

Appendix 15 - Implementation & Monitoring

Introduction

The successful implementation of a significant number of the policies and objectives of the Plan will necessitate on-going collaboration and a sense of good-will across a range of agencies and stakeholders. The implementation of the Plan will depend also on the economic climate, political support, Council funding and the availability of funding from other sources. However, the Council will exercise all of its legal powers to ensure that the objectives are implemented.

In terms of the plan hierarchy, the County Development Plan sits below the regional plan, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands region. The RSES provides the link between the NPF and the City/County Development Plans and the Local Economic and Community Plans.

Notwithstanding the statutory requirement to prepare a progress report not more than 2 years after the making of the Plan, the preparation of an annual monitoring and evaluation report (subject to availability of adequate resources) would be of value to the Council to facilitate the identification of any issues concerning implementation of the plan, for example through the interpretation of plan objectives within the development management process.

Legislative Background

Under the provisions of Section 15 (1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Council has a statutory obligation to secure the implementation of the objectives of the Plan. The Council is fully committed to securing and monitoring the implementation of the strategies, policies and objectives of this Plan. The Council will continue to occupy a leadership role to progress and secure the Plan policies and objectives to achieve the sustainable development of communities, the economic repositioning of the County and the promotion of the County's unique cultural and natural heritage. In providing this leadership role, the Council will foster a collaborative approach with citizens, stakeholders, sectoral interests, and adjoining authorities to achieve collective support and successful implementation of the Plan.

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 gives legislative effect to the proposals contained in 'Putting People First', and provides for a range of changes to the organisation and work of local authorities. Local Authorities are now required to develop a Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) which seeks to establish an integrated approach to economic and local community development at county level. Further changes include the establishment of the Local Community Development Committees (LCDC's), and Local Enterprise Offices (LEO's) within Local Authorities. The Economic Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022, the first of its kind, recognises Meath's significant strategic location within

the Eastern Midland region and the county's unique competitive advantage within Ireland. This Plan seeks to promote the County as a nationally and internationally attractive and distinctive location in which to conduct business. The policies and objectives of this Plan seek to continue the successful implementation of the Economic Strategy which has facilitated the delivery of a number of significant F.D.I and indigenous projects since its inception.

Under Section 22A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), and each Local Authority within the Regional Assembly is required, every 2 years, to prepare and submit a report to the Assembly setting out progress made in supporting objectives, relevant to that authority, of the Strategy.

Local Area Plans

An important driver of the Plan Strategy is to bring policies to a more detailed local level through Local Area Plans. The strategic and broad-ranging policies of the Plan provide a general framework, but not necessarily the detailed treatment required for significant proposals in certain areas. Local Area Plans have proven successful in the detailed implementation of Plan policies and objectives.

Phasing

It is an objective of the Council to promote the implementation of the Plan in a rational and sequential approach that is in keeping with the proposed development strategy. It is also an objective of the Council to ensure that essential facilities (such as road infrastructure, water, sewerage and surface water drainage systems, etc.) are secured and provided in a timely manner and in tandem with proposed developments.

Sources of Funding

Public Private Partnerships

A Public Private Partnership (PPP) involves a partnership agreement between the public and private sector for the delivery of specific projects relating to public services and infrastructure. Such an approach can ensure a commitment to funding due to interlinked public and private assistance, and aims at ensuring the most economically efficient manner of development. Education, local services, health, housing, public transport, roads, solid waste, water/waste water and other public services can benefit from the approach of a PPP. Other partnership approaches will be pursued with state and public organisations.

Additional Funding Sources

It is considered reasonable that contributions be paid towards Local Authority investment in the provision of infrastructure and services by developers who benefit from such provision. Additional National and EU level programmes include the designated urban centre grant scheme 2014-2020, the Re-building Ireland Action Plan, the NeighbourWood Scheme, National Lottery Facility Funding, as well as other funding mechanisms available from the various Government Departments and other agencies. Such bodies have varying criteria regarding the type of developments they fund and may be useful to consider in the achievement of development objectives. The Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds arising from the National Development Plan in support of the National Planning Framework and other national strategies are available to support the implementation of regional and local authority development plans and local economic and community plan objectives.

Project Ireland 2040

For the first time in Irish history, planning and investment are intrinsically linked within Project Ireland 2040 and through the simultaneous publication of the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan, to provide for Government policy and investment to facilitate social and economic progress into the future. The total investment of almost €116 billion under the National Development Plan (NDP) is designed to meet Ireland's infrastructure and investment needs over the ten years from 2018 to 2027, with strategic investment priorities aligned to each of the ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) set out within the NPF. The NDP provides for five-year multi-annual capital allocations, which will facilitate departments in planning their investment programmes over the medium term.

Urban Regeneration and Development fund

As part of Project Ireland 2040, the Government announced the establishment of a new Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), primarily to support the compact growth and sustainable development of Ireland's five cities and other large urban centres. In the first instance, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) has responsibility for implementing the URDF, which has an allocation of €2 billion in the National Development Plan (NDP) to 2027 available for investment in higher tier settlements. In line with the objectives of the National Planning Framework (NPF), the fund is designed to leverage a greater proportion of residential and commercial development, supported by infrastructure, services and amenities, within the existing built 'footprint' of our larger settlements. Within the EMRA Region, the Urban fund applies to Dublin City and the Metropolitan Area (including Dunboyne, Maynooth and Kilcock Environs), the Key Regional Growth Centres of Athlone, Dundalk and Drogheda (including the southern environs within the administrative boundary of Meath), towns with a population of more than 10,000 including the Key Town of Navan and the self-sustaining towns of Ashbourne and Trim (as a town of fewer than 10,000 people but with more than 2,500 jobs).

Rural Regeneration and Development fund

Under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund the Government has committed to providing an additional €1 billion euro investment over the period 2019 to 2027. The Fund provides investment to support rural renewal for suitable projects in towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas. It is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development. This Fund aims to support sustainable community and economic development in rural Ireland, including through regenerating smaller towns and villages and encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation to support job creation in rural areas. It will be a key instrument to support the objectives of the National Planning Framework, and in particular to achieve Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities – one of the NSOs of the NPF. The Fund will support ambitious and strategic projects which contribute to sustainable rural regeneration and development. It will support investments of scale which would not otherwise be delivered without the fund, and projects that are outside the scope of other existing funding streams.

Climate Action Fund

The Climate Action fund, aims to support initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets and will leverage investment by public and private bodies. The fund is being administered by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. The Fund has an allocation of at least €500m to the year 2027 and offers the potential for innovative interventions which, in the absence of specific support from the Fund, would not otherwise be delivered. The Fund is planned to have a wide-ranging scope supporting projects that can contribute to Ireland's climate and energy targets and wider Government policy priorities, including the development of innovative and scalable solutions, projects that generate wider socio-economic benefits and leverage non-exchequer sourced investment.

Disruptive Technologies Fund

The Disruptive Technology Innovation Fund (DTIF) is an initiative which aims to support Ireland's innovation ecosystem and to drive collaboration between public bodies, research, SMEs and industry. The DTIF is a competitive challenge-based fund for the development, deployment and commercialisation of innovative technology solutions to a broad range of challenge areas including health, services, energy and food and to achieve the NSOs of the NPF. The Fund has an allocation of €500m over ten years and is implemented through the Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) and its agencies working with other research funding bodies. The aim of the DTIF is to build on research and leverage for commercial impact, create new start-up companies and prepare Irish enterprises and public bodies to engage in European and global innovation partnerships.

Development Contributions

The Council may, when granting planning permission, attach conditions requiring the payment of financial contribution(s) in respect of public infrastructure and facilities, benefiting the development.

Details of such contributions must be set out in a Development Contribution Scheme. Meath County Council Development Contributions Scheme 2016-2021 (as amended) came into effect in January 2016 and is available to view on the Council's website www.meath.ie

Securities

To ensure the satisfactory completion of development, on a site which has been the subject of a grant of planning permission, a cash deposit shall be submitted to the Council until the development has been completed to the satisfaction of the Council. The amount of the deposit shall be agreed with the Council. The amount shall be sufficient so as to ensure that any liability to the Council in completing the development is minimised. A development can be completed on a phased basis as a development progresses so as to achieve the requisite standards are achieved on site and to limit the financial burden on the developer and minimise the liability to the Council. A cash deposit may be sequestered in part or in its entirety where the development has not been satisfactorily completed. The Council will determine the amount of such cash deposit, based on the Meath County Council Development Contributions Scheme 2016-2021 (as amended).

Monitoring & Reporting

The Planning Department of the Council is the main section responsible for monitoring and implementing the plan, mainly through the development management function. However, it is important to note that this Plan co-ordinates the work and objectives of other key departments within the Local Authority, such as Economic Development, Water Services, Transportation & Environment, Housing and Community. In some cases, the body responsible for the implementation of certain plan objectives may be external, such as Irish Water, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Fisheries Ireland, National Roads Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, and the Environmental Protection Agency etc.

More recently the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) was established by Government in April 2019. The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 established the legal basis for the OPR and outlines its role and functions, which include the assessment of all local authority and regional assembly forward planning programmes, including regional spatial and economic strategies; organisational review of the systems and procedures used by a Planning Authority, in the performance of any of their planning functions. This office operates an independent monitoring role, advising the Minister, Government and the Oireachtas on implementation of local authority statutory planning processes, using a new set of indicators to be developed to assist effective monitoring.

The EMRA is strongly committed to the preparation of evidence-based strategies and plans and this is demonstrated in the baseline data gathering and the preparation of Regional Profiles, which informed the development of the RSES.

The Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly have made a commitment to make available to Local Authorities the baseline data (used in preparation of the RSES) as a shared evidence base for the Region and encourages local authorities to use this database, particularly to inform the preparation and implementation of city and county development plans, local area plans, and local economic and community plans. It is anticipated that the RSES evidence baseline data will be regularly updated as new data becomes available and the Regional Assembly will support the development and publication of a set of robust, relevant and timely Key Regional Indicators for policy making and evaluation. Baseline data will be updated on at least a four yearly cycle to coincide with the EPA state of the environment reporting and shall take account of the monitoring requirements in the SEA.

The large number of objectives included in the Plan represent a significant challenge for the Council. However, a number of the Plan's objectives are set within a longer timeframe, of 20 to 30 years, which may not be fully implemented over the lifetime of this County Development Plan.

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) provides under:

Section 15 (1) that it shall be the duty of a Planning Authority to take such steps within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of the Development Plan,

and;

Section 15 (2) that the Manager of the Planning Authority shall, not more than 2 years after the making of a Development Plan, give a report to the members of the Planning Authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives referred to in subsection (1).

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

IMP & MON OBJ 1: To endeavour to prepare an annual monitoring and evaluation report on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Plan to be given to the Elected Members, subject to the availability of the necessary resources.

IMP & MON OBJ 2: To prepare a preliminary monitoring evaluation report on the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan (subject to the availability of adequate resources) within two years of the making of the Plan. (This could coincide with 2nd annual review of the Plan on the progress achieved in securing the Plan objectives as per IMP & MON OBJ 1).

IMP & MON OBJ 3: To undertake monitoring as set out in Chapter 10 of the Environmental Report.

IMP & MON OBJ 4: To improve the tracking of plans and policies and the implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation to protect the environment.

Monitoring

Plan Objectives

As far as practicable, every effort has been made to formulate objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable and realistic. All of the objectives of the plan have been written with the specific aim of fulfilling the 'Core & Settlement Strategies' of the plan and their associated objectives, as well as the environmental objectives as set out in the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Performance Indicators

The measurement of the success of the implementation of the objectives of the Plan will be a complex process, as a wide number of actions will be required to secure each goal. Table 10.1 Monitoring, in the SEA Environmental report sets out the key selected performance indicators within each of the environmental categories many are not within the direct control of the Council. Performance indicators will be based on known sources of data, such as the Census 2016 data (including any updated Census results/data).

Statutory 2 Year Review

The Plan will be reviewed after 2 years and a progress report will be prepared by the Chief Executive on the achievements in securing the objectives of the Plan at that time.