes place in a orderly manner. When assessing a planning application several other principal documents are taken into consideration including Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement

Guidelines as well as this all applications are referred to the Councils Transportation and Active Travel Department for referrals.

In relation to speed limits within towns and villages, Meath County Council will continue to liaise with TII and the Department of Transport regarding the revision of speed limits in the County.

User experience and All weather infrastructure.

It is currently a policy of the current plan to require that adequate facilities for the secure parking of bicycles be provided at convenient locations (MOV POL 21). This policy will be reviewed in accordance with national and regional policy on the provision of secure, weatherproof bicycle parking.

The current plan also includes objective MOV OBJ 12, which seeks to identify deficits in bus infrastructure and develop a priority list as a basis to secure funding for improvement works, including the provision of bus shelters, bus stops and travel information at stops.

Strategic Project Focus: The Boyne Greenway

The suggestions raised seeking the County Development Plan to prioritise the development of the Boyne Greenway is noted. The Council has successfully rolled out several greenway programmes in the County with the success of the Boyne to Lakelands Greenway. Background works are ongoing regarding the Navan to Oldbridge portion of the Boyne Greenway, with the preferred route published for consultation in December 2023. Work is currently ongoing on preparing the Preliminary Design and the Council are continuing to liaise with relevant stakeholders. The Draft Plan will continue to support the development of a network of Greenways in the County in accordance with national and regional policy.

In relation to the other existing plan mentioned in this submission the following should be noted.

- The Pathfinder Navan-Trim scheme, Meath County Council is very much committed to the delivery of this scheme and acknowledges the benefits this scheme will deliver in improving connectivity between Navan and Trim for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as encouraging active travel as a mode of transport. Unfortunately, the delivery of this scheme has experienced constraints with regards to funding.

- The Boyne Greenway Navan-Trim-Royal Canal Greenway, refers to a planned route along the River Boyne, designed to connect Drogheda to Slane, Navan, and Trim. As mentioned above background works are ongoing regarding the Navan to Oldbridge portion of the Boyne Greenway, with a view to submitting a planning application by Q4 2026. The portion to connect to Trim will be addressed at a future phase.

- The Boyne Greenway Drogheda – Mornington, the proposed cycle and pedestrian way is part of the overall plan for the Boyne Greenway with proposals to link Mornington with

the existing greenway from Drogheda to Oldbridge, then onto Navan and Trim. It is an existing objective in the County Development Plan to support the development of the Boyne Greenway from Mornington to Drogheda in conjunction with the NTA, Failte Ireland and all relevant stakeholders, subject to obtaining all relevant assessments and consents' (BLMD OBJ 11). Meath County Council applied for planning permission to An Bord Pleanála (now renamed An Coimisiún Pleanála) in 2020 for the Mornington Drogheda section of the greenway, unfortunately the application was refused in August 2023. The Council remain committed to obtaining all relevant assessments and consents in order to support the development of the Boyne Greenway.

Navan Rail Link

The comments made in relation to the Navan Rail Line are also noted. Meath County Council, recognises the strategic importance of the Navan Rail Line and is continuing to liaise with Iarnród Éireann and NTA as the project proceeds through the planning and design phases. Consultants have been appointed as a multidisciplinary design team for Phases 1 and 2 of the Navan Rail Line Project, and works are currently underway on the route option selection. The Draft Plan will continue to support the proposed Navan Rail Line Study and the delivery of the Navan Railway Line.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-92: KPMG Future Analytics on behalf of Mr. Michael Ryan
Summary of Submission:

Submission made by KPMG Future Analytics, Chartered Planning and Development Consultants on behalf of Mr. Michael Ryan discussing key themes such as 1) Settlement and Housing 2) Employment Economic 3) Transport & Movement, and 4) Community Services.

The submission describes the current built environment of Ratoath, a self-sustaining town, outlining its established residential neighbourhoods and its range of social and cultural facilities. The submission further outlines the towns strong connections to neighbouring settlements via a strong network of regional roads and bus services.

The submission refers to the First Revision of the National Planning Framework (Revised NPF) published in April 2025 and outlines the increased population targets requiring an associated increase in national annual housing output to approximately 50,000 homes per annum to 2040. Further to this, the submission also refers to the recently published Section 28 Guidelines issued on 29th July 2025 (NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements) which outline the new housing growth allocations for each county and have allocated a new Annual New Housing Growth Requirement of 2,942 + 50% additional provision for County Meath to 2034. The submission highlights that the current core strategy housing allocation of Ratoath will be required to be updated on foot of the revised targets.

The submission highlights the following policy and text from the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied;

It is the policy of the council to ensure Ratoath develops in a consolidated and sustainable manner, which facilitates and supports employment opportunities, accommodates local services, and reinforces the existing town centre (RA POL 1).

Volume 2, Section 5.1 Settlement and Housing states that *'Meath County Council obtained funding, through the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF), to deliver a portion of the Ratoath Outer Relief Road which will facilitate the development of lands to the east of town. Any further phases of the development shall include the construction of the adjoining section of the Ratoath Outer Relief Road…….'*

RATH OBJ 1 *(Master Plan 33): To ensure the provision of appropriate and sustainable employment, visitor and tourist facilities on lands zoned as Tourism and White Land in accordance with an approved Master Plan which shall be agreed with the Executive of the Planning Authority and shall accompany any planning application on the lands subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure….'*

The submission request is aimed towards sustainable expansion of Ratoath and with its position proximate to MP33 and MP34, the subject lands with such economic potential,

have an important role to play in the delivery of a thriving and connected community. In conclusion, the author welcomes the opportunity to discuss the review of the current Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, and to envision the plans for Ratoath in the forthcoming County Development Plan for the Period 2027-2033, aligning with the latest national and local statutory policy frameworks and looks forward to engaging on the next stages for the preparation of the new development plan

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive acknowledges the submission and notes the issues raised in relation to the future development of Ratoath, including housing growth, employment provision, transport infrastructure and community services. The submission's reference to Ratoath's designation as a Self-Sustaining Town and to relevant policies and objectives in the existing Development Plan is noted.

The Council recognises that the revised National Planning Framework and the Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines represent a significant shift in national housing policy and will inform the review of the Core Strategy and settlement-level housing allocations as part of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The role of settlements such as Ratoath in accommodating an appropriate share of future population and housing growth will be considered having regard to their function within the settlement hierarchy, infrastructure capacity, employment base and alignment with national and regional policy.

In relation to masterplans, there are 38 masterplan designations in the current CDP. Each of these designations will be reviewed in the Draft Plan and a Masterplan designation will be applied to certain landbanks if deemed appropriate and required to facilitate the integrated development of a land parcel. Meath County Council will continue to engage and work closely with landowners whose lands are subject to an existing masterplan designation.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-93: The Land Development Agency

Summary of Submission:

The Land Development Agency (LDA) welcomes the opportunity to provide observations as part of the public consultation. The LDA outlines its two main functions in

- Coordinating appropriate state lands for regeneration and development, opening key sites which are not being used effectively for housing delivery, and
- Driving strategic land assembly, working with both public and private sector landowners to smooth out peaks and troughs of land supply, stabilising land values and delivering increased affordability.

The submission anticipates that a significant proportion of future housing delivery will occur through larger-scale regenerative projects within existing urban centres. The Draft Development Plan should therefore ensure that its policies and objectives explicitly support and enable such projects, recognising their strategic importance to achieving sustainable urban consolidation and housing supply targets.

The submission refers to the Register of Relevant Lands and the Report on Relevant Public Land, prepared by the LDA, in facilitating the identification and assessment of the development potential of public lands for the provision of affordable housing, both now and in the future. These tools are integral to ensuring a coordinated, evidence-based approach to utilising State-owned lands for housing delivery. The second report on Relevant Public Lands 2025 published in March 2025 identified Navan Bus Deport as having the potential to deliver 70-110 homes within the County. Given the potential to deliver new affordable and social homes within Meath, it is recommended that the Draft Development Plan includes a specific objective to facilitate collaboration between the Council and the LDA in delivering sustainable housing and regeneration projects across the County.

Suggested Policy for inclusion:

'To support and collaborate the Land Development Agency in the identification, assembly, and development of appropriate lands, including State lands, for the delivery of housing and mixed-use development in accordance with the principles of compact growth, regeneration, and sustainable development.'

This policy objective will reflect the LDA's statutory remit under the Land Development Agency Act 2021 and the intention of the LDA to work actively and collaboratively with Meath County Council in the delivery of homes.

The LDA also outlines its commitment to delivering high quality affordable and social homes at scale. Cost Rental represents a new and sustainable form of tenure, established under the Affordable Housing Act 2021 and supported by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. It is therefore, recommended that the Cost Rental tenure be explicitly recognised and supported within the housing policies and objective of the Draft Development Plan, ensuring it is embedded as a viable and sustainable housing option within the County's tenure mix.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive notes and welcomes the submission from the Land Development Agency (LDA) and acknowledges its statutory role in coordinating State lands for regeneration and development, strategic land assembly, and the delivery of social and affordable housing at scale.

The submission's emphasis on the importance of large-scale regeneration projects within existing urban centres, the efficient utilisation of public lands, and the contribution of such projects to compact growth and sustainable urban development is noted. The Register of

relevant Lands and the Report on Relevant Public Lands prepared by the LDA are also acknowledged as important evidence-based tools to inform the identification and assessment of lands with potential to contribute to future housing delivery. Meath County Council notes that the Draft County Development Plan will be prepared in alignment with national planning policy, including the National Planning Framework, the Government's housing policy Delivering Homes, Building Communities, and relevant Ministerial Guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, including those relating to housing supply, compact growth, regeneration and the effective use of State lands. The Council also notes the LDA's suggestion regarding the inclusion of a specific policy to support collaboration in the identification, assembly and development of appropriate lands for housing delivery. Such a policy is considered reasonable to include and the Chief Executive looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the LDA on the delivery of homes and communities in Meath. Meath County Council further notes the submission on the delivery of social and affordable housing, including Cost Rental tenure, and confirms that the County Development Plan will include appropriate policies and objectives to support a range of housing tenures in accordance with national policy and legislative requirements. Collaboration with the LDA and other relevant public bodies in the delivery of sustainable housing and regeneration projects will be wholly supported in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-94: Brock McClure Planning and Development Consultants on behalf of John Connaughton Limited and Carroll Estates

Summary of Submission:

In summary, this submission supports increased housing provision in Dunboyne, with a particular focus on potential developments benefiting from high-quality public transport.

Key Points of this submission include:

- Dunboyne is located in the Dublin Metropolitan Area and is proposed to be served by high-capacity/high-frequency public transport (DART+ West) with 2 stations located in the town: Dunboyne Station and M3 Parkway Station.

- Dunboyne is well serviced by a range of retail and commercial services, as well as a number of educational and community facilities (schools, library, community centre, etc) within easy reach of the site.

- The revised and updated NPF takes account of changes that have occurred since it was published in 2018 and builds on the framework that is in place. The revised Framework sets out that in the period between 2022 and 2040, it is expected that there will be roughly an extra one million people living in our country. The updated projection is that

the population of Ireland will increase to approximately 5.7 million by 2030 and 6.3 million people by 2040. This population growth will require new jobs and new homes

- The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 projects an approx. 3,023 persons increase annually between 2016 – 2027. The latest Census Data (2022) shows that the population has increased by an average of 4,297 persons annually. This is a significant difference from what has been projected by the Council in their Development Plan and Core Strategy.

- The majority of lands zoned for 'A2 - New Residential' development in The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 benefit from a granted or live planning application, thus can be considered to already be 'activated'.

- Significant transport infrastructure improving Dunboyne's connectivity and allowing its further growth has been permitted:

    - the Dunboyne Eastern Distributor Road permitted under Reg. Ref. 24/60063
    - DART+ West (ABP NA29S.314232 DART+ West) - planned high-capacity public transport nodes or interchanges Dunboyne Station and M3 Parkway Station.

This submission refers to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, more specifically Settlement Strategy Objective SH OBJ 9, which states *"To develop Navan and the Southern Environs of Drogheda as the primary development centres in Meath and to continue to promote Dunboyne as a key settlement in the Metropolitan Area of Dublin. The long-term growth of these settlements shall be based on principles of balanced and sustainable development that support a compact urban form and the integration of land use and transport."*

The author makes reference to the population figures for County Meath outlining that the population projection for County Meath is 227,500 in 2026 and 231,500 in 2031. The Core strategy of the Meath Development Plan sets household allocation 2021-2027 for Dunboyne as 2,002 units to accommodate for projected population 2027 of 10,572. The submission outlines that Dunboyne is a strategically important settlement in Meath as it has an important centre for economic growth in the County due to its location in the Dublin Metropolitan Area and along a multi-modal corridor. It is an objective of this plan to continue to attract high-quality investment to the town. In addition, there is capacity for the town to accommodate significant population growth.

The submission provides an overview of development in Dunboyne expressing that census 2022 shows that the population of Dunboyne did not increase in the period 2016-2022 despite the increase experienced across the Country. However, there are a significant

number of units in the pipeline with the majority of lands zoned A2 – new residential development having a decided planning application.

Dunboyne also has significant public transport infrastructure with the DART+ West Railway Order having authorised CIE to carry out railway works to enable construction of the railway along an approximate 40km section of the existing railway line between Dublin City Centre and M3 Parkway Station. This key piece of infrastructure will provide a sustainable and more frequent rail services, improving capacity and frequency from M3 Parkway to city centre.

It is submitted that a potential of lands zoned for residential development in the Meath County Council Development Plan 2021-2027 have been reached and all key lands benefit from a valid planning permission. Housing projection as set in Core Strategy of the Meath County Council Development Plan 2021-2027 has been met with existing permissions. Furthermore, significant transport infrastructure projects have been permitted allowing further expansion of Dunboyne. It is imperative that the Council consider how best to ensure efficient use of the investment in such projects

The submission makes the following observations on the Issues Papers Themes.

Theme: Settlement and Housing

The population of Meath has increased by 13% from the 2016 to 2022 census showing the constant and growing need for housing. The submission nots that the Dart+ West Project upgrading Dunboyne Train Station to a high frequency and high-capacity public transport node within a Dublin Metropolitan Area and therefore, under the provisions of the Sustainable Residential and Compact Settlements Guidelines, suitably intense residential development shall be brought forward on the most suitable located sites in Dunboyne.

Theme: Transportation and Movement

Highlights that the provision of adequate infrastructure is critical to facilitate and sustain growth and recommends that the Draft Development Plan includes policies and objectives to deliver compact growth and higher density residential development alongside new road and public transport infrastructure.

Theme: Community Services

Outlines that the creation of healthy, socially inclusive communities will be a cross-cutting theme of the Development Plan. The submission highlights that a significant number of residential units has been permitted in the recent years. The future population of Dunboyne will increase demand on social infrastructure, particularly on local schools. Both primary and secondary schools in the area will be able to serve growing population in short term and medium term, however, new schools will be required in long term. Identification of suitable locations for new schools in Dunboyne forms an objective of the current Development Plan.

The submission also recommends the inclusion of delivery of the Greenway along Tolka River.

Chief Executive Response

Settlement and Housing:

Meath County Council notes the significant population growth across the county, together with the role of high-quality public transport investment, including the DART+ West Project, which is impacting Dunboyne.

In relation to the author's comment on most of the A2 – New Residential lands from the current County Development Plan being activated, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit determines serviced and serviceable lands across the county that could accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

Transportation and Movement

In relation to transport and movement, the comments are noted and the Council recognises Dunboyne's strategic location within the MASP. The Council also recognises the existing availability of high-quality public transport mentioned in the submission, resulting in Dunboyne having a high level of accessibility, which is suitable for compact, transport-oriented residential development in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks. Whilst operational management of the train services remains a matter for the NTA and the various operators, Meath County Council continues to work with these stakeholders to ensure an efficient and effective public transport network is achieved and the Draft Plan will include specific objectives in this regard.

The Council also recognises the importance of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in maximising the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure spaces in close proximity to high-quality transport services. Two settlements have been identified as strategic locations for TOD, with sites in Drogheda and Dunboyne selected. The Draft Plan will include policies and objectives in support of rail-focused development consolidation.

Community Services:

In relation to community services, a Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective. As part of the Social Infrastructure Audit, engagement is required with the Department of Education and the Meath Childcare Committee to obtain up-to-date data on pupil numbers and capacity within schools and childcare facilities.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-95: Armstrong Fenton Associates on behalf of Glimmershore Ltd.

Summary of Submission:

This submission is made by Armstrong Fenton on behalf of their client Glimmershore Ltd. Reference is made to 'Self Sustaining Towns', specifically the settlement of Enfield.

The submission acknowledges the recently published Section 28 Guidelines "NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements", highlighting the guidelines' urgency for planning authorities to commence the process of revising and varying the development plan against the policies and objectives of these guidelines as quickly as possible.

Reference is also made to Section 11.5.3 "Density" of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, acknowledging that the number of units to be provided on a site should be determined with reference to the "Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines".

The submission also observes that DM OBJ 14 of the Meath Development Plan states that densities in Large Towns under the "suburban/Urban Extension" Growth Towns category should be between 30 and 50 units per hectare.

The author's opinion is that many rural towns are currently struggling to sustain traditional town centre/retail/commercial uses, with varying levels of vacancy. Enfield is a small town with high-order retail/service provision available in larger towns such as Kilcock, Maynooth and further afield at Liffey Valley.

Chief Executive Response

The Council notes the issues raised in this submission and wishes to highlight that Variation 3 to the current County Development Plan 2021-2027, adopted on the January 27, 2025, integrated the Section 28 Guidelines, 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities'. These Guidelines identified appropriate density ranges, including for Key Towns and Large Towns with populations exceeding 5,000. The population of Enfield in the last census was 3,663. This would put Enfield in the

category of Small and Medium-sized Towns (1,500-5,000 population). The density within this category is identified as between 25-40 units per hectare on the town edge; however, town centre densities need to respond to the existing scale, form and character of existing development and to the capacity of services and infrastructure.

To address vacancy in rural towns such as Enfield, a town regeneration team has been established within the Council to revitalise town centres by tackling vacancy, improving public spaces, boosting local economies, and enhancing community life. Enfield has been a key focus of this team since its establishment, and a Town Centre First Plan, which is a community-led, non-statutory plan prepared by Meath County Council focusing on improving public spaces and making the town a more vibrant hub for living, working, and socializing, using a series of identified projects to attract funding and development.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-96: Irish Concrete Federation

Summary of Submission:

The Irish Concrete Federation (ICF) is the national representative organisation for the Irish aggregates and concrete products manufacturing industry. The ICF welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033 Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper. ICF requests that, in developing its new County Development Plan, Meath County Council considers the findings of ICF's recent (May 2025) publication "*Essential Aggregates – An Evidence-Based Assessment to Inform Ireland's Planning Policy*" which is attached to this submission.

ICF commissioned RPS Consulting to examine the current replenishment rates of authorised aggregate reserves in Ireland, to determine the current timeframes for planning decisions and to make recommendations on appropriate measures within the planning system.

The key findings of this evidence-based report are as follows:

- The successful delivery of national strategic plans such as 'Project Ireland 2040' and 'Housing for All' is highly dependent on a reliable supply of high-quality aggregates.
- Ireland will need approximately one billion tonnes of aggregates to satisfy demand out to 2040.
- Over the past eight years (2017-2024) the 'replenishment' of aggregate reserves nationally has been running behind annual consumption. On average, only 61% of the annual consumption has been replenished by means of new planning authorisations.
- At current levels of land area authorisation, the replenishment rate of authorised aggregates will fall to 52% over the 2025 – 2040 period as demand for aggregates increases due to Ireland's growing population.
- Planning permission has been refused for over half the volume (56%) of aggregate extraction for which authorisation was sought over the 2017 – 2024 period within the Greater Dublin Area (Dublin, Kildare, Meath and Wicklow).

- At current levels of land area authorisation, the replenishment rate of authorised aggregates will be 24% over the 2025 – 2040 period in the Greater Dublin Area.
- From 2017-2024, the average total decision-making time for quarry planning applications which were appealed to An Bord Pleanála was 91 weeks (almost 23 months). By 2023, decision making timeframes for these cases had increased to 146 weeks.

ICF is currently engaging with Government on the need for a National Policy Statement to facilitate the long-term sustainable supply of essential aggregates, which can be implemented at regional and local planning level.

The submission emphasises that planning policy for aggregates must reflect the following:

i. Aggregate materials (stone, sand and gravel) are a strategic national resource, essential for the future development of Ireland and fundamental to meeting societal needs.
ii. The targets and objectives of 'Housing for All', 'Project Ireland 2040' and the 'Climate Action Plan' will require an adequate and steady supply of aggregates over the long term.
iii. Addressing Ireland's significant infrastructure deficits in the areas of housing, health, transport, and electricity will depend on the provision of a stable supply of aggregates of the required quality.
iv. Aggregates being natural products derived from stone, sand and gravel, by their nature can only be accessed where they occur and that the location of an aggregates deposit, together with its size and quality, is fundamentally determined by geology - if there are no workable resources there can clearly be no production.
v. Access to a steady and dependable supply of local, high-quality aggregates is essential to reducing construction costs and carbon transport emissions.
vi. Securing supplies of raw materials will necessitate a proactive national approach to safeguarding access to aggregate reserves as competing pressures on land use will make it increasingly difficult to find suitable extraction locations.
vii. Important reserves of aggregates must be identified and protected from development that might prejudice their utilisation.
viii. Increasing the levels of secondary (recycled) aggregates used in Ireland will eventually help to reduce demand for virgin aggregates, but this will take time and is unlikely to meet a significant proportion of demand in the short term.
ix. Our island status, without multiple neighbours sharing a common network of roads, railways, rivers and canals, limits cross-border flows and makes security of supply a critical issue.

x. The planning system needs to ensure that the replenishment rate of authorised aggregate reserves is sufficient to provide a stable supply of aggregates of the required quality.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive acknowledges the submission and recognises that high-quality aggregates, including stone, sand and gravel, are a strategic natural resource essential to the delivery of housing, infrastructure and wider economic development. The Council notes that County Meath hosts a significant number of active quarries and plays an important role in supplying aggregates to the Greater Dublin Area and beyond. In this context, the findings regarding the rate of replenishment of authorised aggregate reserves are noted.

The Council acknowledges that the planning system has a role in facilitating the sustainable extraction of aggregates; however, planning applications for aggregate extraction are inherently environmentally sensitive and must be rigorously assessed in accordance with planning legislation, environmental law and national and EU policy, including Environmental Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and the protection of residential amenity, water resources, landscape and biodiversity. Demand for aggregates cannot override these statutory obligations.

It is noted that local planning authorities are required to determine applications within strict statutory timeframes. Delays in the overall consenting process have historically arisen primarily at appeal and judicial review stages. In this regard, the Council notes that recent legislative reforms under the Planning and Development Act 2024 are intended to streamline appeal procedures and judicial review processes, which should contribute to reduced delays in securing planning permissions. Notwithstanding these constraints, the Council recognises the importance of procedural efficiency. The Council will continue to encourage robust pre-planning engagement to clearly identify planning, environmental and technical requirements at an early stage, thereby reducing the likelihood of further information requests and facilitating more efficient progression of applications through the planning process, while maintaining full compliance with statutory and environmental requirements.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-97: Armstrong Fenton Associates on behalf of DSPL Limited

Summary of Submission:

This submission is made by Armstrong Fenton on behalf of their client DSPL Ltd.

The submission notes that the current CDP's written statement for Navan contains objectives to prepare "Master Plans", the purpose of which is to ensure an integrated approach is taken to the phasing, management, and development of lands within the Master Plan Area. The CDP states that a planning application will not be considered in the

absence of the Master Plan being agreed in writing with the Executive of the Planning Authority

The submission refers to the following national policy;

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) which identifies Navan as a Key Town and is described in the RSES as a '*large economically active service and/or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres*' and "*given their historic significance and performance as settlements within a regional context, have potential to accommodate commensurate levels of population and employment growth, facilitated by their location on high quality public transport corridors and aligned with requisite investment in services, amenities and sustainable transport'.*

The submission acknowledges the recently published Section 28 Guidelines "NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements" highlighting the guidelines urgency for planning authorities to commence the process of revising and varying the development plan against the policies and objectives of these guidelines as quickly as possible.

Reference is also made to Section 11.5.3 "Density" of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, acknowledging that the number of units to be provided on a site should be determined with reference to the "Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guideline". The Submission also observes that DM OBJ 14 of the Meath Development Plan states that densities in Large Towns under the category of "suburban/Urban Extension" Growth Towns should be encouraged to be between 30-50 units per hectare.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission made by Armstrong Fenton on behalf of DSPL Ltd in respect of the settlement strategy and housing provisions for Navan, including the role of Masterplan areas in facilitating coordinated residential development.

The Council notes the references to the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), which identifies Navan as a Key Town and recognises its strategic role as a county town, major service centre and employment hub, with capacity to accommodate significant population and housing growth.

The submissions reference to the Section 28 Guidelines on NPF Housing Requirements is noted. The Draft County Development Plan will be prepared in alignment with the National Planning Framework, the RSES and relevant Ministerial Guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, including those relating to housing supply, compact growth, density and sustainable settlement patterns.

In this regard, Meath County Council notes that the spatial distribution of housing growth and the identification of lands to accommodate future residential development will be informed by the Core Strategy and the Settlement Capacity Audit. The Settlement Capacity Audit determines serviced and serviceable lands within Navan that could accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning of Navan and the rest of the county.

The Council further notes the submission's reference to density standards and the existing County Development Plan provisions for Large Towns and suburban/ urban extensions areas. Appropriate residential densities will continue to be guided by national policy, including the Sustainable Residential Development and the updated Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, which seeks to prioritise the delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of existing settlements through infill and brownfield development, the re-use of vacant and underutilised lands, and the promotion of compact and sequential growth patterns. National Policy Objective 7 seeks the delivery of at least 40% of new homes within the existing built-up areas. The Draft County Development Plan will be prepared in alignment with national policy requirements and will seek to ensure that housing delivery is directed at appropriate locations.

In addition, the Draft County Development Plan will include a review of the existing housing policies, including Policy SH POL 2 which promotes the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced lands through the prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference to the edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl. The Draft County Development Plan will build on this policy approach and will continue to support compact growth.

The matters relating to detailed zoning, density and phasing of the individual masterplan are noted; however, it should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. Site specific submissions cannot be considered at pre-draft stage. Such submissions should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-98: Energia Renewables

Summary of Submission:

This submission has been received from Energia Renewables, a leading renewable energy company, emphasising the need to enable policies for renewable storage, and grid infrastructure.

The submission provides an overview of Energia, outlining the business includes:

- 16 operational wind farms (358 MW) and solar projects nationwide.
- 50 MW battery storage operational; more in planning.
- €3 billion investment program targeting 1.5 GW additional renewable capacity by 2030.
- €4.5 million invested in community benefit funds (€800,000 annually).
- Overview of current developments in County Meath.

Energia welcomes the opportunity to engage in the Pre-Draft process and emphasises this stage is crucial for the renewable energy section to set the tone to ensure that the Draft Plan will be enabling for renewables, storage and emerging technologies in line with Regional Policy.

Part 3 of the submission lists a number of strategic policy and climate obligations the Draft Plan must be framed within:

- Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Acts 2015-2021 (legally binding 51% CHG reduction by 2030; net zero by 2050).
- National Planning framework (NPF) – compact growth and sustainability objectives.
- Climate Action Plan 2025 – requiring rapid scaling of renewable deployment.
- EU REPowerEU and Renewable Energy Directive (RED) III Directives – mandating accelerated rollout of renewables and grid infrastructure.
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) – identifying Meath's role in the Dublin-Belfast corridor.

The submission notes that climate and renewable energy are raised in the Issues Paper and recommends that, upon publication of the Draft Plan, explicit targets be incorporated into the Council's aspirations for its geographical area.

Part 4 of the submission outlines Energia's review of the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper, recognising that the Core Strategy will be the backbone of the new Development Plan. In this context, the submission recommends that renewable energy delivery be explicitly incorporated into the Core Strategy, not simply as part of infrastructure provision, but as a sectoral enabler of compact growth, climate resilience, and economic development. The

submission asserts that rural areas in particular must be recognised as critical areas for energy generation alongside their role in housing and agriculture.

The submission sets out the following themes which are relevant to Energia's interests:

Infrastructure and Utilities

The submission outlines that, to enable sustainable growth and meet future needs, the Development Plan should prioritise a comprehensive infrastructure framework that integrates energy. Contending that solar energy in Meath offers one of the most immediate renewable energy opportunities. The submission seeks active encouragement and incorporation of utility-scale solar generation into the Draft Plan.

The submission also acknowledges the landscape sensitivities in Meath; however, it recommends that the Development plan must not inadvertently preclude the contribution of wind energy.

Regarding '*what measures can be made to regenerate towns and village*' the submission asserts that renewable projects can bring direct community benefits and sustain rural economies and provide the infrastructure for the people living in Meath. The submission recommends that the Draft Plan develop a landscape capacity framework for renewable energy, avoiding blanket exclusions while ensuring heritage and visual sensitivities are managed proportionately, and providing certainty about where renewable energy development should be located.

The submission emphasises that energy storage and grid reinforcement are equally critical, recommending that the Development Plan provide a policy framework to support emerging technologies such as hydrogen production, battery energy storage and synchronous condensers, which are integral to grid stability and climate delivery.

Rural Development

In relation to rural development, the submission acknowledges that County Meath is a predominantly rural county with rural areas home to a diverse range of uses ranging from agriculture and equine industries, centres of local food production, recreation and tourism, established villages and one-off rural housing. The submission recommends that this list also incorporate renewable energy generation.

Climate Change

In relation to climate change, the submission acknowledges that one of the cross-cutting themes of the Development Plan must be to incorporate a strategy for a net-zero carbon and climate-resilient society. It emphasises that the Draft Plan is not only required to be guided by the strategic policies but is also obliged to align with the principle of meeting climate goals.

Energia strongly supports the drive towards net zero and recommends that the Draft Plan commit to facilitating a measurable volume of renewable energy capacity consistent with national and EU targets.

In addition, the Council is urged to embed Just Transition principles, acknowledging that renewable energy projects can alleviate energy poverty by providing cheaper energy, through initiatives such as the SEAI's Better Energy Communities, reducing household costs, and delivering community benefit funds that directly support social and recreational infrastructure.

Conclusion

Energia welcomes the Council's recognition in the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper that this Development Plan must address the key challenges and opportunities for Meath including the unprecedented rate of population growth, economic challenges, the development of climate change and adaptation measures, sustainable mobility, and the protection and enhancement of amenity and heritage.

Energia strongly encourages Meath County Council to embrace an enabling approach to renewables and supporting grid infrastructure/technologies at this stage. By treating renewable energy as a structural element of growth and resilience, by facilitating grid and storage infrastructure, and by explicitly recognising the community and heritage protection benefits of climate action, the Development Plan can position Meath as a leader in Ireland's transition to a low-carbon, prosperous, and sustainable future.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council welcomes the submission received from Energia Renewables. The submission's reference to relevant national and regional policy frameworks, including the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Acts 2015-2021, National Planning Framework (NPF), Climate Action Plan 2025, EU REPowerEU and Renewable Energy Directive (RED) III Directives and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region, is noted.

Energia Renewables asks for explicit targets are incorporated into this draft development plan, and renewable energy delivery should be incorporated into the Core Strategy. Meath County Council wholly supports the delivery of renewable energy, as evidenced by the number of solar farms granted by the Council in recent years, and will continue to support it in the next County Development Plan. Furthermore, the importance of grid infrastructure, energy storage and emerging technologies in supporting renewable energy generation and grid stability is also noted. In this regard, the Council has recently undertaken a study to identify strategic sites for energy generation assets and potential co-location of high energy users in County Meath with the intention to locating high energy users next to renewable energy sources, thereby driving down their carbon footprint.

The Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), which applies to Meath, is currently being updated to implement the revised National Planning Framework (NPF), including how the region meets renewable energy generation targets allocated under national policy. It is planned that work in respect to the creation of a Renewable energy Strategy for the county will commence once clarity on its renewable energy targets are provided.

Meath County Council recognises the three key policy themes outlined by the author, Infrastructure and Utilities, Rural Development and Climate Change.

Infrastructure and Utilities and Rural Development.

Meath County Council acknowledge the benefits of community funds arising from renewable projects for regenerating rural economies and enhancing community infrastructure. The potential role of renewable energy generation as one of a range of appropriate rural uses is also acknowledged, subject to compatibility with rural character, agricultural activity, residential amenity and environmental constraints. These considerations will inform the preparation of rural development and renewable energy policies in the Draft County Development Plan.

Climate Change

The Chief Executive acknowledges the submission's emphasis on climate action as a cross-cutting theme of the Development Plan. The Council recognises its obligation to align the County Development Plan with national and EU climate targets and to support the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient society. The Draft Plan will seek to integrate climate mitigation and adaptation measures across all policy areas, including energy, transport, settlement strategy and infrastructure.

The submission's reference to Just Transition principles, community benefit and the potential role of renewable energy projects in supporting communities is noted. These matters will be considered in the context of national policy and guidance.

The issues raised will inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan, which will seek to balance the facilitation of renewable energy and grid infrastructure with the protection of landscape, heritage, environmental quality and residential amenity, in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-99: Armstrong Fenton Associates on behalf of Con & Patricia Giltinane

Summary of Submission:

This submission is made by Armstrong Fenton on behalf of their client Con and Patricia Giltinane. The submission acknowledges that Ashbourne is identified in the 2019-2031 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (hereafter RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region and the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, as a "Self-Sustaining Town".

The submission refers to Table 2.12 'Core Strategy Table, Population and Household distribution to 2027' in the current Development Plan, which identifies that Ashbourne has a proposed household allocation of 1,349 no. units over the lifetime of the Development Plan, and acknowledges that Column E of the Table states that 209 no. units in Ashbourne have an extant permission. The submission understands that permission currently exists for c. 693 no. dwellings, with other current development proposals equating to c. 300 additional dwellings, which, if permitted, would bring the number of permitted units up to c. 1,000 units.

The submission also acknowledges the recently published Section 28 Guidelines "NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements", highlighting the guidelines' urgency for planning authorities to commence the process of revising and varying the development plan against the policies and objectives of these guidelines as quickly as possible.

Reference is also made to Section 11.5.3 "Density" of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, acknowledging that the number of units to be provided on a site should be determined with reference to the "Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines". The submission also observes that DM OBJ 14 of the Meath Development Plan states that densities in Large Towns under the "suburban/Urban Extension" Growth Towns category should be between 30 and 50 units per hectare.

Finally the submission contends that under the current CDP, lands that are currently zoned objective 'A2-New Residential' in Ashbourne are all committed in terms of development / extant permissions under construction at the Millrace, Milltown Manor and Coach development, therefore there are no remaining zoned lands in Ashbourne for new residential land use and the preparation of the new CDP is the most opportune time to cater for future housing growth in the town, which is in keeping with the current Government plans to deliver new housing.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive acknowledges the submission and notes the issues raised regarding housing delivery, extant permissions and the availability of zoned residential land in Ashbourne. It is noted that Table 2.12 of the current Development Plan reflects the status of extant planning permissions at the time the Core Strategy was prepared in 2020 and, as

such, does not capture the current status of permitted but not yet completed residential development in Ashbourne. In this regard, the submission subsequently and correctly points to the current position, in which a significantly higher number of units are now permitted or under construction.

The Council acknowledges that, having regard to recent development activity and extant permissions, there is limited remaining residentially zoned land available within Ashbourne under the current Development Plan. The revised Section 28 NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines will inform the review of the Core Strategy and settlement-level housing allocations as part of the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033.

The role of Ashbourne as a Self-Sustaining Town within the settlement hierarchy, together with its capacity to accommodate further growth in a consolidated and sustainable manner, will be considered through evidence-based assessment, including settlement capacity, infrastructure provision and environmental considerations. Detailed matters relating to revised housing allocations or additional residential zoning will be addressed at the Draft Plan stage and will be subject to statutory assessment and public consultation.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-100: An Taisce

Summary of Submission:

An Taisce welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033 and have formatted their response largely in line with the sections set out in the Issues Paper. The key recommendations set out in this submission are as follows:

1. <u>Implementation and Underlaying Premise of the New Plan</u>
   The submission seeks for the new CDP to set out the framework for planning and land use system that provides public goods to meet societal needs and works in the long-term public interest to secure wider social and environmental wellbeing. It is therefore recommended that the Doughnut Economics framework developed by Kate Raworth be used to inform the premise of the new CDP.

2. <u>Climate Action</u>
   In regard to climate action, An Taisce seeks for the CDP to:

   - Align with Climate Act obligations and carbon budgets.
   - Ensure a just transition to be a guiding principle in forward planning and in the new CDP.
   - Address flood risk through catchment-based measures and ecologically sensitive solutions.

3. Biodiversity Crisis

An Taisce recommends that the protection, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity in County Meath must play a central role in the new CDP and be integrated throughout the various policies and objectives under all headings.

The submission proposes that specific, targeted objectives and measures to reverse biodiversity loss be included in the new CDP. It is also crucial that the new CDP integrates specific and targeted objectives for ecosystem restoration, going beyond protection, into county planning policy and forward planning.

The new CDP should be aligned with the new National Biodiversity Action Plan and EU Nature Restoration Law, and the relevant recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss should also be incorporated.

4. Settlement and Housing

The submission asserts that the pattern of low-density, suburban, car-based sprawl which has characterised most of the development of the last number of decades is entirely unsustainable. It is emphasised that the new CDP drives the provision of better designed and higher density urban areas and neighbourhoods with active and public transport connectivity to services, employment, and amenities.

The submission submits that the new CDP should include a requirement that all new residential development in urban and built-up areas be no more than a 15-minute walking distance from basic services and infrastructure e.g. public transport services with adequate capacity, supermarkets, childcare facilities, schools, post offices, medical facilities, recreational facilities, high quality green and open spaces, etc.

An Taisce recommends that the new CDP incorporates and enhances the seven location test standards for new housing in urban areas as outlined in the National Spatial Strategy 2002, asserting that these standards require that planning authorities decision for new housing developments be conditional on integration with existing communities, affordability and mix of housing types, walking and cycling access to local services and schools, transport access to employment locations, and availability to recreation facilities.

An Taisce considers that the CDP should also critically assess how the level of home construction needed to address the housing crisis can be facilitated while staying within the limits of emissions reduction obligations. It is recommended in this submission that mandatory life-cycle carbon measurement or mandatory measurement of embodied carbon in construction, which are needed to drive material changes in what is built and how it is built, be considered.

Lastly the submission also seeks for the CDP to address the revitalisation of rural towns and town centres, which play a key role in providing independence for the aging population and improving mental health.

5. Transport and Movement

An Taisce seeks for the new CDP to link residential development with active transport links as well as safe walking and cycling routes.
It is also submitted that the emphasises in the new CDP needs to be on significantly increasing public transport capacity and not continuing to build roads to increase capacities and thereby induce further demand in road traffic and the related emissions.

It is recommended for the new CDP to include objectives addressing the following to support a modal shift:

- The provision of high-quality interchanges to allow for intermodal journeys involving bikes and public transport;
- A requirement for active travel/cycle infrastructure audits for all major housing developments;
- A requirement for all significant residential/employment developments to include well-located, high-quality, secured, sheltered and high-capacity bicycle parking facilities so as to encourage more intermodal trips in which cycling plays a part;
- A plan for clear signposting to all bus and train stations within towns. There needs to be a simple sign-posting system indicating the distance (in metres) and the estimated walking and cycling times so as to encourage walking/cycling and public transport trips.
- For detailed and specific targets and timelines for achieving a modal shift towards public and active transport be included.

6. Rural Development

It is the view of the submission that Development Plans often include policies and objectives that are largely aspirational in ensuring that the development of rural areas is sustainable and aligned with climate and biodiversity objectives. The submission seeks for any such contradictions to be addressed in the new CDP.

Regarding one-off housing in the countryside, it is suggested that the new CDP include targeted policies to curb the unsustainable spread of one-off dwellings, particularly driven by urban demand. Policies are also needed to prevent further unsustainable ribbon development patterns, expressing their concerns that without such policies, the new CDP would risk undermining the service basis of smaller towns and villages, exacerbating traffic generation and car dependence, and undermining the needed modal shift to sustainable travel.

7. Cultural and Natural Heritage

The submission seeks for a review of all existing land zoning provisions to ensure that no conflict arises in relation to meeting international European or national land use and policy objectives.

The submission also seeks for the new CDP to be informed by the National Landscape Character Assessment, the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, and the associated inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes in considering preferred location for infrastructure, urban expansion and other development. A focus on the need for conservation and adaptive reuse of Meath's vacant heritage building stock is also needed.

The submission asserts that there remains on ongoing issue of the endangerment of heritage buildings and protected structures, contending that cases are consistently arising across the country where protected structures and buildings in Architectural Conservation Areas are suffering abandonment, maintenance neglect, loss of major architectural features, and exposure to theft, vandalism, and arson. The submission seeks for the new CDP to include an objective for improved monitoring of heritage buildings at risk of endangerment.

8. Strategic Environmental Assessment

The submission acknowledges that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required to be carried out for plans which are likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The submission highlights that the success of the CDP in achieving the implementation of its objectives and policies will depend in many ways on a rigorous and legally compliant SEA and the setting of specific targets and indicators therein.
Reference is made to Article 10 of the SEA Directive which sets out provisions for the monitoring of a plan subject to SEA and the obligation for remedial action where unforeseen adverse effects arise. This submission considers that ongoing monitoring or auditing is carried out for the new CDP.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission from An Taisce and notes the emphasis placed on aligning the forthcoming County Development Plan with statutory climate obligations, including national carbon budgets, sectoral emissions ceilings, and the objectives of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended). The Council notes the call for climate action to be integrated across all areas of the Plan, including land-use patterns, transport, flood risk management, and biodiversity, and recognises the importance of a just transition and catchment-based, ecologically sensitive climate adaptation measures. The Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 will be

informed by the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029, the National Climate Action Plan, and relevant EU and national policy to ensure that climate mitigation and adaptation considerations are embedded throughout the Plan framework. It will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Appropriate Assessment to protect the integrity of European designated sites, reduce environmental impacts and manage flood risk appropriately. Reference to the importance of the Doughnut Economics framework developed by Kate Raworth is noted, and it is an appropriate foundation upon which a land-use plan should be built.

Biodiversity

Regarding biodiversity, the Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 was published in late 2025 to address current environmental challenges through 55 coordinated actions with partners, focusing on climate resilience, habitat protection, and community involvement. The This Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) will dovetail with the new County Development Plan (CDP) by embedding nature-positive actions within development management standards, ensuring sustainable growth through integrating biodiversity into planning, using nature-based solutions for climate/water goals, informing development with biodiversity data, and aligning with national policies for compact growth, making conservation a core part of urban/rural development rather than separate from it.

Transport and Movement

The comments regarding transport and movement are noted. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks.

A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase public transport use while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. during the preparation of the previous CDP, the Transportation Department worked with the NTA setting out modal share targets for each settlement within the county. These targets will be reviewed and revised in the upcoming CDP. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan to create attractive, efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing factors for travel demand. Meath County Council aims to provide safe, efficient and accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims, and this will be reflected in the Draft Plan. Permeability within new development proposals will also be an intrinsic element to encouraging modal shift. This is

already supported by SH POL 3 and other movement objectives within the current CDP and will be incorporated into the future Draft Plan.

The recommendations outlined above are also noted, many of these are currently contained in existing policies and objectives of the current plan and will be reviewed and reassessed as part of the preparation of the Draft Plan.

Rural Development

Meath County Council recognises the long tradition of people living in rural areas. The current Plan outlines how rural development should be consolidated within existing villages and settlements to build sustainable rural communities, as set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region (RSES). The Council is actively considering mechanisms and measures to encourage people to choose to live in villages rather than the countryside. The current plan also seeks to accommodate rural-generated housing needs where they arise, subject to local housing need criteria and development management standards. However, a key focus of the Draft CDP is the revitalisation of villages in decline.

Section 9.5.2 of the current Plan relates to ribbon development, acknowledging a balanced and reasonable view to ribbon development, taking into account local circumstances, including the planning history of the area and development pressures. It is a current policy of the Plan to protect the county's national primary and secondary roads from unplanned ribbon development (RD POL 36).

The Draft Plan will continue to encourage and focus on the sustainable development of rural communities without compromising the County's physical, environmental, natural, and heritage resources.

Natural & Cultural Heritage

The comments made on cultural and natural heritage are noted. As outlined above, the Council has recently adopted the Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030. This plan includes several measures relating, inter alia, to biodiversity loss and ecosystem restoration. It is intended that the measures within this Biodiversity Action Plan will be included in the new Development Plan, in accordance with national policy.

Regarding the reuse of protected structures, the Council retains a Conservation Officer within its Heritage & Conservation team. The Conservation Officer oversees the Council’s executive functions relating to protected structures and actively provides information to landowners relating to the use of protected structures and funding streams that support the reuse of protected structures. The Council also operates a Derelict Sites Register (DSR) which identifies buildings throughout the County, including protected structures, that are considered derelict and that could be subject to an annual levy, in accordance with legislation. This is the Council’s primary method for monitoring of heritage buildings at risk

of endangerment. The Council has the authority to compulsorily purchase derelict sites identified on the DSR; however, this is a function reserved for use as a last resort.

The current Development Plan includes several policies and objectives (HER OBJ 10, DUL OBJ 3, KEN OBJ 3, KEN OBJ 4, KILB OBJ 5) relating to the reuse of derelict properties, which will be reviewed and updated in the new Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-101: KPMG Future Analytics on behalf of Mr. Michael Ryan
Summary of Submission:

Submission made by KPMG Future Analytics, Chartered Planning and Development Consultants on behalf of Mr. Michael Ryan discussing the settlement of Enfield. The overall aim of this submission is to facilitate the review of the existing development plan and the preparation of a new development plan and discusses key themes such as 1) Settlement and Housing 2) Employment Economic 3) Transport & Movement, and 4) Community Services.

The submission expresses how their client has played a major role in shaping the town landscape of Enfield and has contributed to the delivery of a variety of completed and ongoing projects on mixed-use and community infrastructure zoning.

The submission provides a detailed contextual analysis of Enfield outlining that Enfield is designated as a Self-Sustaining Town in the current Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and is strategically located along the M4 motorway, served by intercity rail services. The submission submits that the town has a highly educated workforce, which exceeds the State in relation to higher-level educational attainment. It acknowledges that Enfield is targeted for significant future growth as a self-sustaining town, with Meath County Council's intention noted as being to strengthen its position in the settlement hierarchy through employment generation, the construction of new housing and the broadening of its retail and service offer.

The submission refers to the First Revision of the National Planning Framework (Revised NPF) published in April 2025 and outlines the increased population targets requiring an associated increase in national annual housing output to approximately 50,000 homes per annum to 2040. The submission also refers to National Strategic Outcome 1 contained in the Revised NPF emphasising compact growth and activating strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top propriety. Reference is also made to the revised NPF emphasis on the delivery of Transit Orientated Development (TODs) to facilitate compact growth (National Policy Objective 10)

Further to this, the submission also refers to the recently published Section 28 Guidelines issued on 29th July 2025 (NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements) which outline the new housing growth allocations for each county and have allocated a new

Annual New Housing Growth Requirement of 2,942 + 50% additional provision for County Meath to 2034. The submission highlights that the current core strategy housing allocation of Enfield will be required to be updated on foot of the revised targets.

The submission asserts that over the past 15 years, Enfield has experienced considerable growth, driven by its proximity and accessibility to Dublin City, along with strategic road and rail connections to the capital. The town's changing landscape has led to the emergence of various facilities such as Enfield Community College, Lidl, residential and social infrastructural facilities to the east of Enfield, harnessing the development of road infrastructure. The submission therefore suggests the following components to be integrated into Enfield's core strategy for sustainable development:

- As part of the overall development plan review process, review the existing Enfield land use zoning map with relevance to the existing and proposed network of transport and utility infrastructure in the area.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission prepared by KPMG Future Analytics on behalf of Mr. Michael Ryan in relation to the future settlement role, housing growth and sustainable development of Enfield.

The Council notes the submission's reference to Enfield's designation as a Self-Sustaining Town within the County settlement hierarchy and its role in accommodating future population and housing growth in a balanced and sustainable manner. The submission's emphasis on compact growth, urban consolidation and the activation of locations within existing settlements is also acknowledged and aligns with the vision of the Council.

In relation to National Strategic Outcome 1, Policy SH POL 2 of the current County Development Plan seeks to promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced lands through prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference to edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support compact urban growth and sustainable communities. The Draft County Development Plan will continue to support and encourage compact and sequential growth in a plan-led manner.

In addition, Meath County Council notes the requirements of the Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, which states that development plans must prioritise the delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of existing settlements through infill and brownfield development, the re-use of vacant and underutilized lands, and the promotion of compact and sequential growth patterns. National Policy Objective 7 seeks the delivery of at least 40% of new homes within the existing built-up areas. The Draft County Development Plan will be prepared in alignment with national policy requirements and will seek to ensure that housing delivery is directed to appropriate locations.

The submission makes reference to updating the Core Strategy housing allocation for Enfield. In this regard the spatial distribution of housing growth and the identification of lands to accommodate future residential development will be informed by the Settlement Hierachy, the Settlement Capacity Audit, environmental considerations and a sequential approach to development. The Settlement Capacity Audit determines serviced and serviceable lands within Enfield that could accommodate residential development and factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. These considerations will inform decisions on future residential zoning of Enfield and the rest of the county.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-103: Stephen Little & Associates on behalf of Lydon

Summary of Submission:

The submission received from Stephen Little & Associates covers the following topics:

Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033

Outlining how the First Revision to the National Planning Framework (NPF) has dramatically increased the need to deliver new homes in Ireland in order to meet the project growth of the country. The submission acknowledges the Section 28 Guidelines 'NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirement', which has identified the need for Council's to consider a 10–12-year horizon in order to reflect the increased Housing Supply Requirements set out in the NPF. It is also noted that the Planning & Development Act 2024, as amended, provides for a 10-year horizon for Development Plans.

Overview of Lydon

The submission asserts that Lydon has a proven track record in delivering large-scale residential housing projects and to date have supplies over 4,000 new homes in communities throughout the Greater Dublin Area. The submission outlines a number of Lydon's current development sites and recently completed sites in Dublin, Meath and Kildare.

Housing Supply

Reference is made to the current Meath County Development Plan outlining that the plan sets a housing supply target of 16,956 units or 2,826 units per annum. The submission acknowledges that under the first revision of the NPF and the NPF Section 28 Guidelines, this target will be 26,478 units or,4,413 units per annum, or a minimum of 44,130 units in the context of a 10-year plan. The submission contends that since 2021, according to statistics obtained from CSO, 7,013 permissions were granted, 7,068 units have been completed, and 8,889 units have commenced. The submission asserts that there remains a

shortfall in housing supply in Co. Meath, and that there is clearly a demand for additional housing units to be delivered in the county.

The submission has addressed the following questions raised in the Strategic Issues Paper.

In regards to 'What issues relating to housing should be addressed' the submission contends that in order to address the need and demand for housing in the country including Ashbourne, it is essential to consider the application of updated housing growth requirements and the need for additional provisions as outlined in the NPF. As the current Meath County Development Plan sets a housing supply target of 26,478 units, it is crucial to ensure a strong pipeline of zoned and services land to support the delivery of 300,000 homes across Ireland. This scale of delivery will require both the expansion of existing settlements and the creation of new sustainable communities, emphasizing the need for a rapid response to the ongoing housing crisis. The submission emphasises that planning authorities should consider as an immediate priority the suitability of lands for development over a 12 year plus period.

In regards to 'what types of homes are required to meet future demand, and how should the new Plan ensure housing choice for all residents' the submission suggests that a variety of housing types will be necessary to ensure housing choice for all residents. Asserting that the new development plan should incorporate a range of unit types and sizes, and additionally, the plan should consider the integration of community facilities and amenities, such as childcare and recreational space to support diverse living needs and enhance the quality of life for residents.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the matters raised in this submission relating to housing demand, housing typologies and national planning policy, including the revised National Planning Framework and NPF Revised Housing Targets Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines.

To provide clarity to the Author on housing delivery figures for the county, the NPF Housing Growth Requirements require Meath to deliver 2,942 units up to 2034. These guidelines recommend that the Council zone up to 50% over and above quantum of lands required to deliver 2,942 units to recognise that a portion of zoned lands may not be activated for various reasons and zoning additional lands is necessary to ensure there is sufficient provision of sites. It does not increase the number of units to up to 4,413 units, rather, it provides a broader choice of lands upon which 2,942 units can be delivered. Notwithstanding this, it is the intention of the Council to zone a maximum land allowable under the guidelines to increase the land options for developers, thereby increasing housing delivery prospects.

In relation to settlement and housing matters, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit will determine serviced and serviceable lands that could accommodate residential development in County Meath. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

In parallel, a Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is also currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

The Council recognises the importance of providing a range of housing types and sizes to support housing choice and to meet the needs of different household types across the County, having regard to the settlement hierarchy and the evidence base supporting the Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-104: KPMG Future Analytics on behalf of Mr. Michael Ryan

Summary of Submission:

Submission made by KPMG Future Analytics, Chartered Planning and Development Consultants on behalf of Mr. Michael Ryan discussing the settlement of Donacarney-Mornington. The overall aim of this submission is to facilitate the review of the existing development plan and the preparation of a new development plan, the submission discusses key themes such as 1) Settlement and Housing 2) Employment Economic 3) Transport & Movement, and 4) Community Services.

The submission provides a detailed contextual analysis of Donacarney-Mornington outlining that the settlement is strategically positioned in the heart of East Meath, with Mornington East to the east providing access to the coast. To the north lies the River Boyne, and the rail infrastructure is located to the south. Additionally, Drogheda train station is approximately 5 kilometres away from the settlement

The submission refers to the First Revision of the National Planning Framework (Revised NPF) published in April 2025 and outlines the increased population targets requiring an associated increase in national annual housing output to approximately 50,000 homes per annum to 2040. The submission also refers to National Strategic Outcome 1 contained in the Revised NPF emphasising compact growth and activating strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top

propriety. Reference is also made to the revised NPF emphasis on the delivery of Transit Orientated Development (TODs) to facilitate compact growth (National Policy Objective 10)

Further to this, the submission also refers to the recently published Section 28 Guidelines issued on 29th July 2025 (NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements) which outline the new housing growth allocations for each County and have allocated a new Annual New Housing Growth Requirement of 2,942 + 50% additional provision for County Meath to 2034. The submission highlights that the current core strategy housing allocation of Donacarney-Mornington will be required to be updated on foot of the revised targets.

The submission asserts the area has seen significant growth in population and households over the last two decades. This expansion has been influenced by several factors, including its closeness to the coast, being situated along a commuter rail line, and its accessibility to Dublin, Drogheda, the M1, and Dublin Airport. As a result, the area has transformed into a commuter settlement.

This submission would like to recommend the following component to be integrated into Donacarney-Mornington core strategy for sustainable development:

- Review the existing Donacarney-Mornington land use strategy and integrating policies and objectives.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission prepared by KPMG Future Analytics on behalf of Mr. Michael Ryan in relation to the future settlement role, housing growth and sustainable development of Donacarney–Mornington.

The Council notes the submission's detailed contextual analysis of the settlement, its strategic location within East Meath, and its function within the wider commuter catchment of Drogheda and the Greater Dublin Area. The submission's reference to the settlement's recent population growth and evolving role within the County settlement hierarchy is also noted.

In relation to National Strategic Outcome 1, Policy SH POL 2 of the current County Development Plan seeks to promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced lands through prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference to edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support compact urban growth and sustainable communities. The Draft County Development Plan will continue to support and encourage compact and sequential growth in a plan-led manner.

In addition, Meath County Council notes the requirements of the Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, which states that development plans must prioritise the delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of existing settlements through infill and brownfield

development, the re-use of vacant and underutilised lands, and the promotion of compact and sequential growth patterns. National Policy Objective 7 seeks the delivery of at least 40% of new homes nationally within the existing built-up areas. The Draft County Development Plan will be prepared in alignment with national policy requirements and will seek to ensure that housing delivery is directed to appropriate locations.

The specific housing allocation to individual settlements will be determined through the preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives
- The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements
- Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure (Settlement Capacity Audit)
- Environmental constraints including flood risk
- The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability
- Demonstrated housing delivery capacity and pipeline development
- The objective of achieving sustainable settlement patterns across the full settlement hierarchy

The allocation of housing growth to individual settlements must be evidence-based and balanced across the settlement hierarchy, taking into account infrastructure delivery timelines, environmental constraints, and the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-105: SLR Consulting on behalf of Irish Cement

Summary of Submission:

This submission received from SLR Consulting Ireland is submitted on behalf of Irish Cement Ltd, Platin, Drogheda, Co. Louth. Irish Cement Ltd. forms part of CRH, which is an international building materials group. Irish Cement first opened a plant in Drogheda in 1938. In 1972, a new dry process plant, Kiln 1 was constructed when operations transferred to the current site in Platin. A major upgrade was completed with the addition of Kiln 2 in

1977 and then again in 2008 with the construction of Kiln 3, making Platin one of the most energy efficient cement plants in Europe.

The submission outlines the importance of cement as being a vital ingredient in concrete, one of the world's most versatile and commonly used construction materials. Modern societies have come to rely on cement and concrete to deliver the structures and services of our modern built environment and infrastructure.

Irish Cement has a number of property assets within County Meath including sites at Donore Quarry and Platin.

The submission refers to the following National and Regional Policy:

- The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the following National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), NSO3-Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities, NSO5-Sustainable Mobility, NSO6-A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills, and NSO9-Sustainable Management of Environmental Resources.

- The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern Midland Region, referring to Section 10.4 of the RSES in supporting the development of a circular economy by fostering an approach that views waste as a valuable material resource, to be retained in use at its highest value for as long as possible and then re-used, recovered, or recycled, leaving a minimum of residual waste

Section 2.2 of the submission refers to the importance of the extractive industries and recommends the planning authority to consider the published document 'Essential Aggregates – Providing for Ireland's Needs to 2040' when preparing policies that reflect the importance of the extractive industries. The objective of this document is to highlight to Government the need for a national planning policy for aggregates (including cement raw materials), which will underpin local and regional planning policy and ensure the sustainable supply of aggregates for Project Ireland 2040 and beyond. The document provides further detail on the role of locally supplied aggregates in supporting the demand for new homes, new schools and better infrastructure. In meeting the demand arising from the projected population increase, it is worth noting that every new home typically requires up to 400 tonnes of aggregates and every new school typically requires some 3,000 tonnes of aggregates. These requirements are most sustainably met by local sources and suppliers.

The document also highlights three important points that statutory planning policy needs to address at all spatial scales. These are:

1. Importance of Extractive Industries and Aggregates
2. Identifying and Protecting Reserves
3. Enabling Extraction of Aggregates

The submission also recommends for the planning authority to also consider the recent report published by the Irish Concrete Federation (ICF) – "Essential Aggregates – An Evidence-Based Assessment to Inform Ireland's Planning Policy" that examines current replenishment rates of authorised aggregate reserves in Ireland, to determine the current timeframes for planning decisions and to make recommendations on appropriate measures within the planning system

The submission refers to current policies contained in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 extracting the following two relevant policies:

> **RD POL 22**: '*To facilitate the exploitation of the county's natural resources and to exercise appropriate control over the types of development taking place in areas containing proven deposits, whilst also ensuring that such developments are carried out in a manner which would not unduly impinge on the visual amenity or environmental quality in the area'.*
>
> **RD POL 23**: '*To support the extractive industry where it would not unduly compromise the environmental quality of the county and where detailed rehabilitation proposals are provided'.*

In regards to the new Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033, the following areas are considered important to the submission author:

Settlement & Housing

Quarry lands and cement manufacturing serve as essential infrastructure that can meet the demands of the expanding population by providing aggregate both locally and nationally. It is crucial for the MCDP to acknowledge the significance of these resources in developing the County's housing supply and associated services.

Rural Development

The revised county development plan should ensure that both the extraction of raw materials suitable for cement manufacture and the production of cement can take place in suitable locations where the resource exists. It is important to ensure that the future interpretation of county development plan policies does not result in the sterilisation of raw materials suitable for cement manufacture and does not prevent the secure, long-term supply of cement to the construction industry in Ireland**.**

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council (MCC) wishes to acknowledge the submission from SLR Consulting Ireland on behalf of Irish Cement Ltd. MCC recognises Irish Cement's longstanding presence

and contribution to the building materials sector, and the strategic importance of cement as an essential component underpinning infrastructure and housing delivery.

MCC acknowledges the recommendation to consider the publication *"Essential Aggregates – Providing for Ireland's Needs to 2040"* in the preparation of future Development Plan policies. This document's emphasis on the need for a national planning policy to safeguard cement as a raw material supplies is consistent with the objectives of 'Project Ireland 2040' and the sustainable provision of infrastructure, housing, and the delivery of public services.

The two key policies specifically outlined by the author refer to;

> **RD POL 22**: '*To facilitate the exploitation of the county's natural resources and to exercise appropriate control over the types of development taking place in areas containing proven deposits, whilst also ensuring that such developments are carried out in a manner which would not unduly impinge on the visual amenity or environmental quality in the area'.*
>
> **RD POL 23**: '*To support the extractive industry where it would not unduly compromise the environmental quality of the county and where detailed rehabilitation proposals are provided'.*

Meath County Council (MCC) supports these existing policies within the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027, which facilitate the sustainable extraction of natural resources while safeguarding visual amenity and environmental quality, alongside rehabilitation obligations. In preparing the next Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033, MCC will ensure that cement manufacturing continues to be recognised as critical infrastructure to meet the housing and economic growth demands of the County and beyond. The above policies will be carried over to support the long-term supply of cement in the construction industry in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development principles.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-106: David McGuinness
Summary of Submission:
This submission focuses solely on the strategic development direction for Bettystown and the opportunities arising from the proposed railway station. This submission is made in the context of the policy direction set out by: • The National Planning Framework (NPF), which promotes compact growth, sustainable mobility, and development focused around high-capacity public transport nodes.

- The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region, which identifies East Meath as part of the wider Dublin–Belfast corridor and emphasises the importance of integrated land-use and transport planning.
- The NTA metropolitan and regional transport strategies, which highlight the role of new rail stations in shaping settlement form.

The submission asserts the strategic importance of the proposed Bettystown Railway Station, contending the station is a significant investment in sustainable transport infrastructure and will encourage modal shift away from private car use, enhance regional connectivity, support compact, walkable neighbourhoods and anchor Bettystown within the DART+ Coastal North rail corridor.

In line with national and regional policy, the submission emphasises that the proposed station is uniquely suited to principles of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), including:

- Higher-density residential development in walking distance of rail
- Mixed-use patterns that reduce the need to travel by car
- Enhanced pedestrian and cycling connectivity.
- Strong integration between housing, employment, and transport
- Compact and efficient use of serviced land

The submission respectfully requests that the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033

- Recognise the importance of the proposed Bettystown Railway Station in shaping the future settlement pattern.
- Support enhanced pedestrian and cycling connectivity to the station.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission in relation to the strategic development direction of Bettystown and the potential role of the proposed railway station in shaping future settlement patterns.

The Council notes the submission's reference to national and regional policy promoting compact growth, high-density development, and the efficient use of serviced land.

In relation to compact growth, the Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, compact and sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. In this regard, the current County Development Plan already has policies to support compact growth on infill and brownfield sites including Policy SH POL 2 that seeks to promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced lands through the prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference

to the edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl. The Draft County Development Plan will build on this policy approach and will continue to support compact growth.

In this context, Meath County Council also notes the requirements of the Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, which state that development plans must prioritise the delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of existing settlements through infill and brownfield development, the re-use of vacant and underutilised lands, and the promotion of compact and sequential growth patterns. National Policy Objective 7 seeks to deliver at least 40% of new homes within existing built-up areas. The Draft County Development Plan will be prepared in alignment with national policy requirements and will seek to ensure that housing delivery is directed to appropriate locations.

The appropriate scale, location and density of future residential development within Bettystown will be considered as part of the preparation of the County Development Plan, having regard to national policy, including the requirements of prioritising consolidation within the existing built-up areas.

Meath County Council recognises the substantial growth and development in Bettystown in recent years, being driven by the settlements location along the Dublin-Belfast Commuter rail line and the proximity of the settlement to Dublin and Drogheda via the M1 motorway.

The Council also recognises that a rail station in Bettystown would be of significant benefit to the local population. Its proximity to residential areas would improve access to rail services for commuters and would therefore encourage more sustainable modes of transport. The current Plan supports the provision of a train station at Bettystown as part of the DART expansion works. In August 2025, An Coimisiún Pleanála approved the DART + Coastal North Railway Order, which will extend the electrified DART network from Malahide to Drogheda, remaining on the existing line. Meath County Council will continue to engage with NTA, and any other relevant stakeholders regarding the provision of a train station in Bettystown.

The Council recognises the importance of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in maximising the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure spaces in close proximity to high quality transport services. To date, two settlements have been identified as a strategic location for TOD, with sites in Drogheda and Dunboyne selected. The Draft Plan will include policies and objectives in support of rail-focused development consolidation.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-107: SLR Consulting on behalf of Roadstone Limited.

Summary of Submission:

Part 3

This submission received from SLR Consulting Ireland is submitted on behalf of Roadstone Limited, who have a number of property assets within County Meath.

The submission refers to the following National and Regional Policy:

- The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the following National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), NSO3-Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities, NSO5-Sustainable Mobility, NSO6-A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills, and NSO9-Sustainable Management of Environmental Resources.

- The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern Midland Region, referring to Section 10.4 of the RSES in supporting the development of a circular economy by fostering an approach that views waste as a valuable material resource, to be retained in use at its highest value for as long as possible and then re-used, recovered, or recycled, leaving a minimum of residual waste

Section 1.2 of this submission refers to the importance of the extractive industries and recommends the planning authority to consider the published document '*Essential Aggregates – Providing for Ireland's Needs to 2040*' when preparing policies that reflect the importance of the extractive industries. The objective of this document is to highlight to Government the need for a national planning policy for aggregates (including cement raw materials), which will underpin local and regional planning policy and ensure the sustainable supply of aggregates for Project Ireland 2040 and beyond. The document provides further detail on the role of locally supplied aggregates in supporting the demand for new homes, new schools and better infrastructure. In meeting the demand arising from the projected population increase, it is worth noting that every new home typically requires up to 400 tonnes of aggregates and every new school typically requires some 3,000 tonnes of aggregates.

The document also highlights three important points that statutory planning policy needs to address at all spatial scales. These are:

1. Importance of Extractive Industries and Aggregates

2. Identifying and Protecting Reserves

3. Enabling Extraction of Aggregates

The submission also recommends for the planning authority to also consider the recent report published by the Irish Concrete Federation (ICF) – "*Essential Aggregates – An Evidence-Based Assessment to Inform Ireland's Planning Policy*" this examines current replenishment rates of authorised aggregate reserves in Ireland, to determine the current timeframes for planning decisions and to make recommendations on appropriate measures within the planning system

The submission refers to current policies contained in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 extracting the following two relevant policies:

RD POL 22 *To facilitate the exploitation of the county's natural resources and to exercise appropriate control over the types of development taking place in areas containing proven deposits, whilst also ensuring that such developments are carried out in a manner which would not unduly impinge on the visual amenity or environmental quality in the area*.

RD POL 23 *To support the extractive industry where it would not unduly compromise the environmental quality of the county and where detailed rehabilitation proposals are provided.*

In regards to the new Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033 the following areas are considered important to the submission author:

Settlement & Housing

Quarry lands and cement manufacturing serve as essential infrastructure that can meet the demands of the expanding population by providing aggregate both locally and nationally. It is crucial for the MCDP to acknowledge the significance of these resources in developing the housing supply and associated services for the County.

Rural Development

The revised county development plan should ensure that both the extraction of raw materials suitable for cement manufacture and the production of cement can take place in suitable locations where the resource exists. It is important to ensure that the future interpretation of county development plan policies does not result in the sterilisation of raw materials suitable for cement manufacture and does not prevent the secure, long-term supply of cement to the construction industry in Ireland.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council (MCC) acknowledges the submission from SLR Consulting on behalf of Roadstone Limited regarding the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The importance of Roadstone as a key extractive industry stakeholder within County Meath is noted.

MCC acknowledges the recommendation to consider the publication *"Essential Aggregates – Providing for Ireland's Needs to 2040"* in the preparation of future Development Plan policies. This document's emphasis on the need for a national planning policy to safeguard cement as a raw material supplies is consistent with the objectives of 'Project Ireland 2040' and the sustainable provision of infrastructure, housing, and the delivery of public services.

The two key policies specifically outlined by the author refer to;

RD POL 22: '*To facilitate the exploitation of the county's natural resources and to exercise appropriate control over the types of development taking place in areas containing proven deposits, whilst also ensuring that such developments are carried out in a manner which would not unduly impinge on the visual amenity or environmental quality in the area'.*

RD POL 23: '*To support the extractive industry where it would not unduly compromise the environmental quality of the county and where detailed rehabilitation proposals are provided'.*

Meath County Council (MCC) supports these existing policies within the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027, which facilitate the sustainable extraction of natural resources while safeguarding visual amenity and environmental quality, alongside rehabilitation obligations. In preparing the next Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033, MCC will ensure that cement manufacturing continues to be recognised as critical infrastructure to meet the housing and economic growth demands of the County and beyond. The above policies will be carried over to support the long-term supply of cement in the construction industry in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development principles.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-108: Stephen Little & Associates on behalf of Lydon

Summary of Submission:

The submission received from Stephen Little & Associates covers the following topics:

Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033

Outlining how the First Revision to the National Planning Framework (NPF) has dramatically increased the need to deliver new homes in Ireland in order to meet the project growth of the country. The submission acknowledges the Section 28 Guidelines 'NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirement', which has identified the need for Council's to consider a 10–12-year horizon in order to reflect the increased Housing Supply Requirements set out in the NPF. It is also noted that the Planning & Development Act 2024, as amended, provides for a 10-year horizon for Development Plans.

Overview of Lydon

The submission asserts that Lydon has a proven track record in delivering large-scale residential housing projects and, to date, has supplied over 4,000 new homes in communities throughout the Greater Dublin Area. The submission outlines a number of Lydon's current development sites and recently completed sites in Dublin, Meath and Kildare.

Housing Supply

Reference is made to the current Meath County Development Plan outlining that the plan sets a housing supply target of 16,956 units or 2,826 units per annum. The submission acknowledges that under the first revision of the NPF and the NPF Section 28 Guidelines, this target will be 26,478 units or,4,413 units per annum, or a minimum of 44,130 units in the context of a 10-year plan. The submission contends that since 2021, according to statistics obtained from CSO, 7,013 permissions were granted, 7,068 units have been completed, and 8,889 units have commenced. The submission asserts that there remains a shortfall of housing supply in Co. Meath as a result, and there is clearly a demand for additional housing units to be delivered in Co. Meath.

The submission has addressed the following questions raised in the Strategic Issues Paper.

In regards to '*What issues relating to housing should be addressed,'* the submission contends that in order to address the need and demand for housing in the Country including Dunshaughlin, it is essential to consider the application of updated housing growth requirements and the need for additional provisions as outlined in the NPF. As the current Meath County Development Plan sets a housing supply target of 44,130 units, it is crucial to ensure a strong pipeline of zoned and serviced land to support the delivery of 300,000 homes across Ireland. This scale of delivery will require both the expansion of existing settlements and the creation of new sustainable communities, emphasizing the need for a rapid response to the ongoing housing crisis. The submission emphasises that planning authorities should consider as an immediate priority the suitability of lands for development over a 12 year plus period.

In regards to '*what types of homes are required to meet future demand, and how should the new Plan ensure housing choice for all residents'* the submission suggests that a variety of housing types will be necessary to ensure housing choice for all residents. Asserting that the new development plan should incorporate a range of unit types and sizes, and additionally, the plan should consider the integration of community facilities and amenities, such as childcare and recreational space to support diverse living needs and enhance the quality of life for residents.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the matters raised in this submission relating to housing demand, housing typologies and national planning policy, including the revised National Planning Framework and and NPF Revised Housing Targets Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines.

To provide clarity to the Author on housing delivery figures for the county, the NPF Housing Growth Requirements require Meath to deliver 2,942 units up to 2034. These guidelines recommend that the Council zone up to 50% over and above the quantum of lands required to deliver 2,942 units to recognise that a portion of zoned lands may not be activated for various reasons and zoning additional lands is necessary to ensure there is sufficient

provision of sites. It does not increase the number of units to up to 4,413 units, rather, it provides a broader choice of lands upon which 2,942 units can be delivered. Notwithstanding this, it is the intention of the Council to zone a maximum land allowable under the guidelines to increase the land options for developers, thereby increasing housing delivery prospects.

In relation to settlement and housing matters, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit will determine serviced and serviceable lands that could accommodate residential development in County Meath. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

In parallel, a Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is also currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

The Council recognises the importance of providing a range of housing types and sizes to support housing choice and to meet the needs of different household types across the County, having regard to the settlement hierarchy and the evidence base supporting the Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-109: Kilsaran Concrete
Summary of Submission:
This submission received Kilsaran Concrete welcomes the opportunity to make this submission in relation to Stage 1 Pre-Draft of the County Development Plan 2027-2033 and acknowledges the recognition of the extractive industry in the current County Development Plan. Kilsaran Concrete is headquartered in Piercetown, Dunboyne, as well as having eight other plant locations within County Meath. The submission outlines the importance of aggregates in shaping the built environment from housing, energy, transport, water, education, health, agriculture and industry. Expressing a required need for a national approach to protect land that has access to aggregate reserves. Reference is made in this submission to the new housing plan '*Delivering Homes, Building Communities',* which emphasises the need to break down the barriers that are holding back construction. Asserting that County Meath has abundant natural reserves of high-quality aggregates, but the whole life plan of the reserves must be

protected in order to meet demand for the future and government initiatives such as '*Project Ireland 2040*' and '*Housing for All*'.

Reference is also made to a study by engineering consultancy firm RPS for the Irish Concrete Federation, highlighting that a typical new three-bed semi-detached home requires approximately 300 tonnes of aggregates for construction, and under the new NPF household allocation, Meath has a target to build 2,942 new houses per annum from 2025-2034. Therefore, requiring approximately 882,600 tonnes per annum.

The submission refers to current policies contained in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 within Section 9.11 '*Extractive Industry and Building Materials production*'. Specifically, RD POL 21, RD POL 22, RD POL 23, RD POL 24, RD POL 25, RD POL 26 and RD POL 27, expressing their support for the above policies, but in the context of growing demand for aggregates required to facilitate the objectives of the government, the submission believes that some of these policies should be enhanced.

It is the opinion of the submission that the strengthening of Policy RD POL 22, in particular, would be welcomed by the extractive industry. The submission suggests that Meath County Council seek to enhance its control over the types of development taking place in areas containing proven deposits. As key industry stakeholders, there is a need to work together to future-proof deposits and appropriately manage potential development that would limit extensions of existing quarry operations.

County Development Plans must include specific provisions to ensure that replenishment of aggregate reserves to meet local and regional needs, suggesting that Meath County Council look at opportunities to create 'Strategic Reserve' sites that restrict development taking place in identified areas of proven reserves. These Strategic Reserves should be clearly identified in the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033. Where development applications are submitted in close proximity to these identified areas, they need to be carefully assessed to ensure that there is no potential to limit future extraction plans.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council (MCC) welcomes and acknowledges the submission from Kilsaran Concrete and recognises the company's long-standing presence and contribution to County Meath and the construction sector. The importance of aggregates in delivering housing, infrastructure, and national policy objectives, such as Housing for All and Project Ireland 2040, is noted.

The Authority accepts that County Meath contains significant aggregate resources and acknowledges the need to consider their long-term availability. Support for the existing extractive industry policies in the current Development Plan is noted, along with a request to strengthen certain policies, particularly those related to safeguarding proven aggregate deposits.

The suggestion to identify and protect strategic aggregate reserve areas is acknowledged; however, such a designation would warrant appropriate evidence and environmental assessment. The Planning Authority confirms that extractive industry policies will be reviewed as part of the preparation of the County Development Plan 2027–2033, with a balanced approach that considers environmental protection, residential amenity and sustainable development.

The submission is welcomed as constructive input and will inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-110: Stephen Little & Associates on behalf of Lydon

Summary of Submission:

The submission received from Stephen Little & Associates covers the following topics:

Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033

Outlines how the First Revision to the National Planning Framework (NPF) has dramatically increased the need to deliver new homes in Ireland in order to meet the project growth of the country. The submission acknowledges the Section 28 Guidelines 'NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirement', which has identified the need for Council's to consider a 10–12-year horizon in order to reflect the increased Housing Supply Requirements set out in the NPF. It is also noted that the Planning & Development Act 2024, as amended, provides for a 10-year horizon for Development Plans.

Overview of Lydon

The submission asserts that Lydon has a proven track record in delivering large-scale residential housing projects and to date have supplies over 4,000 new homes in communities throughout the Greater Dublin Area. The submission outlines a number of Lydon's current development sites and recently completed sites in Dublin, Meath and Kildare.

Housing Supply

Reference is made to the current Meath County Development Plan outlining that the plan sets a housing supply target of 16,956 units or 2,826 units per annum. The submission acknowledges that under the first revision of the NPF and the NPF Section 28 Guidelines, this target will be 26,478 units or 4,413 units per annum, or a minimum of 44,130 units in the context of a 10-year plan. The submission contends that since 2021, according to statistics obtained from CSO, 7,013 permissions were granted, 7,068 units have been completed, and 8,889 units have commenced. The submission asserts that there remains a

shortfall of housing supply in Co. Meath as a result, and there is clearly a demand for additional housing units to be delivered in Co. Meath.

The submission has addressed the following questions raised in the Strategic Issues Paper:

In response to '*where should new housing be located without contributing to urban sprawl and ensuring consolidated sustainable growth*' the submission believes that new housing should be located within or directly adjoining existing built-up areas where infrastructure, services and community facilities are already in place. The submission specifically refers to Kells outlining the settlement is well positioned to accommodate such growth due to its strategic location beside the M3, its role as a key service and employment centre in north Meath and its strengthened economic profile following its designation as a Regional Economic Development Zone.

In regards to '*what types of homes are required to meet future demand, and how should the new Plan ensure housing choice for all residents'* the submission refers to Kells, asserting that there is a significant demand for additional housing units to be delivered here, and for housing types to include traditional family homes, smaller units such as terraced homes and duplexes, appropriately located apartments, and accommodation for older people. The submission also seeks for new development to be supported by integrated community facilities, including childcare, recreational spaces, while also promoting age-friendly and universally accessible design.

In regards to '*What issues relating to housing should be addressed*' the submission contends that in order to address the need and demand for housing in the County including Dunshaughlin, it is essential to consider the application of updated housing growth requirements and the need for additional provisions as outlined in the NPF. As the current Meath County Development Plan sets a housing supply target of 26,478 units, it is crucial to ensure a strong pipeline of zoned and serviced land to support the delivery of 300,000 homes across Ireland.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the matters raised in this submission relating to housing demand, housing typologies and national planning policy, including the revised National Planning Framework and NPF Revised Housing Targets Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines.

To provide clarity to the Author on housing delivery figures for the county, the NPF Housing Growth Requirements require Meath to deliver 2,942 units up to 2034. These guidelines recommend that the Council zone up to 50% over and above the quantum of lands required to deliver 2,942 units to recognise that a portion of zoned lands may not be activated for various reasons, and zoning additional lands is necessary to ensure there is sufficient provision of sites. It does not increase the number of units to up to 4,413 units; rather, it

provides a broader choice of lands upon which 2,942 units can be delivered. Notwithstanding this, it is the intention of the Council to zone a maximum land allowable under the guidelines to increase the land options for developers, thereby increasing housing delivery prospects.

The Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a compact and sequential approach to residential development, with a strong emphasis on consolidation of existing settlements through infill and brownfield development. This approach is supported by existing policies within the current County Development Plan, including Policy SH POL 2, which seeks to promote compact urban form and the efficient use of serviced lands within established settlements. The Draft County Development Plan will continue to support the principle of compact growth, sequential development and the efficient use of serviced lands.

The Draft County Development Plan will also continue to support the delivery of a balanced and diverse housing mix, including family housing, smaller units and apartments, to meet the needs of different household types and to support the creation of sustainable and inclusive communities. To inform zoning in the Draft Plan, a Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to identify where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

Residential developments will be required to be supported by appropriate social and community infrastructure, including open space and amenities, in order to ensure the creation of well-served, sustainable neighbourhoods.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-111: Alanna Homes Limited

Summary of Submission:

This submission is made by Alanna Homes Limited, an established family-owned company with emphasis made throughout this submission on the settlement of Dunshaughlin. Acknowledging that Dunshaughlin is designated as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town for the purposes of the Core Strategy, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, highlighting these towns contain a reasonable level of jobs and services which adequately caters for the people of its service catchment, and these settlement may have the capacity to support a level of proportionate population and employment growth.

The submission describes Dunshaughlin as a vibrant centre for a wider hinterland which supports a range of high-quality services and amenities together with employment opportunities and high-quality housing. The submission seeks that as part of the review of the Meath County Development Plan, the opportunity should be taken to strengthen and

enhance the role of Dunshaughlin as a vibrant live-work community. This should be achieved by making proper provision in the new Development Plan for additional population growth in tandem with new employment-generating opportunities as suggested by both the NPF and the EMRA RSES.

As a preliminary point, it is suggested that one of the most significant failures of the planning apparatus of the State in terms of the ability to deliver social and economic development, is the failure to make available sufficient lands designated for development to meet the needs of Irelands growing population and its economy. The submission asserts that the provision of adequate land is important to ensure that there is sufficient headroom in the provision of such lands, as not all lands so designated are likely to be brought forward for use due to servicing issues.

The submission addresses the following themes outlined in the Strategic Issues Paper

Settlement and Housing

Asserting, in order for County Meath (and Dunshaughlin in particular) to develop sustainably it must have access to an adequate supply of lands designated for the delivery high-quality communities. This means provision for a range of housing types and tenures to accommodate as broad a cross-section of the community as possible together with sufficient social and community services and high-quality amenities.

With regard to '*where new housing should be located*', the submission believes that new residential development should be directed to existing service centres proportionate with the level of services both existing and that which can be provided to cater for additional population growth. Development should proceed applying the sequential approach where possible within walking/ cycling distance of town centres and, where possible, local employment opportunities while ensuring pedestrian / cycle permeability.

It is the opinion of the submission that the biggest issues relating to housing is the availability of designated lands to accommodate new communities, and what is required to make towns/villages more desirable places to live is providing high-quality housing at sufficient scale, reasonable employment opportunities to avoid excessive commuting as a choice, high-quality services and amenities and a diverse population.

In response to the types of homes required to meet future demand, the submission outlines household sizes are falling and there is a need for smaller dwellings to accommodate single people and older people while delivering sufficient family homes to cater for growing families. This means, for a town like Dunshaughlin, that in any scheme sustainable densities can be achieved by providing higher density apartments and duplex (i.e. 1/ 2/ 3 bed units some with own door) and lower density family homes more appropriate for growing families (i.e. 3/ 4 bed +).

Finally, in regard to how to ensure the protection of the countryside and the regeneration of towns, the submission expresses that the State currently applies a high standard to new development in terms of protection of the natural and cultural environment through appropriate pre-consent surveys and assessments, together with pre-construction monitoring. As such, new developments in towns, such as Dunshaughlin, should adhere to the highest environmental standards to limit the impact on the natural environment and retain original features, such as hedgerows and trees, within new development.

Employment and Economy

In response to 'Meath's key economic strengths and opportunities', and 'how Meath should be promoted to attract investment', the submission asserts that County Meath's greatest economic strengths and opportunities lie in its people in terms of the desire to establish and promote indigenous business by local people and the availability of an educated and progressive workforce to cater for both inward investment and home-grown enterprises.

While it is desirable to seek to promote and attract inward investment, equal emphasis should be placed on facilitating home-grown indigenous enterprises. Indigenous small and medium sized enterprises employ more people in the State than any other sector. Such enterprises are also more likely to have ties to local communities and, as such, are anchored in those communities and less likely to be affected by regulatory changes and the effects of international politics and economics.

Transport and Movement

In response to '*the key transport and movement issues affecting residents, workers and visitors*', the submission outlines, as far as Dunshaughlin is concerned key issues around transportation relate to (a) delivery of rail and (b) promotion of sustainable modes of transport and relieving congestion in Dunshaughlin.

The Development Plan ought to make appropriate provision for the completion of the Relief Road around Dunshaughlin to the north of the town from the existing residential developments to the east which will improve the air quality and amenities of the main street by directing traffic from other towns e.g. Ratoath/ Ashbourne etc. away from the town centre.

The submission also suggests the most suitable location for a park and ride facility, noting the proposal to bring rail from Dunboyne (Pace) to Navan is included the National Transport Authority (NTA) Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042 and this is welcomed. The submission notes route selection is currently underway, and no conclusion has been reached as to the intended route. It is submitted that the chosen route ought to serve Dunshaughlin (and the significant urban centres of Ashbourne and Ratoath) by providing for a station north of the town east of the motorway.

In conclusion, the submission states that any such new community for Dunshaughlin should be of sufficient scale so as to be able to deliver development at the appropriate scale and

address such matters as school provision, parks and other recreational facilities that may be required by the local community e.g. playing pitches / facilities etc.

To close, the submission highlights the Navan Railway line, acknowledging it is currently under consideration and asserting there is a strong argument for a route which serves Dunshaughlin by providing a railway station east of the M3 Motorway, which would ensure that the significant urban centres of Ashbourne and Ratoath have access to a rail service.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive acknowledges the preliminary point raised in the submission regarding the importance of ensuring an adequate supply of development land to meet housing and economic needs. The recently issued Section 28 National Planning Framework Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines (July 2025) require Meath County Council to plan for an Annual New Housing Growth Requirement of 2,942 dwellings per annum to 2034. These Guidelines further provide for the zoning of additional residential land capacity of up to 50% above baseline housing requirements in order to support deliverability, provide market choice and account for circumstances where designated lands may not come forward due to factors outside the control of the planning authority, including infrastructure constraints, ownership or market conditions. With respect to employment zoning, the current Meath CDP 2021-2027 has a considerable quantum of lands zoned for employment to encourage a range of employment types and industries to the county.

The Council acknowledges that not all zoned lands will necessarily deliver within a plan period and that appropriate headroom is an important component of a robust and realistic Core Strategy. The forthcoming County Development Plan will be informed by the requirements of the Section 28 Guidelines and will seek to ensure that sufficient, appropriately located and serviceable lands are identified through an evidence-based approach, consistent with proper planning and sustainable development and aligned with national and regional policy.

Settlement and Housing:

The Council acknowledges the importance of ensuring that settlements develop in a sustainable manner through the provision of an adequate supply of lands to support high-quality residential development, supported by appropriate social and community infrastructure and amenities.

The Development Plan will seek to direct new residential development to existing settlements in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, depending on the services available. A Settlement Capacity Audit is currently being prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit will determine serviced and serviceable lands that could accommodate residential development in County Meath. The factors considered

during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

In parallel, a Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is underway to identify where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

In relation to housing mix, the Council recognises the need to provide a range of housing types and sizes to reflect changing household composition and to support housing choice, including the provision of smaller units and family homes, as appropriate to the scale and character of individual settlements.

Transport and Movement:

The concerns raised in relation to transport and movement issues affecting residents, workers and visitors in Dunshaughlin is noted. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks

The provision of a distributor road around the town that ties in with the existing link road to the M3 would result in more efficient traffic movements whilst also reducing congestion in the town centre. These roads will be developer-driven and will be completed on a phased basis in tandem with the development of the identified lands. Part of the eastern section of this Distributor Road is to be developed as part of 'The Willows' residential development. The Draft Plan will continue to support the delivery of these Distributor Roads and recognises the benefits they would have in removing through traffic from the town centre and promoting a more pedestrian and cycle-friendly environment in the urban core of the town.

The Draft Plan will also include policies and objectives in support of rail-focused development consolidation as well as safeguarding land for suitable park and ride facilities in close proximity to rail stations and bus stops.

The comments regarding the Navan railway line are also noted. Meath County Council continues to liaise with the NTA as the project proceeds through the route selection, planning and design phases. It is a key objective of the Council to support the extension of the passenger rail link from Dunboyne to Navan to Dublin in order to generate greater

connectivity and strengthen the economic potential of the town. The Draft Plan will continue to support the delivery of the Navan Railway Line.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-112: Ballymore

Summary of Submission:

This submission is made by Ballymore, one of Ireland's longest-established and largest property developers, focused on delivering sustainable residential communities who are keen to bring their experience and expertise to Meath by investing in residential development opportunities in the County. The submission commends Meath County Council for commencing the review of the Meath County Development Plan and welcomes the opportunity to participate in the plan-making process by making this submission at the pre-draft stage. This submission addresses the issues raised in the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper (the Issues Paper), specifically focusing on the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy, and raises the following points:

1. Notwithstanding the fact that the review of the Meath County Development Plan is commencing under the P&D Act 2000 (as amended), it will be adopted under the P&D Act 2024. The Draft Plan should therefore be a 10-year plan to serve the County from 2027 to 2037.

In this context, the submission notes how the Issues Papers state the new plan is a for 6-year period and acknowledges that the Planning Authority is obliged to commence the preparation of the County Development Plan in the context of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, pending the commencement of Part 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2024. However, the submission asserts it is likely that Part 3 of the Act will commence before the Draft Plan is published and that the Plan will most likely be finally adopted under the new Act.

It is therefore suggested in the submission for the Planning Authority to prepare the Draft Plan that conforms to the requirements of the new Act, and for the Draft Plan to;

- zone sufficient land for a 10-year period (with an additional allowance for headroom).
- identify appropriate areas for Urban Area Plans, Priority Area Plans and Coordinated Area Plans.
- identify appropriate locations for Urban Development Zones and TODs.

2. The Draft Plan should anticipate the update of the RSES for the EMRA region and be consistent with the Revised NPF and population targets in line with the Minister's Section 28 Guidelines of July 2025 rather than the outdated 2019-2031 RSES.

The submission raises concerns that RSES for the Eastern and Midland Regional has not yet been updated to reflect the Revised NPF, asserting that preparing the draft County Development Plan 2027-2033 in the context of the outdated RSES also impacts not only on the quantum of land that needs to be zoned, but also the spatial distribution of the projected increase in population.

3. The Planning Authority should seek to have the Dublin Metropolitan Area extended to align with the proposed extension of the DART to Drogheda, to enable possible future TOD schemes along this route.

The submission refers to the public transport corridors within the MASP area, as outlined in the current 2019-2031 RSES, highlighting that the MASP area includes Dunboyne but does not extend into Meath along the coastal corridor. The submission raises concerns that, as a result, Meath is losing out on substantial incentives (i.e., the Croi Conaithe programme). The submission would like to see the MASP boundary extended to include Drogheda and seeks for Meath County Council to work with EMRA towards extending the Dublin MASP area to the County boundary in Drogheda in the next review of the RSES and to prepare the draft County Development Plan to take maximum advantage of the investment in the DART Coastal project.

4. The Planning Authority should zone the maximum '50% additional provision' to provide an adequate supply of new residential development. For specific historic and geographic reasons Meath is unlikely to be able to achieve the 30% target of new residential development within the established built-up footprint of existing towns and villages.

The submission refers to the housing output in Meath since the current plan came into effect in 2021, as per the 'CSO New Dwelling Completions data' and concurs, it is reasonable to assume the total output of the plan period will be 12,720 units which is just 75% of the 16,958 units targeted in the exiting Core Strategy. Reference is also made to the recently published Section 28 Guidelines on the Housing Growth Requirements highlighting, as per the Guidelines Meath is to target the delivery of 2,942+50% additional provision dwellings per year. The submission therefore suggests the 2027 Meath County Development Plan should zone sufficient land for the development of at least 37,000 dwellings over a 10-year period 2027 -2037.

Emphasis is made to NPO 9, which seeks for at least 30% (11,100 dwellings) of dwellings should be targeted within the existing built-up footprints of existing settlements with the remaining 70% (26,000 dwellings) to be on green field sites. The submission contends there

is a need to zone between 493 – 743 ha of green field lands for residential use to accommodate for the 26,000 dwellings.

It is the belief of the submission that an overview of planning history during the County Development Plan period has identified a total of 252 units permitted in the county on B1 and C1 zoning, representing approximately 2% of the total number of dwellings consented in the County. Therefore, the submission seeks for Meath to zone more appropriately located and planned greenfield sites within the built-up footprint of towns and villages.

5. New greenfield zonings should be located on public transport corridors including lands adjacent to the planned Dart West and Dart Coastal North projects, with new train stations to be developed to maximise the potential of this major infrastructural investment.

The submission has carried out an audit of zoned lands in the County and concurs that the remaining undeveloped zoned lands (including A2-New Residential, Phase II Residential/ Strategic reserve) equates to 195ha. Submission note that several settlements include 'White Land' zoning which is also undeveloped and equates to 264ha. The submission contends if all these lands identified are zoned for residential development in the forthcoming County Development Plan, there will be 459ha zoned 'greenfield' land, emphasizing there is a need for between 40ha and 290ha of additional 'greenfield' zonings to meet the housing targets in the S.28 Guidelines. The submission suggests that this can be done in a sustainable way by targeting growth in new TOD settlements along the planned DART lines. The submission calls on the Planning Authority to identify appropriate locations along the DART lines for new Transport Oriented Development settlements, to be brought forward for consideration by the Government as Urban Development Zones.

6. Enterprise and Employment

Suggests that the Planning Authority zones an appropriate quantum of lands for Enterprise and Employment. The submission suggests that the location of industrial and employment lands be addressed on a regional basis in the next review of the RSES, with Meath in a strong position to attract a considerable percentage of new and relocated employment uses from Dublin.

Access to energy is becoming an increasingly critical consideration in the siting of large industrial enterprises. In this regard the location of the landfall for the main gas interconnector at Gormanston in East Meath and the proposed substation for the North Irish Sea Array windfarm immediately south of the Meath border at Bremore in Fingal offers the opportunity for an Energy Park, where LEUs can cluster in a sustainable way.

In conclusion, the submission believes that a new approach is both necessary and possible, suggesting that Meath looks to the development of at least one planned new settlement in the county, taking advantage of the unprecedented investment in public transport infrastructure in the DART projects**.**

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive welcomes Ballymore's interest in County Meath and acknowledges the submission and engagement at this early stage of the Development Plan review process.

The Council notes the submission's observations regarding the legislative transition between the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2024. The review of the Meath County Development Plan formally commenced on 22 September 2024 under the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, prior to the commencement of Part 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2024, which came into effect on 31 December 2024.

In this regard, the Council notes that Section 69 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 provides a transitional mechanism to ensure continuity and legal certainty. Where notice of the preparation of a Development Plan was issued under the 2000 Act prior to the repeal of the relevant provisions, the plan-making process is required to continue under the new Act until the plan is made. Accordingly, and in line with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and Section 69 of the 2024 Act, the Council is required at this time to progress the County Development Plan as a six-year plan, unless and until otherwise advised.

Notwithstanding the six-year statutory timeframe of the Draft County Development Plan, the Council acknowledges the importance of long-term planning and will consider appropriate mechanisms to support delivery beyond the immediate plan period. This includes the identification, where appropriate, of areas suitable for Urban Area Plans, Priority Area Plans and Coordinated Area Plans, as well as the strategic consideration of locations for Urban Development Zones and Transport-Oriented Development, informed by national and regional policy, infrastructure capacity and settlement strategy.

The Chief Executive acknowledges the submission and notes the concerns raised regarding the absence, at this time, of a revised Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region. The Council recognises that the lack of an updated RSES presents a key challenge in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan, particularly in aligning population growth, housing provision and spatial distribution with the revised National Planning Framework.

Pending the publication and adoption of a revised RSES, the Council will rely on the Section 28 National Planning Framework Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines (July 2025) to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy, including population

and housing targets, in accordance with statutory requirements. The Draft County Development Plan will be reviewed and, where necessary, updated to reflect the revised RSES once it is published.

The comments raised in relation to the potential extension of the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) boundary, including reference to eligibility for programmes such as Cónaí Cónaí / Croí Cónaithe, are noted and will be taken into consideration. The delineation of the MASP boundary is a matter for regional and national policy through the RSES review process, and the Council will continue to engage with the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly in this regard.

With respect to the provision of additional residential zoning headroom, the Council notes the submission's support for the 50% 'additional provision' allowance provided for under the Section 28 Guidelines. The Council intends to zone the maximum quantum of lands allowable under this additional provision, in order to increase market choice, support deliverability and account for circumstances where zoned lands may not come forward due to factors outside the control of the Planning Authority, thereby supporting increased housing output.

In relation to Transport-Oriented Development, the submission's request to identify locations along DART corridors for potential new TOD settlements and Urban Development Zones is noted. In this context, the Council advises that in May 2023, it submitted 17 candidate TOD locations to the National Transport Authority and relevant stakeholders, including settlements located along existing rail lines traversing County Meath and the planned Dunboyne–Navan Rail Link. Of these, Dunboyne and lands south of Drogheda were confirmed as TOD locations, with an informal consensus emerging that Navan would also be considered an appropriate TOD location. These matters will continue to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan, subject to statutory assessment and national and regional policy direction.

The comments on enterprise and employment are noted. The Council is reviewing the delivery of employment-zoned lands across the County to inform the employment zoning methodology for the new Development Plan, which must align with the provisions of the Development Plan Guidelines for Local Authorities (2022). This will consider the need for employment zoning or rezoning across County Meath.

Regarding Large Energy Users (LEUs), it is noted that the Government has recently published a Large Energy User Action Plan (LEAP) that aims to locate new large energy demand near renewable energy sources. In anticipation of this, the Council is progressing a variation to the existing Development Plan, whereby a preferred, suitable site has been identified, based on studies undertaken in consultation with 3rd-party consultants, for the co-location of LEUs. The outcome of this variation will be incorporated into the new Development Plan.

The Chief Executive notes the submission's view that a new strategic approach to growth is required, including consideration of a planned new settlement in County Meath to capitalise on significant public transport infrastructure investment associated with the DART projects. This matter is noted and will be considered in greater detail through a series of evidence-based assessments, including spatial planning, infrastructure capacity, transport accessibility and environmental evaluation, which would inform the identification of an optimal and definitive location for any such settlement, in accordance with national and regional policy and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

All of these matters will continue to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan, subject to statutory assessment and national and regional policy direction.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-113: Stephen Little & Associates on behalf of Lydon

Summary of Submission:

The submission received from Stephen Little & Associates covers the following topics:

Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033

Outlining how the First Revision to the National Planning Framework (NPF) has dramatically increased the need to deliver new homes in Ireland in order to meet the projected growth of the Country. The submission acknowledges the Section 28 Guidelines 'NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirement', which has identified the need for Council's to consider a 10–12-year horizon in order to reflect the increased Housing Supply Requirements set out in the NPF. It is also noted that the Planning & Development Act 2024, as amended, provides for a 10-year horizon for Development Plans.

Overview of Lydon

The submission asserts that Lydon has a proven track record in delivering large-scale residential housing projects and to date has supplied over 4,000 new homes in communities throughout the Greater Dublin Area. The submission outlines a number of Lydon's current development sites and recently completed sites in Dublin, Meath and Kildare.

Housing Supply

Reference is made to the current Meath County Development Plan outlining that the plan sets a housing supply target of 16,956 units or 2,826 units per annum. The submission acknowledges that under the first revision of the NPF and the NPF Section 28 Guidelines, this target will be 26,478 units or,4,413 units per annum, or a minimum of 44,130 units in the context of a 10-year plan. The submission contends that since 2021, according to statistics obtained from CSO, 7,013 permissions were granted, 7,068 units have been completed, and 8,889 units have commenced. The submission asserts that there remains a

shortfall of housing supply in Co. Meath as a result, and there is clearly a demand for additional housing units to be delivered in Co. Meath.

The submission has addressed the following questions raised in the Strategic Issues Paper.

In response to '*where should new housing be located without contributing to urban sprawl and ensuring consolidated sustainable growth*' the submission believes that new housing should be located in areas that can support compact sustainable development, ideally within or adjoining existing built-up areas where infrastructure and services are already in place.

In regards to '*What issues relating to housing should be addressed*' the submission contends the most important is the supply of new homes, which in many cases is held back by the availability of zoned and serviced land. The submission refers to the Revised NPF Guidelines which require planning authorities to consider how to address zoning and phasing over a 10-year period of development. The submission outlines there is a demand for housing in Kilcock due to its strategic location and rail connectivity, yet the current land use zoning limits the availability of zoned and serviceable sites.

In regard to 'how the plan can best promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport', the submission suggests that the Plan prioritise the integration of new housing within walking distance of existing transport infrastructure, particularly rail. In the case of Kilcock, the train station represents an important public transport asset. Locating new residential development within a reasonable distance of the station would directly support a shift away from private car use. This approach aligns with the principles of Transit-Oriented Development and is strongly supported by both the NPF and RSES as well as the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines.

Chief Executive Response

The Council acknowledges the importance of ensuring that settlements develop in a sustainable manner through the provision of an adequate supply of lands to support high-quality residential development, supported by appropriate social and community infrastructure and amenities. The presence of a train station Kilcock is a significant asset to the town and it is acknowledged that locating new residential development within a reasonable distance of the station would directly support a shift away from private car use. Accordingly, lands in this location would be prioritised for zoning, subject to these containing the necessary social and physical infrastructure.

A Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. This audit determines serviced and serviceable lands that could accommodate residential development in areas like Kilcock. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands

coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

In parallel, a Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is also currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-114: Stephen Little & Associates on behalf of Lydon

Summary of Submission:

The submission received from Stephen Little & Associates covers the following topics:

Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033

Outlining how the First Revision to the National Planning Framework (NPF) has dramatically increased the need to deliver new homes in Ireland in order to meet the projected growth of the Country. The submission acknowledges the Section 28 Guidelines 'NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirement', which has identified the need for Council's to consider a 10–12-year horizon in order to reflect the increased Housing Supply Requirements set out in the NPF. It is also noted that the Planning & Development Act 2024, as amended, provides for a 10-year horizon for Development Plans.

The submission also contends the age profile of those 55+ is showing a significant increase over the next decades and that will also increase the need for independent living/retirement villages to be delivered to cater for this demand in society.

Overview of Lydon

The submission asserts that Lydon has a proven track record in delivering large-scale residential housing projects and to date have supplied over 4,000 new homes in communities throughout the Greater Dublin Area. The submission outlines a number of Lydon's currently development sites and recently completed sites in Dublin, Meath and Kildare.

Housing Supply

Reference is made to the current Meath County Development Plan outlining that the plan sets a housing supply target of 16,956 units or 2,826 units per annum. The submission acknowledges that under the first revision of the NPF and the NPF Section 28 Guidelines, this target will be 26,478 units or,4,413 units per annum, or a minimum of 44,130 units in the context of a 10-year plan. The submission contends that since 2021, according to statistics obtained from CSO, 7,013 permissions were granted, 7,068 units have been completed, and 8,889 units have commenced. The submission asserts there is clearly a demand for additional housing units to be delivered in Co. Meath.

The submission also highlights new ERSI report projects that long-term residential care and home support requirements will increase by at least 60% by 2040.

83The submission has addressed the following questions raised in the Strategic Issues Paper;

In response to '*what measures can be taken to encourage greater delivery of community facilities',* the submission suggests there is need for more age-friendly infrastructure with the population of those aged 65 and over in Meath growing by 30% between 2016-2022.

In regards to '*what types of homes are required to meet future demand, and how should the new Plan ensure housing choice for all residents'* the submission suggests a broader mix of homes will be required, including adaptable housing for changing household needs, smaller units for younger residents, family-sized homes, and specialised accommodation such as independent and assisted living options for older people. The plan must ensure housing choice for all by encouraging mixed tenure and mixed typology development embedding universal design and locating homes where services and infrastructure can support them.

Lastly, the submission acknowledges that Meath's population has increase by 13.2% between 2016-2022 and asserts, the county is experiencing sustained pressure for housing, and the plan must recognise the importance of a wide range of services, amenities, and employment opportunities to support a balance and health quality of life for its communities.

Chief Executive Response

The submission made by Stephen Little and Associates references the First Revision to the National Planning Framework and associated Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines, noting the increased requirements for housing delivery nationally and the extended 10-year horizon for Development Plans under the Planning and Development Act 2024. It contends that these changes highlight the need for a proactive and plan-led approach to housing provisions in County Meath. Chapter 5 of Part 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 details the statutory process for the preparation and making of a Development Plan and the information required to be included in same. Under this legislation, the duration of a Development Plan would be 10 years. It is acknowledged that under the provisions in Part 3 of the 2024 Planning and Development Act that the lifetime of Development Plans will be 10 years. However, this Development Plan is being prepared under the 2000 Act (as amended), prior to the commencement of the relevant sections of the act and therefore will have a life of 6 years.

In relation to the need for more age-friendly living and infrastructure, the submission highlights the need to respond to demographics. In this regard, the current Meath County

Development plan, as amended by Variation 3, includes a requirement that between 15 – 30% of all new dwellings and apartments be designed as age-friendly lifetime adaptable homes in order to future proof housing stock and support independent living. The Draft County Development Plan will continue to support age-friendly housing provision and will seek to ensure that such development is appropriately located near community infrastructure and local services.

The Draft County Development Plan will also continue to support the delivery of a balanced and diverse housing mix, including family housing, smaller units and apartments, to meet the needs of different household types and to support the creation of sustainable and inclusive communities.

In regard to ensuring a wide range of services and amenities in settlements, a Social Infrastructure Audit is currently underway for the county to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure, and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-115: CWPA Planning & Architecture

Summary of Submission:

The submission received from CWPA Planning & Architecture notes that the current Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, recognises the importance of providing care for the elderly in a variety of different forms as set out in a number of different sections of the Plan.

The submission emphasises the following policy and sections from the current County Development Plan:

- **SH POL 6** – acknowledges the importance of encouraging semi-independent living amongst other forms of specialist care.
- **Section 7.6.2.2** - recognises the significant increase of people within the County of Meath aged 65 and over, and the importance of the '*Age Friendly Ireland*' initiative.
- **Section 11.5.9** – in recognition of the Governments Joint Policy Statement, '*Housing Options for our Ageing Population*,' which was launched in February 2019.
- **Section 11.7.2** – acknowledges the need for step down housing, residential care homes, retirement homes, nursing homes and retirement villages.
- **DM Pol 24** – requires that residential care and step-down homes are to be located in towns and villages in close proximity to the availability of services.

The submission welcomes Meath County Councils commitment to providing a broad variety of accommodation options for the older person within the existing towns and villages of the County, it is respectfully requested that the Council consider alternative options in certain

circumstances. This for example could include lands which form part of the immediate outskirts of existing rural towns and villages which may be suitable for certain forms of development such as independent living or retirement villages. The submission recognises that such sites typically would also have to be in position to connect to existing settlements with appropriate footpaths and cycleways. The submission contends the advantage of including such sites rather than just sites within the existing built-up footprint is that there is an opportunity to avail of sites which can offer a form of rural tranquillity for future residents which typically may not be as achievable within the built environment. In addition, the submission also asserts that an out-of-town location would likely deliver lower unit costs and provide greater potential for additional space required to host wider family requirements and grandchildren in particular.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive notes the submission received from CWPA Planning & Architecture and acknowledges the support expressed for the policies and objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, in relation to the provision of accommodation options for older people.

In relation to the alternative locations on the immediate outskirts of towns and villages, the Chief Executive advises that the Development Plan already provides flexibility through its settlement hierarchy, zoning objectives and development management standards. These provisions allow for the consideration of suitable proposals on a case-by-case basis.

The Chief Executive further notes that under Variation 3 of the Meath County Development Plan, a requirement was incorporated into the County Development Plan to ensure between 15-30% of all new dwellings and apartments in developments of 10 units or more are designed to be Age Friendly Lifetime Adaptable Homes having regard to our ageing population and trends. This was carried out to align with updated age-friendly housing policy. This variation strengths the County Development Plan by further supporting age-friendly communities and the provision of suitable accommodation for older people across a range of housing types and settlements.

The Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033 will look to further strengthen the provision of housing for our ageing population by requiring 30% of all new dwellings and apartments to be designed to be Age-Friendly Lifetime Adaptable Homes. In this regard, it will continue to promote age friendly communities and support the delivery of a range of appropriate housing options for older people.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-116: Michael Dowling
Summary of Submission:
The submission received from a long-term resident of Enfield expresses how Enfield has developed considerably and continues to grow as an attractive residential location due to its proximity to Dublin and expanding transport links. However, the submission highlights that despite ongoing development in the area, there remains a notable shortage of recreational and community facilities for young people who are not involved in GAA or soccer. Local clubs such as the GAA and Enfield FC provide excellent amenities for residents, however, considering that Enfield's two schools accommodate around 1,300 students and nearby schools in Baconstown and Longwood which accommodate approximately 945 students, adding significantly to the local youth population. The submission estimates that approximately 53% of children have no access to alternative sporting or recreational facilities. Therefore, the submission proposes the development of a multi-functional community centre in Enfield that would cater for people of all ages and interests, and seeks for the development to include a sports hall, climbing walls, badminton, paddle ball, table tennis, pool tables, chess, health centre, kitchen, meeting spaces for teenagers and senior citizens, computer centre, art studio, in-door bowls and a 300 seat auditorium. It is also sought for the following outdoor facilities to include a car park, athletics track, tennis courts, basketball court, golf driving range and golf practice area. The submission suggests that planning permission for nearby housing developments be granted on the condition that the landowner sells a parcel of land to Meath County Council for the purpose of a community development. It is respectfully requested that Meath County Council give serious consideration to this proposal as part of the ongoing Meath County Development Plan and welcomes the opportunity to discuss in further consultation process.
Chief Executive Response
The submission highlights the need for more community facilities within Enfield particularly a multi-functional community centre that would cater for all ages groups and different interests. A Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-117: Kevin Corrigan
Summary of Submission:
The submission focuses on creating a more sustainable, family-friendly, and liveable town, seeking for the new Development Plan to represent a fundamental step-change in delivery,

moving from vague aspirations to specific, funded, and fast-tracked projects that make a tangible difference to daily life.

Community Facilities and Public Space

It is strongly recommended in the submission for the Council to address the critical deficit in community infrastructure in Navan. Asserting that new residential developments have not been adequately matched with social amenities. The submission raises concerns over the severe lack of safe, modern and accessible community facilities in Navan acknowledging that specific capital investment is needed for new, high-quality, inclusive playgrounds designed for a range of ages, a dedicated community centre that can serve as a hub for local groups and safe designated areas for teenagers to socialise. The submission further requests for the plan to commit to allocating more public space to the community, this includes the creation of small urban parks and the installation of benches in residential areas and along walking routes.

Sustainable Transport and Traffic

The submission highlights that the previous Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 acknowledged that the current transport trends are unsustainable and seeks for the new plan to translate that acknowledgement into legally binding action.

The submission makes the following observations regarding sustainable travel:

- Urgent traffic calming measures are required throughout Navan and the County to facilitate active travel and truly promote people-orientated communities. A prime example of where this could be successfully implemented is on Swan Lane in Navan, where vulnerable road users are put in danger every day from having to share the road with speeding motorist.
- Cycling infrastructure remains disjointed and is not being delivered at the required pace. The Plan must accelerate the delivery of high-quality, segregated, and connected infrastructure that adheres to international best practice standards.
- The Plan must adopt legally binding modal share targets for walking and cycling, specifically for the County's nine Decarbonisation Zones, including Navan.
- The provision of the Navan Rail Link is an essential piece of national infrastructure. The new County Development Plan must ensure the delivery of this project within its 2027-2033 lifetime, not as a distant aspiration.
- Meath County Council must actively support multi-modal travel by ensuring adequate provision is made on regional and local buses to accommodate bikes, either inside or on external racks.

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

The submission reiterates their strong support to the Draft Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 and requests the inclusion of the following specific actions to strengthen the new Development Plan.

- Implement an absolute ban on the use of glyphosate weedkiller across the entire County.
- The Plan must mandate the default use of native wildflower seeding on all newly created verges, particularly along greenways and road verges.
- The Council must commit to systematically expanding wildflower meadows on all suitable public lands, replacing sterile, close-cut grass areas with biodiverse habitats.
- Outline a clear, ongoing support system for local community biodiversity and climate-focused groups, including access to funding, resources, and technical guidance from the Biodiversity and Climate Action Officers.
- Create a formal network that actively engages Tidy Towns, school groups, resident associations, and local businesses to facilitate the sharing of best practices.
- Schedule more community awareness events, such as bat walks, hedgerow mapping, and wildflower identification sessions, throughout the year, not just during National Biodiversity Week.
- Recommends the development of new infrastructure to improve public access to areas of rich biodiversity. An example would be the construction of a boardwalk from Kilcarn Bridge to Buvinda House, creating a safe and accessible route through a biodiverse area.

Chief Executive Response

Community Services:

In relation to community services, a Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

In line with the NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines 2025, planning authorities are now required to undertake Settlement Capacity Audits to identify serviced/serviceable lands in all relevant settlements, specifying enabling infrastructure, for example wastewater network or treatment infrastructure, energy infrastructure, roads or public transport capacity and in the case of enabling social infrastructure, schools provision and community facilities. This work is currently under way by Meath County Council and will inform the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033.

In this context, the preparation of both the Social Infrastructure Audit and the Settlement Capacity Audit will provide an evidence-based assessment of existing and future capacity,

enabling Meath County Council to identify the most appropriate zoning location for additional community infrastructure within the County.

Sustainable Transport and Traffic

In relation to transport and movement, the concerns are noted**.** A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing factor for travel demand. Meath County Council's aims to provide safe, efficient and accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims, and this will be reflected in the Draft Plan.

The Written Statements of all settlements in the current CDP includes a set of measurable and achievable targets for each settlement to track progress in achieving our climate change goals through the modal shift. These targets will be reviewed and updated for the next CDP period**.**

The comments made in relation to the proposed Navan Rail Line are very much welcomed. The Draft Plan will continue to support the proposed Navan Rail Line. The Council recognises the importance of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in maximising the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure spaces in close proximity to high quality transport services. The Draft Plan will include policies and objectives in support of rail-focused development consolidation.

Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure:

It is noted that the Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 has recently been adopted by the Council. The measures from this Biodiversity Action Plan will be incorporate into the new Development Plan, where relevant, in consultation with the Council's Biodiversity Officer. Measures such as banning weedkiller are however beyond the remit of the Development Plan. There is a section in the current CDP, Section 8.19 titled *Green Infrastructure* which also contains a number of supportive policies and objectives in relation to the protection and management of green infrastructure. This section will be reviewed and updated if required in the Draft Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-118: Sharon Burke
Summary of Submission
The author of the submission outlines concern with a proposed port development at Gormanston and raises the following points:

1. Previous Attempts of a Port
   Gormanston shares the Delvin River with Fingal County Council and therefore no port development can take place without being approved by Fingal County Council too. A previous plan to build a port in Bremore was not carried out as Fingal County Council acknowledged the area's archaeological importance. The port was supposed to be moved down the coast; however, now developers are seeking to place the port near where it was originally planned.
2. Impact of Marine Life
   A port would harm marine life, birds and mammals. Coastwatch Ireland warns it could cause coastal erosion at Bettystown and Laytown. The area is vital for migratory birds, including red-throated divers and Brent geese.
3. Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
   Gormanston has rich offshore and onshore archaeological remains, including multiple shipwreck (e.g., SS Downshire, Belle Hill), prehistoric sites, and post-medieval settlements. Bremore Point contains passage tombs over 5,000 years old. The area has exceptional historic and archaeological significance that must be protected.
4. Loss of recreational amenity
   Gormanston Beach is used by many people living on the east coast. The beach is one of the only large recreational amenities that Stamullen, Gormanston and Julianstown have. The beach is used for many activities including fishing, running, walking, horse riding, swimming and family time.
5. Visual impact
   Gormanston beach is an area of natural beauty. The proposed port and the large warehousing will lead to industrialising a rural area. Nighttime lighting will also have impact on many species within the area.
6. No need for the port
   The east coast of Ireland is already serviced by several ports, and no other European Country has so many ports within such a close proximity.

The submission further states that approving the port without independent studies on the impacts or necessity would be reckless, with consequences that would be seen by current and future generations.

Chief Executive Response

The concerns raised regarding the potential development of a port at Gormanston are noted. Any future proposal of this scale would be subject to a separate statutory consent process, including full environmental assessment, public consultation, and engagement with all relevant authorities.

Part 3

1. Previous Port Proposals and Cross-Boundary Considerations The submission's reference to earlier port proposals in the wider Bremore/Gormanston area is acknowledged. Any development straddling the Meath-Fingal boundary would require coordinated assessment and decision-making by both local authorities, as well as compliance with national planning policy and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

2. Marine Ecology and Coastal Processes The concerns raised regarding potential impacts on marine habitats, protected species, and coastal erosion are noted. The coastline at Gormanston, Laytown and Bettystown contains sensitive ecological features and is subject to national and European environmental designations. Any future proposal for significant coastal development would be required to undergo rigorous environmental assessment, including Appropriate Assessment and Coastal Modelling, to ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives.

3. Archaeology and Cultural Heritage The submission highlights the archaeological and cultural significance of the Gormanston-Bremore coastline, including recorded shipwrecks, prehistoric sites, and other heritage assets. These sensitivities are recognised. The Development Plan will continue to protect archaeological sites and cultural landscapes in accordance with national policy and the statutory responsibilities of the National Monuments Service.

4. Recreational and Amenity Value The importance of Gormanston Beach as a valued recreational amenity for local communities is acknowledged. The Development Plan seeks to safeguard coastal amenities, public access, and the natural character of the coastline. Any proposal that could materially impact these amenities would be subject to detailed assessment through the appropriate statutory processes.

5. Visual and Landscape Impacts The concerns regarding potential visual intrusion, industrialisation of a rural coastal landscape, and impacts from lighting are noted. The Development Plan includes policies to protect the visual and environmental quality of the coastline. Any future large-scale development proposal would require a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and would be evaluated against these policies.

6. Strategic Need for a Port The submission's view that there is no strategic requirement for an additional port on the east coast is noted. The identification of ports of national or regional significance is a matter for national policy and is not determined through the County Development Plan process. Should any such project be advanced by Government or private promoters in the future, it would be subject to separate statutory evaluation, including assessment of need, alternatives, and environmental impacts.

All issues raised in the submission are acknowledged and will be considered in the preparation of the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The Development

Plan will continue to protect the environmental, cultural, and recreational value of the Meath coastline while ensuring alignment with national and regional policy frameworks.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-119: John Spain Associates on behalf of GEM Construction
Summary of Submission:

The submission details that the next Meath County Development Plan (2027–2033) must zone significantly more land for housing to meet increased national and regional population and housing targets. National policy now requires c.55,000 new homes annually to 2034, with Meath's target rising to 2,942 homes per year. This means zoning capacity for at least 33,506 homes over the next 13 years, potentially increasing to c.50,259 when additional headroom is included.

Drogheda, designated as a Regional Growth Centre in the RSES and strategically located on the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor, is identified as a key location to accommodate a substantial share of this growth. The submission details that the south of Drogheda is particularly suitable for new development due to:

- proximity to existing and planned transport infrastructure (rail, DART+ Coastal North, southern orbital route)
- availability of serviced or easily serviceable lands
- consolidated landownership enabling coordinated masterplanning
- the need to rebalance growth between the northern and southern environs
- alignment with compact growth and transport-oriented development principles

The author, an established housebuilder, contends that some existing zoned lands in Meath are underperforming or unsuitable and should be reconsidered in favour of more deliverable, well-located sites such as those in south Drogheda.

The submission responds to key Issues Paper questions on Core Strategy, Settlement & Housing, and Transport & Movement, emphasising sustainable, compact, infrastructure-led growth. It highlights Drogheda's strong public transport links, community facilities, and economic role, arguing that the town—especially its southern area—should be prioritised for future residential and mixed-use development.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission made by GEM Construction in respect of the Core Strategy and settlement and housing strategy for Drogheda and the wider County.

The issues raised in this submission are noted, particularly the emphasis on aligning the forthcoming County Development Plan with the revised National Planning Framework

(NPF), the NPF Implementation Guidelines (2025), and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). The submission highlights the significantly increased national and county-level housing targets and the need to ensure that sufficient, appropriately located lands are identified to meet future population and housing requirements in a sustainable manner.

The recognition of Drogheda's role as a designated Regional Growth Centre within the RSES is acknowledged. The strategic importance of the town, its location on the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor, and the presence of existing and planned transport infrastructure including the DART+ Coastal North project and the proposed southern orbital route are all relevant considerations in the preparation of the Draft Plan. The submission's request for a greater focus on the southern environs of Drogheda, including the potential for compact, infrastructure-led growth, is also noted.

The Council further notes the submission's observations regarding the adequacy of zoned residential land supply and the need to ensure sufficient serviced and serviceable lands to meet revised housing targets over the plan period. The spatial distribution of housing growth and future residential zoning will be informed by the Core Strategy and the Settlement Capacity Audit.

In this regard, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit determines serviced and serviceable lands across the County that could accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

The Vision Document submitted in respect of lands in the southern Drogheda area is acknowledged. Regarding the site-specific land that the author deems suitable for residential development, it should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. Site specific submissions cannot be considered at pre-draft stage. Such submissions should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

In relation to transport and movement, the comments are noted. The Council recognises the strategic location of Drogheda and East Meath along the Dublin – Belfast corridor. The Council also recognises the existing availability of high-quality public transport mentioned in the submission resulting in Drogheda having a high level of accessibility which is suitable for compact, transport-oriented residential development in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives.

The Council also recognises the importance of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in maximising the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure spaces in close proximity to high quality transport services. Two settlements have been identified as a strategic location for TOD, with sites in Drogheda and Dunboyne selected. The Draft Plan will include policies and objectives in support of rail-focused development consolidation.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-120: Róisín de Blacam

Summary of Submission

The author shares concerns about the village of Dunshaughlin where the author resides, highlighting key problems related to planning and development. The main issues identified as part of this submission are severe traffic congestion that affects the village almost every day, dangerous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists on exit roads, and a lack of green spaces to support the growing population.

The author references and commends a past decision by Meath County Council to include a roundabout at the M3 Motorway, Exit 6 to the south to a future link road connecting with the R147. The author suggests that the area zoned for 'Enterprise & Employment' could also include walking and cycling tracks and additional green spaces.

The author contends that this development would improve access to major roads, schools, and sports facilities while enhancing community connectivity and supporting the Town Centre First Plan. The author acknowledges the importance of upcoming development decisions for the village's future.

Chief Executive Response

The comments made in relation to lack of green space are noted. For information purposes, a Social Infrastructure Audit is currently underway for the county to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

The issues highlighted in regard to transport congestion, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure are also noted. It should be noted that there is an objective and indicative route outlined on the land use zoning map in the current CDP to support the delivery of the mentioned roadway - DNS OBJ 10 *To support the continuation of the Western Distributor Link Road from its position west of the Dunshaughlin Interchange to the R147 south of the town.* It is also an existing objective to support improvements in pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the town - DNS OBJ 8 *To support improvements in the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in the town that will improve connectivity and permeability and promote more sustainable modes of transport.* A key priority of the

current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing factor for travel demand. Meath County Council aims to provide safe, efficient and accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims, and this will be reflected in the Draft Plan. Enhancing movement in Dunshaughlin will remain a key priority of the Council.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-121: Harmony Solar Ireland Limited

Summary of Submission:

The author, Harmony Solar Ireland Limited has submitted comments on the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033, focusing on the "Infrastructure & Utilities" section. The author notes that the Strategic Issues Paper is an important step in this process, aimed at shaping the Pre-Draft stage of the development plan. Key policies influencing renewable energy development, including solar power, are outlined by EU and Irish national regulations, which set ambitious targets for renewable energy usage.

The author outlines that Meath County Council (MCC) is required to align its Development Plan with specified renewable energy capacity allocations, ensuring that local strategies meet national goals. Specifically, there is a target to produce up to 8 GW of solar power by 2030 as per Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25), which needs to be integrated into the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and regional Renewable Electricity Strategies (RRES) in line with National Policy no.74 of the revised National Planning Framework (NPF). The author reaffirms that MCC as the local authority are required to ensure their development plan aligns with MW capacity allocations and is consistent with the RSES National Policy no.75.

The author of this submission draws attention to two primary questions from the Strategic Issues Paper that address renewable energy development:

1)"How to promote greater use of renewable energy sources?"

2)"Where should renewable energy developments be located given the national targets for the sector?"

The author suggests that proximity to existing grid infrastructure should be prioritised for new projects to mitigate delays. However, there should also be a careful assessment to ensure that viable development sites are not overlooked based on grid capacity alone. The author proposes to adopt a top-down approach, identifying areas unsuitable

for solar PV development, such as conservation sites and regions of significant biodiversity, an example can be excluding Natura 2000 conservation sites such as a Special Area of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

The author contends that the integration of solar farms in agricultural settings is encouraged, as they can coexist with farming activities without harming land quality. The new County Development Plan (CDP) should highlight the compatibility of solar PV developments with agricultural practices.

The author Harmony Solar Ireland Limited calls for recognition of renewable energy as a priority land use, the designation of areas unsuitable for solar PV, and acknowledgment of its compatibility with agriculture. The company seeks continued involvement as a stakeholder in the planning process.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council welcomes the submission received from Harmony Solar Ireland Ltd regarding the topic of Utilities and Infrastructure. Harmony Solar Ireland Ltd recognise the key policies influencing renewable energy development, including solar power, that are outlined by EU and Irish national legislation, which set ambitious targets for renewable energy usage.

Meath County Council acknowledges that there is a significant need for renewable energy development and already has developed policy in relation to this in the current County Development Plan.

INF OBJ 39 *"To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by facilitating the development and exploitation of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal, hydro and bio-energy at suitable locations within the County where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities so as to provide for further residential and enterprise development within the county."*

The Council intends to carry this policy forward to the next iteration of the draft County Development Plan. Informed by the Meath Climate Action Plan, the Plan will support the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient county through compact growth, sustainable mobility, renewable energy development, and climate adaptation measures. The Council will plan for renewable energy capacity allocations arising from the RSES review and will strengthen policies to support wind, solar, and other low-carbon energy sources.

The Council area ware of National Policy Objective 75 in the Revised NPF 2025 which sttaes' *Local Authorities shall plan for the delivery of Target Power Capacity (MW) allocations consistent with the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, through their City and County Development Plans'.* The Planning Authority will ensure, when making the County Development Plan, that the renewable energy aspects presented take

account of and are consistent with the RSES Climate Action Strategy, the National Climate Action Plan and the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. The Planning Authority are aware that each Regional Assembly will prepare a Regional Renewable Electricity Strategy (RRES) as per NPO 75, whereby additional detail will be outlined on how the regional renewable electricity capacity allocations for the region can be best achieved in a consistent and sustainable manner, including the identification of specific targets for each of the constituent local authorities. The Council will engage with EMRA regarding the specific requirements and timeframes in this regard.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-124: McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultant on behalf of McGarrell Reilly Group

Summary of Submission:

This submission is made on behalf of the McGarrell Reilly Group, an active residential developer and landowner in County Meath, in response to the Strategic Issues Paper for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. The submission is strategic in nature and focuses primarily on housing delivery, Core Strategy alignment, and the implications of recent national policy updates for land supply and settlement planning in the county.

The submission places significant emphasis on the revised National Planning Framework (April 2025) and associated Section 28 NPF Implementation Guidelines – Housing Growth Requirements, alongside the Government publications Future Forty and Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025–2030. It argues that these documents collectively represent a fundamental shift in national housing policy, requiring development plans to plan for substantially increased and sustained housing delivery beyond previous projections.

A central theme of the submission is the need for the forthcoming Development Plan to provide sufficient zoned residential land, including the application of up to 50% additional provision (headroom) to account for historic under-activation of zoned lands. The submission states that, for Meath, this translates into a revised annual housing requirement of approximately 4,413 units for the period 2025–2034 when uplift is applied. It highlights that housing completions in Meath in recent years have been approximately 40% below adopted Development Plan targets, demonstrating a persistent gap between planned capacity and actual delivery.

The submission argues that the Core Strategy must move beyond aggregate zoning figures and adopt a delivery-focused approach, prioritising land that is capable of early activation. It emphasises the importance of identifying and sequencing Tier 1 lands for immediate development and ensuring that Tier 2 lands are supported by clear infrastructure

investment pathways within the plan period. The submission stresses that headroom should be treated as a practical delivery mechanism rather than a theoretical buffer.

In discussing Future Forty, the submission highlights the concept of long-term "pent-up demand" and the structural nature of Ireland's housing shortage. It notes that falling household sizes, sustained inward migration, and strong labour market demand, particularly in counties within the Dublin Metropolitan Area, will continue to drive elevated housing demand well beyond the lifetime of a single development plan. The submission contends that Meath, due to its proximity to Dublin, will experience disproportionate growth pressures and must plan accordingly.

The submission also draws attention to the relationship between housing supply and economic competitiveness, referencing Future Forty's analysis of how under-supply constrains labour mobility, increases costs, and undermines productivity. It argues that housing should be treated as critical economic infrastructure and that Development Plan policy should facilitate, rather than constrain, large-scale and continuous delivery.

In addressing Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025–2030, the submission highlights the increased expectations placed on local authorities to align zoning, infrastructure provision, and delivery mechanisms. It stresses the need for Development Plans to demonstrate credible pathways for activating zoned land, supported by water, wastewater, transport, energy, and digital infrastructure. The submission also references the national emphasis on mixed tenure delivery, including social, affordable, cost-rental, and rightsizing housing, and the need for development plans to support this diversity through appropriate zoning and policy frameworks.

At a settlement level, while explicitly acknowledging that the Strategic Issues stage is not appropriate for site-specific rezoning requests, the submission highlights the strategic role of Dunboyne and Kilcock, both located within the Dublin Metropolitan Area. It notes that Dunboyne has already exceeded its current Development Plan housing allocation and that population growth has surpassed projected figures. Similarly, Kilcock is identified as a well-connected, rail-served settlement with a strong delivery record and capacity to accommodate additional compact growth. The submission recommends that population and housing allocations for both settlements be recalibrated in line with revised national and regional projections.

Overall, the submission calls for a Development Plan that is evidence-based, implementation-focused, and responsive to updated national housing policy, with sufficient zoned and serviced land, infrastructure alignment, monitoring mechanisms, and flexibility to address sustained housing demand over the plan period and beyond.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission made by MH Planning on behalf of the McGarrell Reilly Group in relation to the strategic direction of the Draft County

Development Plan 2027–2033, with particular regard to housing delivery, Core Strategy alignment and the implications of updated national policy on residential land supply.

The Council notes the submission references to the revised National Planning Framework, the Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines and the Government's housing policy Housing for All / Delivering Homes, Building Communities, and recognises the significant increase in housing delivery targets for County Meath over the forthcoming plan period. These updated national requirements will be fully considered in the preparation of the Core Strategy and housing strategy for the Draft County Development Plan.

The Council further notes the submission's emphasis on the need to ensure a sufficient quantum of residentially zoned and serviceable land, including the application of the additional headroom provision, in order to support sustained housing delivery and avoid constraints on supply. The Core Strategy will be required to demonstrate consistency with national and regional policy, including the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and will set out an evidence-based spatial distribution of population growth and housing allocations across the settlement hierarchy.

In this regard, the Council notes the submission's position regarding the importance of deliverability and early activation of lands. These matters will be considered through the preparation of the Core Strategy and informed by supporting evidence, including housing demand projections, infrastructure capacity assessments and the Settlement Capacity Audit. The Settlement Capacity Audit has identified lands with differing levels of infrastructure readiness and development potential, including Tier 1 lands capable of short-term delivery and Tier 2 lands suitable for medium-term development, to support a sequential and deliverable approach to zoning and housing supply over the lifetime of the Development Plan.

The Council also notes the submission's comments regarding aggregate zoning figures, monitoring mechanisms and the relationship between housing supply, economic competitiveness and infrastructure provision. The Draft County Development Plan will seek to provide a balanced policy framework which supports sustainable levels of housing delivery, compact growth, and the efficient use of serviced land, while ensuring that residential development is aligned with the timely provision of supporting infrastructure and services.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-125: Richard & Patricia Thorpe

Summary of Submission:

Kilcarn, Navan

This submission relates to the pre-draft review of the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033 and focuses on settlement strategy and housing provision in Navan, identified as a Key Town within the Core Region under the National Planning Framework and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

The submission outlines Navan's strategic role as a major service and employment centre within County Meath, highlighting its designation as a Key Town, its population growth, young demographic profile, and its function as the county town. Reference is made to Navan's location on the M3 corridor, its existing public transport services, and the progression of proposals to extend the railway line from Dunboyne to Navan.

The submitter addresses the Settlement and Housing question posed in the Strategic Issues Paper, specifically regarding the appropriate location of new housing in a manner that avoids urban sprawl and promotes consolidated growth. The submission sets out a series of principles for identifying suitable lands for residential development, including proximity to existing built-up areas, availability or feasibility of servicing, accessibility to services and amenities, protection of environmental and cultural assets, promotion of sustainable transport and active travel, and support for compact, live-work town models consistent with the concept of the 15-minute city.

The submission identifies lands at Kilcarn, Navan, edged red on the accompanying map, and requests that Meath County Council consider how these lands could assist in achieving the strategic settlement and housing objectives of the County Development Plan. It is acknowledged within the submission that zoning matters cannot be considered at the pre-draft stage, and the submission is framed accordingly.

The submission concludes by requesting that the general principles and considerations outlined be taken into account in the preparation of the Draft Meath County Development Plan.

Dunshaughlin

The submission states that the author has a proven track record in the delivery and operation of industrial development in Dunshaughlin being responsible for the development of the existing light – industrial development park on the Dublin road. He is also the founder of the Pod Company which has established new premises at the business park and, when fully operational, the facility will employ over 400 people in the manufacture of housing components using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC).

In making this submission the provisions of the Planning and Development which requires that a planning authority cannot consider submissions or observations relating to the

zoning of any lands at this pre-draft stage of the County Development Plan review process have been noted.

The submission is primarily concerned with Dunshaughlin and with the provision of appropriate employment and economic development together with appropriate community uses. Key to the economic success of County Meath, and Dunshaughlin in particular, is the establishment of local indigenous business engaged in manufacturing and other activities. Such businesses provide the backbone to the economic success of the country. It is therefore essential that sufficient provision is made for the establishment (and in certain circumstances such as the present) for the expansion of established businesses. Therefore the Draft Development Plan, when published, must make provision for same.

The person making this submission controls lands located adjacent to his existing successful business park (and predominantly within the existing development boundary) which are capable of assisting in the achievement of the strategic objective of Meath County Council to encourage Industry and Employment. It is the purpose of this submission to seek that Meath County Council give consideration as to how the subject lands can assist in the achievement of the Strategic Objective of Meath County Council with respect to Industry/ Employment and Community uses.

Chief Executive Response

The Council acknowledges the submission relating to Navan. It should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. Any submissions in relation to land-use zoning should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

In relation to identifying additional land for residential zoning, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit has determined serviced and serviceable lands within Navan that can accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

Dunshaughlin

The Council also acknowledges the submission relating to Dunshaughlin. It is noted that the submission requests that the subject lands be considered for future employment zoning in the Draft Plan. Matters relating to zoning, phasing and the spatial extent of settlement expansion cannot be considered at this stage of the plan-making process. Such

matters should be raised at the draft stage of the County Development Plan process. With regard to the identification of additional lands for employment zoning, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The purpose of this audit is to assess serviced and serviceable lands within settlements, including Dunshaughlin, that may be capable of accommodating employment development. The audit considers factors such as water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions in relation to future employment zoning and expansion. The quantum on employment zoning will also be informed by an Employment Zoning Methodology and an Economic Strategy which will identify the quantum of employment lands to be zoned within each settlement across the county.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-126: Brock Mc Clure & Associates on behalf of Mr. Patrick Gleeson.

Summary of Submission:

The submission requests Meath County Council adopt a forward-looking approach to zoning to leverage Clonee's strategic position and infrastructure advantages and advocates for the strategic recognition of greenfield lands north of Clonee, Co. Meath (approx. 33 hectares).

The submission requests that the subject lands be considered for future employment zoning in the Draft Plan, planning policy supports enterprise expansion at Clonee to balance residential growth and economic development.

The submission outlines the following key points:

Strategic Location

- Lands are situated 1.5 km north of Clonee Village, adjacent to the M3 Motorway, and near major employment hubs:
- Close to residential areas of Dunboyne, Clonee, and Blanchardstown, and within 10 minutes of M3 Parkway Park & Ride, offering direct rail access to Dublin.
- A major employer already established locally has expressed interest in developing the site for state-of-the-art employment facilities, reinforcing its potential for significant job creation.

Policy Context

- Current Meath County Development Plan (2021–2027) identifies Dunboyne as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town and Clonee as a Village within the Dublin Metropolitan Area.
- Subject lands border E2/E3 zoned lands (General Enterprise & Employment / Warehousing & Distribution) and Master Plan 23, which prioritises large-scale employment projects and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and the submission outlines the lands would be opportunely located for natural and orderly extension and future development.
- The area is described as a centre of enterprise and employment, with strong transport links supporting major growth.

Chief Executive Response

It is noted that the submission requests that the subject lands be considered for future employment zoning in the Draft Plan. Matters relating to zoning, phasing and the spatial extent of settlement expansion cannot be considered at this stage of the plan-making process. Such matters should be raised at the draft stage of the County Development Plan process. With regard to the identification of additional lands for employment zoning, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The purpose of this audit is to assess serviced and serviceable lands within settlements, including Dunboyne/Clonee, that may be capable of accommodating employment development. The audit considers factors such as water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions in relation to future employment zoning and expansion. The quantum on employment zoning will also be informed by an Employment Zoning Methodology and an Economic Strategy which will identify the quantum of employment lands to be zoned within each settlement across the county.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-127: Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of Swanhall Ltd

Summary of Submission:

The submission focuses on Gormanston's strategic role within the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor and advocates for plan-led growth in Gormanston, leveraging its strategic location and transport infrastructure.

Three Strategic Proposals are requested:

1. Recognise Gormanston in the Core Strategy as a strategically important settlement due to its rail / DART+ access, location on the Dublin-Belfast corridor, proximity to

Bremore Port, and its capacity to accommodate sustainable growth in line with the NPF.

2. Allocate 1% of the County's NPF housing growth (264 units) to Gormanston, reflecting its location on the public transport corridor.
3. Support future south-eastern expansion of the settlement, on the basis that it algins with national policy and county strategy, the existing urban structure, transport infrastructure and the location of the village core and key services/ employment.

The submission advocates sequential Urban Expansion to the Southeast which would consolidate the village core and future expansion to the southeast, bounded by the R132 and Gormanston College lands. The submission outlines the area is walkable to the train station, bus stops, schools, and community facilities and aligns with NPF priorities for compact growth and transport-oriented development.

Chief Executive Response

In relation to settlement and housing, the submission refers to the direction of future expansion to lands to the southeast of Gormanston. The Council acknowledges Gormanston's strategic role within the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor and the benefits arising from its accessibility to public transport, together with existing social and community infrastructure. However, it should be noted that matters relating to zoning, phasing and the direction of growth cannot be considered at this stage of the plan-making process. Such matters may be considered at the Draft County Development Plan stage.

The specific housing allocation to individual settlements, including Enfield, will be determined through preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives
- The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements
- Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure
- Environmental constraints including flood risk
- The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability
- Demonstrated housing delivery capacity and pipeline development

- The objective of achieving sustainable settlement patterns across the full settlement hierarchy

The Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, compact and sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. With regard to the identification of additional lands for residential zoning, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The purpose of this audit is to assess serviced and serviceable lands within settlements, including Gormanston, that may be capable of accommodating residential development. The audit considers factors such as water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions in relation to future residential zoning and expansion.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-128: Stephen Little & Associates on behalf of Lydon.

Summary of Submission:

The submission addresses the urgent need for additional housing in Meath, focusing on lands in Navan (Johnstown area) as a strategic location for compact, sustainable growth. The submission encourages the Council to ensure that there is an adequate pipeline of housing supply to help the Government meet the ambitious target of 300,000 new homes by 2030.

The submission refers to two parcels of land adjoining Dunville and Old Johynstown village centre and requests the lands currently zoned open space (F1), be rezoned to New Residential (A2) while lands not currently zoned be zoned to Open Space (F1) and A2 New Residential. Lands are within the built-up area, close to schools, childcare, healthcare, retail, and public transport.

The submission outlines the lands proximity to services, schools and public transport and would support the towns sequential and compact growth and would facilitate a mix of housing types and community amenities.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive acknowledges this submission relating to housing growth in Navan and the request to rezone lands adjoining Dunvillie and Old Johnstown village centre in Navan.

It is noted that the submission references to the lands being within close proximity to services including schools and public transport, while supporting sequential and compact growth.

However, it should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

In relation to the rezoning of land, matters relating to zoning, rezoning, phasing and the spatial extent of settlement expansion cannot be considered at this stage of the plan-making process. Such matters should be raised at the draft stage of the County Development Plan process.

With regard to the identification of additional lands for residential zoning, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The purpose of this audit is to assess serviced and serviceable lands within settlements, including Navan, that may be capable of accommodating residential development. The audit considers factors such as water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions in relation to future residential zoning.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-129: Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of Dun Royal ULC

Summary of Submission:

The submission supports the Draft Meath County Development Plan strategy of directing growth to designated towns and promoting compact, transport-oriented development. It focuses on Dunshaughlin, which is identified as a *Self-Sustaining Growth Town* with strong public transport links, proximity to the M3, future rail potential (Navan Rail project), and substantial water, wastewater and community infrastructure capacity (schools, healthcare, sports and services).The submission emphasises that Dunshaughlin has the capacity to accommodate significant housing and employment growth in line with national and regional policy objectives.

Three Strategic Proposals:

- Ensure that the Core Strategy and associated housing allocations should fully recognise Dunsaughlin's designation as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town, its strong public transport connectivity, and its capacity to accommodate a sustainable level of population growth in line with the National Planning Framework (2025).
- Dunsaughlin should be allocated 8% of Meath's total National Planning Framework housing growth over the lifetime of the Development Plan, equating to approximately 2,118 residential units.

- The future expansion of Dunsaughlin to the south-west, stating that this direction of growth aligns with national policy, the county's overall development strategy, the town's existing urban structure, planned strategic road objectives, and the location of the town centre and key community, recreational, commercial and employment uses.

Overall, the submission states that allocating more housing growth to Dunshaughlin will help Meath meet national housing targets while delivering compact, well-serviced and sustainable urban development aligned with the NPF and regional policy

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive notes the submission regarding Dunshaughlin's designation as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town and its role in accommodating housing and employment growth in accordance with national and regional planning policy. The submission's references to the town's public transport connectivity, strategic road access, and existing social, community, and utility infrastructure are noted.

In relation to the direction of future growth, it is noted that matters relating to zoning, phasing and the spatial extent of settlement expansion cannot be considered at this stage of the plan-making process. Such matters should be raised at the draft stage of the County Development Plan process.

With regard to the identification of additional lands for residential zoning, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The purpose of this audit is to assess serviced and serviceable lands within settlements, including Dunshaughlin, that may be capable of accommodating residential development. The audit considers factors such as water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions in relation to future residential zoning and expansion.

The specific housing allocation to individual settlements, including Enfield, will be determined through preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives
- The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements

- Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure
- Environmental constraints including flood risk
- The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability
- Demonstrated housing delivery capacity and pipeline development
- The objective of achieving sustainable settlement patterns across the full settlement hierarchy

The Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, compact and sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-130: Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of Hayfield Homes

Summary of Submission:

The submission addresses strategic issues for the next Development Plan, focusing on Enfield's role as a Self-Sustaining Town and its capacity to accommodate growth in line with national and regional policy objectives.

The submission requests the formulation of a new County Development Plan to:

- Recognise Enfield's Strategic Importance as a Self-Sustaining Town under the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).
- Recognise the strong public transport connectivity (rail and bus Enfield is served by high-frequency bus routes and a rail station on the Dublin–Sligo corridor (to be upgraded under DART+ West). The Wastewater plant was upgraded in 2024 to serve 9,000 units; temporary water treatment plant in place for current developments**.**
- Increase Enfield's allocation of Meath's Housing Growth to 792 units; an increase from 2.8% to 3%.
- Consolidate the town core and expand southwards, bounded by the Outer Relief Road (R148). Community Facilities such as Schools, childcare, health centres, sports clubs, library, and Garda station within 1–2 km of proposed expansion area.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission regarding the strategic role and future development potential of Enfield. The submission's proposal to allocate 3% of NPF-allocated growth to Enfield (792 units over the plan period) is noted, based on the settlement's location on a high-capacity public transport corridor. The submission references the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines (August 2025) which increase Meath's annual housing requirement to 2,942 units (baseline), with provision for up to 50% additional provision resulting in 4,413 units annually.

The specific housing allocation to individual settlements, including Enfield, will be determined through preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives
- The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements
- Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure
- Environmental constraints including flood risk
- The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability
- Demonstrated housing delivery capacity and pipeline development
- The objective of achieving sustainable settlement patterns across the full settlement hierarchy

The Council acknowledges the submission's identification of a strategic expansion area to the south of the town. It should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. Any submissions in relation to land-use zoning should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan. With regard to the identification of additional lands for residential zoning, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The purpose of this audit is to assess serviced and serviceable lands within settlements, including Dunshaughlin, that may be capable of accommodating residential development. The audit considers factors such as water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions in relation to future residential zoning and expansion.

The Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, compact and sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.

The comments raised regarding transport and connectivity in Enfield are acknowledged by the Council. Meath County Council will continue to engage with the NTA and other relevant stakeholders regarding the growing demand for additional rail and bus services to Enfield. The delivery of the DART+ is via national agencies including TII, NTA and Irish Rail, however, the Council has close cooperation and interaction with these bodies on an ongoing basis to ensure that policy objectives are being addressed through the process. As such, the Draft Plan will include policies which will continue to support the relevant agencies in the development of key public transport in line with the NPF, NDP and the RSES. Whilst operational management of the train services remains a matter for the NTA and the various operators, Meath County Council continues to work with these stakeholders to ensure an efficient and effective public transport network is achieved and the Draft Plan will include specific objectives in this regard.

A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-131: Kinnegad Town Team

Summary of Submission

The author outlines the following issues in relation to Clonard and Kinnegad:

1. **Clonard-Kinnegad Interconnected Development Needs**

   At present, Clonard is identified within the Meath County Development Plan as a Rural Area; however, the submission emphasises that Clonard should be recognised as a village in the 2027-2033 County Development Plan. Residents rely on Kinnegad for essential services and both communities are closely linked in terms of development needs. The author notes that planning decisions for Clonard will directly affect Kinnegad and vice versa. The author urges authorities to ensure this interconnected relationship is properly reflected in future planning frameworks.

2. **Cross-County Coordination**

   The submission outlines that although Kinnegad lies in County Westmeath, much of its functional hinterlands including Clonard and key transport routes extend into County Meath. Despite this, there has been little effective coordination between the two County Councils. The author states that the consultation document fails to

acknowledge Kinnegad's strategic importance and its deep interconnection with neighboring Meath communities.

Several essential facilities serving Kinnegad are physically located in County Meath, and critical road infrastructure near Clonard lies within Meath yet receives insufficient maintenance, creating safety issues. This lack of cross-county cooperation limits integrated planning, infrastructure improvements and sustainable growth.

The submission points to Athlone as an example of successful cross-county collaboration and recommends similar joint planning for Kinnegad and Meath. It proposes formal dialogue structures, a joint local area plan, shared transport and infrastructure strategies, and official recognition of Kinnegad as a regional centre influencing both counties**.**

3. Infrastructure and Service Provision

The submission notes that the current infrastructure planning, especially for transport and water, doesn't meet the needs of Kinnegad and its surrounding areas, which rely on two different local authorities. It calls for coordinated investment in transport links, aligned water and wastewater planning to avoid duplication, and joint action on wider infrastructure needs such as broadband, schools, and healthcare, ensuring fair and efficient services for all residents.

4. Recognition of Kinnegad's Growth and Strategic Importance

Kinnegad is experiencing rapid growth and functions as a key hub for the wider region, including parts of County Meath. The submission outlines that strategic planning should recognise this role and support sustainable development, economic opportunity and community wellbeing. The author recommends joint economic initiatives that take advantage of Kinnegad's strategic position and promote local business development.

Chief Executive Response

The comments made in this submission regarding the settlement of Clonard are acknowledged. The Council recognises Clonards locations in the south west of the County, being 5 km east of Kinnegad, 7km west of Longwood and 13km west of Enfield. Under the current County Development Plan 2021-2027, Clonard is identified as a 'Village' in the County's settlement hierarchy, and will continue to the recognised as a village in the Draft Plan. The Council notes that Kinnegad is an important and the main service centre for the rural hinterland area of south-west area of Meath. In the preparation of the Draft Plan the Council will continue to engage with all adjoining local authorities, including Westmeath to ensure that policies and objectyives between adjoining development plans align and are consistent.

Meath County Council will also continue to liaise with Uisce Eireann, the NTA and all other infrastructure providers regarding the development of neighbouring settlements, infrastructure and transport needs.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-132: Avison Young on behalf of Paul Morrin

Summary of Submission:

The submission focuses on compact, infrastructure-led growth and uses Dunshaughlin as an exemplar for sustainable development with housing directed to services and serviceable settlements allowing growth to occur in a compact sequential manner and avoiding greenfield expansion. The submission encourages a countywide compact growth strategy, prioritising serviced, sequential, and transport-accessible locations.

The submission references Meath's housing requirement as 2,942 units annually (2025–2034), with up to 50% headroom (4,400–4,500 units/year) and outlines the Eastern & Midland RSES prioritises growth in Self-Sustaining Towns like Dunshaughlin, aligned with rail and road infrastructure.

The submission outlines how the growth of Dunshaughlin can help Co. Meath meet increased housing targets while supporting sustainable mobility, climate action, and balanced economic development via Strategic Growth Principles and actions:

- Direct new housing to serviced or serviceable lands within settlement boundaries.
- Prioritise walkable, transport-accessible locations.
- Support higher densities near town centres and public transport nodes.
- Ensure balanced housing mix and integration with employment lands.
- Promote climate-aligned growth by reducing car dependency.

Outlining Dunshaughlin as an exemplar for Planned growth the submission states that the Population as 6,644 (Census 2022) – which already exceeds 2027 target. Housing permissions of 1,502 units has reached the revised Core Strategy threshold and advocates the need for new Tier 1/ Tier 2 lands in the next plan. The submission states the availability of Green-rated wastewater capacity; strong water supply**;** excellent road access (M3, R147), frequent bus services, and planned rail station (Dublin–Navan line).

Future opportunities proposed include:

South-west quadrant (M3 J6) identified as optimal for future growth due to the location being: Contiguous to town, Infrastructure-ready, Within walking distance of Main Street and proposed rail station, entirely in Flood Zone C (low risk).

Challenges referred to the submission include:

Limited diversity in housing stock (93% houses, only 7% apartments), high car dependency (42% commute by car) and high social housing demand.

The submission makes the following recommendation next Development Plan:

- Adopt a 10-year horizon (2027–2037) per Planning and Development Act 2024.
- Zone additional Tier 1/Tier 2 lands in strategic, infrastructure-ready locations.
- Promote transport-oriented development near the proposed rail station.
- Deliver a balanced housing mix (smaller units, apartments, family homes).
- Integrate active travel networks, green corridors, and public spaces.
- Safeguard land for Park & Ride facilities near the rail station.
- Align growth with climate resilience and flood-risk management.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges this submission, which focuses on housing delivery through compact, infrastructure-led growth and references Dunshaughlin as an exemplar of sustainable settlement development within County Meath.

The submission makes reference to national and regional planning policy, including revised housing requirements under the National Planning Framework, the application of headroom, and the role of Self-Sustaining Towns under the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. Meath County Council also acknowledges the submission's emphasis on directing housing growth to serviced or serviceable settlements, promoting higher densities in accessible locations, supporting sustainable mobility, and delivering a balanced housing mix in line with climate action objectives.

References to population growth, existing housing permissions, infrastructure capacity, and future transport proposals in Dunshaughlin are also noted, together with the identification of opportunities and challenges relating to housing mix, mobility patterns, and social housing demand.

In relation to settlement and housing, it should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

The submission refers to future growth of the south-west quadrant of Dunshaughlin. Such site-specific zoning, phasing and growth direction matters cannot be considered at this stage of the process and should be made at the draft stage of the County Development Plan process.

In relation to identifying additional Tier 1 and Tier 2 lands, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit determines serviced and serviceable lands within Dunshaughlin that can accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning and expansion.

Meath County Council supports the delivery of a balanced and diverse housing mix, including smaller units, apartments and family units, to meet the needs of different people. The Draft County Development plan will continue to support appropriate housing mix and typologies through policies and objectives.

In relation to comments raised regarding transport and movement are noted. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks.

The prioritisation highlighted in regard to sustainable transport, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is also noted. A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing factor for travel demand. Meath County Council's aims to provide safe, efficient and accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims, and this will be reflected in the Draft Plan.

The Council also recognises the importance of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in maximising the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure spaces in close proximity to high quality transport services. Two settlements have been identified as a strategic location for TOD, with sites in Drogheda and Dunboyne selected. The Draft Plan will include policies and objectives in support of transport orientated development

as well as safeguarding land for suitable park and ride facilities in close proximity to rail stations and bus stops.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-133: John Spain Associates on behalf of Loughcrew Developments.

Summary of Submission:

The submission advocates for Athboy to accommodate additional housing growth through rezoning of strategically located lands. This aligns with national policy, addresses Meath's housing shortfall, and leverages existing infrastructure for sustainable development to meet revised housing targets under the National Planning Framework (NPF) and Section 28 Guidelines.

Meath's housing requirement revised to 2,942 units annually (2025–2034), increasing total need to 51,975 homes by 2040 when headroom is included. The submission contends that there is insufficient zoned land in Meath and significant uplift is required.

As a Level 4 Small Town in Co. Meath's settlement hierarchy, Athboy has a strong retail base, public realm improvements, and existing infrastructure, is well-connected via N51 and public transport routes (Dublin, Cavan, Maynooth, Drogheda).

The submission request to rezone subject lands North of Athboy Town, Oldcastle Road (R154) with an area: c. 3.7 ha, and currently zoned F1 – Open Space to A2 New Residential. The area was previously zoned A2 – New Residential in earlier plans; permissions granted but not implemented. Adjacent lands have active permission for 65 dwellings (Reg. Ref. 24204)

Lands qualify as Tier 1: Serviced Lands under NPF categorization (adjacent to infrastructure, sequential to built-up area). Indicative layout shows potential for 100 houses at 30 units/ha, aligning with sustainable density guidelines.

The Planning Rationale is stated as follows;

- Supports compact growth and sequential development.
- Addresses housing deficit and aligns with new 10-year development plan requirements.
- Logical extension of existing residential area; complements permitted developments.

7. Appendices

- Appendix A & B: Demonstrate compliance with Tier 1 zoning and Sequential Test.
- Appendix C: Highlights urgent need for additional residential zoned lands due to revised national housing targets and infrastructure delivery programs.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive acknowledges this submission relating to housing growth in Athboy and the request to rezone lands north of Athboy Town, Oldcastle Road (R154), from F1- Open Space to A2 – New Residential.

It is noted that the submission references to national and regional planning policy, revised housing targets under the National Planning Framework, and the role of Athboy within the County Settlement Hierarchy, together with supporting information in relation to infrastructure availability and sequential development.

However, it should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

In relation to the rezoning of land from F1- Open Space to A2 – New Residential located to the north of Athboy Town, Oldcastle Road, it should be noted that matters relating to zoning, rezoning, phasing and the spatial extent of settlement expansion cannot be considered at this stage of the plan-making process. Such matters should be raised at the draft stage of the County Development Plan process.

With regard to the identification of additional lands for residential zoning, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The purpose of this audit was to assess serviced and serviceable lands within settlements, including Athboy, that may be capable of accommodating residential development. The audit considers factors such as water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions in relation to future residential zoning.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-134: Stephen Little & Associates, on behalf of Castlethorn.

Summary of Submission:

The submission relates to the Settlement and Housing theme for lands located broadly to the south of Dunboyne and Clonee and between Dunboyne and Hansfield/Barnhill within

the Dublin Metropolitan Area. A Contextual map prepared by O'Mahony Pike Architects was included to illustrate the strategic location of lands.

The submission seeks to optimise strategic lands within Meath's Metropolitan Area for plan-led residential development at scale, consistent with national and regional policy. The submission outlines the strategic location of the lands along the North-West Rail Corridor, adjacent to Dunboyne and Clonee, and within the Dublin Metropolitan which would provide an opportunity to deliver Transport-Oriented Development (TOD), compact growth, and sustainable communities anchored on the DART+ West rail corridor.

It raises the potential for a new rail station between Dunboyne and Hansfield to support sequential development and further requests the need for Meath County Council to identify and zone sufficient serviced and serviceable lands to ensure a robust pipeline of housing delivery beyond Core Strategy targets, in line with Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) guidance.

The submission cites TOD principles and Government policy promoting higher density, mixed-use development near high-capacity public transport nodes. The infrastructure and delivery capacity of the lands are noted as:

Tier 1 and Tier 2 Lands: Submission categorises lands as serviced or serviceable, capable of delivering thousands of homes within four years.

Roads: Dunboyne Eastern Distributor Road and Ongar/Barnhill link roads under construction; submission lands would facilitate completion.

Water and Drainage: Existing networks with capacity for phased upgrades; foul drainage linked to Tolka Valley Sewers and Ringsend WwTP.

Social Infrastructure: Proximity to schools, healthcare, Blanchardstown Town Centre; potential to deliver new schools, parks, and mixed-use district centre.

The submission requests:

- that an Urban Development Zone (UDZ) designation for the submission lands be explored in order to enable large-scale, plan-led development.
- Zone lands for residential-led development to meet housing demand and population growth projections under NPF and Housing for All.
- And the preparation of a framework plan for Dunboyne South lands to integrate housing, transport, green infrastructure, and community facilities.

Chief Executive Response

The submission refers to lands south of Dunboyne that the author states are suitable for residential zoning. It should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

Submissions relating to zoning, phasing or growth direction of settlements cannot be considered at pre-draft stage. Such submissions should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

In relation to identifying additional land for residential zoning, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit has determined serviced and serviceable lands within Dunboyne that can accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning.

In relation to transport and movement the comments are noted. The Council recognises the strategic location of Dunboyne within the MASP. The Council also recognises the existing availability of high-quality public transport mentioned in the submission resulting in Dunboyne having a high level of accessibility which is suitable for compact, transport-oriented residential development in accordance with National Planning Framework objectives. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks.

The Council also recognises the importance of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in maximising the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure spaces in close proximity to high quality transport services. Two settlements have been identified as a strategic location for TOD, with sites in Drogheda and Dunboyne selected. The Draft Plan will include policies and objectives in support of transport orientated development.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-135: Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of McGreevey Construction.

Summary of Submission:

The submission focuses on the role and function of Donacarney within East Meath as a designated Self-Sustaining Town and seeks to prioritise compact growth through urban consolidation, sequential urban expansion and plan led housing delivery.

The author highlights Donacarney's strategic location in the Dublin–Belfast Economic Corridor, close to Drogheda, rail stations, major roads, and the proposed Bremore Port energy hub, making it suitable for sustainable, transport-oriented growth.

Three Strategic Proposals are recommended:

- Recognise Donacarney's strategic role and location within East Meath and its capacity to accommodate growth.
- Allocate 4.5% of County Meath's housing growth to East Meath (approx. 1,194 units), with Donacarney accommodating 25% (300 units).
- Direct future expansion to the southwestern quadrant of Donacarney, consistent with compact growth and sequential development principles. The submission references Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) maps, spatial maps and extant permissions at Glen Boann noting limited capacity and need for additional lands.

The south-west area is recommended as it Is close to the village centre, schools, services and bus routes, has fewer environmental and flood constraints, has available infrastructure capacity, and helps prevent urban sprawl.

The submission raises concerns that the existing residential zoned land is limited therefore, additional residential zoning will be required to meet the proposed housing targets**.**

The submission raises that allocating more housing to Donacarney and expanding it carefully to the south-west would support national planning policy, deliver compact growth, and improve the long-term sustainability of East Meath.

Chief Executive Response

In relation to settlement and housing, the submission refers to directing future expansion to lands within the southwestern quadrant of Donacarney. The authors concern regarding the need for additional land is acknowledged; however, it should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. Such submissions should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

In regard to zoning additional lands, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit has determined serviced and serviceable lands within Donacarney that can accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure,

environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future residential zoning and expansion.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-137: Electricity Supply Board

Summary of Submission:

ESB's submission seeks to ensure the County Development Plan supports energy infrastructure, renewable energy development, and sustainable transport, aligned with national climate targets and the National Planning Framework (NPF). The submission states that to enable and support the anticipated growth within County Meath, it is crucial to develop and strengthen the county's electricity network to address existing capacity constraints and accommodate the substantial levels of projected development. ESB advocates for the inclusion of robust policies and objectives within the County Development Plan that prioritise the delivery of energy infrastructure solutions to address current capacity constraints and accommodate the anticipated increase in demand in County Meath**.**

Infrastructure Needs

Each new home requires double the electrical capacity compared to pre-2019 builds. Critical projects in County Meath include new and upgraded substations in Ashbourne, Dunboyne (Cradockstown), Dunshaughlin (Macetown), Navan, Blundelstown, Slane, Duleek (Donore), Bettystown and Gormanston.

ESB requests that Meath County Council and ESB coordinate closely to identify suitable sites for the delivery of key electricity infrastructure, including 110/38kV substations. Early identification and zoning of such sites will be critical to ensuring timely and cost-effective delivery of infrastructure that underpins regional growth and climate action targets.

By 2040, 601 substations on the medium and low voltage network will exceed capacity. 571 need upgrades and 30 new units will be required. The towns most affected in Meath include: Trim, Navan, Ashbourne, Ratoath, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Stamullen and Dunboyne.

Renewable Energy Development

Meath is strategically positioned for onshore wind, offshore wind, solar PV, and hybrid renewables. Meath is strategically positioned to play a significant role in the advancement of renewable energy, and the development of alternative energy resources should be actively encouraged and facilitated at appropriate locations across the county, particularly

along or in close proximity to the enhanced 400 kV transmission lines. To advance this objective, the formulation of a comprehensive Renewable Energy Strategy is a key priority for the Meath County Development Plan 2027–2033. Accordingly, ESB strongly recommends that the plan explicitly commits to the following aims:

"To produce a Renewable Energy Strategy for County Meath within one year of adoption of the revised Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region, to include the Regional Renewable Energy Electricity Capacity Allocation for County Meath, during the lifetime of this Development Plan. This strategy shall have regard to 'A Methodology for Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategies', (SEAI) and shall be compliant with the requirements of SEA & Habitats Directive"

ESB has identified significant shortcomings in the existing renewable energy plans. The submission advocates for the development of a fit-for-purpose, plan-led spatial framework for renewables. The Objectives included in Chapter 11 of the existing CDP in Section 11.8.3 *Wind Energy,* should be reviewed, updated and incorporated into a dedicated framework. This framework should:

• Apply a refined constraints assessment, clearly defining "no-go" areas such as nationally significant landscapes, based on standardised criteria set out in statutory guidance.

• Establish a positive policy environment for all other areas, identifying them as suitable for renewable projects in principle, subject to compliance with statutory development management policies, including updated Wind Energy Guidelines.

Onshore wind Energy

The submission requests that the Draft County Development Plan incorporates Policy Objectives that actively support the development of onshore wind generation projects, along with the necessary provision for associated infrastructure. ESB also advocates for the retention of Policy Objectives from the current Meath CDP 2021–2027 which reflect this approach, such as Policy Objectives INF POL 41 and alterations to update existing Policy Objective INF POL 42. The submission further states the new Development plan fully integrate and facilitate the allocation of renewable energy generation capacity as set forth in the Regional Renewable Energy Strategy developed by the Eastern & Midlands Regional Assembly.

Offshore Wind & Marine Renewable

The submission requests that the Draft County Development Plan incorporates Policy Objectives that actively support the development of offshore wind generation projects, along with the necessary provision for associated onshore infrastructure. ESB also

advocates for the inclusion of Policy Objectives adopted by other coastal counties which reflect this approach, such as Policy Objectives set out below.

"To support the development of offshore windfarm developments subject to normal planning considerations, including in particular the impact on areas of environmental or landscape sensitivity."

Terrestrial Developments for Offshore Wind

"To ensure that terrestrial developments along the coastline provide adequate provision for connection to the national grid for offshore wind farms."

Solar

The Eastern and Midlands Region has been allocated 45% of the national share of Solar PV generation. The submission outlines to suitably facilitate the efficient development of Solar Farms in County Meath, ESB advocates for the development of a fit-for-purpose, plan-led spatial framework for solar developments.

The Submission requests the Planning Authority to retain the option to grant permission for a longer period, than the standard 5 years, if requested by the developer, in appropriate circumstances. Furthermore, the submission outlines that the lifetime of solar developments is extending with most technologies now suitable for a minimum of 30 years operation. Investment decisions for projects are being made on project lifetimes of up to 40 years. In this regard, ESB request that permissions are granted with a lifetime up to a maximum of 40 years with decommissioning plans.

Energy Storage

ESB would welcome the inclusion of specific policies supporting the crucial role of Energy Storage Systems in grid stability, renewable integration, and achieving decarbonisation targets, delivering economic efficiency and environmental benefits while ensuring a secure, flexible and future-proof energy network. ESB propose that the wording below be incorporated into the new CDP to promote the delivery of Storage Solutions.

Proposed Energy Storage Policy Objective:

"Energy Storage systems such as batteries, green hydrogen storage, along with grid stability services, are some of the technologies being explored that will be essential to smoothing out the natural variability that occurs in renewable energy sources and to provide electricity at times of peak demand"

There is the possibility of demand side management opportunities for business if the potential generation from off shore farms and the North – South Interconnector have an excess of supply relative to demand in County Meath.

Telecommunications

ESB encourages that the Draft CDP should recognise that applications for telecommunications development shall be consistent with the updated guidelines (PL 07/2012) that facilitate the improved development of telecommunications infrastructure and promotion of a policy of co-location**.**

Sustainable Transport

The submission strongly recommends the retention of the supportive policies set out in the existing County Development Plan (CDP), including MOV POL 16 and Objectives MOV OBJ 25 and MOV OBJ 26. The continued inclusion of these policies, together with the existing development management guidance detailed in Section 11.9.2 on EV Charging Points, will facilitate the effective delivery of the necessary infrastructure to support the expansion of electric vehicle charging points throughout the county**.**

ESB welcome all initiatives promoting charging infrastructure, however, it is very important to note that the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive calls for an increase to 20% for the number of parking spaces which should have provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. In preparing the new Plan, an opportunity exists to ensure availability is expanded, in line with the new directive so that the UAP is consistent with National and Regional Policy in relation to the provision of electric vehicle infrastructure over the lifetime of the new UAP.

Conclusion & Policy Requests

- Protect strategic energy infrastructure and enable flexible planning.
- Facilitate renewable energy development and commit to a Renewable Energy Strategy.
- Support telecommunications expansion and EV infrastructure.
- Promote energy storage, hybrid renewables, and demand-side management to attract industry and optimise grid use.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the comprehensive submission from the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) and notes the strategic importance of electricity infrastructure to enable sustainable growth, support climate action objectives, and facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy. The Council recognises ESB's role as a major infrastructure

provider and employer in County Meath and notes the significant investment planned in electricity transmission, distribution, and renewable energy generation infrastructure across the county.

The Council acknowledges the specific electricity network capacity requirements and infrastructure projects identified for County Meath, including proposed substations at Ashbourne, Dunboyne (Cradockstown and Walterstown), Dunshaughlin (Macetown), Blundelstown, Navan, Slane, Duleek (Donore), and Bettystown/Gormanstown. The Council also notes that each newly constructed home now requires approximately twice the electrical capacity compared to pre-2019 homes, and that current demand growth is resulting in capacity constraints at high-voltage stations across the county. These infrastructure requirements will be considered in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to the settlement hierarchy, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, and appropriate zoning provisions.

The submission's emphasis on supporting renewable energy development is noted, including the Regional Renewable Electricity Capacity Allocations for the Eastern and Midlands Region (25% of national onshore wind capacity and 45% of national solar PV capacity). The Council acknowledges ESB's recommendation to prepare a Renewable Energy Strategy for County Meath within one year of adoption of the revised Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region, having regard to the revised SEAI methodology for Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategies. This will be considered as part of the plan-making process, subject to resources and statutory requirements.

The Council notes the points raised regarding onshore wind energy, offshore wind energy and associated onshore infrastructure, solar PV development, energy storage systems, hybrid renewables, repowering/life extensions, telecommunications infrastructure, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033 will include policies and objectives to support appropriate renewable energy development and related infrastructure, having regard to national policy objectives, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, environmental designations, landscape character, and the need to balance renewable energy development with other land uses and environmental protection requirements.

The Council acknowledges ESB's request for early coordination in identifying suitable sites for electricity infrastructure and for early engagement in the design of public infrastructure projects to facilitate efficient integration of electricity networks. The Council will continue to liaise with ESB Networks and other utility providers during plan preparation and implementation to support the timely delivery of necessary infrastructure to facilitate sustainable development in County Meath.

MH-C203-SIP-140- Hughes Planning Consultants on behalf of Keegan Land Holdings Ltd
Summary of Submission:
Prepared by Hughes Planning and Development Consultants on behalf of Keegan Land Holdings Ltd. Key Points: 1. Context & Basis: ○ References Revised National Planning Framework (NPF 2025) and Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines and notes urgent Government directive to accelerate housing delivery. As County Meath is among the fastest-growing counties. Trim is strategically located near Dublin and major transport routes 2. Policy Alignment: ○ Supports compact, sequential, and sustainable growth. ○ Emphasizes Transport-Oriented Development (NPO 10). ○ Trim has strong public transport links (bus routes to Dublin, Navan, Drogheda, Athlone). 3. Current Issues: ○ Insufficient residentially zoned land in Trim. ○ Existing employment-zoned lands remain largely undeveloped. 4. Proposed Development: ○ Concept masterplan prepared by Doran Cray Architects. ○ Mix of housing types: detached, semi-detached, smaller units for diverse needs. 5. Benefits of Rezoning: ○ Supports balanced town growth and vitality, enables early housing delivery and reduces car dependency. 6. Conclusion: ○ Requests Meath County Council to zone lands in Newtown, Trim for residential use in the 2027–2033 Development Plan.
Chief Executive Response
In relation to settlement and housing, the author makes reference to lands that are suitable for zoning in Trim for residential use. It should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County

Development Plan. Such submissions should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

In regard to zoning additional lands, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit determines serviced and serviceable lands within the county that could accommodate residential development. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future zoning.

Regarding existing employment lands remaining undeveloped in Trim, the Council aligns its approach to employment development with the requirements set out in the Development Plan Guidelines (DPGs) for Planning Authorities (2022). The DPGs recommend that a job: resident workforce ratio (jobs ratio) is used as a barometer for the need for employment development throughout the County. A jobs ratio refers to the number of jobs available versus the number of resident workers in each town, with a ratio of 1.0 meaning that there is one job for every resident worker. The number of jobs and the resident labour force are calculated based on figures from the latest census. This indicates whether there is enough employment within the town to accommodate the resident workforce thereby demonstrating the level of outward and inward commuting for employment purposes. The Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern & Midlands Assembly 2019-2031 indicates that a jobs ratio of 0.7 or above would be considered acceptable. It is noted that Trim achieves a jobs ratio of 0.67 in the current Development Plan indicating that employment development in Trim is occurring at a close to acceptable level to sustain the resident workforce. Data from the recent census indicates that the jobs ratio for Trim has improved to 0.79. This will be taken into account when considering the issues identified by the submission relating to the development of employment-zoned lands in Trim.

In addition to the above, the Council is currently undertaking an assessment of the employment zoned lands across County Meath to inform the employment zoning methodology for the new County Development Plan. Preliminary results indicate that approximately 60% of employment zoned lands in Trim are developed. This will be considered, along with the recommendations within the submission pertaining to employment, in the Development Plan review and in accordance with the employment zoning methodology as set out in the DPGs.

The Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, compact and sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. In this regard, the current County Development Plan already has policies to support compact growth on infill and brownfield sites including Policy SH POL 2 that seeks

to promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced lands through the prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference to the edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl. The Draft County Development Plan will build on this policy approach and will continue to support compact growth.

In this context, Meath County Council also notes the requirements of the Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, which states that development plans must prioritise the delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of existing settlements through infill and brownfield development, the re-use of vacant and underutilised lands, and the promotion of compact and sequential growth patterns. National Policy Objective 7 seeks the delivery of at least 40% of new homes within the existing built-up areas. The Draft County Development Plan will be prepared in alignment with national policy requirements and will seek to ensure that housing delivery is directed to appropriate locations.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-141: Brock McClure Planning Consultants on behalf of Údarás na Gaeltachta

Summary of Submission:

Údarás na Gaeltachta, the regional authority for Gaeltacht development, welcomes the review of the Meath County Development Plan and emphasizes the importance of addressing the unique needs of Gaeltacht na Mí (Ráth Chairn and Baile Ghib), the smallest Gaeltacht region and the only one on Ireland's east coast.

Key Points

1. Population & Housing Challenges
    - Gaeltacht na Mí's population grew by 13% (2016–2022), but housing delivery has lagged significantly (only 46 houses built since 2016).
    - High vacancy and holiday home rates, combined with rising property prices, threaten affordability and risk outward migration.
    - Housing shortages undermine efforts to maintain Irish as a community language.
2. Language & Cultural Preservation
    - Irish speaker numbers are increasing, but daily usage is declining, risking linguistic tipping points.
    - Strong measures are needed, including mandatory Language Impact Assessments and Language Enurement Clauses for housing developments.
3. Planning & Policy Recommendations

- Implement Priority Area Plans to be introduced under the Planning & Development Act 2024) for Ráth Chairn and Baile Ghib.
- Align with National Planning Framework (NPF) objectives and new housing targets (Meath must deliver 2,942 units annually plus 50% headroom).
- Support actions in the Government's Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025–2030 plan, including a National Planning Statement for Gaeltacht housing. The use of Priority Area Plans proposed to come forward under Section 72 of the Planning and Development Act for Limistéar Pleanála Teanga Ráth Chairn agus Bhaile Ghib would deliver on specific local objectives aimed at increasing housing provision in Gaeltacht na Mí to align with the increasing population of the region. The Priority Area Plan for Gaeltacht na Mí would ensure increased housing that ensures consolidated sustainable growth for the region.
- a need for the delivery of a mixed tenure which should include social housing,

4. Infrastructure & Services
   - Improve water and wastewater capacity, pedestrian paths, and sustainable transport options.
   - Enhance community facilities (schools, childcare, sports centres) to strengthen cultural identity.
   - There are currently no designated cycle lanes or pedestrian footpaths within Ráth Chairn or Baile Ghib, and there is a lack of bicycle parking in both regions. The introduction of designated cycle lanes, bicycle parking and pedestrian footpaths in Gaeltacht na Mí would encourage residents to use more sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.
5. Economic Development
   - Promote enterprise, tourism, and cultural initiatives leveraging proximity to Dublin and local heritage.
   - Support Gaeltacht service towns (Athboy and Navan) to provide essential services.
6. Climate & Sustainability
   - Integrate climate action into planning: renewable energy, low-carbon mobility, and nature-based solutions.
   - Údarás na Gaeltachta proposes its "An Gaeltacht Glas" sustainability strategy for collaboration.

Chief Executive Response

The Planning Authority acknowledges the submission from Údarás na Gaeltachta regarding housing and settlement in Gaeltacht na Mí, including Ráth Chairn and Baile Ghib. The submission highlights population growth, limited housing delivery, affordability

pressures, and the potential impacts on the preservation of the Irish language and community cohesion.

1. Population & Housing Challenges

The Planning Authority notes the population growth figures provided for the Gaeltacht na Mí and the concerns that housing shortages undermine efforts to maintain Irish as a community language. The Council will ensure that there is sufficient land zoned to meet future housing demand in both Gaeltacht's in addition to continuing the support for one-ff rural housing in the Gaeltacht's where there is a demonstrated local housing need and the application is supported by a Linguistic Impact Assessment.

2. Language & Cultural Preservation

The concerns raised regarding the difficulties Gaeltacht areas in Meath are experiencing are acknowledged. It has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to maintain Irish as the language of the community. It is a goal of the current Plan to ensure the continued survival and development of the Gaeltachts as an area distinct in the linguistic and cultural life of the County.

The current plan sets out policy for applicants seeking to build a one-off house in Gaeltacht areas. Applicants are required to qualify under the rural housing policy i.e. persons that are an intrinsic part of the rural community and that demonstrate compliance with the local housing need criteria as set out in Section 9.4 of the County Development Plan. Additionally, applicants are required to carry out a Linguistic Impact Study before any application for housing within the Gaeltacht Area is submitted. This study is to identify the applicant's relationship with linguistic or cultural development objectives of groups associated with the development of Gaeltacht areas in order to prove that a given proposal will have a positive impact upon the promotion and use of Irish as the language of the community. The Draft Plan will continue to ensure the survival and development of the Gaeltachts area of Baile Ghib and Ráth Chairn as an area distinct to the linguistic and cultural life of the County, whilst seeking to realise their economic and development potential in a balanced and sustainable manner.

3. Planning & Policy Recommendations

The Council are aware of the obligations to prepare Priority Area Plans for Ráth Chairn and Baile Ghib under the Planning & Development Act 2024 and will engage with Údarás na Gaeltachta in that regard.

4. Infrastructure and Services:

In relation to comments raised on transport and movement. A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan

to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. The need to facilitate and support safe walking and cycling routes is recognised and existing principles and policies will be reviewed during the preparation of the Draft Plan. It is intended that the Draft Plan will support the creation of sustainable communities into the future and require safe connectivity in all settlements between key amenities.

In relation to community services, a Social Infrastructure Assessment of the county is currently underway to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective. There current CDP includes a detailed Written Statement **for** Ráth Chairn and Baile Ghib which includes settlement specific objectives relating to social infrastructure, movement, settlement and housing, heritage and economic development. These written statements and policies and objectives will be reviewed and updated where required, taking account of the future needs of both settlements.

5. Economic Development

The Council will continue to promote enterprise, tourism, cultural initiatives and local heritage and support the Gaeltacht service towns (Athboy and Navan) to provide essential services.

6. Climate & Sustainability

The Council will embed climate action across the CDP in line with section 10(2)(n) of the Act. Informed by the Meath Climate Action Plan, the plan will support the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient county through compact growth, sustainable mobility, renewable energy development, and climate adaptation measures. The Council will plan for renewable energy capacity allocations arising from the RSES review and will strengthen policies to support wind, solar, and other low-carbon energy sources. Coastal change and climate adaptation considerations will be integrated into relevant policies, consistent with NPOs 53 and 54. A Climate Action chapter will set measurable targets aligned with Meath CAP.

Submission No.: MH-C203-SIP-142: Boyne Valley Consultation Committee

The submission suggests the County Development Plan should prioritise creating connections between key Boyne Valley amenities—Brú na Bóinne (World Heritage Site), Dowth Hall Estate (future national park), and Oldbridge Estate, thus forming a loop from Drogheda to Slane and onward to Navan. This area offers unmatched historical, cultural,

and environmental value, presenting a unique opportunity for sustainable green tourism development.

Key proposals include:

- Developing a greenway along the south bank of the Boyne, with bridges linking to the north bank.
- Exploring cycle/pedestrian routes between Knowth and Slane, including a ridgeline return loop for scenic views overlooking the valley.
- Opening Dowth Hall Estate for pedestrian and cyclist access, creating a natural oasis connected to Oldbridge.
- Leveraging these amenities to drive tourism-related businesses and services.

Failure to act would squander a world-class opportunity to enhance the county's economic, cultural, and natural life. This proposal should inform objectives in the new Development Plan

Chief Executive Response

(Insert CE Response)

The suggestions raised seeking for the County Development Plan to priotitise creating connections between key Boyne Valley amenities is acknowledged. The Council recognises the World Heritage Site as being one of world's most important archaeological complexes and as a key component of Ireland's Ancient East, with potential to generate additional tourist activity in the wider Boyne Valley region.

The Council has successfully rolled out several greenway programmes in the County with the success of the Lakelands Greenway. Background works are ongoing regarding the Navan to Oldbridge portion of the Boyne Greenway, with the preferred route published for consultation in December 2023. Work is currently ongoing on preparing the Preliminary Design and the Council are continuing to liaise with relevant stakeholders. The Draft Plan will continue to support the development of a network of Greenways in the County in accordance with national and regional policy.

Meath County Council notes the exceptional archaeological, architectural and landscape sensitivity of the Boyne Valley, including Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site and its wider setting, together with Dowth Hall Estate and Oldbridge Estate. Any future greenway or access proposals will be required to comply with Development Plan's heritage protection policies.

The Draft County Development Plan will support sustainable green tourism initiatives where they are appropriately located and designed to protect World Heritage Sites and the integrity of the wider cultural landscape. The issues raised in this submission will be

considered in the preparation of heritage, landscape character and green infrastructure objectives within the Draft County Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-143: Hughes Planning Consultants on behalf of Keegan Holdings Limited
Summary of Submission:
This submission highlights that there is an insufficient supply of residentially zoned land in the town of Trim and the urgent need to address same having regard to the following: • The recent publication NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities. • The NPF strongly promotes Transport-Orientated Development near high-capacity public transport (National Policy Objective 10). Trim is well served by public transport. • The strategic location of Trim offering strong access to employment opportunities, well established education network and commuting distance to Navan, Dublin city, Drogheda and Balbriggan. • The need for a mix of dwelling types to cater for future demand in Trim.
Chief Executive Response
The Chief Executive notes the submission regarding an insufficient supply of residential zoning in Trim. The author requests that Meath County Council consider lands that they have identified as suitable for residential development. It should be noted that matters relating to site specific zoning cannot be considered at this stage of the plan-making process. Such matters should be raised at the draft stage of the County Development Plan process. With regard to the identification of additional lands for residential zoning, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The purpose of this audit is to assess serviced and serviceable lands within settlements, including Trim, that may be capable of accommodating residential development. The audit considers factors such as water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints, and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions in relation to future residential zoning and expansion.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-146: Brock McClure Planning Consultants on behalf of Belgree Industrial Developments Ltd.
Summary of Submission:
Population projections in relation to economic needs The 2022 Census population statistics have been detailed and it is noted that Meath's population has increased by 13.2% since 2016. It is contended that the substantial population growth necessitates the appropriate development of employment opportunities across the County. **Employment lands in Kilbride** The submission responds to key themes set out in the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper and demonstrates how the employment lands at Kilbride can meaningfully contribute to the economic development and delivery of employment opportunities in County Meath.
Chief Executive Response
An Economic Strategy (chapter) will form a key part of the Draft Plan and will contain a range of policies and objectives which support employment opportunities and employment growth across the county. The Council will prepare a robust, evidence-based economic strategy that reflects Meath's strengths, emerging economic trends, and national climate objectives. The strategy will identify opportunities for employment growth in key towns and strategic locations, while supporting the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy. Employment zoning will be reviewed to ensure that it is strategically located, appropriately serviced, and aligned with transport accessibility. Regarding the zoning of the subject lands, submissions can be made and considered at the draft Plan stage. The Council is currently undertaking an assessment of the employment zoned lands across County Meath to inform the employment zoning methodology for the new County Development Plan. Preliminary results indicate that a large majority of employment zoned lands in Kilbride remain undeveloped. This will be considered, along with the recommendations within the submission pertaining to employment, in the Development Plan review and in accordance with the employment zoning methodology as set out in the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022).

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-147: Hughes Planning Consultants on behalf of Earlsfort Developments Drogheda Limited
Summary of Submission:
This submission highlights that there is an insufficient supply of residentially zoned land in the Southern Environs of Drogheda and the urgent need to address same having regard to the following: • The recent publication NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities. • The NPF strongly promotes Transport-Orientated Development near high-capacity public transport (National Policy Objective 10). Drogheda is well served by public transport. An Coimisiún Pleanála has recently granted the expansion of DART services to Drogheda. • The strategic location of Drogheda offering strong access to employment opportunities, well established education network and commuting distance to Navan, Dublin city, Drogheda and Balbriggan. • The need for a mix of dwelling types to cater for future demand in Drogheda.
Chief Executive Response
The submission references the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines (August 2025) which increase Meath's annual housing requirement to 2,942 units, with provision for up to 50% additional provision resulting in 4,413 units annually. The specific housing allocation to individual settlements, including South Drogheda, will be determined through the preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to: • National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development • Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives • The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements • Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure • Environmental constraints including flood risk • The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability • Demonstrated housing delivery capacity and pipeline development • The objective of achieving sustainable settlement patterns across the full settlement hierarchy

The Council notes that while the principle of supporting transport-oriented development is consistent with national and regional policy, the allocation of housing growth to individual settlements must be evidence-based and balanced across the settlement hierarchy, taking into account infrastructure delivery timelines, environmental constraints, and the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-148: DOWNEY Planning on behalf of Holdings Limited

Summary of Submission:

This submission advocates for targeted, plan led residential growth in the at Colpe, Drogheda to help meet Meath's significantly increased housing targets under the revised National Planning Framework (NPF) and Section 28 Guidelines. The following point is made:

- Under the 2025 Guidelines, Meath County Council are required to plan for 2,942 homes annually to 2034, with up to 4,413 units per annum when headroom is included.

Colpe Settlement Context is outlined as follows:
The submission states that the surrounding area of Colpe has a population of 2,385 people recorded in the 2022 Census, an increase of 36.5% from 2016. Given the scale of growth taking place in the Eastern and Midland Region it is purported that Colpe's role remains highly relevant in contributing to both national and county level planning objectives. Combined with its established community, strategic location, and access to key transport infrastructure serving the Drogheda-East Meath corridor, it is contended that Colpe is well placed to accommodate targeted, plan-led residential expansion in a sustainable and locally appropriate manner. Further, it is indicated that targeted residential growth within or immediately adjoining the existing village core would naturally extend the settlement form and reinforce the vitality of the village centre.

Chief Executive Response

The submission references the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines (August 2025) which increase Meath's annual housing requirement to 2,942 units, with provision for up to 50% additional provision resulting in 4,413 units annually.

The specific housing allocation to individual settlements will be determined through the preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives
- The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements
- Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure
- Environmental constraints including flood risk
- The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability
- Demonstrated housing delivery capacity and pipeline development
- The objective of achieving sustainable settlement patterns across the full settlement hierarchy

The allocation of housing growth to individual settlements must be evidence-based and balanced across the settlement hierarchy, taking into account infrastructure delivery timelines, environmental constraints, and the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-149: DOWNEY Planning on behalf of Mary Rose Fallon

Summary of Submission:

This submission advocates for targeted, plan led residential growth in the village of Julianstown to help meet Meath's significantly increased housing targets under the revised National Planning Framework (NPF) and Section 28 Guidelines. The following point is made:

- Under the 2025 Guidelines, Meath County Council are required to plan for 2,942 homes annually to 2034, with up to 4,413 units per annum when headroom is included.

Julianstown Settlement Context is outlined as follows:
The submission states that the population of Julianstown grew marginally from 1,214 to 1,223 according to the 2022 Census. Notwithstanding this, it is indicated that given the scale of growth taking place in the Eastern and Midland Region it is purported that Julianstowns role remains highly relevant in contributing to both national and county level planning objectives. Combined with its established community, strategic location, and access to key transport infrastructure serving the Drogheda-East Meath corridor, it is contended that Julianstown is well placed to accommodate targeted, plan-led residential expansion in a sustainable and locally appropriate manner. Further, it is indicated that targeted residential growth within or immediately adjoining the existing village core would naturally extend the settlement form and reinforce the vitality of the village centre.

Chief Executive Response

The submission references the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines (August 2025) which increase Meath's annual housing requirement to 2,942 units, with provision for up to 50% additional provision resulting in 4,413 units annually.

The specific housing allocation to individual settlements, including Julianstown, will be determined through preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives
- The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements
- Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure
- Environmental constraints including flood risk
- The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability
- Demonstrated housing delivery capacity and pipeline development
- The objective of achieving sustainable settlement patterns across the full settlement hierarchy

The allocation of housing growth to individual settlements must be evidence-based and balanced across the settlement hierarchy, taking into account infrastructure delivery timelines, environmental constraints, and the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-152: DOWNEY Planning on behalf of Balgeeth Holdings Limited

Summary of Submission:

This submission advocates for targeted, plan led residential growth in the village of Julianstown to help meet Meath's significantly increased housing targets under the revised National Planning Framework (NPF) and Section 28 Guidelines. The following point is made:

- Under the 2025 Guidelines, Meath County Council are required to plan for 2,942 homes annually to 2034, with up to 4,413 units per annum when headroom is included.

Julianstown Settlement Context is outlined as follows:

The population of Julianstown grew marginally from 1,214 to 1,223 according to the 2022 Census. Notwithstanding this, it is indicated that given the scale of growth taking place in the Eastern and Midland Region it is purported that Julianstown's role remains highly relevant in contributing to both national and county level planning objectives. Combined with its established community, strategic location, and access to key transport infrastructure serving the Drogheda-East Meath corridor, it is contended that Julianstown is well placed to accommodate targeted, plan-led residential expansion in a sustainable and locally appropriate manner. Further, it is indicated that targeted residential growth within or immediately adjoining the existing village core would naturally extend the settlement form and reinforce the vitality of the village centre.

Chief Executive Response

The submission references the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines (August 2025) which increase Meath's annual housing requirement to 2,942 units (baseline), with provision for up to 50% additional provision resulting in 4,413 units annually.

The specific housing allocation to individual settlements, including Julianstown, will be determined through preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives
- The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements
- Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure
- Environmental constraints including flood risk
- The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability
- Demonstrated housing delivery capacity and pipeline development
- The objective of achieving sustainable settlement patterns across the full settlement hierarchy

The allocation of housing growth to individual settlements must be evidence-based and balanced across the settlement hierarchy, taking into account infrastructure delivery

timelines, environmental constraints, and the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-153: Meath Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO)
Summary of Submission:

This submission advocates for accessibility and inclusion to be central to the new Development Plan, ensuring disabled people in Meath can live barrier-free lives. The key issues are summarised as follows:

1. **Accessibility in Settlements, Infrastructure, Community Services and Rural Development**

- Many rural and urban areas lack accessible infrastructure for example:
    - Poorly maintained or absent footpaths (too steep, narrow, broken, or only on one side);
    - Building entrances often too narrow or with steps, creating barriers;
    - Playgrounds with accessible equipment but gates that block wheelchair access;
- No enforcement of accessibility standards even in public buildings despite the Disability Act 2005.

2. **Accessibility in Employment**

- Remote working has improved inclusion for disabled people by allowing flexibility. This should be supported in the new Development Plan.

3. **Accessibility in Transport & Movement**

- Public transport in Meath is unreliable and often inaccessible:
    - For example, bus routes from Trim (route 190, 109b, 111, 189) have unpredictable vehicle types—sometimes wheelchair accessible, sometimes not and are infrequent.
    - Rural areas often lack bus services entirely.
    - Navan rail line repeatedly delayed despite potential benefits.

Recommendations are made in relation to the topics above as follows:

- Adopt Universal Design principles in all developments;
- Improve frequency, reliability, and accessibility of public transport;
- Support remote working options as part of employment strategy, benefiting disabled and non-disabled workers alike.

Chief Executive Response

In relation to Universal Design in housing, Variation 3 to the current Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 was adopted last year to take into account the actions outlined in the policy statement entitled, 'Housing Options for Our Ageing Population' prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the Department of Health (2019), Section 6.4 entitled "Age Friendly Communities" of the National Planning Framework (Project Ireland 2040) and Housing Policy Objective 6: Increase and improve housing options for Older People within policy "Housing for All, A new Housing Plan for Ireland" prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (2021). The following policy documents are now referenced under section 11.1.2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied:

- Housing Options for Our Ageing Population, Policy Statement (2019) Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government & Department of Health.
- Building for Everyone: A Universal Design developed by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (National Disability Authority).
- Ten Universal Design Features to include in a Lifetime Adaptable and Age Friendly Home, Age Friendly Ireland.

Variation 3 saw changes to the quantum of residential units that must be universally designed across the County. All residential schemes of ten or more units now must ensure 15-30% of the total number of units are universally designed. This figure is proposed to rise to a 30% minimum under the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033. Furthermore, under section 11.5.2 of the current County Development Plan 2021-2027 and specifically DM OBJ 13 a detailed design statement in residential schemes of 10 or more units must be submitted which includes a universal design statement. The universal design statement must demonstrate the universal design principles applied through the proposed development and how the proposed development complies with the 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design', 'Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland' developed by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (National Disability Authority) and section 11.5.29 of the Plan. The requirement for a universal design statement at planning application stage means the development will be designed from the outset with a focus on universal design and hence accessibility. Section 11.5.29 is a section that was also added under Variation 3 and relates specifically to the provision of Age Friendly Lifetime Adaptable Homes.

In relation to transport and movement, the concerns expressed are acknowledged. The need for equality of access to all aspects of the built environment for all individuals is recognised by Meath County Council as essential for equal opportunities and development of an inclusive society. The principle of universal design for all will be

supported and required in the implementation of all aspects of the built environment including public realm and the pedestrian and cycling network, to create an environment that is safe and accessible and in accordance with best accessibility practice.

Furthermore, it is considered that the adoption of 'whole journey approach' to all elements of a person's journey from starting point to destination is critical in delivering universal accessibility. The Draft Plan will continue to support the implementation of a range of universal accessibility measures relating to transport infrastructure in the County, in accordance with the 'whole journey approach' and the principles of people-centered urban design.

The Council will continue to work with national agencies in supporting and addressing the transport and access needs particularly for vulnerable groups such as people with mobility impairment and/or disabilities including the elderly and people with children during the course of preparing the Meath County Development Plan 2027-2033. The Council will also continue to work with the NTA and TFI Local Link to improve the reliability and frequency of public transport bus services across the county.

In relation to remote working options the Council will continue to promote same as part of the economic strategy which will form part the draft Plan. Universal access to all such developments will be a key consideration and requirement in their design and layout.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-154: Naul Community Council

Summary of Submission:

This submission welcomes the opportunity to engage with the Strategic Issues Paper of the Draft Meath Development Plan 2027-2033 and advocates for a focus on improving accessibility, transparency, and environmental protection in the Development Plan process, while also advocating for better mapping tools and heritage conservation. It is summarised under the following headings:

1. **Accessibility & Public Engagement**

- Current Meath Development Plan website is difficult to navigate.
- Suggests adopting best practice from Fingal County Council, with:
    - Dedicated webpage for the Development Plan.
    - Clear sub-sections for each stage (Strategic Issues Paper, CE Reports, amendments).
- Emphasises compliance with Aarhus Convention for public access to environmental information.

2. **GIS Mapping & Interactive Viewer**

- Greater use of GIS for all is advised, for example the following:
    - Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), protected structures, RMP sites, rivers, and ecological corridors, cycling routes, proposed greenways, and nature development areas.
- Incorporate National Landcover Map and EU Nature Restoration Law requirements.
- Include historic sites like the Naul Townland area identified in 1972 as scientifically significant.

3. Protected Structure Designations

- Add historically significant structures to the Record of Protected Structures as follows:
    - Black Man's Bridge, single arch medieval bridge;
    - Historic double arch bridge Gormanston Demesne;
    - WWII pillboxes at Irishtown/Gormanston area;
    - Pillboxes along the Boyne River as identified in a Jstor report by Geraldine Stout.

It is indicated that these are an increasingly rare part of our architectural heritage and a legacy of Ireland's Emergency period and as such warrant protection given their national, social and technical qualities.

4. GIS Mapping and specific area based objectives

- A GIS map showing the main rivers should be included for the county with buffer zones identified. In Fingal a 10m buffer zone exists in relation to streams and a 48m buffer zone exists in respect of the main rivers taking into account the potential for otter activity and the need to protect riparian landscapes.
- In the Fingal Development Plan there are mapped objectives which include river restoration works on the Delvin River at Naul to be led by MCC and FCC. While Fingals maps provide a policy basis in Fingal, there is a lack of green infrastructure maps for Meath and therefore no county policy level basis to support this.
- This was identified during the Water Action Plan and will shortly have a National Plan basis in the National Nature Restoration Plan.
- There is a need to carry out this mapping to align with the Water Framework Directive and upcoming National Nature Restoration Plan.

In relation to the above, reference is made to the way in which Fingal County Council present their data. It is indicated that Meath County Council should make improvements particularly in relation to the following:

- Improving public access and transparency in plan-making;
- Improved GIS mapping for environmental and heritage assets in particular;
- Provide stronger nature protection policies and buffer zones;
- Ensure historic and scientific sites in Meath are recognised and given a planning framework.

Chief Executive Response

Accessibility & Public Engagement, GIS Mapping & Interactive Viewer and GIS Mapping and specific area based objectives

The comments that the current Meath Development Plan website is difficult to navigate are noted. The recommendation for a dedicated webpage for the Development Plan is also noted. The current Meath CDP has a dedicated website which details each stage of the CDP preparation as well as links to all relevant documents **https://countydevelopmentplanreview.meath.ie/ .**

It should be noted that the current CDP includes a suite of interactive GIS maps including Land use zoning, cultural and natural heritage and strategic food risk assessment **https://meathcoco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/portfolio/index.html?appid=f26096f1576e4db0abbd9a89dd4b14d1**

Each chapter also includes its own dedicated interactive mapping portfolio where relevant. The recommendations regarding enhanced GIS mapping, buffer zoning along rivers, and the protection of ecological corridors and landscape are noted. These matters will be considered during the Draft County Development Plan.

The Draft County Development Plan will continue to include policies and objectives to safeguard built heritage, archaeological heritage, biodiversity and landscape character, and to support the sustainable management of natural assets across County Meath.

Protected Structure Designations

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission in relation to cultural and natural heritage, including the suggestions regarding additional protected structure designations, improved mapping of heritage and environmental assets, and the protection of river corridors and riparian habitats.

The council notes the specific structures identified in the submission and advises that the Record of Protected Structures will be reviewed as part of the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan at Draft Plan Stage.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-155: Dunshaughlin Town Team
Summary of Submission:

This submission details the key challenges and opportunities for the town of Dunshaughlin which has seen rapid population growth and substantial residential development in recent years. The submission indicates that while this growth reflects the town's desirability and strategic location, there is a critical mismatch where infrastructure, services and transport have not kept pace. The submission makes recommendations in relation to a number of topics which are summarised under the following headings:

1. Population Growth & Housing

- Challenges: Risk of housing outpacing schools, healthcare, and amenities.
- Recommendations:
    - Ensure phasing of housing is strongly linked to infrastructure delivery;
    - Use active land management to prioritise brownfield/infill development thereby reducing sprawl;
    - While identifying sufficient zoned land also require developers to contribute to community infrastructure such as schools, health facilities, and public spaces.

2. Transport & Connectivity

- Prioritise delivery of the Dunshaughlin train station;
- Expand park-and-ride infrastructure in Dunshaughlin;
- Enhance walking and cycling infrastructure;
- Develop/complete relief roads to reduce local traffic congestion, e.g, the Eastern Relief Road and Western Distributor as identified in existing plans.

3. Infrastructure & Utilities

- Continue to coordinate with Irish Water to forecast and deliver water/wastewater in line with housing and employment land release;
- Promote broadband uptake and plan for future digital infrastructure;
- Require developer contributions especially for high-demand services.

4. Social Infrastructure

- Include in the new CDP a commitment to build/expand schools in line with demographic growth;
- Promote the development of local healthcare facilities;

- Prioritise open space, parks and sports amenities in new neighborhoods.

5. Economic Development

- Identify and zone land for employment in or near Dunshaughlin prioritising quality local jobs;
- Promote mixed-use development in growth areas;
- Provide flexible zoning/tools for local enterprises and small businesses.

6. Town Centre Regeneration

- Embed Town Centre First Plan into the CDP for statutory backing;
- Support public realm improvements (streetscape, landscaping, pedestrian safety);
- Promote adaptive reuse of vacant buildings for community or mixed-use purposes.

7. Sustainability & Climate Action

- Promote green building standards in new developments;
- Plan for green infrastructure (parks, tree canopy, sustainable drainage) in both new and existing parts of the town;
- Strengthen active travel policies to reduce car reliance.

The submission highlights the risks if the above issues are not addressed as follows:

- Overstretched services reducing quality of life and placing financial pressure on the council;
- Increased traffic and congestion;
- Loss of community character;
- Economic imbalance leading to commuter dormitory status undermining its 'self-sustaining' role.

Chief Executive Response

The Chief Executive notes the submission from the Dunshaughlin Town Team which outlines the key challenges and opportunities arising from recent population growth and residential development in the town. The submission raises issues relating to housing delivery, infrastructure capacity, transport, social infrastructure, economic development, town centre regeneration, and climate action. These matters are noted and considered in the context of the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

Population Growth & Housing

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission's concerns regarding the pace of population growth in Dunshaughlin and the need to ensure that housing delivery is

appropriately aligned with the provision of supporting infrastructure and community facilities.

In relation to prioritising brownfield and infill development, the Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, compact, and sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. In this regard, the current County Development Plan already has policies to support compact growth on infill and brownfield sites including Policy SH POL 2 that seeks to promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced lands through the prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference to the edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl. The Draft County Development Plan will build on this policy approach and will continue to support compact growth.

In addition, Meath County Council notes the requirements of the Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, which states that development plans must prioritise the delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of existing settlements through infill and brownfield development, the re-use of vacant and underutilized lands, and the promotion of compact and sequential growth patterns. National Policy Objective 7 seeks the delivery of at least 40% of new homes within the existing built-up areas. The Draft County Development Plan will be prepared in alignment with national policy requirements and will seek to ensure that housing delivery is directed at appropriate locations.

The council will continue to promote the coordinated phasing of residential development with the timely provision of physical and social infrastructure, including education, healthcare, open space and community facilities.

Transport & Connectivity

The Council acknowledges the comments made in relation to transport and connectivity. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks.

The prioritisation highlighted in regard to sustainable transport, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is also noted. A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing

factor for travel demand. Meath County Council's aims to provide safe, efficient and accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims, and this will be reflected in the Draft Plan.

The provision of a distributor road around the town that ties in with the existing link road to the M3 would result in more efficient traffic movements whilst also reducing congestion in the town centre. These roads will be developer driven and will be completed on a phased basis in tandem with the development of the identified lands. Part of the eastern section of this Distributor Road is to be developed as part of 'The Willows' residential development. The Draft Plan will continue to support the delivery of these Distributor Roads and recognise the benefits they would have in removing through traffic from the town centre and promoting a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment in the urban core of the town.

The Draft Plan will also include policies and objectives in support of rail-focused development consolidation as well as safeguarding land for suitable park and ride facilities in close proximity to rail stations and bus stops.

Infrastructure & Utilities

Meath County Council acknowledge the submission's emphasis on the importance of aligning residential and employment growth with the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure, including water services, wastewater capacity, and digital infrastructure.

Meath County Council will continue to liaise with Uisce Éireann in relation to the planning and delivery of water and wastewater infrastructure to support planned growth, in accordance with the Core Strategy of the Draft County Development Plan.

The Draft County Development Plan will also have regard to national and regional policy objectives relating to the provision of high-quality digital infrastructure and broadband connectivity as a key enabler of sustainable economic development and community wellbeing.

The Council further notes the role of development contributions and related mechanisms in supporting the delivery of enabling infrastructure and services, which will continue to be applied and reviewed as part of the Draft County Development Plan.

Social Infrastructure

The submission's observations regarding the importance of ensuring that social infrastructure, including education, healthcare facilities, open space and recreation amenities, are delivered in tandem with population growth, are noted.

In this regard, a Social Infrastructure Audit is currently underway for the county to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

Meath County Council will also continue to engage with relevant statutory bodies, including the Department of Education and the HSE, in relation to the planning and delivery of schools and healthcare facilities, and will promote the provision of open space, recreation and community facilities as a key component of new residential development.

Economic Development

The Chief Executive notes the submission's comments regarding the importance of supporting employment growth in and around Dunshaughlin and promoting a balanced pattern of development that integrates residential, employment and service uses.

Regarding zoning additional lands, a Settlement Capacity Audit has been prepared as part of the Draft County Development Plan. The audit has determined serviced and serviceable lands within Dunshaughlin that can accommodate employment zoning. The factors considered during a Settlement Capacity Audit are water and wastewater capacity, transportation infrastructure, access to social and community infrastructure, environmental constraints and the likelihood of lands coming forward for development within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. The findings of the Settlement Capacity Audit will inform decisions on future employment zoning.

Regarding the quantum of zoned employment lands, the Council is currently undertaking an assessment of the employment zoned lands across County Meath to inform the employment zoning methodology for the new County Development Plan. Preliminary results indicate that the majority of employment zoned lands in Dunshauglin remain undeveloped. This will be considered, along with the recommendations within the submission pertaining to employment, in the Development Plan review and in accordance with the employment zoning methodology as set out in the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022).

The Draft County Development Plan will also include policies and objectives to support enterprise development and local employment creation. The Council has engaged 3rd party consultants to update the Retail Strategy which will support the new Development Plan. This strategy will focus on, inter alia, supporting indigenous employment and flexible retail spaces.

Town Centre Regeneration

The author's support for a town centre-led approach to development and the importance of regeneration, public realm enhancement, and the reuse of vacant and underutilised buildings in Dunshaughlin is noted.

Notwithstanding this, the Draft County Development Plan will be informed by the principles of the Town Centre First policy, as well as national and regional objectives which seek to strengthen the vitality and viability of town centres, supports compact growth and promotes the efficient use of existing serviced lands and buildings.

The Draft County Development Plan will include policies and objectives to support regeneration and revitalisation of town centres, including the enhancement of public realm, improved pedestrian safety and accessibility, and the promotion of high-quality streetscape and placemaking initiatives.

In addition, Meath County Council supports the adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilised buildings for community, residential and mixed-use purposes. This approach will continue to be encouraged.

Sustainability & Climate Change

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission from the Dunshaughlin Town Team and notes the emphasis placed on embedding sustainability and climate action into the future growth of the town. The Council recognises the relevance of promoting green building standards, energy efficiency, renewable energy integration, green infrastructure, and sustainable drainage systems as part of a climate-resilient approach to development. The submission's focus on strengthening active travel and reducing reliance on private car use aligns with climate mitigation objectives relating to emissions reduction and improved air quality. The Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 will be informed by the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 and will integrate climate mitigation and adaptation considerations across settlement planning, transport and infrastructure, subject to environmental assessment and statutory requirements.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-156: Boyle Planning Consultants

Summary of Submission:

The submission proposes a "Family Hub" concept as an alternative to traditional one-off rural housing, aiming to reduce ribbon development and visual impact while improving road safety.

Key Proposal: Family Hub / Cluster Development

- Concept:
  - A single entrance from the public road leading to a semi-circular internal service road.
  - Cluster of 3–5 houses located 150–200 meters off the public road.
  - Designed for family members (or farm employees) on rural landholdings.
- Infrastructure:
  - Shared communal septic tank (permitted under recent ministerial changes) or individual tanks if sites are large enough (0.5 acres).
- Benefits:

- Reduces ribbon development and negative visual impact on rural landscapes.
- Improves road safety by replacing multiple entrances with one.
- Encourages clustering near existing farmyards.
- Maintains local need criteria for rural housing.

The submission requests that this 'family hub' model is included as a policy option in the forthcoming Meath County Development Plan to help manage rural housing in a more sustainable and visually sensitive manner.

Chief Executive Response

The comments made in this submission regarding the concept of 'Family Hubs' as an alternative to traditional one-off rural housing is acknowledged. Meath County Council recognises the long tradition of people living in rural areas. The current Plan outlines how rural development should be consolidated within existing villages and settlements that can build sustainable rural communities as set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region (RSES).

The current plan supports rural nodes located across the County in offering attractive housing options to meet the need of the established rural communities and to support existing local community facilities. Rural nodes are designated for limited development at a sustainable scale for immediate local need through the development of clusters. The Council supports infill development on appropriate sites in rural nodes which make the most sustainable use of serviced land and existing public infrastructure.

The current plan also promotes the 'clachan tradition' of clustering housing within rural nodes. The Draft Plan will continue to encourage sustainable development of rural communities without compromising the physical, environmental, natural and heritage resources of the County

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-157: Brendan Regan

Summary of Submission:

This submission provides observations on sustainable development, environmental protection, and community needs, with a strong focus on safeguarding East Meath's coastal and rural areas. It can be summarised under the following headings:

1. Development Plan Review

- Ensure that achievements/benefits of the 2021–2027 plan are retained while addressing weaknesses in the review of the County Development Plan.

- The continuation of population, climate change impacts due to global warming, and infrastructure shortfalls should be addressed.
- Protection of the environment and ecosystems is called for under EU and Irish Law and must be to the fore in the drafting of the plan for present and future sustainability.

2. Settlement & Housing

- There is a need to address excessive population distribution along the east coast of Ireland in particular the Dublin City and County areas and in the adjoining areas of counties Meath and Kildare.
- There is a need to address the imbalance between the eastern commuter belt and inland counties suffering from dereliction and population loss.

3. Employment & Infrastructure

- Key employment sectors include construction (23%) and commerce.
- The plan aims to attract investment and support local businesses.
- There is strong opposition to the proposed deep-water port at Gormanston Beach for the following reasons:
    - Seen as environmentally disastrous for Meath's coastline.
    - Seen as an unnatural location for a sea port.
    - The existing and future employment potential of Drogheda Port is questionable.

4. Rural Development and land spreading

- Meath's rural areas face challenges in balancing economic, social and environmental needs. The East Meath area has fertile, warm, almost all year round crop growing soils.
- Concerns raised in relation to the spreading of biocake/biosolids from wastewater treatment plants on agricultural land spells disaster for safe and clean food production. This must be resisted by Meath County Council and included in the new development plan.

5. Transport & Movement

- Prioritise the Navan–Dublin rail link for sustainable connectivity.
- Develop strategic transport systems for inland and midland towns to reduce car dependency.

6. Community Services

- Enhance inclusive communities with schools, libraries, and recreational facilities.
- Ensure social infrastructure needs are prioritised.

7. Cultural & Natural Heritage

- Meaths rich heritage must be protected.

8. Climate Action

- The Plan needs to focus on transitioning to a low-carbon society, addressing climate resilience and sustainability. Targets should include a minimum 50% improvement in energy efficiency and 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.
- The historic and continuous discharge to the area and the Irish Sea of radioactive isotobes is an issue that must be addressed seriously by the Irish Government with the involvement of local authorities.

Chief Executive Response

1. Development Plan Review

The CDP will incorporate robust SEA, AA, and SFRA processes, including climate impact assessments. Engagement with statutory bodies (EPA, NPWS, OPW, Uisce Éireann) has commenced and will continue be prioritised to ensure compliance with all EU and national legislation and guidelines. It is also recognised that the CDP must put in place a framework that promotes and provides high quality physical infrastructure to allow development to progress in a sustainable manner. The availability of infrastructure such as water, wastewater, surface water drainage, energy, and telecommunications networks will play a key role in securing economic investment, delivering homes and community facilities. The Council will continue to engage with all relevant infrastructure providers in this regard .

2. Settlement & Housing

The Planning Authority will ensure, when making the County Development Plan, that it is materially consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region (RSES) and the National Planning Framework (NPF). The Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, prioritising the consolidation

of existing urban areas and the efficient use of serviced lands in order to support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl.

3. Employment & Infrastructure

The Council will prepare a robust, evidence-based economic strategy that reflects Meath's strengths, emerging economic trends, and national climate objectives. The strategy will identify opportunities for employment growth in key towns and strategic locations, while supporting the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy. Employment zoning will be reviewed to ensure that it is strategically located, appropriately serviced, and aligned with transport accessibility. In this respect, the Council is currently undertaking an assessment of the employment zoned lands across County Meath to inform the employment zoning methodology for the new County Development Plan. The results of this assessment will be considered, along with the recommendations within the submission pertaining to employment, in the Development Plan review and in accordance with the employment zoning methodology as set out in the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022).

The opposition to the deep-water port at Gormanston Beach and the reasons for same is noted. Any proposal for a deepwater port would be subject to a comprehensive suite of assessments at project level, including Environmental Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, coastal process and erosion studies, archaeological assessment and compliance with national marine, climate and planning policy. Such a development would also require consistency with national policy, including the National Planning Framework and any relevant sectoral strategies, and would be subject to approval by the appropriate consenting authorities.

4. Rural Development and land spreading

Meath County Council recognises the long tradition of people living in rural areas and promotes sustainable rural settlement as a key component of delivering more balanced regional development. Rural development should be consolidated within existing villages and settlements that can build sustainable rural communities as set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region (RSES). The Development Plan seeks to accommodate rural generated housing needs where they arise, subject to local housing need criteria and development management standards. The Draft Plan will continue to encourage sustainable development of rural communities without compromising the physical, environment, natural and heritage resources of the County.

The concerns raised in relation to the spreading of biocake/biosolids from wastewater treatment plants on agricultural land is noted however land spreading is outside the remit of a development plan.

5. Transport & Movement

In regard to the Navan – Dublin rail line, Meath County Council is continuing to liaise with the Irish Rail as the project proceeds through the planning and design phases. The Draft Plan will continue to support the delivery of the Navan Railway Line.

It is recognised that maximising accessibility to rural areas within the County through expansion of local link bus services is essential to addressing social exclusion, isolation and improving connectivity and mobility within rural areas. The Council are committed to working with public transport providers including the NTA in relation to the Local Link Rural Transport Programme and provision of the NTA's Connecting Irelands Mobility Plan to identify areas most in need. In this context, the Council will continue to engage with the NTA and other relevant transport providers relating to the provision of rural transport services, throughout the process of the preparing the Draft Plan.

6. Community Services

One of the overall aims of the current Plan is the promotion of social inclusion and this will be carried forward into the Draft CDP. Section 7.6 *Social Inclusion* of the current Plan will be reviewed and updated where required,

For information purposes, a Social Infrastructure Audit is currently underway for the county to determine where social infrastructure deficits exist. The outcome of this assessment will determine what locations are in greatest need of social infrastructure and where necessary, additional lands will be zoned and supported by an objective.

7. Cultural & Natural Heritage

The Draft Plan will contain a dedicated chapter to Cultural and Natural Heritage specifying a range of policies and objectives to protect and safeguard the unique heritage of the county.

8. Climate Action

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission from Brendan Regan and notes the emphasis placed on climate change mitigation and resilience, including the transition to a low-carbon society, improved energy efficiency, and the achievement of national greenhouse gas reduction targets. The Council notes the submission's reference to climate-related pressures arising from population growth, coastal vulnerability in East Meath, and the need to protect environmental and ecosystem integrity in the context of climate change. The Draft County Development Plan 2027–2033 will be informed by the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024–2029, the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development

(Amendment) Act 2021, and national climate targets, and will integrate climate mitigation and adaptation considerations across settlement planning, infrastructure provision and environmental protection, subject to appropriate environmental assessment and statutory requirements.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-158: Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of Tara na Ri Limited

Summary of Submission:

This submission seeks to include a strategic proposal and specific objective in the new Development Plan to support sustainable tourism development at the Tara na Rí site in Garlow Cross, Navan. The context of the site can be summarised as follows:

- Tara na Rí facility is located:
  - 3 km north of the Hill of Tara, 7 km south of Navan, close to Junction 7 on the M3.
  - Within Ireland's Ancient East and Boyne Valley Region—one of Fáilte Ireland's top ten world-class destinations.
- The facility is currently under construction (permitted under MCC Ref. AA/200061 and extended by Reg. Ref. 25/157) and includes the following:
  - Restaurant, public bar, shop and holiday accommodation and function room.
  - Park & Ride facility, coach drop-off and parking are located adjacent.

The rationale behind the proposal is justified having regard to the following:

- The facility is accessible to a variety of nature-based attractions, ancient sites, leisure attractions and heritage assets.
- The facility is very well connected by public transport.
- The revised National Planning Framework (NPF) promotes tourism branding and rural economic potential.
- The Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) encourages rural tourism and diversification through RPO 4.84 and 6.8.
- The current Meath CDP objectives RUR DEV SO 1 and 8 support sustainable development of rural communities. Further objectives/policies in the CDP support this proposal, for example, ED POL 8, ED OBJ 18, ED POL 19, ED OBJ 22 and ED POL 18.
- The proposal would strengthen Meath's tourism offering and provide local employment and community amenities.

Chief Executive Response

It should be noted that there a range of supporting policies and objectives in the current CDP in Section 4.24 *Tourism* which support tourism developments and tourism accommodation across the county. It is not possible for the Council to include specific objectives in relation to all tourism developments across the county, however Meath County Council notes the request for a specific objective to support sustainable tourism development at the Tara na Rí site. The Council will consider the appropriateness of including a site-specific heritage objective for the Tara na Ri as part of the Draft County Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-159: Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of Knockglade Limited

Summary of Submission:

This submission proposes a number of key strategic proposals in relation to the role and function that Ashbourne can play in the implementation of an overall strategy consistent with the NPF, RSES and Development Plan guidelines. These strategic proposals are summarised as follows:

1. **Ensure that the Core Strategy and associated housing allocations recognise the strategic importance of Ashbourne which is a self-sustaining growth town.**

- Benefits:
    - Strong public transport connectivity (multiple bus routes, M2/N2 corridor).
    - Significant investment in social, community, and recreational facilities.
    - Available water and wastewater capacity.
- Track record:
    - Delivered 9% of Meath's housing completions between 2012–2025.
    - All zoned residential lands under the current plan are committed or under construction.

2. **Allocate 8% of the NPF allocated growth over the life of the Plan to Ashbourne (2,120 units).**

- This equates to 2,120 units for Ashbourne between 2027–2033.
- Justification:
    - Ashbourne's proven ability to deliver housing.
    - Strategic location and infrastructure capacity.
    - Supports national policy to increase annual housing output from 35,000 to 60,000 units.

3. The future expansion of Ashbourne to the southwest is consistent with national policy priorities and guidance.

- Advocate for southwest quadrant expansion (includes area designated as Masterplan 21):
    - Logical, compact growth adjacent to the town centre.
    - Opportunity to deliver a major town park integrated with green infrastructure and active travel networks.
    - Aligns with NPF and Development Plan Guidelines (2022) for sequential development and urban consolidation.
    - Extensive social infrastructure within 1–2 km. For example, 6 primary & 2 secondary schools, 23 healthcare facilities including clinics and pharmacies, library, Garda station, fire station, community centre, over 25 sporting facilities (GAA, soccer, rugby, gyms, golf etc).

Chief Executive Response

The strategic importance of Ashbourne is emphasised and recognised in the current Meath CDP. Ashbourne is the second largest town in the County and its significant expansion is primarily related to its proximity to Dublin Airport and Dublin City Centre.

Employment and enterprise in Ashbourne benefits from its proximity to Dublin Airport, its strong links with the Dublin Metropolitan Area, and its location along the N2 strategic road corridor. As Dublin Airport continues to expand it is anticipated that the strategic importance of Ashbourne as a place of employment in Meath and the wider region will increase. The draft Plan will continue to identify the strategic importance of Ashbourne and will support and facilitate industry, employment, and enterprise in the settlement.

The housing allocation requested for Ashbourne and the suitability of the town growing in an south-western direction is noted. The specific housing allocation to individual settlements, including Ashbourne, will be determined through preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives
- The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements
- Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure
- Environmental constraints including flood risk

- The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability

The allocation of housing growth to individual settlements must be evidence-based and balanced across the settlement hierarchy, taking into account infrastructure delivery timelines, environmental constraints, and the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-160: Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of Coldrick Family

Summary of Submission:

This submission welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the sustainable and plan-led development of Navan through the next Meath County Development Plan. In this regard, the submission identifies strategic proposals as follows:

- **Ensure that the Core Strategy and associated housing allocations recognise the strategic importance of Navan which is a Key Town with significant capacity as the County's largest town.**

  Navan is designated in the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) as a Key Town:

  - Largest town in Meath.
  - Principal employment and service centre.
  - High-quality transport links and capacity to act as a growth driver.
  - Supports multi-modal access and future rail link extension from Dunboyne/M3 Parkway to Navan.
- **Allocate 25.6% of the NPF allocated growth over the life of the Plan to Navan (6,792 units).**

  Having regard to RPO 4.26 of the RSES at least 30% of Meath's housing growth should be in Key Towns (Navan and Maynooth).

  Proposed allocation for Navan:

  - Taking into account the limited housing delivery to date in Maynooth, it is considered appropriate to maintain the established allocation ratio of 85.5%/14.5% in favour of Navan.
  - Up to 6,792 units over the life time of the Plan should be allocated to Navan (includes headroom/additional allocation).
  - This reflects Navan's capacity, infrastructure, and track record in housing delivery.

- **Development of lands to the east of Navan would provide sequential urban consolidation.**

  The submission advocates for the future consolidation of the Eastern segment of Navan, to the east and south of the River Boyne. It is highlighted that the agreed MP12 Masterplan sets out a phasing scheme for development of the masterplan lands which has significantly progressed to date and given these are the only lands identified to the east of Navan, there is a need to look at other opportunities. The following is identified in support of the foregoing:

  - Opportunity to leverage recent infrastructure investment (LDR6 Distributor Road).
  - Proximity to town centre, employment lands, and social amenities.
  - Opportunities for greenfield and brownfield infill development exist.
  - Aligns with NPF objectives (NPO 7, NPO 9, NPO 11) and RSES priorities.
  - Complements existing Masterplan 12 lands and pipeline developments (e.g. Boyne Village Enterprise Park, large-scale residential projects).
  - Adequate water and wastewater capacity exists.
  - Strong social infrastructure in place: childcare, schools, healthcare, sports, and community facilities.

The core message of the submission is that Navan should receive the largest housing allocation in Meath to meet the NPF targets and land to the east of Navan presents an opportunity to accommodate compact, sequential development in this regard.

Chief Executive Response

Section 4.6 of the RSES identifies Navan as the primary centre of employment in the County with a range of retail and services including two retail parks, an acute hospital, health centres, court service and a number of primary and post primary schools. The RSES defines Navan as a Key Town within the Core Region, and the Settlement Hierarchy of the CDP is required to reflect this. RPOs 4.26 and 4.27 address the role of Key Towns within Core Strategies and this is augmented by RPOs 4.42-4.47 which specifically relate to Navan. The Draft Plan will continue to identify and support Navan's role as a Key Town and the primary centre for housing and employment growth in the county.

The housing allocation requested for Navan and the suitability of the town growing in an eastern direction is noted. The specific housing allocation to individual settlements, including Navan, will be determined through preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives
- The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements
- Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure
- Environmental constraints including flood risk
- The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability

The allocation of housing growth to individual settlements must be evidence-based and balanced across the settlement hierarchy, taking into account infrastructure delivery timelines, environmental constraints, and the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-161: Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of Ballyronan Developments Limited

Summary of Submission:

This submission relates to lands at Ballinlough Workhouse which is a protected structure near Dunshaughlin. The lands incorporate the rear ranges of the Ballinlough Union Workhouse complex listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS No. 91425/NIAH 14404403 and RPS No. 91426/NIAH 14404404). The submission can be summarised as follows:

Growth Allocation:

Advocates for Dunshaughlin to receive above-average growth in the Core Strategy due to its designation as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town, strong transport links, and infrastructure capacity.

Heritage Protection & Reuse:

- Proposes specific objective DUN HER 1 detailed below to enable conservation-led restoration and reuse of Ballinlough Workhouse rear ranges and former fever hospital for tourism and residential purposes.
- Suggests enabling housing of up to 60 units on adjoining lands to finance restoration, with development contingent on restoration completion.

DUN HER 1: *'To facilitate the reinstatement, repair and reuse of the rear ranges of the Ballinlough Workhouse buildings (Protected Structures) and the footprint of the former fever hospital, for tourism and residential use in a manner consistent with the*

Architectural Heritage Guidelines and best conservation practice, and to facilitate an element of enabling housing of up to 60 units on adjoining lands to the west. Development of the enabling housing element will not be permitted to commence until such time as the structures comprising the rear ranges of the workhouse have been restored to the satisfaction of the planning authority'.

The submission contends that the above aligns with the NPF and RSES policies promoting heritage-led regeneration. It is indicated that a previous permission (MCC DA30342, ABP 210105) on the site was unviable due to omission of enabling residential element.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission in relation to the protected structures at Ballinlough Workhouse, including the rear ranges of the former Union Workhouse and the footprint of the former fever hospital, which are included on the Record of Protected Structures.

Growth Allocation:

The specific housing allocation to individual settlements, including Dunshaughlin, will be determined through preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives
- The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements
- Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure
- Environmental constraints including flood risk
- The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability

The allocation of housing growth to individual settlements must be evidence-based and balanced across the settlement hierarchy, taking into account infrastructure delivery timelines, environmental constraints, and the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

Heritage Protection & Reuse:

The Council recognises the architectural, historical and social significance of the Ballinlough Workhouse complex and the importance of safeguarding protected structures and their setting in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities and the best conservation practice.

The Draft County Development Plan will continue to support the conservation-led repair, restoration and appropriate reuse of protected structures, where such proposals respect the special character, architectural integrity and historic fabric of the buildings.

Meath County Council notes the request for a specific heritage objective in respect of the site. The Council will consider the appropriateness of including a site-specific heritage objective for the Ballinlough Workhouse as part of the Draft County Development Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-162: Declan Brassil & Company Ltd on behalf of Mr. Eamonn Walsh & the Walsh Family

Summary of Submission:

This submission was made by Declan Brassil & Company Ltd on behalf of Mr. Eamonn Walsh & the Walsh Family. The submission focusses on lands in Dunboyne, County Meath.

The submission acknowledges the role of Dunboyne in the core strategy based on its proximity to rail transport and its location within the metropolitan area of Dublin. The submission further acknowledges the suitability of Dunboyne for compact growth and sequential urban expansion. The submission suggests that any development in Dunboyne must be of an appropriate scale and must protect heritage structures, biodiversity and natural amenities. In this respect, the submission references lands in Dunboyne which include a protected structure. The submission proposes the continued protection of this protected structure and suggests that the lands could be utilised for sequential, plan-led urban development. In light of this, the submission contains 2 no. strategic proposals for inclusion in the new Development Plan.

Firstly, the submission suggests the application of a masterplan objective on the author's lands, with a distinct focus on biodiversity, conservation and landscape. Secondly, the submission proposes the retention of the following Development Plan policies and objectives:

- HER POL 16
- HER POL 17
- HER POL 18
- HER POL 20
- HER POL 40
- HER POL 42
- DM OBJ 11

The submission concludes by recommending that heritage and landscape management be included as core considerations in the new Development Plan.

Chief Executive Response

The author's comments regarding the role of Dunboyne within the Core Strategy, having regard to its proximity to high-quality public transport, its location within the Dublin Metropolitan Area and its capacity to accommodate compact growth in a sequential and plan-led manner, are noted.

The Chief Executive acknowledges the submission's emphasis on the presence of protected structures, biodiversity and landscape features within the family lands, and the importance of ensuring that any future development responds appropriately to these sensitivities.

It should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. Site specific submissions cannot be considered at pre-draft stage. Such submissions should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

Notwithstanding this, Meath County Council notes the submission's position that future development in Dunboyne should proceed at an appropriate scale and in a coordinated manner and that lands should be brought forward sequentially. In this regard, Policy SH POL 2 of the current County Development Plan seeks to promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced lands through prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference to edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support compact urban growth and sustainable communities. The Draft County Development Plan will continue to support and encourage compact and sequential growth in a plan-led manner.

In addition, Meath County Council notes the requirements of the Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, which states that development plans must prioritise the delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of existing settlements through infill and brownfield development, the re-use of vacant and underutilized lands, and the promotion of compact and sequential growth patterns. National Policy Objective 7 seeks the delivery of at least 40% of new homes within the existing built-up areas. The Draft County Development Plan will be prepared in alignment with national policy requirements and will seek to ensure that housing delivery is directed to appropriate locations.

With regard to the request to apply a masterplan-led approach to the subject lands, it is noted that the purpose of a masterplan is to provide a coordinated framework for the planning and delivery of development, rather than to introduce additional layer of environmental and heritage protection. While the number of masterplans to be delivered in the Draft County Development Plan has yet to be determined, it is likely that masterplans will be identified for lands that have multiple landowners, various forms of

development beyond housing alone, or unique considerations that warrant a higher-level plan for the area.

Furthermore, the protection of architectural heritage, protected structures, and valuable woodlands are already provided for through the current County Development Plan's policies and objectives, including HER POL 14 and HER POL 40. These policies will be carried forward into the Draft County Development Plan, reviewed and updated where necessary, and will inform the assessment of any future development proposals for the area.

Chief Executive Recommendation

Continue to prioritise the delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of existing settlements through infill and brownfield development, the re-use of vacant and underutilised lands in compliance with national and regional policy.

Prepare an evidence-based core strategy which will identify settlements and specific land parcels which have the capacity in services to facilitate growth.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-163 : Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of MRP Investment & Development Ltd.

Summary of Submission:

This submission addresses the strategic role and future development potential of Kilmessan village, which is located on the planned Navan-Dublin rail corridor. MRP Investment & Development Ltd is part of the McAleer & Rushe Construction Group with €550 million turnover in 2025, having delivered 10,500 units as a group. The Directors and shareholders have 2,483 housing units constructed, in planning, or directly facilitated within the previous five years and have been active in Meath for over 25 years.

Three Strategic Proposals:

1. Recognition of Kilmessan's Strategic Importance for Transport-Oriented Development

The submission requests recognition of Kilmessan as strategically important for transport-oriented development (TOD), given its location on the Navan-Dublin rail corridor. The NPF defines TOD as "a form of urban development that seeks to maximise the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure space in close proximity to frequent, high quality transport services." The submission emphasizes that Kilmessan's future rail station provides an opportunity to embed TOD principles at an appropriate scale for the village's role and function.

The village currently benefits from bus transportation (Route 1098 connecting to Trim, Dunshaughlin, Navan, and Dublin) and available water services infrastructure, including a

new water treatment plant commissioned in 2019 with sufficient capacity to facilitate growth during the plan period. The village is also served by the Skane Valley Sewerage Scheme including the Castletown Tara Treatment Plant.

2. Sustainable Housing Allocation (264 units - 1% of County Allocation)

The submission proposes allocating 1% of the NPF-allocated growth to Kilmessan (264 units over the plan period), having regard to its location on a planned high capacity public transport corridor. Based on the 2025 NPF Housing Growth Requirements which increase Meath's annual housing target to 4,413 units (with full 50% additional provision applied)—a 53% increase from 2,862 units—the submission calculates that 1% of the 6-year allocation (4,413 x 6 = 26,478 units) equates to approximately 264 units for Kilmessan. This allocation would support the return on public investment in the rail infrastructure and help build critical mass at the proposed railway station to support the line's viability.

3. Future-Proof Through Consolidation and Strategic Infill

The submission proposes facilitating future expansion of Kilmessan by consolidating compact growth centered on the village core and the rail line to maximize integration of land use and public transportation. The submission identifies a strategic infill area between the existing village centre and the proposed rail line to the west. This area is described as the most suitable and sequential location for urban expansion as:

- It is contiguous to the existing built-up area
- The rail line will serve as a medium-term defensible boundary for urban expansion at an appropriate scale
- It will facilitate linking the rail station with the village centre and wider village area
- Flood-based constraints limit eastward and southern expansion of the village (National Indicative Fluvial Mapping identifies the Skane River as a flooding source to east and west)

The submission references the current Development Plan vision for Kilmessan to "consolidate and strengthen the defined and attractive Village Centre... develop existing opportunity and backland sites which will ensure that the village develops in a compact manner." The proposed strategic infill area is identified as within the CSO Built-Up Area and represents tier 1 or tier 2 lands which are or can be serviced by water and wastewater infrastructure within the plan lifetime.

Supporting Infrastructure and Services:

The submission provides detailed evidence of Kilmessan's existing supporting facilities and services located within 200-550m of the village core (with GAA club at 1,271m). The

submission includes 5 and 10-minute walking isochrones demonstrating accessibility from the proposed strategic infill area to village services and facilities.

Policy Alignment:

- NPF Transport-Oriented Development Objectives: Maximizing integration of land use and transportation, reducing carbon emissions, improving quality of life
- RSES: Focus on aligning population growth, residential development location, employment, and public transportation to support modal shift from private car
- Development Plan Guidelines (2022): Sequential approach prioritizing lands within or close to settlement core; infill and brownfield development on lands contiguous to built-up area
- NPF Housing Growth Requirements (2025): 53% increase in Meath's housing targets requiring strategic allocation to settlements with sustainable transport capacity

Specific Requests:

1. Recognition of Kilmessan's strategic importance for transport-oriented development in the Core Strategy and settlement hierarchy
2. Allocation of 1% of countywide housing growth to Kilmessan (264 units over plan period)
3. Identification and designation of strategic infill area between village core and planned rail line
4. Support for compact growth and urban consolidation centered on the village core and rail station
5. Recognition of the role Kilmessan will play in supporting the viability of the Navan-Dublin rail line

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission from MRP Investment & Development Ltd regarding the strategic role and future development potential of Kilmessan village. The Council notes MRP's track record in housing delivery in County Meath and the wider region.

Transport-Oriented Development, Housing Allocation and Settlement Hierarchy

The submission's proposal to allocate 1% of NPF-allocated growth to Kilmessan (264 units over the plan period) is noted, based on the settlement's location on a planned high-capacity public transport corridor. The submission references the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines (August 2025) which increase Meath's annual

housing requirement to 2,942 units (baseline), with provision for up to 50% additional provision resulting in 4,413 units annually.

The specific housing allocation to individual settlements, including Kilmessan, will be determined through preparation of the Core Strategy for the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033, having regard to:

- National Planning Framework objectives regarding compact growth, sequential development, and transport-oriented development
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy objectives
- The settlement hierarchy and the strategic role and function of individual settlements
- Infrastructure capacity including water services, wastewater treatment, transportation (existing and planned), and social/community infrastructure
- Environmental constraints including flood risk
- The tiered approach to zoning and evidence-based assessment of land suitability
- The delivery timeline and viability of the Navan-Dublin rail line and associated stations
- Demonstrated housing delivery capacity and pipeline development
- The objective of achieving sustainable settlement patterns across the full settlement hierarchy

The Council notes that while the principle of supporting transport-oriented development is consistent with national and regional policy, the allocation of housing growth to individual settlements must be evidence-based and balanced across the settlement hierarchy, taking into account infrastructure delivery timelines, environmental constraints, and the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

Strategic Infill and Settlement Expansion

The Council acknowledges the submission's identification of a strategic infill area between the existing village core and the proposed rail line to the west of Kilmessan. It should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. Any submissions in relation to land-use zoning should be made and considered at the draft stage of the County Development Plan.

The Draft County Development Plan will continue to promote a plan-led, compact and sequential approach to residential development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. In this regard, the current County Development Plan already has policies to support compact growth on infill and brownfield sites including Policy SH POL 2 that seeks to promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the efficient use of serviced

lands through the prioritisation of infill and brownfield development, in preference to the edge of settlement and greenfield sites, in order to support sustainable communities and reduce urban sprawl. The Draft County Development Plan will build on this policy approach and will continue to support compact growth.

In this context, Meath County Council also notes the requirements of the Section 28 Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, which states that development plans must prioritise the delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of existing settlements through infill and brownfield development, the re-use of vacant and underutilised lands, and the promotion of compact and sequential growth patterns. National Policy Objective 7 seeks the delivery of at least 40% of new homes within the existing built-up areas. The Draft County Development Plan will be prepared in alignment with national policy requirements and will seek to ensure that housing delivery is directed to appropriate locations.

Infrastructure and Service Capacity

The Council acknowledges the submission's detailed inventory of existing services and facilities in Kilmessan, including civic facilities, educational provision, retail/commercial facilities, leisure and hospitality facilities, and sporting amenities. The capacity of existing infrastructure and services to support additional development, and the need for any additional infrastructure or facilities, will be assessed as part of the development plan preparation process.

The Council notes the reference to water services infrastructure capacity including the water treatment plant commissioned in 2019 and connection to the Skane Valley Sewerage Scheme. Confirmation of infrastructure capacity from Uisce Éireann and detailed assessment of water services capacity to accommodate planned growth will inform housing allocations and land use zoning decisions in the Draft Plan.

Navan-Dublin Rail Line Timeline

While the Council continues to strongly support the delivery of this strategic infrastructure project, the timeline for delivery will be a material consideration in determining appropriate housing allocations and phasing of development in Kilmessan. The Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033 will include policies and objectives supporting the delivery of the rail line while ensuring that housing allocations and zoning decisions are realistic and achievable within the plan period, having regard to infrastructure delivery timelines.

The Council welcomes MRP Investment & Development Ltd's engagement in the development plan process. The matters raised regarding Kilmessan's potential role as a location for transport-oriented development, housing allocation, strategic infill, and compact growth will be considered in the preparation of the Core Strategy, settlement hierarchy, housing allocation, land use zoning, and settlement objectives for Kilmessan in

the Draft County Development Plan 2027-2033. This will be undertaken having regard to national and regional policy, the settlement's role and capacity, infrastructure provision and delivery timelines, environmental assessment, and the objective of delivering sustainable, compact, and sequential development patterns across the county.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-164 : Declan Brassil & Company on behalf of MRP Investment & Dev. Ltd

Summary of Submission:

This submission relates to lands within MP6 masterplan area in Navan which are owned by MRP Investment & Development Ltd. The submission is commercial and planning-led in nature and focuses on the role of the subject lands in meeting housing delivery, compact growth, and Core Strategy objectives over the forthcoming plan period.

Three Strategic Proposals are requested by the submission:

1. To include objectives within the County Development Plan that priorities the long-term viability and deliverability of the MP6 lands, including
    - Flexibility in lands uses, location and quantum of development over multiple plan cycles.
    - A phased approach to development and infrastructure delivery, including the ability to commence early residential phases in advance of the rail infrastructure, while allowing later phases to align with rail delivery.
    - The provision of appropriate and sustainable residential densities and housing typologies.
2. The inclusion of specific County Development Plan provisions to guide the preparation and assessment of a future masterplan. In particular, it proposes that:
    - Retail and commercial use should be focused on ground-floor level around the plaza
    - The plaza should function as a key civic space
    - The rail station and plaza should be located on the town side of the rail line
    - Interim or temporary use (such as surface cark parking) should be permitted in future development plot in advance of the railway
3. The request that MP6 lands be considered for designation as an Urban Development Zone (UDZ) under the Planning and Development Act 2024 to facilitate plan-led residential development.

The submission sets out the planning context for the lands, including their location, accessibility, and relationship to existing and planned infrastructure. It contends that the lands are strategically positioned to contribute to sustainable residential development in accordance with the National Planning Framework and the Eastern and Midland Regional

Spatial and Economic Strategy, particularly in relation to consolidation, sequential development, and the efficient use of serviced land.

The submission places significant emphasis on housing delivery and land supply, arguing that the Development Plan must ensure an adequate pipeline of zoned and serviceable lands to meet projected housing requirements. It highlights national housing targets, delivery timelines, and the risks associated with constrained land supply, asserting that failure to identify and support suitable lands at this stage could undermine the ability of the County to meet statutory housing obligations.

Infrastructure capacity is addressed in detail, with reference to water services, transport connectivity, and supporting social and community infrastructure. The submission contends that the subject lands can be developed in a phased and coordinated manner aligned with infrastructure investment and that their inclusion within the Core Strategy would support orderly growth.

The submission also references environmental and planning considerations, stating that development of the lands can be progressed in compliance with environmental assessment requirements, including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, and flood risk assessment, to be undertaken at later plan-making and development management stages.

Overall, the submission seeks that the Strategic Issues Paper and the subsequent Draft County Development Plan recognise the strategic role of the lands, provide for their consideration within the Core Strategy, and ensure that policy does not unduly constrain their future development potential. While no specific zoning change is sought at the SIP stage, the submission requests that the plan-making framework remains sufficiently flexible to facilitate the appropriate inclusion of the lands at Draft Plan stage.

Chief Executive Response

Meath County Council acknowledges the submission made by Declain Brassil & Company Ltd on behalf of MRP Investment & Development ltd.

The proposals put forward relates to the role and function of the Master Plan 6 (MP 6) lands in Navan, designated in the current development plan. MP 6 relates to lands zoned for town centre uses to the south of the retail core of the town. There is a long-term proposal that the Navan Rail Station will be located on these lands.

The requests put forward in the submission are noted, however many are site specific and overly prescriptive for this stage in the development plan process. It should be noted that the Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Stage of the Development Plan process is intended to identify high-level strategic issues and policy consideration to inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan.

The submission calls for the inclusion of specific new and amended objectives for the subject lands. Meath County Council will align policies and objectives on densities, typologies, use classes across the County with the NPF and the RSES, including any applicable Section 28 Guidelines issued by the Minister.

With respect to the request to designate MP 6 as an Urban Development Zone (UDZ), the Chief Executive considers it premature to identify UDZ lands at this stage. The designation of a UDZ must be informed by a Candidate Site Selection Assessment to determine the most appropriate location, having regard to detailed planning, environmental, infrastructural, and heritage considerations. Where a Candidate UDZ is proposed to be designated in a Development Plan, a pre-designation consultation paper must be prepared and the general public consulted in accordance with statutory requirements.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-165: Gerard Murphy

Summary of Submission:

The submission focuses on rail services for County Meath and the Northeast region, highlighting the population of Meath is 221,000 making it the 6th largest county in the state. However, its rail infrastructure is severely lacking, noting that most of the population of Meath is a considerable distance from a railway station.

The submission expresses frustration regarding the Navan Rail line, highlighting that phase 1, Clonsilla – Dunboyne, opened in 2010 with phase 2, Dunboyne – Navan still not being delivered. The submission is concerned over the proposed development of the Dublin Metro and if this will take the priority away from delivering the Navan Rail line. The submission also highlights the existing Navan – Drogehda railway, seeking for this to be upgraded immediately.

In regard to the northern part of the County, the submission raises the question of rail services north of Navan, outlining concern in believing the authorities see no need for such services. The submission raises concerns on the number of greenways being developed expressing that the only way walkers and cyclists can access the greenway is by car. The submission refers to a previous submission they lodged on the Navan-Kingscourt greenway urging for the start of the greenway to commence at the proposed Navan North Station.

Reference is made to Kells where the submission notes apartments were built opposite the Kells railway station and seeks for the Council to identify a suitable site for a new station.

It is also sought for both Meath and Cavan County Council to co-ordinate their plans to provide a new station at Oldcastle or Virgina, or a 'parkway' station somewhere between the two towns. As well as for authorities to co-ordinate their transport and housing plans to provide for a Navan-Kells – Cavan – Monaghan line.

Lastly the submission appeals to the authorities to refrain from turning the track bed of Navan-Kells-Oldcastle into a greenway emphasising that a railway cannot be built if all possible routes are blocked by housing or other developments.

Chief Executive Response

The concerns expressed in this submission regarding the development and completion of the Navan railway line are noted by the Council. Meath County Council is continuing to liaise with the NTA as the project proceeds through the route selection, planning and design phases. It is a key objective of the Council to support the extension of the passenger rail link from Dunboyne to Navan to Dublin in order to generate greater connectivity and strengthen the economic potential of the town. The Draft Plan will continue to support the delivery of the Navan Railway Line.

The Chief Executive wishes to highlight that Area Based Transport Assessments (ABTAs) are currently underway for the settlements of Drogheda and Navan. As part of the process the Council will be engaging with the relevant stakeholders including the National Transport Authority, Irish Rail, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland. This will provide a policy framework for transport related developments in the Draft Plan.

In regard to the concerns expressed on greenways accessibility, A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, walking and cycling to destinations. It is an objective of the current plan to identify and develop suitable lands to provide for Park and Ride facilities at appropriate locations in the County. The Draft Plan will continue to promote and support sustainable transport as a means of travel.

The comments made in relation to identifying a suitable site for a new rail station in Kells in noted. However, the Draft Plan must align with established national and regional policy including the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) which set the overarching direction for transport investment and spatial development.

The proposal for a park and ride facility located between Oldcastle and Virginia is acknowledged. It is in objective of the current plan to identify suitable lands for park and ride facilities; this objective will be reviewed as part of the preparation of the Draft Plan.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-166: Doughlas Hyde Town Planner on behalf of Old Balreask Company Limited.

Summary of Submission:

This submission has been made by Douglas Hyde Town Planner on behalf of Old Balreask Company limited (OBC), focusing on recommending Development Plan policies and

objectives to facilitate the construction of the Navan Rail Link and to prioritise completion in the near future of construction of the Navan Ring Road, (including early construction of local distributor road LDR 1(b) for which planning permission has been granted).

The submission outlines how OBC understands that the reviewed Meath County Development Plan will set out an evidence-based core strategy for the spatial development of Meath and will be consistent with National and Regional policies and objectives of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES). This submission addresses a select number of matters identified by MCC in its Issues Paper, in particular as they relate to the County's capital town of Navan.

Employment and Economy

One of the key questions in the Strategic Issues Paper asks what the main infrastructural constraints are to economic development in Meath. It is considered, by the submission, that the provision of the critical pieces of infrastructure such as the Navan Rail Line and LDR 1 is necessary to ensure that Navan and other urban settlements achieve their undoubted potential for employment creation.

Transport and Movement

The submission expresses it is vital that appropriate land use objectives are included to capitalise on and maximise economic and social benefits from transformational transportation projects, including Navan Rail Link, Dart+ West , Dart + Coastal North, the remaining sections of the Navan Ring Road and construction of the local distributor road, LDR 1(b), which is a vital remaining link for urban connectivity in Navan. The consolidation of new development at locations served by new transport facilities in the larger urban area of Navan is a particular priority of this submission.

Infrastructure and Utilities

Seeks for objectives to facilitate and ensure infrastructure provision are required in the reviewed County Development Plan. This includes schools, local retail and services facilities, parks, water, wastewater, sustainable surface water disposal, energy and telecommunications networks.

Community Services

Seeks for the reviewed Development Plan to provide for the preparation of Master Plans in as short a time frame as practicable. Asserting, this will facilitate the provision of social and community infrastructure in tandem with residential and employment-generating development.

Climate Change

The submission welcomes the increased emphasis on sustainable development and travel patterns, energy use and protection of green infrastructure. Contending, the optimal use of the Navan Rail Link will be achievable by facilitation of the planned population increase in

the key town of Navan (and in other urban areas in the County). Asserting, this in turn will be sustained by a strengthened range of social, cultural, educational and community facilities.

Settlement and Housing

One of the key questions in the Strategic Issues Paper invites consideration of where new housing should be located without contributing to urban sprawl and ensuring consolidated sustainable growth. The Strategic Issues Paper further asks what issues relating to housing should be addressed. The submission acknowledges that Navan is one of the two Key Towns in Couty Meath. The submission has provided the following specific proposals for consideration:

- inclusion of objectives for the elimination of critical infrastructural bottlenecks that currently restrict and prevent sustainable residential development in Navan.
- an active program of identifying relevant lands for compulsory acquisition should be prepared forthwith to facilitate - where necessary - the rapid implementation of vital infrastructural projects.
- Delivering of two major transport projects 1) Navan Rail Link, and 2) Navan Ring Road.
- construction of the Ring Road section designated LDR1(b)

Chief Executive Response

Employment and Economy

The Council recognises the requirements for critical pieces of infrastructure to facilitate development across the county and have and will continue to engage with all relevant infrastructure providers to ensure such infrastructure is delivered. The provision of the critical pieces of infrastructure such as the Navan Rail Line and LDR 1 is supported by policies and objectives in the current County Development Plan (MOV POL 5 and NAV OBJ 19) and this support will continue and be strengthened where necessary in the Draft Development Plan.

Transport and Movement

The Council acknowledges the comments made in relation to transport and connectivity. A modern, efficient and well-integrated public transport network for the County to meet transport demand has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council to enable future sustainable growth and mobility and will continue to be a key consideration for the new Plan, in line with national, regional and local policy frameworks.

Meath County Council note the importance of transformational transportation projects listed above. The Chief Executive wishes to highlight that Area Based Transport Assessments

(ABTAs) are currently underway for the settlements of Drogheda and Navan, to provide an evidence base to land use planning.

In regard to the recommendation for the inclusion of policies and objectives in the new County Development Plan on the prioritisation and construction of the Navan Rail Link and the Navan Ring Road LDR 1b, the Council recognises the significance of these projects and this is reflected in the current Plan under MOV POL 5 and NAV OBJ 19. The Draft Plan will continue to support the prioritisation and construction of these projects.

Infrastructure and Utilities

A comprehensive Settlement Capacity Audit has been undertaken to assess the availability of serviced and serviceable lands, infrastructure capacity, and opportunities for brownfield and infill development. The Council will apply the serviced vs serviceable distinction (NPO 101) and will prepare infrastructure cost estimates (NPO 102) to ensure that zoning decisions are realistic, deliverable, and aligned with infrastructure investment priorities. Lands that cannot be serviced within the plan period will not be zoned (NPO 103). The Council will work closely with Uisce Éireann, the Housing Activation Office and other infrastructure providers to identify and address infrastructure constraints and to support the timely delivery of housing and economic development. Appropriate policies and objectives will be included in the draft Plan to support the delivery of necessary infrastructure.

Community Services

The Council is committed to facilitating the provision of social and community infrastructure in tandem with residential and employment-generating development. A detailed Social Infrastructure Audit is under preparation and will inform the Draft Plan on the existing and future social and community infrastructure requirements. In relation to masterplans, there are 38 masterplans designations in the current CDP. Each of these designations will be reviewed in the Draft Plan and a Masterplan designation will be applied to certain landbanks if deemed appropriate and required to facilitate the integrated development of a land parcel. Meath County Council will continue to engage and work closely with landowners whose lands are subject to an existing masterplan designation.

Climate Change

It is noted that the submission welcomes the increased emphasis on sustainable development and travel patterns, energy use and protection of green infrastructure.

Settlement and Housing

The Council recognises the importance of the availability of high-quality physical infrastructure in supporting sustainable development. The CDP will identify key infrastructure priorities and will work closely with Uisce Éireann, the Housing Activation Office and other infrastructure providers to identify and address infrastructure constraints

and to support the timely delivery of housing and economic development in Navan and other key growth settlements across the county.

Submission No. MH-C203-SIP-167: Kevin Weldon on behalf of Railway View Residents Pride of Place Committee

Summary of Submission:

This submission has been received on behalf of Railway View residents' Pride of Place Committee, providing their suggestions for the settlement of Nobber.

1. General maintenance of the village and estates

The submission notes that most of the general maintenance is carried out by volunteers who are aged over 60 years. The submission seeks for more to be done by Meath County Council in the general upkeep of the village and seeks for more engagement with village committees especially pride of place groups.

2. Village Footpath

The submission highlights that the footpath in the village, especially on the south side of the main street is in poor condition. The submission requests for a new modern footpath and street furniture to be provided.

3. Traffic

Seeks for traffic calming measures in the village, particularly for the traffic coming into the village from the Navan side, highlighting there has recently been a number of minor accidents coming into the village due to speeding.

4. Traffic into estates

Outlines the need for traffic calming measures also required at Bridge Park and Railway View estates, outlining that the access through Railway View also leads to the greenway and there is a high number of vehicles meeting pedestrians and cyclists. The submission highlights that the current traffic calming wooden gates located on the Railway View access lane to the greenway are broken and need repairing or replacing.

The submission also refers to the greenway access roads, expressing their concerns over the lack of maintenance of cleaning of the tarmac entrance ways, especially to the rear of the Railway View estate. The submission seeks for the Council to look after the roadways and to ensure they are kept clean.

5. Local Heritage

Submission seeks for a plaque to be located beside Spiddal railway gates in recognition of former resident Turlough O'Carolan, who was born in Nobber in 1670 and was a blind harpist, composer and singer.

6. Pride of Place Committees

Emphasises the Council needs to look after pride of place committees and not to take their work for granted. The submission notes that this year their pride of place committee – railway view received €250 for first place, outlining that this doesn't represent the significant work being carried out by the committee or for the necessary equipment required for keeping the village clean.

Chief Executive Response

Community Services:

The Council acknowledges the vital contribution pride of place committees, tidy town groups and local community committees and organisations play in maintaining towns, villages and other projects across the County.

The aim of Pride of Place is to work in partnership with communities, to encourage best practice, innovation and leadership in providing vibrant sustainable communities that improve the quality of life for all.

The Council will continue to support local groups such as Railway View Residents Pride of Place Committee through the Pride of Place Scheme and other community funding opportunities. There will also be other stages of public engagement during the development plan process, and the Council looks forward to engaging with groups and committees such as Railway View Residents throughout the process.

Movement:

The constraints highlighted in regard to transport congestion, traffic calming, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure are noted. A key priority of the current Plan is the development of a sustainable transport system, promoting measures to increase the use of public transport, while also increasing the modal share for walking and cycling in towns and villages across the County. It will be a strategic aim of the Draft Plan to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing factor for travel demand. Meath County Council aims to provide safe, efficient and accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims, and this will be reflected in the Draft Plan. The movement issues highlighted in this submission will be considered in the formulation of settlement specific policies and objectives for the Nobber village written statement.

Heritage:

The submission requests the installation of a commemorative plaque at Spiddal railway gates in recognition of Turlough O'Carolan. Meath County Council acknowledges the cultural and historical significance of Turlough O'Carolan and the value of initiatives which promote awareness of local heritage and notable historical figures.

Part 3

The Council will continue to support the protection and promotion of cultural heritage through the County Development Plan and, where appropriate, such proposals may be considered in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and community groups, subject to the availability of funding and the necessary consents.

Part 4: Chief Executives Recommendations

Part 4

Introduction:

This element of the report sets out the Chief Executive's Recommendations on the broad policies to be included in the Draft Development Plan. It is presented mainly as a response to the issues raised in the public submissions. The statutory requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), and Section 28 Guidelines must be followed and the Draft Plan must be consistent with the Revised National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and associated Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan. Therefore, the recommendations below are soley derived from the issues raised and summarized above.

Strategic Overview

- Adopt enhanced and innovative public engagement methods throughout the plan-making process, drawing on OPR's Public Engagement Toolkit to broaden participation.
- Integrate the EPA/OPR SEA public participation guidance to ensure meaningful, accessible and transparent consultation during environmental assessment stages.
- Prepare a Draft Development Plan that complies with the provisions set out under Section 10(2)(A) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), including Section 28 Guidelines and consistent with the Revised NPF, the NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements (July 2025), the RSES and associated MASP. Insofar as is reasonable, endeavour to incorporate the provisions of Part 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2024.
- Incorporate climate action as an overarching and cross-cutting theme across the Draft Plan in line with policies and objectives contained in the NPF, the RSES, MCC's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and national legislation.
- Ensure strategic alignment with the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including climate action, clean energy, sustainable settlements, economic resilience, social equity, innovation, infrastructure, education and health.
- Contribute to the creation of a more socially inclusive society by providing for appropriate community infrastructure and improving access to information and resources. Seek new innovative ways of enhancing social inclusion.
- Promote a more socially inclusive society through the provision of appropriate community infrastructure to support the needs of the existing and growing population.
- Support a housing approach that provides an appropriate mix of tenures to meet the needs of young families, an ageing population and people with special or additional needs in County Meath.

- Support and promote development that delivers compact growth in line with the National Strategic Outcome of Compact Growth under the NPF and the Regional Strategic Outcome of Compact Growth and Regeneration set out in the RSES.
- Prepare a robust, evidence-based Core Strategy, Housing Strategy (including a Housing Need and Demand Assessment) and Settlement Hierarchy in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), and consistent with the Revised NPF, MASP and relevant Section 28 guidelines.
- Promote the creation of high-quality places to live by embedding the principles of healthy placemaking in the planning and development process.
- Through a comprehensive placemaking approach to planning, design and management, support the delivery of attractive, inclusive and sustainable places to live, work and recreate, underpinned by high-quality public realm, community facilities, design standards and open spaces across the county.
- Identify and support the timely delivery of key enabling infrastructure at strategic locations to facilitate sustainable development over the lifetime of the Development Plan.
- Ensure that lands zoned for development are fully serviced or capable of being serviced within the lifetime of the County Development Plan.
- Promote the sequential development of serviced or serviceable lands in accordance with the tiered approach to land zoning set out in the NPF, RSES and MASP, and ensure coordination with adjoining planning authorities where strategic development corridors cross county boundaries.
- Develop a suite of rural regeneration policies and objectives aimed at revitalising villages that have experienced population decline or stagnation.
- Support viable rural communities by promoting the sustainable growth of rural villages and clusters, while balancing this with carefully managed residential development in the countryside.
- Support the strategic provision of childcare infrastructure as an essential component of sustainable communities and future population growth.

Theme 1: Core Strategy, Settlement & Housing

- Review the settlement hierarchy and core strategy for the county in line with relevant national and regional policy and guidance.
- Incorporate the housing allocation for Meath as provided for in the 'NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirement Guidelines' into the Core Strategy of the Draft Plan.
- Ensure there are sufficient lands available throughout the County and in particular the settlements designated for growth to meet the projected housing requirements identified for Meath in the Housing Growth Requirement Guidelines, which will be

transposed into the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan. Ensure full alignment of the core strategy with the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, Section 28 Guidelines and National Planning Statements.

- Incorporate the Housing Growth Requirements and associated 50% headroom provision into the land supply and zoning strategy.
- Utilise the Settlement Capacity Audit and Social Infrastructure Audit to identify infrastructure constraints and engage with the relevant providers to assist in the delivery of same.
- Identify potential locations for transport orientated development which will be informed by existing and proposed high frequency public transport provision.
- Promote Transport-Oriented Development (TOD) with mixed-use high-density development at key rail nodes.
- Continue to prioritise the delivery of housing within the built-up footprint of existing settlements through infill and brownfield development, the re-use of vacant and underutilised lands in compliance with national and regional policy.
- Prepare an evidence-based core strategy which will identify settlements which have the capacity in services to facilitate growth.
- Develop an evidence-based settlement hierarchy reflecting infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints and the county's position across three RSES sub-regions.
- Ensure that the Core Strategy recognises the strategic importance of Navan as the Key County Town

<u>Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)</u>

- Integrate the MASP strategic development areas into the core strategy, with particular emphasis on the North-West corridor.
- Apply MASP guidance on employment density and strategic employment locations.
- Maintain active engagement with EMRA to ensure alignment with emerging RSES review outcomes, including potential Transport-Oriented Development (TOD) opportunities.

<u>Compact Growth and Zoning</u>

- Prepare a comprehensive Settlement Capacity Audit to underpin all zoning decisions.
- Apply the serviced vs serviceable land distinction and avoid zoning lands that cannot be serviced within the plan period.
- Prepare infrastructure cost estimates for development-dependent zoning proposals.
- Prioritise brownfield and infill development in key towns and growth centres in line with compact growth objectives.

<u>Lower-Tier Plans</u>

- Identify settlements requiring Urban Area Plans, Priority Area Plans or Coordinated Area Plans in the Draft Plan.
-

- Review the masterplan designations in the existing CDP and identify if any additional land parcels require a masterplan designation.
- Continue to prioritise the preparation of the Drogheda Joint Urban Area Plan and Transport Plan in collaboration with Louth County Council, EMRA and the NTA.
- Support and promote cross-boundary collaboration and coordination with adjoining local authorities, relevant statutory agencies and stakeholders in the planning, management and delivery of shared environmental assets, infrastructure and recreational amenities, including but not limited to coastal management, watercourse and catchment management, green and blue infrastructure, sustainable transport networks, and the provision of inter-county walking and cycling routes, where such collaboration contributes to proper planning and sustainable development and is consistent with environmental protection, climate adaptation and national and regional planning policy.
- Include a policy to reflect the LDA's statutory remit under the Land Development Agency Act 2021 and the intention of the LDA to work actively and collaboratively with Meath County Council in the delivery of homes.

Theme 2: Employment & Economy

- Prepare an evidence-based economic strategy aligned with national climate objectives and the GDA Transport Strategy.
- Review and rationalise employment zoning using OPR Practice Note PN04 to ensure strategic location, servicing capacity and accessibility.
- Update the retail strategy to reflect the RSES retail hierarchy and support town centre vitality.
- Review the effectiveness of Land Use Zoning categories as part of the Economic Strategy. Incorporate the key objectives and recommendations from th**e** recent Tourism Strategy.
- Promote working with private industry to grow and expand the Food Tourism experience in the county.
- Promote Meath as a high-quality location for film, television and media by;
    - Facilitating appropriate filming activity throughout the county while safeguarding environmental, heritage and community assets.
    - Encouraging the development of infrastructure, services and workspaces that enable film and creative professionals to operate within Meath.
    - Collaborating with national and regional agencies to attract production activity and strengthen Meath's profile within the screen sector.
    - Supporting skills development and enterprise opportunities that contribute to local employment in the creative economy.

Theme 3: Transport & Movement

- Provide for an integrated approach to land use and ground transportation, aimed at securing a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport, i.e. cycling walking and public transport.
- Include measurable modal shift targets supported by clear implementation measures.
- Support initiatives for establishing walking routes and accessibility.
- Protect the strategic function of national roads and review employment zoning near strategic junctions.
- Apply DMURS principles consistently to enhance walkability, cycling and urban design quality.
- Promote land use patterns which reduce the need to travel and support public transport including higher densities at public transport corridors and nodes.
- Support the preparation of Local Transport Plans in conjunction with the NTA and relevant stakeholders, where Local Area Plans are undertaken, having regard to the Area Based Transport Assessment Guidance Notes.
- To engage with the NTA and other relevant agencies to have ongoing reviews of the network of bus routes in Meath, and to support and encourage public transport operators to provide improved bus services in, and through the County.
- To work with the NTA and relevant stakeholders to provide bus services in rural communities in the County.
- Continue to engage with adjoining Local Authorities to co-ordinate transport proposals
- Support the delivery and integration of key transport enablers to accommodate growth over the plan period and beyond, consistent with the NPF and the RSES, including Navan Rail Line and the DART expansion.
- Support the expansion of heavy rail through the DART+ Programme and the Navan Rail line project and support ongoing investment in rail infrastructure.
- Support the delivery of an integrated, user-friendly and highly connected public transport network.
- Support the provision of Park and Ride facilities at suitable locations in accordance with proposals set out by the NTA.
- To protect the strategic function of national roads per Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012) and maintaining the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads network including planning for future capacity enhancements.
- Review the standards and the car and cycle parking requirements for residential and non-residential development in line with national planning and transport policy requirements.
- Promote and facilitate the universal design approach into all developments.

- Include clear policies to avoid the creation of additional access points onto national roads outside urban speed limit zones, carefully manage development at or near national road junctions and interchanges, and ensure that development proposals do not undermine the strategic transport function of these routes.
- Draft Plan to include policies to ensure the protection of national roads infrastructure when routing utility services, including electricity transmission infrastructure, and that such works comply with relevant guidance and consultation frameworks.
- Provide specific policy support in the Draft Plan for projects recognised in the National Development Plan.
- Continue to support the delivery of the N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross scheme into the Draft Meath CDP 2027-2033
- Include policies to progress and support the delivery of greenways within the county.
- Include an objective to ensure the necessary consultation is carried out with respect to the routing of utilities affecting national roads, in addition to the proper reinstatement of affected road infrastructure.
- Continue to support the expansion of TFI local link service across the county over the development plan period.
- Include a policy/objective to provide an additional train station in South Drogheda in the Draft Plan.
- Continue to support the delivery of the N2 Slane Bypass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme.
- Consider the measures within the CAP25 relating to sustainable mobility and reducing the demand for transport journeys by private vehicles (Avoid-Shift -Improve Framework) through more effective land use and transport planning integration and compact growth principles when drafting the Development Plan.
- Maintain and build on the existing policy support for the growth and development of Dublin Airport in line with the principles of the National Aviation Policy for Ireland and the first revision of the National Planning Framework to support growth in High Quality International Connectivity (National Strategic Outcome (NSO) 4).
- Support an update of the National Aviation Policy, and the emerging Midland and Eastern Regional and Spatial Economic Strategy to reflect the importance of Dublin Airport as a strategic national asset in order to maximise the economic, employment, connectivity and competitiveness benefits of Dublin Airport for County Meath.
- Seek engagement and clarification from daa to draft objective**s** that will effectively manage airport encroachment by noise-sensitive uses within airport noise zones, by requiring all planning applications for noise-sensitive development (including residential uses) located within the designated Dublin Airport noise zones and the Noise Abatement Objective under EU Regulation 598/2014:
- Require development proposals in noise-sensitive zones be accompanied by a site-specific Aircraft Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) referencing the latest strategic noise

maps and metrics (e.g., Lden, Lnight), and analysing both indoor and outdoor noise exposure levels. This assessment should include appropriate design and construction measures to mitigate aircraft noise impacts, ensuring compliance with the Noise Abatement Objective and limiting encroachment into high-noise areas. Require developers to provide post planning compliance confirmation that these measures have been implemented.

- Strengthen and improve airport safeguarding policy - Support a review and update of Airport Noise Zones and Public Safety Zones, on Development Plan maps and in the Written Statement, ensuring they reflect the latest available data and regulatory requirements, including any review of the Noise Abatement Objective and that this be effectively coordinated with adjoining planning authorities and the Aircraft Noise Competent Authority (ANCA).

Theme 4: Infrastructure & Utilities

- Strengthen collaboration with Uisce Éireann to address water and wastewater constraints, across the county.
- Maximise the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in all new development.
- Avail of information and data provided by the OPW, such as the flooding maps, Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment & Management Programme (CFRAM Programme) and the Groundwater Flood Probability Maps (GFPM) will continue to form part of the Planning Authority's flood risk assessment that would Confirm potential flood sources, assess existing information, and create flood zone maps.
- Include reference to:
    - Shaping Our Electricity Future 1.1, EirGrid's updated roadmap for the development of the transmission grid out to 2030 to deliver on the 80% renewable energy targets.
    - ESB's Networks Strategy: Networks For Net Zero, which sets out ESB Networks' role in enabling the delivery of the Government's Climate Action Plan 2023 and supports the decarbonisation of the electricity system by 2040.
- Ensure Draft Development Plan is consistent with the policies and objectives of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), which outlines the Government's vision, objectives and marine planning policies for each marine activity.
- Include objectives supporting local and community based renewable energy projects to address Government policy and strategy for sustainable, secure and affordable energy.
- Include specific objective to promote the repowering and extension of the lifetime of existing wind power installations and to enhance the development of additional renewable energy infrastructure in the County, including solar as well as supporting grid infrastructure.

- Include a policy to facilitate land-sea interactions and support sustainable marine-related development in appropriate locations.
- Create policy to implement the delivery of the Social Housing Energy Efficiency retrofit programme, to support the ambitions of the National Residential Retrofit Plan, in particular, the development of the electrification of heating, having regard to the CAP25, the RSES and the NPF. This also aligns with SDG targets relating in particular to SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities and SDG 7 – Affordable and Renewable Energy.
- Within the lifetime of the Plan, examine the potential of district heating, including district heating derived from waste heat and geothermal energy, where available, technically feasible and cost effective and commit to carrying out a feasibility exercise and the use of heat mapping in support of same in the draft policies, having regard to the CAP25, RPO 7.38 of the RSES, NSO 8 and NPO 68 of the revised NPF, the National Heat Study and the Government's Policy Statement on Geothermal Energy for a Circular Economy. As such, policies in support of same are encouraged in the Development Plan.
- Support circular economy principles in the Development Plan and implement policy for same.
- The Development Plan will have regard to the guidance "Best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource & waste management plans for construction & demolition projects" and give effect to them through the objectives of the plan.
- Amend Map 11.1 to include Intel's Seveso consultation zone as appropriate (Note: no maps were included in the submission). This will be requested from the HSA.
- Include policy provisions in the Draft Development Plan that encourage and facilitate the advancement of the strategic and economic potential of Drogheda Port, including port-related development, tourism, recreation and community-focused initiatives, subject to proper planning and sustainable development, environmental assessment, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders and adjoining local authorities.
- Continue engagement with infrastructure providers to identify solutions to barriers to infrastructure provision.
- Review and strengthen where necessary policies and objectives which support critical pieces of infrastructure which are required to facilitate development.
- Consider the inclusion of a policy to protect the county's aggregate reserve.

Theme 5: Community Services

- Explicitly support the provision of new schools, expansion of existing ones and the development of community infrastructure to complement schools.
- Liaise and identify specific sites required for future schools in settlements across the county and apply specific Local Objectives where advised by the Dept. of Education and agreed by the Executive.
- Complete Social Infrastructure that illustrate mapped locations of all schools within the county.

- Noting the challenges faces by Department in acquiring sites where zoning does not exist, consider the expansion of community zoning around existing schools to accommodate for future expansion.
- Carry out a Countywide Social Infrastructure Audit and incorporate the recommendations into the Draft Plan, where appropriate.
- Consider a more streamlined process for the provision of Public Art under DM OBJ 38 of the existing plan.
- Develop a suite of rural regeneration policies and objectives aimed at revitalising villages that have experienced population decline or stagnation.
- Expand the strategic provision of childcare infrastructure as an essential component of sustainable communities and future population growth.
- Review and update existing settlement specific policies and objectives for the village of Nobber and relevant sections of the Community Chapter (Strategy) which refers to community initiatives such as Pride of Place.
- Reflect the Gaeltacht boundaries in the Development Plan

Theme 6: Rural Development

- Develop a rural strategy aligned with NPF rural objectives to support rural settlement regeneration.
- Promote serviced sites and infill development within rural towns and villages as viable alternatives to dispersed rural housing.
- Review existing Gaeltacht and Irish language related policies and objectives. Consider the justification for and implementation of a Gaeltacht area local needs assessment.

Theme 7: Cultural & Natural Heritage

- Incorporate recommendations from the Meath Biodiversity Action Plan into the Draft CDP
- Include policies and objectives to ensure that recreational developments are delivered in a manner that protects environmental sensitivities and cultural heritage.
- Consider the incorporation of the following objectives in the Draft CDP
    - *Strategic Objective X.X - Protect and enhance the built and cultural heritage resource of Meath, ensuring that development proposals, both in the wider landscape and in settlements, are informed by the historic context. Heritage-led regeneration and placemaking will be promoted and supported*
    - *Strategic Objective X.X - Establish sustainable communities in a manner that consolidates development and amenities within walking and cycling distance, while ensuring that development avoids the most environmentally sensitive sites in the locality.*
- *Objective X: Enabling Development for Historic Structures:*

- *It is the objective of Meath County to ensure that historic buildings and structures are reused and enhanced as part of development proposals. Schemes which fail to ensure continued appropriate re-use of historic buildings on site within the ownership boundary will not be supported. If historic structures and buildings are not conducive to operational requirements, a clear pathway for their re-use will need to be established before permission is granted.*
- *Proposals which seek to comply with this policy will be supported by flexibility in terms of development standards, commensurate with the level of importance of the protected structure/historic building in question.*

Policy Objective X: Species Specific Surveys

- *It is the objective of Meath County Council to ensure that applications that may impact on protected species/ species of conservation concern should be accompanied by a species-specific ecological survey, which can be included as part of general ecological assessments. The suitability of the receiving ecological environment to accommodate the following should be assessed e.g. Bat species, Swift and House Martin, Otter, Red Squirrel, Badger etc.*
- *Strategic Objective X.X - Protect and enhance the built and cultural heritage resource of Meath, ensuring that development proposals, both in the wider landscape and in settlements, are informed by the historic context. Heritage-led regeneration and placemaking will be promoted and supported*
- *Strategic Objective X.X - Establish sustainable communities in a manner that consolidates development and amenities within walking and cycling distance, while ensuring that development avoids the most environmentally sensitive sites in the locality.*
- *Strategic Objective X.X – It is the objective of Meath County Council to conserve and restore the ecological network of Meath by protecting sites of local, national and international importance and ensuring that development proposals seek to retain natural features which are important for the biodiversity of the county.*
- *Policy Objective X - Proposals for nature restoration projects need to demonstrate that the project has been based on the best available scientific data and best practice.*
- *Policy Objective X.X County Biodiversity Areas*
  It is the objective of Meath County Council to prevent both direct and indirect damage or deterioration of County Biodiversity Areas. Development proposals which may impact on these sites should be accompanied by an ecological assessment of the features for which the site has been identified as being of county importance.
- *Policy Objective X.X Natural Features, site design, and infrastructure*

It is the objective of Meath County to prevent the undue loss of natural features, such has hedgerows, treelines, smaller stands of trees, grass margins and boundary walls that provide habitats for species. The design approach to landscaping and open space in new developments should retain natural features. How this has been achieved should be detailed in the drawings and design statements submitted with the application.

- *Policy Objective X - It is the objective of Meath County that any planting regime as part of site design and landscaping proposals is confined to native species and provenance. While maintenance regimes for hedgerows should be informed by the relevant national guidance e.g. National Biodiversity Data Centre guidelines on hedgerow planting*
- *It is the objective of Meath County that all development proposals are designed with ecology in mind. Infrastructure including public lighting systems should be installed in a manner that prevents significant harm to species.*

- Avail of EMRA resources will be used by the Council to map ecological networks and integrate GI into zoning.
- Consider the Actions of the Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 including Action 5.1, as relevant for the plan area, when drafting the Development Plan, and consider the related SDG.
- Incorporate the Built and Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan Guidance for Local Authorities 2024 into the Draft Meath CDP by way of a new objective.
- Review and strengthen where necessary policies and objectives relating to safeguarding and protecting all forms of heritage.
- Review Tree Protection Orders as part of the Development Plan review process.
- To continue to work in partnership with the Department of Heritage, OPW, Local community and all relevant stakeholders to address visitor management issues and augment the visitor experience at the Hill of Tara.

Theme 8: Climate Change

- Embed climate action across the Plan in accordance with section 10(2)(n) of the Act.
- Incorporate the recommendations of this submission by way of policies and objectives within the Draft CDP that will support the delivery of the Government's commitment to achieving climate neutrality.
- Plan for renewable energy capacity allocations arising from the RSES review and strengthen policies supporting wind, solar and other low-carbon energy sources.
- Integrate coastal change and climate adaptation considerations into relevant policies.
- Support the implementation of the national Climate Action Plan, the Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions, the National Climate Objective, the National Adaptation Framework, NPO 69 of the revised NPF and the UN Agenda 2030 and the

Sustainable Development Goals through the preparation of effective objectives and actions for climate action in Development Plan area.

- Include an objective and / or policy in the Development Plan to support the implementation of CAP25 (and annual revisions thereof).
- Include objectives and / or policies to ensure the implementation of the Meath County Council LACAP, DZ priority areas and related actions, thereby ensuring consistency and alignment between both Plans.
- Prepare a Renewable Energy Strategy as part of the Development Plan, having regard to the Regional Renewable Energy Strategy (RRES) and the revised methodology for LARES (when published).
- Include an objective of the Council in the Development to promote the development of renewable energy installations, and to support the development of additional supporting grid infrastructure.
- Consider the particular targets set out in Agenda 2030 regarding SDG7 - Affordable and Clean Energy – in the drafting of the plan
- The Department plan will have regard to the Clean Air Strategy for Ireland, and consider the impacts of measures adopted in the draft Development Plan on current and future air quality. This will include having regard to limits on air pollution and ensure that any measures set out in the Development Plan will not negatively impact on future air quality.
- Refer to the Doughnut Economics framework developed by Kate Raworth can be used to inform the premise of the new CDP.

Other Issues

- Incorporate recommendations from the Town Centre First Plan into the Written Statement for Enfield Written Statement.
- Consider the appropriateness of including a site-specific heritage objective for the Ballinlough Workhouse as part of the Draft County Development Plan.
- Consider the appropriateness of including a site-specific objectives for sustainable tourism sites of importance as part of the Draft County Development Plan

Environmental Assessment (including SEA, AA and SFRA)

- Prepare a comprehensive Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and integrate flood mapping with zoning maps.
- Ensure zoning decisions support OPW flood relief schemes and avoid creating new flood-related vulnerabilities.

Monitoring and Implementation

- Develop a robust monitoring framework aligned with NPOs 105–108 and the forthcoming OPR Practice Note PN06.

- Use digital monitoring tools to track compact growth, housing delivery, infrastructure progress and climate action throughout the plan period.